UN-REDD Programme 2022 Annual Report

Table of Content

Foreword

Following the adoption of the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December, 2021, the momentum for forests continued to grow in 2022, giving the forest agenda an opportunity to move from an era of goodwill and readiness into a decade of scaled up action, results and finance. Building on the [Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forest and Land Use,](#) announced at UNFCCC COP-26, the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership was launched to drive delivery of the 2030 target to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.

This momentum continued at the UNFCC COP-27 in Sharm El Sheik in November, 2022, where forests were profiled as exemplars of progress being made on the Paris Agreement, climate action and mobilizing finance. The role of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and forests was reaffirmed in the [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#), with forests increasingly recognized as a gateway to NbS. The need for adequate finance, capacity development and partnerships was highlighted as key enabling conditions to deliver forest solutions at scale.

Furthermore, forests were recognized as a key solution in the landmark [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), which was established at the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in December, 2022.

Aligned with the growing momentum for forests, the UN-REDD Programme is focused on supporting scaled-up international REDD+ implementation and the mobilization of finance. We have continued to partner with forest countries in advancing climate goals through the implementation of REDD+, improving capacities to address drivers of deforestation, to progressively meet high quality jurisdictional standards and to access diverse funding sources, including through [Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF)](#).

Strong partnerships are key to scaling up ambition, action and finance. UN-REDD is also a founding partner of the [Green Gigaton Challenge](#), a global effort to catalyze funds to transact one gigaton of high-quality emissions reductions from forest-based, natural climate solutions by 2025 and annually after that.

As we shift from commitments and pilots to implementation and scale up, we hear more and more that key elements on the critical path to heightened delivery include forest and climate finance, the nexus with agriculture and food systems, safeguards and social inclusion, local action, gender and the role of and support for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). In response to these increasing demands from partners, UN-REDD is continuously aligning its work to bring its technical assistance, policy advice, knowledge management and convening role to where it is most needed and impactful. The discussions held at the [UN-REDD Country Dialogue on Strategic Finance Pathways for Forest Solutions](#) and the [Sixth Executive Board Meeting](#) are good examples of how we strive to listen to our stakeholders and tailor our work to meet expressed needs with the speed and agility required.

We stand at a pivotal moment for forests, and UN-REDD is committed and ready to contribute its part in accelerating actions on forests and climate.

Executive summary

The UN-REDD Programme is pleased to present its 2022 Annual Report, showcasing the remarkable progress made in its mission to support developing countries in their efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and to promote sustainable forest management. The report provides an overview of the Programme's activities and results achieved in 2022, highlighting its contributions to climate action, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

UN-REDD continues to help countries fully realize the mitigation potential of forest solutions to the climate emergency by avoiding carbon emissions and fostering carbon sequestration at levels of at least 5 GtCO2e per year by 2030. Within the scope of this ambition, the UN-REDD results framework for the period 2021-2025 was adopted, aiming to support countries in implementing and enhancing forest solutions to the climate emergency. UN-REDD has sharpened its focus to assist countries in accessing performance-based finance schemes for REDD+ results, including carbon markets (under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement) by supporting them to meet standards of high environmental integrity and to further advance their efforts to deliver results. The results framework aligns UN-REDD with the major international development undertakings in the coming decade as the Paris Agreement enters full implementation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are realized.

In 2022, the world faced a critical juncture in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Sixth Assessment Report, with a warning that global warming is accelerating, and the effects are already irreversible. The 2022 UNEP Emissions Gap Report revealed that the world is on track for a temperature rise of over 2.7 degrees above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, well above the Paris Agreement target of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees. The 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference adopted the Global Biodiversity Framework, which sets ambitious targets for the protection and restoration of biodiversity, including forests, by 2030. The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) delivered a universal definition of Nature-based Solutions. Momentum for forests continued at the World Forestry Congress in Korea, with the European Union's regulation on deforestation-free trade, and finally to the UNFCCC COP27 where governments came together to accelerate action towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and UN-REDD's Making Good on the Glasgow Climate Pact paper was launched.

Against this backdrop, the UN-REDD Programme has continued to play a leading role in ramping up action for forests and nature. The Programme made significant strides in strengthening the technical capacities of partner countries to implement REDD+ activities, mobilizing financial resources for REDD+ initiatives and promoting stakeholder engagement and participation in REDD+ activities.

The Programme continued to expand its impact by working with a growing number of partner countries. UN-REDD has 65 partner countries, including 23 in Africa, 20 in Asia-Pacific, and 22 in Latin America and the Caribbean, providing direct technical assistance and capacity building to 25 countries to helping them to develop and implement national REDD+ strategies and action plans. The Programme also launched several initiatives aimed at promoting the adoption of sustainable land-use practices and reducing emissions from the agriculture and land-use sectors by working closely with partner countries to strengthen their capacities to access and mobilize climate finance, including through the Green Climate Fund and other multilateral funds.

UN-REDD assists partner countries in their efforts to complete the four pillars of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, a requirement for results-based finance. Adopted in 2013, the Warsaw Framework outlines four areas of REDD+ readiness: national REDD+ strategies or action plans (NS/AP), national forest monitoring systems (NFMS), forest reference emissions levels/forest reference levels (FREL/FRL), and Safeguards Information Systems (SIS).

Highlights of support to countries are presented below for each of the four outcomes of the UN-REDD 2021-2025 Results Framework.

Outcome 1. Forest solutions realized. UN-REDD continued to provide technical support to countries to advance the implementation of policies in line with REDD+ strategies, define nesting approaches, develop financing strategies, enhance cost-effectiveness, establish or improve SIS, support social inclusion and multicultural dialogues, decouple agricultural and forestry supply chains from deforestation, enhance monitoring systems, and update and enhance forest reference levels. The Programme also continued to support countries with analysis of available data so they could make an informed decision on whether to submit a proposal to the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) Coalition, as well as with initial ART-TREES gap assessments and support to populate the capacity building and technical assistance needs in their LEAF proposals.

Outcome 2. Forest solutions rewarded. UN-REDD has made progress towards mobilizing $5 billion of results-based financing (RBF) for REDD+ in 10 countries, including Colombia, Costa Rica, DRC, Ecuador, Ghana, Peru, PNG, RoC, Uganda, and Viet Nam. Technical support was provided to these countries for ART-TREES registration documents, which allowed them to access RBF from the LEAF Coalition. Costa Rica and Ecuador have signed memoranda of agreement (MOA) with the LEAF Coalition and are advancing towards signing emissions reductions purchase agreements (ERPAs) with UN-REDD's technical assistance. DRC, PNG, and Uganda have also signed MOUs with the LEAF Coalition. The potential REDD+ RBF for UN-REDD countries looking to benefit from the LEAF Coalition is estimated to be $1 to 1.2 billion from 2022 to 2026. Additionally, UN-REDD provided technical assistance to Uganda to draft a national results-based finance strategy and continued to support Peru in meeting its Joint Declaration of Intent commitments with Norway, allowing Peru to access $10 million of results-based funding through PROFONANPE. A roadmap to access climate finance from voluntary carbon markets in alignment with the NDC has also been prepared for Peru.

Outcome 3. Forest solutions enhanced. UN-REDD has been supporting countries to integrate and enhance LULUCF sector actions relating to REDD+, to increase the ambition in their new or updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Since 2018, UN-REDD has supported more than 25 countries in enhancing the role of forest-related activities into new or updated NDCs, as well as NDC implementation plans. This resulted in several achievements, such as Côte d'Ivoire submitting a revised NDC that mainstreamed forest-based solutions into the NDC's mitigation measures and increased ambition from 28.25 to 30.41 percent. DRC developed an NDC implementation roadmap and aligned the FONAREDD portfolio to LULUCF targets. Ecuador developed a REDD+ sustainability strategy and a national certification scheme for deforestation-free production and trade. Peru developed a roadmap to access climate finance from voluntary carbon markets (VCM) in alignment with the NDC. Viet Nam submitted an updated NDC that includes raising emissions reductions targets from 9 to 15.8 percent (unconditional) and from 27 to 43.5 percent (conditional) across sectors, including LULUCF. But challenges remain in shifting from pledges to action to facilitate both mitigation and adaptation efforts in the forest sector.

Outcome 4. Connecting actors and knowledge for forest solutions. UN-REDD continued work on capturing, managing and disseminating knowledge on how to scale up REDD+ implementation to accelerate climate action. The UN-REDD Executive Board has defined three knowledge management priorities for 2023: REDD+ finance, social inclusion, and the agriculture-forest nexus. A training and dialogue program for Indigenous peoples on climate finance is also being developed for inception during 2023 and implementation in 2023-2024. UN-REDD also focused on global exchanges and trainings in response to partner countries' requests. To support capacity building on social inclusion in REDD+, UN-REDD convened training sessions and dialogues to connect social equity with REDD+

policy and finance, including [a training for Indigenous Peoples on Climate Finance](#) and a training on Climate Finance as a Catalyst for gender equality and women's empowerment in the forest sector. Collective political and societal support for NbS increased through knowledge-based advocacy events, including the launch of the [Making Good on the Glasgow Climate Pact](#) paper at UNFCCC COP27 and UN-REDD participation at the World Forestry Congress.

The Programme continued to support partner countries in integrating gender equality and women's empowerment principles within REDD+ action. The support provided by UN-REDD ranged from integrating gender within REDD+ benefit sharing systems to ensuring women's active and equitable involvement in REDD+ efforts. Examples of this include integrating gender and social inclusion at the operational level of the ENCCRV and the +Bosques project in Chile and integrating gender considerations into ART-TREES compliance documentation in Costa Rica. The Republic of the Congo set a minimum threshold of at least 30 percent for women's participation, which led to an almost 50 percent women's participation rate in a radar imagery training. In Ecuador, 35 percent of local producers who had their capacities strengthened on commercialization of their deforestation-free products were women. UN-REDD also organized an internal seminar on gender to enhance skills and to increase gender mainstreaming efforts. Moreover, the Programme developed a new tool to measure men's and women's participation in workshops, events and trainings, to track the quality and effectiveness of their participation and to assess how often their ideas or proposals are accepted or adopted. Additionally, a new Gender and Forestry Resources Library was created to compile resources related to gender and forestry.

The UN-REDD Programme recognizes the need for greater ambition, collaboration, and innovation in the global effort to address the urgent challenges of climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. Looking ahead, the Programme will ramp up support on REDD+ implementation, the mobilization of finance, and capitalize on the role of forests in achieving net-zero emissions.

Progress towards REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

Achieving forest solutions involves the broadest range of actions from policies and measures to implement REDD+ strategies, to achieve sustainable agriculture and forestry, and to implement safeguards and improve forest monitoring in line with high integrity standards. During 2022, the UN-REDD Programme provided technical support in line with the following demands:

- Supporting diverse measures to advance the implementation of policies in line with REDD+ strategies (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia and Democratic Republic of Congo)
- Advancing the definition of nesting approaches (Perú) as well as carbon markets and related benefit sharing regulations (Papua New Guinea)
- Development of financing strategies (Chile) and design and operation of various funding mechanisms (FONAREDD in Democratic Republic of Congo, IEF in Indonesia and the forest guarantee fund in México)
- Addressing the need to enhance the cost effectiveness of REDD+ measures (Colombia)
- Supporting establishing or improving SIS (Chile, Congo, Peru, Uganda) and preparing SoI's (Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico, Uganda), as well as enabling them to comply with high integrity standards (Vietnam, Uganda) and its application to broader climate policies (Ecuador)
- Supporting social inclusion and multi-cultural dialogues (Perú and Colombia)
- Actions to decouple agricultural and forestry supply chains from deforestation (Colombia, Ecuador, México, Viet Nam)
- Enhancing monitoring systems to expand activities, as well as improving the quality, efficiency and national capacity of monitoring systems (Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, México), with a view to also meet more stringent standards such as TREES (Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Ghana,) as well as Technical Annexes (Democratic Republic of Congo)
- Supporting updates and enhancing of forest reference levels was also provided (Chile, Papua New Guinea)

Forest solutions rewarded

Progress towards achieving the mid-decade target of mobilizing $5 billion of results-based financing (RBF) for future anticipated REDD+ results focused on supporting 10 countries: Colombia, Costa Rica, DRC (the province of Tshuapa), Ecuador, Ghana, Peru, PNG, RoC, Uganda and Viet Nam. These countries received technical support for ART-TREES registration documents, which in most cases[1] was a step towards accessing RBF from the LEAF Coalition. In the case of Costa Rica, the first TREES monitoring report (2017-2019) was also supported and successfully submitted to the ART Secretariat. Furthermore, support was provided to prepare for recruitment of the Validation and Verification Body, as required by ART.

Costa Rica and Ecuador signed memoranda of agreement (MOA) with the LEAF Coalition in 2022 and are now advancing, with UN-REDD technical assistance, towards signing of emissions reductions purchase agreements (ERPAs). DRC, PNG and Uganda have also each signed a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the LEAF Coalition. Total potential REDD+ RBF, 2022-2026, for UN-REDD countries looking to benefit from the LEAF Coalition, is $1 -1.2 billion[2].

In addition to the technical assistance provided to potential LEAF suppliers, support was provided to Uganda to draft a national results-based finance strategy aimed at examining existing and evolving results-based payment schemes. This strategy explores key issues for Uganda in accessing these

---

[1] All countries listed, except Colombia and Peru.
[2] DRC – $ 250-300 million, Ecuador – $60 million, Ghana – $30-80 million, PNG – $470 million, Uganda – $20-110 million, Viet Nam – $120 million

schemes and maximizing revenues for forest and land-use mitigation actions. Following on from the registration document for ART-TREES, UN-REDD continued to support Peru in meeting its Joint Declaration of Intent commitments with Norway. This has contributed to Peru being able to access results-based funding: $10 million through PROFONANPE (the Peruvian Trust Fund for National Parks and Protected Areas) to continue supporting Peru with its efforts to halt deforestation. A roadmap to accessing climate finance from voluntary carbon markets (VCM), in alignment with the NDC, has also been prepared for Peru.

Forest solutions enhanced

The UN-REDD Programme has been supporting tropical forest countries in integrating and enhancing LULUCF sector actions related to REDD+ to increase the ambition in their new or updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and to shift towards translating ambition into action in terms of NDC implementation. This includes support for the inclusion of enhanced or new targets or commitments including or relevant to the forest sector, improvements in institutional coordination to support submissions of new or updated NDCs, as well as securing finance to implement enhanced NDC mitigation actions in the forest sector.

According to the UNFCCC Synthesis Report in 2022, 85 percent of "second generation" NDCs include the LULUCF sector, compared to just 73 percent of previous NDCs. To notable extent, this is the result of support from UN-REDD and the UN Climate Promise initiative. While 81 percent of NDCs refer to specific mitigation options in the LULUCF sector, a smaller proportion of new or updated NDCs (43 percent) include a quantitative mitigation target for LULUCF. Furthermore, 31 percent include explicit reference to reducing deforestation, including efforts to implement REDD+. In summary, since 2018, UN-REDD has provided technical assistance to more than 25 countries in enhancing the role of forest-related activities into new or updated NDCs, as well as NDC implementation plans. This has complemented other ongoing efforts, such as UNDP's Climate Promise, where some 53 countries have requested LULUCF-related support.

In addition, in 2022, UN-REDD supported more than 10 countries (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Ghana, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Viet Nam and Zambia) in accessing finance and developing work plans to enhance forest sector components of their NDCs, while also integrating gender and social inclusion considerations. The following new and/or strengthened policy measures were achieved with UN-REDD support:

- Côte d'Ivoire submitted a revised NDC in March, 2022, mainstreaming Forest-based Solutions into NDC's mitigation measures. The revised NDC increases ambition from 28.25 percent to 30.41 percent, with due consideration to Forest-based Solutions and other mitigation measures.
- DRC developed an NDC implementation roadmap and undertook an exercise to align the FONAREDD portfolio and its revision to LULUCF targets, especially in regard to the land-use sector.
- Ecuador developed a REDD+ sustainability strategy, as well as a national certification scheme for deforestation-free production and trade; this includes international finance, private sector engagement and green credit lines for REDD+ compliant rural and territorial development.
- In Peru, a roadmap was developed to access climate finance from voluntary carbon markets (VCM), in alignment with the NDC. The roadmap aims to integrate different initiatives under MINAM.
- Viet Nam submitted an updated NDC in November, 2022, which, notably, includes raising emissions reductions targets from 9 to 15.8 percent (unconditional) and from 27 to 43.5percent (conditional) across sectors, including LULUCF. In parallel to the process to update the NDC, UN-REDD facilitated discussions with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), which oversees the NDC, and VNFOREST to identify opportunities to finance the implementation of its NDC targets through, among other things, international cooperative approaches under Article 6.

While progress is being made, as the country examples above demonstrate, it is clear that many countries face challenges shifting from pledges to action to ensure that the LULUCF sector, and specifically REDD+, are fully leveraged towards implementation of the NDC and to facilitate both mitigation and adaptation efforts in the forest sector. This points to the value of ongoing support through UN-REDD to strengthen the linkages between NDCs and REDD+ for the forest sector.

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN-REDD Programme supports the SDGs agenda in a wide and integrated way. Analysis of the country results, presented in the following section, shows that UN-REDD technical assistance is supporting countries and stakeholders with the realization of at least seven different SDGs.

UN-REDD technical assistance, policy advice and knowledge management serve countries to advance SDG targets under SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 15 (forest conservation & sustainable management), among others. Hence the recognition of UN-REDD as the UN platform for forest solutions to the climate emergency.

UN-REDD assists countries in integrating forest- and land-based climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning (SDG 13.2), improving stakeholder and institutional capacities on climate change mitigation planning and actions (SDGs 13.3 & 13/b) and helping mobilize international climate finance at scale and enabling countries in accessing the Green Climate Fund (SDG 13/a). UN-REDD also promotes the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of forests across the world, aiming ultimately at halting deforestation (SDGs 15.1 & 15.2) while mobilizing investments and economic incentives to finance sustainable forest management (SDG 15/b).

Yet, UN-REDD also serves SDG 5 (gender equality) with equal intensity by systematically promoting the full and effective participation of women in decision-making (SDG 5.5), as well as women's equal rights to land and natural resources (SDG 5/a). Internal UN-REDD gender mainstreaming tools and policies underpin such efforts across the portfolio. The UN-REDD Programme also supports SDG 16 (inclusive institutions and societies) by supporting the participation of Indigenous peoples, forest communities and civil society organizations in national policies and financing schemes for forest governance and climate action (SDG 16.7 & 16.10), as well as by empowering developing countries to participate and inform international climate governance institutions and negotiations (SDG 16.8).

UN-REDD also promotes SDG 12 (sustainable trade) by promoting policies and partnerships for deforestation-free commodity chains, encouraging countries and companies to adopt and monitor sustainable production and trade practices (SDG 12.6). UN-REDD also contributes to SDG 1 (fighting poverty) by promoting equal rights to forest lands and resources, notably with regards to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (SDG 1.4), as well as by mobilizing international climate finance towards developing countries engaged in forest conservation with local communities that are custodians of such forests (SDG 1/a).

Finally, UN-REDD is a prominent force in SDG 17 (partnerships for sustainable development) by stimulating a wide and rich diversity of collaborative arrangements and schemes, including multi-stakeholder policy platforms, institutional alliances, and public-private partnerships for forest conservation and climate action. UN-REDD helps developing countries mobilize and combine financial resources from multiple partners for national sustainability endeavours (SDG 17.3). UN-REDD also helps with the scoping and building of public-private partnerships for forest solutions to the climate emergency (SDG 17.17).

Furthermore, UN-REDD promotes the generation and sharing of knowledge on forest solutions across countries and stakeholders, including through South-South cooperation (SDG 17.6 & 17.16). UN-REDD equally builds capacities in developing countries to support national climate plans towards implementing the SDGs (SDG 17.9), along with enhancing policy and stakeholder coherence for sustainable development, notably through NDC design, implementation, atowardnd enhancement (SDG 17.14).

Country results

Argentina

On track	Delayed
	X

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

During 2022, Argentina launched implementation of the GCF's Results-based Payment project, designed to enhance and scale up implementation of national policy on forests and climate change, including the law for the conservation of native forests and the country's NDC. UN-REDD technical assistance complemented support related to enabling activities and ensuring synergies with broader REDD+ efforts. For instance, initial inputs for strengthening the SIS and for updating the summary of safeguards information have been provided, including related to strengthening links to information generated through the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Results-based Payments (RBPs) project.

Forest solutions rewarded

As a significant milestone in its national REDD+ process, Argentina submitted its second REDD+ Technical Annex in 2022, with results for the years 2017-2018 for a total of 109 MtCO2e.

Dialogues were held with the Government of Argentina on partnerships and innovative approaches to access high environmental and social integrity climate finance, including the review of work and approaches on digital Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV). Discussions occurred with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAyDS) on further opportunities for accessing REDD+ climate financing, including through ART-TREES. The full assessment of carbon finance options is anticipated to take place in 2023.

Challenges and solutions

Political changes in Argentina have affected the definition of some priority areas for REDD+, including opportunities for forest and climate finance and the definition of legal aspects related to carbon and market access. Initial discussions have begun, and it is expected there will be further definition of priority areas for TA support for 2023.

During the inception phase of the RBP project, technical personnel in MAyDS dedicated a bulk of their attention to the development of implementation arrangements. Synergies and cross-fertilization with the UN-REDD TA were identified towards safeguards, monitoring and reporting, with joint work expected to advance in 2023.

For safeguards work, the main focal points have been part of the RBPs project. As that project has started implementation, there have been other priorities for safeguards staff related to the development of safeguards analyses for the project, among other things. It is expected that with project implementation beginning, there will be more of a focus on safeguards monitoring and reporting, which the TA will continue to support in 2023.

Gender and social inclusion

The GCF Argentina's Results-based Programme produced a gender action plan in 2020. As part of this work, a dedicated support stream for women's enterprises in native forests was launched. The UN-

REDD programme is expected to support refining the action plan and opportunities for broader mainstreaming in 2023. The advisory committees for the payment for results project were formed in 17 provinces. Women's participation has been enhanced over time, with participation rates in initial meetings at 24 percent, and 43 percent in subsequent meetings.

Partnerships

MAyDS is leading, in conjunction with FAO as the accredited entity and technical agency, the implementation of the GCF REDD+ RBP project, recognizing Argentina's REDD+ results for the years 2014 and 2016, worth of $82 million. The REDD+ RBP is not a stand-alone project, but it is fully framed within Argentina's Forest Law as an active element of the country's forestry agenda implementation.

It helps Argentina as it advances its Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement targets, while promoting territorial forest management and forest restoration, enhancing and upscaling forest-friendly livestock management, the sustainable use of wood and non-wood forest products, and the improvement of prevention and early response to forest fires. UN-REDD leverages the established, solid partnership with the project, including various aspects of gender, safeguards, climate finance, emerging standards and high environmental integrity.

Linkages to SDGs

UN-REDD´s TA contributes directly to SDGs 13 and 15.

Chile

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

Chile continues to lead on ambitious climate action, particularly in implementing the UNFCCC framework for REDD+. During the second half of 2022, Chile started the full implementation of its National Strategy for Climate Change and Vegetation Resources (ENCCRV) and its Benefit Sharing System (SDB in Spanish), led by the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) through the National Forest Corporation (CONAF) and with the support of Chile's RBP GCF Project, +Bosques. Through the +Bosques project, the ENCCRV approved 394 applications to implement REDD+ measures of action in 4,600 hectares from 2023 to 2024. Lessons learned from early implementation of the SDB, and the need to leverage further finance to guarantee the full implementation of the ENCCRV, underscore the importance of Chile undertaking a systematic analysis to update the financial strategy for the ENCCRV. This would allow the country to maximize its funding opportunities for a cost-effective, cost-efficient and sustainable implementation, with an increased role for the private sector.

During the last quarter of 2022, UN-REDD supported the development of a methodological framework, and an annotated outline, for the design of a fit-for-purpose finance strategy for Chile, conceived to facilitate access to a diversity of sources of financing.

During 2022, CONAF developed an updated FREL/FRL for the period 2001-2013, which includes a series of improvements, particularly in terms of geographical scope, moving from six to 12 regions, and covering 99.9 percent of the forest coverage at the national level. UN-REDD support included the revision and technical backstopping in the preparation of the proposed FREL/FRL, for submission to

the UNFCCC in January, 2023 for Technical Assessment during the first trimester of 2023. As part of continuous improvements to monitor four REDD+ activities, further UN-REDD support was deployed to prepare a plan to build national capacities on the estimation of uncertainty and the application of the Montecarlo method, a technique in which a large quantity of randomly generated numbers are studied using a [probabilistic](#) model to find an approximate solution to a numerical problem that would be difficult to solve by other methods, and for the development of a dedicated tool for CONAF´s use, which will be delivered in 2023, in preparation for the FREL/FRL technical assessment session with the UNFCCC.

The implementation of the ENCCRV is supported by an operational Monitoring and Measuring System, which includes the SIS. During 2022, UN-REDD reviewed and provided technical backstopping for the development of improvements in the SIS, including facilitating dialogues with CONAF to identify lessons learned and challenges for the improvement of the SIS, including the collection and aggregation of information on safeguards' implementation at multiple scales, including under the +Bosques project. Moreover, UN-REDD provided technical backstopping and feedback for the preparation of Chile's Second Summary of Information on Safeguards, to be completed and submitted to the UNFCCC in 2023.

Forest solutions rewarded

During 2022, UN-REDD support included legal assistance to CONAF regarding clarification of carbon rights. As part of the feasibility analysis for Chile to comply with the requirements of the ART-TREES standard regarding the ownership of emissions reductions, Chile completed a draft analysis, "*Challenges and opportunities related to the regulatory framework for reduced emissions titling.*" This draft analysis complements efforts initiated in 2021 under the UN-REDD National Programme and has two objectives: i) to describe the status quo of Chilean legislation and elements associated with its interpretation and existing arrangements related to carbon rights, in light of relevant international schemes and standards; and (ii) to identify challenges and opportunities as the country moves forward in seeking legal solutions to clarify carbon rights and benefits associated with these rights. Additionally, as part of the activities carried out in 2022, this analysis assessed the possible implications of the draft of the new constitution, subject to a plebiscite held in September, 2022. While the plebiscite eventually rejected the new proposed constitution, a new constitutional process has been launched and with a new plebiscite to be held in November, 2023.

In relation to the development of a TREES concept to be submitted by Chile to the ART Secretariat, CONAF reiterated during 2022 the need to prioritize the work on a nesting approach for REDD+ projects under the ENCCRV and a supporting finance strategy before moving on to the preparation of a TREES concept. CONAF noted the remaining need to develop a better understanding of the technical and legal implications of the standard before making a decision to pursue an ER programme registration, which will be further supported in 2023.

Forest solutions enhanced

CONAF has been building institutional capacities under its NFMS to measure emissions reductions at both the project and small-scale, property level, to determine individual and private contributions to the implementation of the ENCCRV and its NDC, with a focus on beneficiaries of the ENCCRV/SDB. Similarly, the operation of the NFMS and MRV process has progressed, including the development of an updated FREL/FRL. The UN-REDD's 2023 planning efforts have facilitated strategic discussions with CONAF in relation to the need for the definition of regulations and/or institutional arrangements that facilitate the operation of a nesting approach, complemented by a conceptual/methodological framework for the integration of multiple ER accounting scales and approaches. As a result of these discussions, the TA 2023 was defined as the development of standard operational procedures at the normative and technical level. The operationalization of a nesting approach aims to maximize funding

opportunities and provide the basis for enhancing environmental integrity, while contributing to the achievement of NDC objectives.

Challenges and solutions

On March 11, 2022, Chile's new President assumed office. This was followed by a transition process for CONAF while the TA 2022 workplan was being defined. Transition processes can typically lead to programmatic delays, and in this case, there were minor delays during the first half of 2022. However, a hybrid country mission in June, 2022 provided the space to fine-tune the workplan and identify, in detail, activities towards agreed deliverables and milestones at the output level. Moreover, during this hybrid country mission, Chile underscored the importance of having the necessary inputs to develop a financial strategy to access REDD+ and other forest carbon financing, including the improvement and consolidation of their safeguard and MRV system. Since this mission, regular coordination between thematic focal points, and between CONAF and UN-REDD at a more strategic level, have facilitated smooth progress for activities and revised milestones for the 2022 period, including the agreement of a detailed 2023 workplan.

Gender and social inclusion

Gender and social inclusion have been promoted as part of the TA for 2022, consistent with CONAF´s efforts to mainstream gender equity and social inclusion during the implementation of the ENCCRV. Early implementation of the SDB is underpinned by gender and social variables, which are part of the technical criterion for the evaluation and prioritization of applications for the implementation of REDD+ measures for actions on the ground. Similarly, gender and social inclusion have been streamlined at the operational level of the ENCCRV and the +Bosques project, including both in the design of projects under the SDB, through inclusive and participatory processes (including FPIC, when appropriate), and by building local and regional capacities at the institutional level. Furthermore, at a management and decision-making level, CONAF is promoting gender and social inclusion across its governance structures for REDD+, including gender and IPs representatives as observers in the +Bosques Steering Committee, as well as members of regional REDD+ groups to support the operation of the SDB. All of these will provide valuable lessons from the ENCCRV implementation in 2022, allowing a strengthened gender sensitive approach in the ENCCRV. Further UN-REDD support will be deployed in 2023 to update a gender gap assessment as part of further improvements on the SIS, and in relation to ART-TREES safeguards indicators.

Although the forestry sector is traditionally male-led in Chile, it is worth noting gender mainstreaming efforts promoted through the REDD+ national process, including via UN-REDD, led to greater gender parity on CONAF's REDD+ management and technical team, which is largely composed of women. This is part of larger efforts working to achieve gender equity in the sector.

Partnerships

CONAF is currently leading the full implementation of the ENCCRV through blended finance, including domestic resources and through the reinvestment of REDD+ results-based finance secured by Chile through a wide array of sources, including the GCF RBP pilot programme, which provides roughly $64 million for results achieved from 2014 to 2016. The +Bosque Project, implemented by CONAF in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as a GCF accredited entity and technical agency, is a strategic partner for UN-REDD´s technical assistance in Chile that provides financial and operational supports for the implementation of the SDB, as well as the operation of technical efforts under the REDD+ framework, including forest monitoring, MRV and safeguards implementation and monitoring. Moreover, lessons learned from the implementation of the SDB will play a key role in defining the REDD+ nesting framework for Chile and a finance strategy for the ENCCRV, to be supported by UN-REDD in 2023.

As a result of the implementation of the ENCCRV and its SDB, progress under UN-REDD´s TA contributes directly to SDGs 13 and 15, and indirectly to SDGs 5, 6, 8, 12 and 16.

Colombia

On track	Delayed
	x

REDD+ implementation

In December, 2021, Colombia enacted a [Climate Action Law](#), which reaffirmed Colombia's goal of reducing deforestation by 51 percent by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. This includes reaching net zero deforestation by 2030. The law mandates key REDD+ policies and incentives and directs 50 percent of the carbon tax funds towards efforts to halt deforestation. In addition, the law promotes the involvement of the private sector in mitigation actions, including through zero-deforestation agreements, public-private partnerships, and carbon markets. The general election process led to a change in government in Colombia, and thus a process of elaboration of new government priorities began. The foundation document for the [2022-2026 National Development Plan (NDP)](#) proposes a renewed emphasis on total peace and key transformations that will have important implications on forests and climate change, such as land planning, community rights and sustainable rural development. In this context, support from the program focused on the consolidation of key areas, as well as on providing inputs to facilitate the transition.

Forest solutions realized

The new government is proposing a plan to halt deforestation building on REDD+ strategy in nine active hotspots and promoting sustainable forest management. In addition, the fire prevention and management and forest restoration plans will be updated and implemented. In terms of climate change, the foundations of the NDP propose a review of the implementation plan to meet the country's NDC. It also establishes forest protection as one of the pillars. A number of policy instruments and incentives are also included in law, which includes provisions to transition to deforestation-free agriculture, minimizing risks of livestock impacts on forests, and conservation agreements to stabilize the agriculture frontier.

UN-REDD continued to provide technical advice to expand the scope of the monitoring system. The main topics supported were restoration monitoring and sustainability of the forests monitoring system. An evaluation of the efficiency of conservation agreement (CA) actions and community forestry (CF) projects and initiatives was developed within the framework of the project. The results were positive, and recommendations for improvement were submitted to MinAmbiente.

With UN-REDD support, including via knowledge management, a stream of work on deforestation-free production and trade was initiated based on lessons from similar pioneer work in neighboring Ecuador. This paved the way for a broader engagement in 2023, including the potential expansion into Colombia of the *UNDP-Lavazza Partnership for Deforestation Free Coffee,* which is developing and testing policy-based, pilot schemes for production, certification and trade of deforestation-free commodities, engaging international companies along the way, and connecting them with farmer cooperatives on the ground.

Forest solutions rewarded

A key milestone for the country was the launch of the GCF Visión Amazonía "Payment for Results REDD+ Colombia 2015-2016" project. The project will be executed by FAO, in close coordination with MinAmbiente, the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) and Indigenous and peasant communities of the Colombian Amazon. This will accelerate actions in the pillars of forest economy and governance in Indigenous territories of the Amazon Vision Program, in the departments of Amazonas, Caquetá, Guainía, Guaviare, Putumayo and Vaupés.

In relation to carbon markets, legal provisions also incorporate registration requirements for projects and initiatives, including those aspiring to receive payments for results. As part of the efforts to maximize the potential of carbon markets, the law established a commission for the study of carbon markets in Colombia, which will release recommendations for the regulation and administration of such markets.

As a result of multi-stakeholder dialogues, the need to assess the implementation of the National Strategy and CONPES 4021 on deforestation control was identified, as well as a need to design a participation and communication plan that allows for the strengthening of institutional coordination. This will guarantee access to information on REDD+ and carbon markets, and continue strengthening the management, regulation and control instruments that allow results based on the greatest environmental and socio-cultural integrity.

Forest solutions enhanced

In the framework of the implementation of Colombia's REDD+ RBP project, FAO has facilitated two discussion spaces between Colombia's national government and the [Mesa Regional Amazónica (MRA)](#) as a guarantee of due process of Prior Consultation to [Programa Visión Amazonía](#). In this context, FAO has provided information related to its Indigenous Peoples Policy and its guidelines for FPIC.

As part of the efforts to create policy pathways for forest conservation, 46 conservation agreements were evaluated, representing 573,619 hectares under agreements with 43,788 active participants. In addition, eighteen community forestry projects were also assessed and evaluated, resulting in recommendations for the design, monitoring and evaluation of CA and CF programs and projects in Colombia.

Challenges and solutions

With each change of government, there is the challenge of maintaining long-term efforts adapting to national priorities. UN-REDD contributed to this process by providing information and relevant knowledge, anchoring its support around implementation of the Comprehensive Strategy for the Control of Deforestation and Forest Management (EICDGB) of the new National Development Plan. To this end, UN-REDD promoted spaces for training and dialogue at a technical and political level, aiming to improve coordination within the Ministry of the Environment and other responsible entities, as well as a more significant appropriation of the national strategy in the forestry tables, the nodes of climate change, and the instances of participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities.

The emerging conflicts around voluntary markets show the need to strengthen the National Registry of Remissions (RENARE) and its relationship with the regulations of the safeguards, as well as to develop capacities for the nesting of REDD+ actions, considering the roles of the different actors that come together in the territories that must work together to transform the causes of deforestation and forest degradation.

Gender and social inclusion

UN-REDD continued to support the Permanent Bureau for Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples, which comprised three major policy areas: biodiversity & climate, indigenous territories & peace, and autonomy and governance. This support included information sharing, capacity building, dialogue facilitation and promoting gender equality. The flagship event took place on August 9, 2022, within the framework of the commemoration of the international day of Indigenous peoples. UN-REDD facilitated a high-level dialogue between seven national Indigenous organizations, the President of Colombia and various ministers, as well as representatives of the United Nations. This space reinvigorated the dialogue process.

UN-REDD continued to support the environmental agenda with Indigenous peoples at the national level and the information and consultation processes of the National Development Plan, the Amazon Vision Program and the regulation of Payment for Environmental Services in Indigenous territories.

Partnerships

Colombia MADS is implementing, together with FAO as AE and technical agency, the REDD+ RBP project recognising results for the years 2015-2016. This project was granted by the GCF for a total of $28.2 million. The project, currently in full implementation, is strengthening national and local capacities to monitor and control deforestation, while enhancing sustainable management of forest areas, territorial governance and capacities of Indigenous peoples to manage and preserve forests. UN-REDD technical assistance is leveraging the established and important partnership with the project.

UNDP has implemented a partnership with the Territory Renewal Agency (ART) and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS) for the NaturalPaz(Naturaleza para la Paz) project, which aims to contribute to the construction of sustained peace and prevent new socio-environmental conflicts through investments in green businesses that contribute to climate action, strengthening the capacities of rural communities settled in sites of high biological and cultural diversity. Through the UN-REDD TA, the project is expected to collect the intervention models and lessons learned from REDD+ initiatives in communities with public and private stakeholders.

The Climate Promise Initiative, implemented by UNDP, has begun a second phase, financed by the UK's Ministry of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), to strengthen and accelerate the implementation of Colombia's NDC. Together with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon (OPIAC) and the National Commission of Indigenous Women (CNMI), an open call for proposals has been launched to support and finance Indigenous actions that contribute to the implementation of the country's climate and environmental agreements, focusing on the most vulnerable and excluded territories and populations.

Linkages to SDGs

The SDGs directly related to the control of deforestation and sustainable forest management are: SDG 1, 2, 13 and 15.

Congo (Republic of)

On track	Delayed
X	

The Republic of Congo continues to work towards reducing emissions caused by deforestation. The country is committed to implementing concrete actions aligned with its national REDD+ strategy and national development plan through the development of programmes, projects and initiatives under the GCF, the Central African Forest Initiative [CAFI], the World Bank – Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance (LEAF) initiative, and ART-TREES.

Legislation recently passed in 2020, the Forest Code of the Republic of Congo, recognizes REDD+ as a valuable forest management approach. Moreover, the country recognizes the need to continuously improve the current system to attract climate finance, and in turn, truly benefit Indigenous people and local communities.

In 2022, the UN-REDD programme provided technical support to the country to update its Forest Reference Emissions Levels (FREL), and for the development of the SOI and gap analysis to improve access by Indigenous people and local communities to climate finance and benefits.

Forest solutions realized

Most of the activity data, obtained using radar imagery and required for the FREL update, are available. However, additional work is planned to improve other parameters such as emissions factors, adjustments and degradation through separate technical assistance provided by the SYNA-MNV programme in 2023. This project is being implemented in partnership with the National Centre for Forest and Fauna Inventory (CNIAF) Measurement, Notification, Verification (MNV) unit.

The development of the SIS is ongoing. The information requirements, information providers, and overall structure of the safeguard summary of information (SoI) have been defined. The document, to be developed in 2023, will present the main advances in safeguards processes and report on the country's approach to building its SIS. UN-REDD technical assistance will support the country in developing and submitting its first SoI. This process will involve key REDD+ stakeholders and will build on previous experiences and learnings to promote an inclusive and gender responsive process emphasizing the need to actively involve women and other marginalized stakeholders.

During 2022, the findings of a gap analysis of the Republic of Congo's safeguard system in relation to the ART-TREES requirements were incorporated into the country's LEAF submission.

Forest solutions rewarded

As the market for 2018-2019 vintages of High Forest, Low Deforestation (HFLD) carbon credits is uncertain, after exchanges with the government, the formulation of the ART-TREES 2.0 concept note was postponed to 2023. Registration under ART-TREES is a demanding process, especially meeting requirements related to safeguards, benefit sharing, carbon rights and country engagement. These aspects will be supported through the 2023 UN-REDD technical assistance.

Existing financial and benefits transfer mechanisms at several levels, as well as the legal, political, and strategic frameworks related to community and tenure rights, were examined in collaboration with the REDD+ national coordination and key REDD+ stakeholders. The analysis, summarizing the positioning of the Republic of Congo to meet its commitment under the Glasgow Declaration (UNFCCC COP 26), recognizes several critical key legal and governance issues that must be addressed to ensure Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) benefit from REDD+ finance. The analysis highlights that despite various efforts to reform the legal and policy framework, there remain gaps in implementation in terms of the engagement of IPLCs in development of the benefit sharing

mechanism, in obtaining forest tenure rights, especially for women, and in accessing an operational grievance mechanism. Respect for REDD+ safeguards should be further improved to enhance the country's eligibility for REDD+ climate finance. The technical brief, aimed particularly at REDD+ policymakers, has been published in French and will be officially launched in early 2023.

Challenges and solutions

In 2022, national REDD+ coordination faced major issues with regards to staff capacity, including high turnover of REDD+ national coordination staff, resulting in limited responsiveness. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to create major challenges, hampering delivery of technical assistance, including the total prevention of missions to the country. Thus, the UN-REDD Programme mostly used digital tools and remote modalities for the implementation of the workplan, including for trainings and workshops.

The country made some progress with access to carbon finance, such as the FREL update, progress on an ART-TREES submission and the submission of a LEAF concept note, though the biennial updated report (BUR) was not submitted on time due to a lack of available human resources and activities of the MNV and National Coordination REDD+ cells. To overcome institutional struggles, the agreement with the ministry was reworked, and remains open and available to suggestions for implementation.

Gender and social inclusion

Gender equality has been strongly emphasised during UN-REDD activities carried out in 2022, and in particular, gender has been integrated into the design of new REDD+ projects. For example, gender expertise was provided by UN-REDD in the formulation of a new GCF project, PREFOREST, that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests. The project implementation is guided by a comprehensive Gender Action Plan (GAP) integrating gender tools developed by the UN-REDD Programme. The project's Gender Action Plan (GAP) sets ambitious and measurable goals to support rural women as they work to obtain secure tenure rights, engage in forest enterprises, tree nursery management and agroforestry, and gain access to financial credit.

Gender equality was also strongly encouraged during activities carried out in 2022, including the radar imagery training in partnership with USFS that achieved almost 50 percent women's participation. A minimum threshold of at least 30 percent women's participation has been set for all activities.

Partnerships

UN-REDD supported major REDD+ projects, such as PREFOREST (Project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in five departments in the Republic of Congo) and PROREP (Strengthening sustainable wood energy potential projects), demonstrating a high level of collaboration between different stakeholders. The technical committee of REDD+ projects, such as the SYNA-MNV programme, is inclusive. For the SYNA-MNV programme, its technical committee is composed of different collaborators, such as the implementing agencies involved in Component 2 of the land use planning project led by the French Development Agency, as well as the Emissions Reductions Programme in Sangha-Likouala.

Several training sessions will take place within the framework of these projects and programmes, including UN-REDD programme activities, involving technicians from different ministries, such as Environment, Planning, Territorial Equipment and Works, as well as academics.

The SIS is at the heart of this participatory mechanism, with its design involving different REDD+ stakeholders. Future steps to strengthen the SIS will be socially inclusive and will include stakeholder inputs. In addition, following a UNDP gap analysis of the safeguards system for ART-TREES 2.0

requirements, a targeted engagement and data collection process will engage key information providers through bilateral discussions, focus group discussions and broader consultations.

The continued development of the NFMS, and the progress towards the SIS relate to SDG 13 and 15. Through the implementation of REDD+ projects, namely the PROREP and PREFOREST projects, the Republic of Congo will advance specifically on SDG 15.3.1, amongst other SDG indicators, in the coming years.

Costa Rica

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

Continued planning and discussions have taken place with the REDD+ Secretariat at FONAFIFO on updating the baseline and several layers for the co-benefits monitoring report to be prepared as part of their annual reporting to the Carbon Fund. Different options for preparing a new biodiversity baseline and other layers were scoped and mapped and will be finalized in early 2023.

Forest solutions rewarded

Significant progress has been made supporting Costa Rica in meeting the TREES requirements to achieve certification under the standard. During 2022, the following documents were developed and submitted to the ART Secretariat: (i) TREES Registration document (2017-2021), (ii) the first TREES Monitoring report (2017-2019), and (iii) two variance requests. The ART Secretariat cleared these documents in October, 2022. Legal and technical advice was provided to ensure Costa Rica could activate a Registry account. Also, the Validation and Verification Body, Aster Global, was selected in the platform and had to complete the conflict-of-interest disclosure forms. The inception meeting of the verification process is expected to take place in early 2023.

Technical assistance has also been provided to the government to assess the draft ERPA contract proposed by Emergent for the Costa Rica submission. This assessment included an analysis of the ERPA process, the document's structure, issues identified (including elements on safeguards), and recommendations. Moreover, discussions were supported at the technical and political levels on the use of proceeds and the arrangements for a financial intermediary, as required by the ERPA. During 2022, Costa Rica nominated a national entity, FUNBAM (Environmental Bank Foundation), as the potential Financial Intermediary for REDD+ results from 2017. Costa Rica initiated negotiations directly with Emergent to sign a Financial Intermediary agreement between FUNBAM and Emergent.

UN-REDD also assisted Costa Rica with some bilateral and multilateral knowledge and policy exchanges that addressed national issues with REDD+ performance finance and LEAF access.

In addition, a concept note was developed to organize an exchange of experiences among countries on carbon ownership, to be led by Costa Rica and supported by UN-REDD. In light of the legal requirements recently established in carbon schemes, whether in the context of carbon markets (ART-TREES, VCS JNR) or Results-based Payments (RBP) schemes (GCF, FCPF), a country legal report for Costa Rica has been produced, analyzing the challenges and opportunities related to the definition

and transfer of carbon rights in the context of REDD+. The report is part of a series of 27 reports produced by the White&Case law firm on a pro bono basis in collaboration with FAO and UN-REDD.

Although a rights-based approach is necessary, certain countries that have enacted a devolution of carbon rights to the programme entity at the national scale by signing individual contracts with landowners face challenges due to the lack of human and financial capacities and high transaction costs, and have expressed concerns in this regard. This is the case in Costa Rica. It is expected that a follow-up discussion will take place in 2023 to better understand if alternative solutions are available, and what type of legal action is required.

Forest solutions enhanced

In the context of the GCF REDD+ Results-based Payment project approved in October, 2020, a second disbursement of $13.3 million was successfully channelled to support the National Payment for Environmental Services Programme. This represents a total of $37 million disbursed to FONAFIFO and the National Forest Fire Prevention and Management Programme since 2021. This equals nearly 75 percent of the total project cost. This detailed second technical verification process included extensive desk reviews and field visits using robust statistical methods. This process concluded the following results in 2022:

156,464 hectares under forest protection active contracts within the PES Program, of which:
- 56,055 hectares (35 percent) are in districts with a Very Low Social Development Index (SDI)
- 29,972 hectares (19 percent) are under contracts formalized with women owners or co-owners of properties
- 2819 hectares (1.8 percent) belong to young owners, and
- 32,643 hectares (20 percent) belong to smallholders in properties with contracts of less than 50 hectares

9,635.5 hectares under natural regeneration active contracts within the PES Program benefiting 900 forest landowners. These contracts include:
- 2,251 hectares (23.3 percent) are in districts with a Very Low Social Development Index (SDI)
- 699 hectares (7.2 percent) are under contracts formalized with women owners or co-owners of properties
- 145 hectares (1.5 percent) belong to young owners, and
- 1865 hectares (19.3 percent) belong to smallholders in properties with contracts of less than 50 hectares

95 percent of the Indigenous territories have interest letters confirming their participation in the free, prior, informed, and consent process to build a Forest and Territorial Environmental Plan to access climate finance resources benefiting 12,000 people in 16 Indigenous territories. This is a prerequisite underpinned by an exclusion criteria indicator under the PBPA that ensures compliance with social safeguards and Indigenous rights. The results from those territories are:
- 42,289 hectares in Indigenous territories were under forest protection active contracts within the PES Program
- 880 hectares in Indigenous territories were under natural regeneration active contracts within the PES Program
- 485,202 trees in Indigenous territories are under active agroforestry systems contracts

Challenges and solutions

The biggest challenge that Costa Rica is facing is the long and sometimes patchy process of negotiation with Emergent to sign an agreement with FUNBAM as a Financial Intermediary, as well as to sign an

ERPA. This has endangered the sale of the 2017 REDD+ results, which are not attractive to corporate buyers looking for results obtained after 2020.

Another challenge has been securing the start of the validation and verification process by Aster Global, the only company approved by the ART Secretariat for this required process. Even though the company was already hired in 2021, when the TREES registration and monitoring document were uploaded to the ART registry, the company has not made itself available to start the process anytime during 2022. Meanwhile, UN-REDD provided support to prepare all the relevant national agencies and stakeholders involved in the verification process, aligning their agendas. An inception mission may be feasible for the beginning of 2023. Yet, in essence, the lack of variety and competition in terms of companies accredited to conduct the validation and verification jeopardises the country's efforts and access to performance finance.

Finally, two variance requests had to be negotiated and submitted to the ART Secretariat for the approval by the ART Board. These variance requests were related to: (i) addressing the technical limitations of the current national data and system for the development of land use and land use change (LULUC) maps, which means that it is not feasible to accurately stratify between commercial forests and natural forests, as required by ART-TREES; (ii) a variance to submit the 2020-2021 Monitoring Report in 2023. Accordingly, technical support was provided to Costa Rica, including support to evaluate the viability of different technical approaches for such a variance, draft text for several iterations of the variance request submission, and facilitate a process of informal engagement, technical guidance and questions and answers between Costa Rica and the ART Secretariat on the proposed variances, which were ultimately approved.

Gender and social inclusion

Despite some gender guidance gaps in the ART-TREES standard, Costa Rica proactively integrated explicit gender considerations in their TREES registration document and the monitoring under the safeguards section.

The process for LEAF is anchored in a solid and systematic mechanism of social inclusion and engagement of Indigenous peoples developed since the origins of the REDD+ strategy in Costa Rica. Since 2008, FONAFIFO has held a continuous dialogue platform with leaders of the 24 Indigenous territories of Costa Rica. In 2011, the national consultation process for REDD+ began, which included three stages: information (2011-2014), early consultation (2014-2017), and in-depth strategic consultation, all of which underpins the TREES compliance process and the pathway for LEAF engagement.

Currently, there is a national process of preparation for the Forest and Territorial Environmental Plan (PAFT). The PAFTs are vehicles to address the risks identified in the activities implemented in the National REDD+ Strategy, including the participation of Indigenous territories under the PES Programme. The PAFTs will establish how Indigenous peoples implement the actions identified as priorities within the Indigenous territory, the benefit sharing of the climate resources, and the transparency and accountability of these resources. Costa Rica is also using this national process of development of the PAFT to share information and consult with Indigenous peoples on potential sources of climate finance, such as the voluntary carbon markets through the sale of TREES credits. The first workshop to raise awareness in the Indigenous leadership of the negotiation with the LEAF Coalition for the sale of TREES credits took place early 2023 in San Jose, with in-person attendance of Indigenous leaders from 20 IP territories.

Partnerships

Costa Rica is already engaged in REDD+ Results-based Payment initiatives from both market and non-market sources. In 2020, the country signed an Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) with

the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility for up to 12MtCO2 or $60 million. In 2022, the country was able to report results and receive the first disbursement of $16,415,110 out of the $60 million from the FCPF. Costa Rica also provided a ground-breaking report on the non-carbon benefits of the implementation of the FCPF ER Programme, with support from UN-REDD. This has now become the global standard for reporting on non-carbon benefits at a jurisdictional scale.

In October, 2020, Costa Rica received approval from the Green Climate Fund for a $54 million REDD+ Results-based Payment proposal to the GCF for emissions reductions achieved in 2014 and 2015. In February, 2021, the Government of Costa Rica and UNDP signed a Technical Support Services agreement to design and implement a diversified strategy to access REDD+ Result-based Payments from market and non-market sources.

These efforts and partnerships are also integrated with the UN-REDD Technical Assistance for LEAF engagement and ART-TREES compliance, as well as with the ongoing FCPF work under the umbrella of the National REDD+ Secretariat's workplan for 2022.

Linkages to SDGs

The implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy contributed and will continue to contribute to numerous Sustainable Development Goals beyond the obvious contribution to SDG 13. They include SDG 1, 5 and 15.

Côte d'Ivoire

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

To increase its forest cover to at least 20 percent of the national territory by 2030, Côte d'Ivoire continues to implement an ambitious national policy on forest and natural resource management. Côte d'Ivoire is the beneficiary of several recent investments in climate finance and REDD+, including two Forest Investment Programs (FIP 1 & 2), the Emissions Reduction Program (ERP) in the western part of the country, and a project financed by the GCF: Promoting Deforestation-Free Cocoa Production to Reduce Emissions in Côte d'Ivoire (PROMIRE). Moreover, Côte d'Ivoire is engaged in dialogue with the main agricultural sectors responsible for deforestation: cocoa, rubber, oil palm, rice and yams, as a means to mobilize the private sector.

Forest solutions realized

UN-REDD deployed an important private sector engagement strategy focused on the cocoa value chain, in close collaboration with the European Forest Institute (EFI), involving several ministries (environment, agriculture and finance), under the leadership of the Cocoa Coffee Council (CCC). That led to the creation of the 1for20 Partnership, which aims to mobilize $1 billion for the restoration of 20 percent of the country's forest cover. To that end, the partnership convenes private and public sector actors to explore innovative financing models capable of financing the transition to sustainable and deforestation-free cocoa production at scale. In 2022, a study was carried out in the Loh-Djiboua region to assess the feasibility of REDD+ implementation at the jurisdictional level and to complement the existing approach. Different enabling conditions and progress made in the region were identified in terms of REDD+. Suggestions were included concerning the design and implementation of a pilot project to test an approach and replicate it at the regional and jurisdictional level.

A technical and remote training on Collect Earth Online (CEO), involving 10 participants (three women) from various institutions, including representatives from the SEP-REDD, was organized to strengthen technical capacities for the collection of activity data at the national scale, covering the period 1990-2020. Technical materials were prepared and shared with participants. Activity data collection was finalized and a total of 12,890 plots were analyzed by 10 interpreters. The data obtained was processed and analyzed, and a technical report on the methodology was developed. In addition, land-use change matrices developed for the periods: 1990-2000, 2000-2010 and 2010-2020 and the associated confidence intervals have been estimated. Lastly, the compilation of the national greenhouse gas inventory at the national scale for period 1990-2020 is being prepared.

In partnership with the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), UN-REDD supported the development of a draft of prefectural decree establishing a dialogue platform at the regional level as the only framework for dialogue for all projects related to land use in the region, ensuring better coordination between projects and initiatives in the region in the fight against deforestation. Support was provided for the effective participation of Cavally Regional Council representatives, including women and youth, in national dialogue events on the cocoa-forest nexus.

UN-REDD also assisted the country with the development of a project proposal entitled "Support for the jurisdictional implementation of zero-deforestation agricultural production and forest restoration," which aims to mobilize international funding while engaging small producers, including youth and women community-based organizations. This project would implement a regional strategic plan to promote agricultural value chains with zero-deforestation in the Cavally and Belier regions. Support under UN-REDD allowed for the successful operationalization, development and implementation of further projects, such as the operationalization of the project "Scaling up cocoa-based food systems, land use and restoration transformative innovations in Côte d'Ivoire." This project aims to promote sustainable natural resource management and improve local livelihoods, while ensuring the active participation of women and youth in the implementation of the project.

UN-REDD was instrumental in the development and implementation of the Abidjan Legacy Programme, a flagship programme of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and UNCCD Parties to foster the integration of resilient commodity value chains in economic systems and to protect lands and restore forests. The programme empowers women and youth via job creation in the agricultural sector; UN-REDD provided for the mobilization of technical and financial partners for the financing, with implementation estimated at $1.642 billion.

Lastly, UN-REDD supported a global consultation of stakeholders in the framework of the preparation of the UNCCD COP15, including direct consultations of more than 413 people; 42 percent were women and 40 percent were youth from different areas including artists, journalists, civil society, private sector, government and women's and youth organizations. Participants were invited to express expectations and points of view, particularly the importance of digitalization and technology for modern agriculture and the restoration of forests to end poverty, create jobs and ensure the empowerment of women.

Forest solutions rewarded

UN-REDD supported the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to design results-based payment approaches, particularly through Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. This support has helped the government mobilize funding for the implementation of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and enabled them to negotiate with private project developers to create carbon credits for the voluntary carbon markets.

For example, a legal report was produced that assesses the potential legal options of emissions reductions rights, respectful of the new forest code and the draft decree determining the management rules for REDD+ projects and programmes and related greenhouse gas emissions reductions, once adopted. The report was produced in partnership with the law firm, White & Case LLP. Technical assistance was provided to the national government to initiate a framework document defining a national benefit-distribution scheme.

In addition, a UN-REDD technical brief on the rights of local communities in the context of REDD+ and access to climate finance was drafted and will be published in 2023. The brief describes key enabling conditions and governance aspects that influence equitable benefit sharing and the possibility to mitigate climate change through on-the-ground action in collaboration with local communities. The analysis assumes several key legal and governance issues are critical for communities to benefit from REDD+ finance. The brief includes a review of existing financial transfer mechanisms, as well as the legal, political, and strategic frameworks related to safeguards, grievance mechanisms and community tenure rights, with attention to gender aspects. The analysis was contextualized through a series of interviews with key government and civil society actors in the forestry sector. The brief will be jointly launched with a similar brief in the series from the Republic of Congo in 2023.

Forest solutions enhanced

UN-REDD TA was provided for the oversight of the NDC revision process, including mainstreaming of forest-based solutions into NDC mitigation measures. The revised NDC was successfully completed and submitted to UNFCCC in March, 2022 with an increased ambition from 28.25 to 30.41 percent and with due consideration to forest-based solutions as other mitigation measures.

UN-REDD supported the organization of a series of high-level consultations and policy dialogues in partnership with the Forest Declaration Platform under the theme: "How to build strong partnerships, identify gaps and ensure coherence and complementarity of actions among key forest sector initiatives." Importantly, UN-REDD helped facilitate high-level meetings with the three main Ministers of Environment, Water and Forests and Agriculture, where vision, perceived challenges and capacity building needs were shared while discussing the need to eliminate deforestation in agricultural supply chains, with particular attention to the role of women and youth. Representatives of government, technical and financial partners, the private sector, civil society, and representatives of producers, youth and women's groups also successfully expressed their views, with a focus on ensuring meaningful participation and representation of women and youth in these discussions.

Challenges and solutions

Similar to the year prior, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt national and field activities throughout 2022, which negatively impacted the ability for UN-REDD to deliver timely, in person and quality technical assistance to the country. In-country missions started in the last quarter of 2022. Nevertheless, the country remained active in its endeavours, and UN-REDD used digital means and in-country experts to keep the above-mentioned workstreams active.

The main challenges identified concerning the implementation of forestry solutions, particularly for the success of key initiatives in the forest-agriculture nexus, are as follows:

- Improving and enforcing gender-sensitive forest governance
- Establishing financing mechanisms for forest restoration that are accessible to women and marginalized communities
- Resolving issues related to tree ownership and rural land tenure that affect women and marginalized communities

- Developing an incentive and remuneration mechanism that is suitable for producers, such as payments for ecosystem services (PES) or sustainability premiums, that also addresses the specific needs of women and marginalized communities
- Increasing the income of producers, specifically by raising cocoa prices, ensuring benefit to women and marginalized communities
- Implementing transparency mechanisms and involving producers, including women marginalized communities, and all stakeholders in decision-making processes related to cocoa and forest strategies

To address these priority issues, stakeholders developed a roadmap to facilitate faster decision-making and action to overcome these obstacles, with a focus on ensuring the participation and empowerment of women and marginalized communities.

Gender and social inclusion

UN-REDD integrates a gender-responsive approach in its support to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in implementing Results-based Payment approaches. The programme ensures the voices of women and youth are included in the development and implementation of REDD+ projects and initiatives.

This is demonstrated through various initiatives such as providing support for effective participation of women and youth representatives in national dialogue events on the cocoa-forest nexus; developing a project proposal to mobilize funding and engaging small producers, including youth and women's community-based organizations; and providing technical support for the operationalization of a project that promotes sustainable natural resource management and improves local livelihoods while ensuring active participation of women and youth. The program also aims to empower women and youth and to create jobs and opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Gender mainstreaming of the PROMIRE project utilizes some of the UN-REDD gender tools and methods, such as the checklist for gender responsive workshops. The key stakeholders of this REDD+ implementation project include one women's cooperative with 60 female members. Efforts are being made to ensure that a larger proportion of women also benefit from agroforestry activities which were originally targeted at heads of households, who tend to be male.

Partnerships

UN-REDD works in partnership with different organizations, entities, and country partners, including the EU-REDD Facility, the GCFTF initiative, the World Bank, the GCF, the FAO-GCF PROMIRE project, and the Cocoa & Forest Initiative, among others. UN-REDD provides tailored technical assistance to help the country in its policy commitments, mobilize partners and finance, and test innovations and pilot initiatives.

Linkages to SDGs

The ensemble of work on the cocoa-forest nexus, including deforestation-free farming, economically sound agroforestry models and forest-ecosystem restoration plans, help the country advance in several SDGs in an integrated manner, including SDG 12, 13 , 15 and 17. Through PROMIRE project activities, as well as the ERP jurisdictional programme, Côte d'Ivoire will significantly advance on SDG 15.3.1. The emphasis on women's participation and benefits from all activities advance the country on SDG 5 related to gender equality.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

UN-REDD assisted FONAREDD, the National Fund for REDD+, through a combination of technical and institutional support. This included advisory support to the Technical Committee of FONAREDD, which is its main portfolio management body. In addition, UN-REDD provided strategic and operational advice for enhancing implementation and synergies in various investment and reform programmes financed by FONAREDD, particularly on land use policy, transition to clean energy and integrated development in the former Orientale Province. Finally, UN-REDD supported FONAREDD with pipeline development by assisting with the design of four project proposals for the FONAREDD 2022 Call for Expression of Interests (land-use planning; energy; carbon markets and NDC; forests and agriculture).

With regards to safeguards, UN-REDD assisted the country with the drafting of the first safeguards' summary of information, which was submitted to the UNFCCC (now available on the REDD+ Info Hub). DRC continued its efforts to operationalize the elements of the Warsaw Framework by finalizing its Safeguards Information System (SIS). The country now has a dedicated website that documents and reports on progress related to safeguards and showcases significant achievements. In December, 2022, DRC also submitted its first BUR with a REDD+ Technical annex.

Forest solutions rewarded

UN-REDD provided technical assistance to relevant governmental agencies to foster mechanisms for partnership and multi-sectoral coordination for the development of a carbon markets scheme in the DRC. A training manual for effective engagement in carbon markets was developed, along with a situation analysis identifying specific capacity needs for DRC's effective engagement in carbon markets, and a roadmap on carbon market support for the DRC. At the same time, the country continued its discussions with Emergent regarding the LEAF submission.

Forest solutions enhanced

UN-REDD supported the government with the development of the NDC implementation roadmap, as well as aligning the FONAREDD portfolio to LULUCF targets and its revision, especially on land-use sectors.

Challenges and solutions

Similar to previous years, the continued COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt national and field processes, as well as the ability of the UN-REDD Programme to provide timely and qualitative technical assistance to the country. In-country missions took place in 2022, and DRC remained active in its endeavours, with UN-REDD using digital means and in-country experts to keep the mentioned streams active.

Gender and social inclusion

Under the leadership of the Vice Prime Minister in charge of Environment (VPM – MEDD), DRC established a Task Force with different actors, including CSO representatives, to deliver on REDD+ and the LEAF proposal. Through the Task Force, DRC conducted several stakeholder consultations to

gather inputs on REDD+ activities and UN-REDD TA. This Task Force was involved in a series of consultations throughout the development of safeguards elements for TREES assessment.

Partnerships

UN-REDD work carried out in 2022 benefited from the partnership with the Ministry of Environment and FONAREDD through the Task Force established by the VPM-MEDD. FONAREDD played an important role in coordinating with UN-REDD team and all members within the Task Force, but also provided contents building on existing projects and programmes being implemented on the ground.

Linkages to SDGs

The REDD+ activities in DRC contribute directly to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 15, with linkage to other SDGs such as poverty reduction, health and well-being, gender equity, hunger alleviation, and improving institutions.

Ecuador

On track	Delayed
X	

Forest solutions realized

In 2022, support was given to launch the deforestation-free certification scheme at the national level, and it was presented at COP 27. In addition, advice and technical assistance were provided to consolidate commercial agreements on deforestation-free production with internationally-renowned companies, such as Lavazza and Silva Cacao. This strengthened local producers' capacities and the commercialization to international markets of their deforestation-free products. During 2022, FAPECAFES and APEOSAE, local Amazonia organizations, exported the first 17 tons of coffee and seven tons of cocoa certified as a sustainable deforestation-free Amazonian product. It is important to note that more than 35 percent of local producers are women who have played a vital role in the production and the negotiation with international companies.

The development of a safeguard framework for the Ecuador's Zero Carbon Programme was supported, including a tool for risk assessment. These elements were considered in the regulation that will be issued for the operation of the Programme.

An exchange between Costa Rica and Ecuador on assessing forest degradation was also supported.

Forest solutions rewarded

During 2022, UN-REDD technical assistance convened several technical and political meetings to examine gaps, to map technical support needed, and to provide technical advice and support to address ART-TREES requirements and achieve certification under TREES. The UNDP Paris Agreement, LULUCF and NDC Tool (PLANT) evolved, and it continued to be a tool to underpin some national analysis. The country advanced with actions for addressing ART-TREES requirements to achieve certification under TREES and has a plan to move into the certification and registration stage under TREES in 2023. Also, legal and technical advice was provided to Ecuador to activate a Registry account for TREES document submissions to the ART Secretariat.

Regarding the ERPA negotiations, technical assistance has been provided to assess the draft Emissions Reduction Purchase Agreements (ERPA) shared by Emergent with Ecuador. This assessment included

an analysis of the process, the document's structure, issues identified, and recommendations. As a result, Ecuador signed memorandums of agreement (MOA) with Emergent outlining the next steps and putting in place a clear roadmap and timetable for the signing of binding ERPA by the end of April, 2023. The country has also launched a participatory process to build a benefit-sharing plan that will inform the distribution of benefits resulting from future ERs purchases.

Also, technical support regarding forest and carbon monitoring for ART-TREES included improvements on the conceptual framework for deforestation and forest degradation monitoring to comply with the requirements for carbon accounting and uncertainties under ART-TREES. Technical advice was provided on the available data to understand the magnitude of degradation emissions in the country for the ERPA negotiations. This allowed the negotiations for the MOA with Emergent. Also, technical and temporal needs for obtaining better data were recommended, due to the country's conditions on historical satellite imagery for the reference period.

Concerning the safeguard elements of ART-TREES, support was provided by UN-REDD to clarify the requirements and assess gaps and alternatives. The country elaborated its third summary of safeguards information, and feedback from UN-REDD was incorporated; this report has considered the safeguards themes and indicators under ART-TREES. Following the development of this last summary of information, the safeguards section of the TREES Registration Document will be drafted.

Forest solutions enhanced

Ecuador developed its REDD+ financing sustainability strategy to mobilize international finance and the private sector for REDD+ actions and investments. This is a relevant instrument for expanding the PROAmazonia portfolio and for enhanced implementation of the NDC. In addition, the national scheme for deforestation-free production and trade represents a key pillar for NDC delivery, as agriculture is the major driver of deforestation and forest-based carbon emissions.

Challenges and solutions

The country presented the second FREL in January, 2020 to the UNFCCC, and after the technical assessment, the government identified the need for considerable changes to improve the uncertainty of the data. Therefore, the updated second FREL has not yet been submitted to the UNFCCC. In November, 2021, the MAATE, with the support of the GCF ProAmazonia Project and the UN-REDD Programme, developed a roadmap to close gaps and strengthen the National Forest Monitoring System. This roadmap is under implementation, and the first result of the new approach was prioritized by REM for extending a third payment agreement for emissions reductions in 2019. The next step on the new NFMS approach is the implementation of the new methodological framework for the agreement with LEAF and ART-TREES, to be presented in October, 2023, and for the updated second FREL to be submitted in December, 2023. In addition, with UN-REDD technical advice, the country planned to test a proxy to accelerate the forest degradation accounting for June, 2023.

Regarding the ERPA negotiations, Ecuador, like other countries, has encountered several challenges. On the one hand, the proposed ERPA draft is confusing, not building from past ERPA practices, and excessively long, undermining country progress with LEAF engagements. On the other hand, there are a lot of issues with the proposed ERPA document, which is based on USA law, which is difficult to accept for sovereign nations as it undermines the preeminence of national legislation on such a matter as forest carbon management and transactions. The UN-REDD team is putting together an assessment of the LEAF ERPA proposal, so to help nations like Ecuador analyze and review it, then negotiate with the LEAF intermediaries.

Gender and social inclusion

Women have played a vital role in promoting deforestation-free products. Women producers of cacao and coffee have actively participated and engaged with international companies, such as Silva Cacao and Lavazza, to better understand commercial dynamics, how the retail chain behaves and reacts, and the importance of quality and sustainability. In all the events and meetings held between local producers and international companies, more than 35 percent of participants have been Amazonian women producers who have played an essential role in achieving commercial agreements of 17 Metric Tonnes (MT)of coffee and 7 MT of cacao.

Amazonian Indigenous groups have actively participated in the piloting of the national deforestation-free certification scheme. From the beginning, IPs and LCs have committed to enhancing a sustainable, deforestation-free system and played an essential role in the first-ever exportation of deforestation-free coffee and cacao beans to the European market.

Communities and Civil Society Organization (CSO) continue to be engaged in discussions of the REDD+ Round Table, where updates are periodically shared and key issues and next steps are defined.

Partnerships

In 2022, based on the process and advances made on FPIC under the GCF RBP project, Ecuador was selected to be a part of a regional assessment study on FPIC implementation, conducted by UNDP. Results are expected to be delivered in May, 2023, and the key lessons will be shared with UN-REDD partners and disseminated through UN-REDD communication channels.

Linkages to SDGs

The UN-REDD support to Ecuador, which underpins the implementation of the National REDD+ Action Plan, contributes to numerous Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 1, 12, 13, 15 and 17.

Ghana

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

Ghana's REDD+ implementation efforts are guided by its National REDD+ strategy (2016) and its Nationally Determined Contribution (2017). Ghana's successful REDD+ implementation has resulted in verified emissions reductions (see next section) and inspired Ghana to submit a TREES concept note in 2021. UN-REDD support in 2022 was framed in the context of Ghana's TREES concept note submission. Specific gaps for TREES compliance were filled, notably:

- Emissions factors were assessed consistently for the entire TREES accounting area;
- Automated data processing was applied to obtain multiple interpretations of existing plots for TREES compliant activity data;
- Some standard operating procedures for the TREES measurement, reporting and verification were drafted;
- TREES carbon accounting model was created;
- Initial legal analysis has been performed identifying further gaps.

Information was gathered to report about conformance with TREES safeguards indicators through consultations with national and landscape level stakeholders (in Western North Region and Ashanti Region), including civil society groups. The information compiled is the basis for the safeguards section of TREES registration document. Drawing on the achievements listed above, the drafting of TREES registration document has started.

Forest solutions rewarded

Supported by UN-REDD, Ghana submitted a proposal to the LEAF Coalition in 2021 and successfully completed an initial technical screening process led by a panel of technical experts. A Letter of Intent was negotiated and signed in Glasgow with Emergent – the LEAF financial representative – during COP 26 in November, 2021 making it the first African country to take this step.

In 2022, with technical support from FAO and funding from the FCPF, Ghana finalized the verification and validation of its first monitoring report to the Carbon Fund, making the country ready to receive its first emissions reduction payment.

Forest solutions enhanced

Technical assistance to finalize Ghana's verification and validation of its first monitoring report to the Carbon Fund, allowing a first emissions reductions payment in early 2023. A future agreement with the LEAF coalition is also envisaged as work progresses to complete Ghana's TREES registration document. Elements in Ghana's NDC are being aligned with financing opportunities through TREES registration, and the remaining areas under the REDD+ Strategy that are not covered by a financing arrangement are being prepared for engagement through the jurisdictional REDD+ Programme and compliance with TREES. Stakeholder engagement in the Transitional, Togo Plateau and Coastal Mangrove zones have commenced.

Challenges and solutions

Because Ghana has made great strides in implementing its National REDD+ Strategy and has a large portfolio of REDD+ projects and initiatives, it was not always possible to have the desired level of interaction and coordination with the respective government teams, so to ensure the UN-REDD technical assistance is a catalyst in such a rich fabric of REDD+ endeavor.

Gender and social inclusion

Stakeholder engagement mainly involved national institutions; however, through a feasibility study being undertaken in the ART-TREES landscape, further information on the drivers of deforestation was obtained from discussions with regional, district and some community members in the Transitional Zone and the Togo Plateau.

The ART-TREES J-REDD programme area will be larger than the GCFRP, and stakeholder engagement for the additional areas will need to be undertaken. This activity can replicate the tested approach in Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) and lead up to the signature of agreements to implement activities.

Despite the fact that most engagement with country counterparts took place at the national level, for the work of gathering safeguards information to report on TREES indicators, consultations took place at the landscape-level with stakeholders in the cocoa-forest landscape and emissions reductions programme areas. Regional and District Forestry Offices (Sefwi Wiawso, Mankranso, and Nkawie), Regional and District Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) (Sefwi Wiawso, Adugyama, Nkawie, Tepa, Nyinahin), Western North Regional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) office, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (Sefwi Wiawso, Nkawie, and Nyinahin) and

community members drawn from the Sefwi-Bibiani-Akontombra and Ahafo-Ano Hotspot Intervention Area Management Boards were engaged.

Future discussion with stakeholders in existing and additional HIAs will need to include a review of the existing benefit-sharing plan in relation to its applicability for LEAF. In this manner, Ghana will build on substantive past efforts to ensure that a socially inclusive approach will be undertaken to develop the implementation and benefit-sharing plans under LEAF.

Partnerships

The work carried out in 2022 continues to draw on the GCFRP project that is being implemented with funding from the World Bank. A first payment from the Carbon Fund was received in January, 2023.. A future agreement with LEAF is also envisaged.

The GCFRP is expressly relevant as the LEAF area includes the High Forest Zone in GCFRP, and Ghana has built on this project for the proposal submitted to the LEAF Coalition in the following ways: the stakeholder engagement structures and approach through HIAs, institutional framework, the national safeguards framework, forest monitoring and the recently crafted benefit-sharing plan.

Since 2018, with funding from the World Bank, FAO has been supporting Ghana's Forestry Commission to improve the quality and accuracy of Ghana's data on deforestation, forest degradation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Ghana submitted its first monitoring report to the Carbon Fund in 2021 with results for the second half of 2019 and successfully finalized the verification and validation in August, 2022.

Ghana's place on the world stage with regards to climate and forests is well recognized. The European Union and 27 countries launched the Forest Climate Leaders' Platform (FCLP) to follow up on announcements at COP26 in Glasgow, where over 140 world leaders, representing over 90 percent of the world's forests, committed to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation. Backed by the UK COP26 Presidency, the FCLP held its first ministerial meeting at COP27, co-chaired by the USA's Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry and Ghana's Minister of Land and Natural Resources, the Honourable Samuel Jinapor.

Ghana has also progressed significantly with respect to carbon markets. A Carbon Market Office has been set up and currently three partnerships with Sweden, Singapore and Switzerland on Article 6.2 were announced at COP27 and are now underway. A partnership with South Korea is also envisaged. Article 6.2 regulations and a readiness framework have been set in place.

Linkages to SDGs

Implementation of Ghana's REDD+ Strategy and the development of partnerships such as with the LEAF coalition are designed to ensure positive impacts with respect to SDGs 13 and 15,

Indonesia

On track	Delayed
	X

In September, 2022, Indonesia submitted an enhanced NDC.

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

UN-REDD supported the completion of a national assessment of the extent and change of Indonesia's mangroves and the drivers of change over the past 30 years. This important output was achieved through an innovative approach, comprising 40 Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia (MoEF experts (17 females, 43 percent) supported by UN-REDD technical experts. These experts worked to interpret high-resolution satellite imagery of 3,000 samples across all areas in the country likely to have mangroves; it is recognized that the collaborative approach led to a successful output. Moreover, this served to benefit capacity development for technical staff, while enabling the delivery of a new database and statistical set for mangrove areas and changes over time. The findings include an increase in the total mangrove area and provide statistical accuracies and confidence in the results, as well as estimates of the drivers of change over time. This can be useful for improving national reporting on climate change because of the high-carbon content of mangrove ecosystems and can serve to improve the management of mangroves and the vital environmental services they provide.

Indonesia had success in Results-based Payments (RBP) under the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) with $103 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for results from 2014-2016 in August, 2020. The Indonesian Environment Fund (IEF), with technical inputs from UN-REDD, developed policy, legal and operational documents on REDD+ fund distribution.

As part of on-going support to the IEF's aspiration to be an entity on par with internationally reputable environmental fund agencies, UN-REDD supported their considerations to be a GCF National Accredited Entity. This was in collaboration with the World Bank through their Technical Assistance to IEF. During 2022, the IEF, with UN-REDD technical assistance, also worked on designing a Climate and Resilience Fund (CRF). The fund will use future potential RBPs to attract upfront private investment for REDD+ implementation. Development and operationalization of the CRF will continue in 2023. This activity seeks to provide additional sources of finance to IEF to accelerate FOLU Net Sink 2030 implementation.

Forest solutions rewarded

UN-REDD has been working with IEF and MoEF on the development of incentives to reduce emissions by providing a strong incentive to forest owners and users to manage forests better through jurisdictional RBPs. RBPs are a way to help Indonesia achieve the emissions reductions targets of the FOLU 2030 Plan and the National REDD+ Strategy with international support. The payment will be able to support sub-national governments in achieving sub-national emissions reductions targets.

Responding to Indonesia's request, UN-REDD supported the country with resource mobilization for the continuation of peatland restoration efforts to mitigate the largest source of GHG emissions in the AFOLU sector. For this, existing finance sources for peatland restoration and sustainable livelihood development were studied with a local civil society organization.

Forest solutions enhanced

Indonesia proposed restoration to 2.4 million hectares of peatlands and 600,000 hectares of mangroves, which will enhance the forest and carbon mitigation quantities. Through UN-REDD support, several Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry staff learned about SE.PLAN, an innovative new tool to help countries plan forest restoration. The tool includes a wide range of economic and environmental data, including satellite imagery to enable rapid interactive assessments of various land management scenarios. The tool can identify potential locations where the benefits of forest restoration are high, relative to restoration costs and subject to biophysical and socioeconomic constraints, and users define areas where restoration is permissible. A country-specific training on

SE.PLAN is planned to further investigate opportunities for assessing restoration potential in Indonesia and as a contribution to Indonesia's environmental restoration efforts.

A report outlining the existing efforts within Indonesia and different regions for reducing wildfire risk, resulted in a Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) assessment report, which was presented to the MoEF with an offer to organize further consultations and support. This work area can further benefit from support through the new FAO—UNEP Global Fire Management Platform, which was also presented and discussed with government during COFO in Rome in October, 2022.

Similarly, an updated report of existing peatland fire emission factors was compiled, listing the key gaps in the technical work area. The report could contribute further to the government's efforts to better understand and reduce the emissions from peatland fires.

Peatland's groundwater level is a key indicator, alongside its subsidence, as defined by the IPCC Wetlands Supplement published in 2014. In 2019, FAO was able to demonstrate through a NICFI-funded support project to the Mangrove and Peatland Restoration Agency that Indonesia's degraded peatlands and restored areas' soil moisture works as an indicator of the groundwater level. FAO strove to further refine the soil moisture tool on SEPAL platform, a tool the government is actively using (both the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, as well as the Peatland and mangrove restoration agency, BRGM on its publicly available [Peatland restoration information monitoring system - PRIMS](#)) to allow for more refined emissions estimates. An agreement with a civil society organization, supported by NASA, for exchanging important amounts of field data (a limiting factor for the tool refinement) was finalized in late 2022, and work for the soil moisture tool refinement will start in early 2023.

Challenges and solutions

The scope of UN-REDD technical assistance for 2022 was lower than anticipated, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in a diversion of the national budget, including key human resources, away from some environmental areas. According to the second version of the State of Indonesia's Forests (SOIFO), released in December, 2020, it is expected "*the emissions reduction targets of 29 and 41 percent will not be revised, as the 29 percent target is considered quite ambitious, as well as the large challenges expected to ensure the conditions that must be achieved to reach these targets*". UN-REDD activities in Indonesia in 2022 continued at a lower level but supported the development of capacities and systems for improving the accuracy and completeness of the MRV systems, including gap-filling in areas such as mangrove, peatland and fire emissions. Identification of gap-filling actions will be based on demands formulated by the MoEF, through its research and development agency and the Directorate of Climate Change Control, with the aim to better capture GHG emissions from mangroves, peat decomposition and fire (which have been not fully included in the latest FREL).

UN-REDD is still in consultation with the Indonesian Government on the overarching arrangements for technical support. Activities continuously under development are strongly supported by and implemented in cooperation with MoEF; positively, these activities have been successful. However, as overall activity levels are less than planned, it is expected that overall progress will be delayed.

The upcoming election period, as well as retirement and changes in the key focal points within the key agencies can be expected to change the context further. Close international collaboration on peatland and mangrove matters by the international centres established by Indonesia helps bring global attention and national commitment to the key areas where climate change mitigation efforts are yet to be achieved.

There have been encouraging signs of increasing engagement with Indonesia during 2022. The Ministry for Environment and Forests led a delegation to Rome in October to launch the State of

Indonesia's Forests report; the national focal point for fire risk reduction expressed keen interest in further collaboration on fire matters. UN-REDD supported the drafting and reviewing of the report, as was done for previous editions in 2018 and 2020. The reports highlight Indonesia's efforts to increase transparency in reporting on forest and environmental issues.

UN-REDD supported Indonesia's G20 Presidency to advance environmental issues through several presentations and workshops on the importance of peatlands and mangroves for climate change and environmental services. This was also mentioned in the final Bali Leaders' Declaration G20 process. The G20 member states participated and made many positive comments on their progress and indications of increased attention and efforts to address climate change through forests, peatlands and other types of wetlands as part of their climate change actions.

UN-REDD continued to consult with Indonesia on the development of the 2022-25 workplan and administrative arrangements. Communication with MoEF is ongoing and the intent remains to work to find a mutually acceptable arrangement to continue and expand upon currently available technical assistance. Missions are planned in early 2023 and seek to achieve high-level discussion in greater detail, to be followed by the development of technical workplans to meet Indonesia's needs.

Gender and social inclusion

Within the context of the design of the sub-national RBP in Central Kalimantan, UN-REDD has worked on progressively mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in the RBP, particularly strengthening of Indigenous institutions like *handil* associations and forest management and ensuring that future payments will encourage gender equality as traditional forest management has been gender biased.

Partnerships

Collaboration through the Global Peatlands Initiative, with UNEP and FAO as founding members, continues with joint international and national visibility and activities. The initiative currently has over 50 members.

UN-REDD has deepened partnerships with bilateral development partners like the World Bank, USAID and FCDO. In addition, UNEP has initiated stakeholder consultations with sub-national governments, the private sector, and civil society, and through innovative green financing, is engaging with potential investors.

Linkages to SDGs

Results from the UN-REDD Programme are expected to contribute to the achievement of the country's objectives in relation to SDGs 5, 13 and 15, among others.

Mexico

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

To work on deforestation-free supply chains in key agricultural commodities, CONAFOR participated in an inter-institutional REDD+ Working Group, including the Ministry of Finance as well as the Ministry

of Agriculture and Rural Development. Dedicated operational multi-sectoral teams have been created to advance joint activities on deforestation-free commodity production.

Technical recommendations to enhance operations of the Forestry Guarantee Funds were provided to CONAFOR as part of a broader analysis of bank and fiduciary guarantees.

Lessons learned and experiences were exchanged with countries that apply the MRV system for other REDD+ activities, including forest degradation, increasing forest carbon stocks and sustainable forest management, as well as on community-based forest monitoring within the National Forest and Soil Inventory.

Technical support towards strengthening the national safeguards system has been continued. Mexico has made good progress in the preparation of its second summary of information on how safeguards are respected and addressed. Key elements of the report have been agreed, which is due to be published in 2023. Also, the SIS has been further improved in its structure and technical set up. State level actors from Quintana Roo and Chiapas were able to strengthen their capacities on applying the tools of the SIS.

Forest solutions rewarded

Mexico submitted its REDD+ Technical Annex in 2022, showing results in reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the period from 2017-2019. On that basis, recommendations to access international forest and climate finance under different international private and public funding mechanisms were provided to CONAFOR and other key actors, in accordance with the methodologies of the ART-TREES standard and in line with preliminary information on a potential second phase of the GCF's Results-based Payments programme.

Mexico continues to show interest in accessing finance sources to reward results in reduced deforestation. With the enactment of the reform to the General Law on Sustainable Forest Management (LGDFS) in 2022, Mexico provided legal pathways for sub-national entities to directly access international climate finance. As such, the states of Jalisco and Quintana Roo advanced in the TREES cycle, with the latter submitting a concept to the ART Secretariat in 2022. The full operationalization of the General Law for Sustainable Forestry Development (LGDFS) reform, including clarity on the rights over emissions reductions requires further regulations by the sectoral lead agency, the Ministry of Environment (SEMARNAT). These regulations are expected in 2023.

Challenges and solutions

While COVID-19 restrictions continued to play a limiting role for operations, UN-REDD maintained progress by using online platforms for technical support. Delays in the submission of the second summary of safeguards information were partly caused by the pandemic's disruptions.

CONAFOR continued to experience budget restrictions, which further reduced operational capacities. In spite of changes in personnel and the institutional set up, the UN-REDD Programme was able to maintain a stable working relationship with CONAFOR over the course of the year. The reduced capacities in personnel at CONAFOR, however, impacted the work on deforestation-free supply chains, as well as forest finance. The set up of the inter-institutional REDD+ Working Group provides an opportunity to link UN-REDD activities to an institutional agenda and work with CONAFOR and other partners on aspects relating to sustainable production and climate finance.
While the General Law on Sustainable Forest Management was reformed, further clarity on carbon rights and access to international finance streams is required through the by-laws and regulations.

Gender and social inclusion

Gender equality is a key component of Mexico's safeguards information system. As such, the tools developed to facilitate reporting across levels of government explicitly includes gender considerations in its design, application, as well as corresponding capacity building measures.

Partnerships

Synergies with the work under the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force (GCFTF) continued in 2022, particularly through GCFTF country coordination on submissions to the ART-TREES standard in Jalisco and Quintana Roo, as well as with the implementation of the GCFTF's innovation funding projects in Jalisco and Yucatán. Further synergies could be forged with the work under the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI), launched in 2021, and active contribution by CONAFOR as well as states in the initiative's governance body.

Linkages to SDGs

The activities developed contribute indirectly to SDGs 5, 8, 12, 13 and 15.

Myanmar

	On track	Delayed
TA for REDD+ Implementation		X
Mangroves TA	X*	

* As assessed against the work-plan following the no-cost extension granted in January, 2023

The Government of Myanmar made significant advancements against the pillars of the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, including the completion of the National REDD+ Strategy development through an inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement process. Much of the achievements and lessons learned are the result of dedicated work carried out under the UN-REDD National Programme, which ended in November, 2020.

Similar to what was reported in 2021, the long tail of COVID-19 and the in-country political situation continued to make it untenable to realistically plan for the implementation of new TA activities in 2022. In line with the document, "*Myanmar United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Engagement in Current Context,*" no engagement with the de facto government counterpart was possible. As a result, the TA for REDD+ implementation is still on hold.

Nevertheless, the UN-REDD country team considers UN-REDD support of paramount importance to build upon, including continuing the successful work carried out in previous years. The country team will continue to reassess the situation to identify windows of opportunity for planning a re-entry when in-country conditions allow.

In addition to the regular TA, Myanmar is a beneficiary of two additional UN-REDD initiatives launched in 2020: *Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region (SFT-LMR)* and *Integrating Mangroves into REDD+ Implementation in Myanmar.* The latter, even with adjusted activities, managed to continue achieving progress, and results are outlined in a dedicated section below. Similarly, the Myanmar component of the SFT-LMR initiative progressed on activities related to timber legality at the community level, including communication campaigns for awareness on forest crime, strengthening monitoring systems and engaging smallholders to access legal and sustainable forest product value chains.

Myanmar Mangroves Technical Assistance

Activities under the Myanmar Mangroves TA continued in 2022 in a similar fashion to what was accomplished in 2021, following the revised results framework as discussed (and agreed upon by the UN-REDD Executive Board) in the aftermath of the *coup* that took place in February, 2021. 2022 was a successful year for the TA, with significant progress and a more positive, yet challenging, in-country working environment. For example, in 2022, it was possible to carry out limited field missions and organize in-person meetings and workshops at the community level. The positive experience of this year triggered the request for a no-cost-extension of the TA until the end of 2023 (granted by the UN-REDD Executive Board in January) allowing for the conclusion of all anticipated activities, and importantly, to reach the objectives set forth in the project document.

National REDD+ Strategy: Activities related to sub-national REDD+ action plans for non-state actors focused on raising awareness on REDD+ with the Karen National Union (KNU), as well as developing a manual to write community forest management plans for the KNU. Support to Community Forests (CF), Community Forest Enterprises (CFE) and Community Protected Areas (CPA) have continued successfully in Ayeyarwady and Tanintharyi regions and Mon state ranging from, among others, trainings in forest inventory and mangrove conservation to drafting management and business plans. An example of the initiative's work at local level has been captured in webstory of The mangroves of Myanmar.

FREL/FRL: Field data from mangrove clusters in the Myanmar National Forest Inventory has been analyzed and results presented in a report to yield improved Emission Factors (EF) estimates for the mangroves biome. The mangrove extent maps of the Ayeyarwady and Tanintharyi regions have been classified according to level of maturity and canopy coverage using a combination of very high-resolution satellite images and field data. These results, along with a document summarizing recommendations for developing a new baseline for REDD+ implementation in the mangroves, will contribute to the improvement of the latest version of the country's FREL (submitted in 2019). While this is already an important achievement for the country's REDD+ context, the UN-REDD Programme will be able to support next steps: providing technical assistance to the country to use the data for drafting and submitting a new FREL once political circumstances allow, and once direct contact with the Forestry Department can be re-established.

NFMS: Extensive spatial analysis was carried out to produce mangrove extent and mangrove condition/degradation maps for two regions. The methodological approach will be applied to other regions in Myanmar and can prove useful in mangrove areas elsewhere. In addition, a scoping report was prepared to identify the priorities, data sources and options for proposed analyses that can support the integration of mangroves sustainable management, restoration, and conservation into REDD+ implementation in Myanmar. Draft spatial analyses focused on mangrove biodiversity, ecosystem services and importance for communities are being prepared, along with capacity building materials.

Safeguards/SIS: A final working version of a guidance package on how to apply Myanmar's national safeguards approach at the sub-national level, with a focus on community forestry, has been produced in Burmese and English, incorporating feedback from initiative partners and selected experts. This package includes a guidance document and a set of checklists in English and Myanmar languages, aimed at helping Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), NGOs and other civil society REDD+ planners and implementers to plan, design and implement socially and environmentally sustainable REDD+ actions in line with the safeguards. Subsequently, a training of trainers was organized with a key NGO implementing partner, to assist in providing similar capacity building to key community forestry groups in the country and to pilot the use of selected safeguards checklists.

Challenges and solutions

Implementation challenges related to the political situation continued in 2022. However, by focusing on remote support and direct engagement at the community level, the TA succeeded in advancing towards its stated objectives. For the first time, field missions were carried out in Tanintharyi and Delta regions in coordination with the implementing NGO. Also, savings related to limited travel and a reframed workplan justified the request of a no cost extension, prolonging the initiative's lifetime well into 2023.

Gender and social inclusion

As a result of the reframed workplan, in 2022, the initiative dedicated significant resources towards social inclusion, reorienting part of the planned actions specifically towards strengthening capacities of local communities. Overall, over 20 communities benefitted from training and capacity development programmes and awareness initiatives related to CF, CFE and CPA. In addition, the safeguards guidance package specifically addresses issues of gender, social inclusion, and participation.

Partnerships

The partnership with UNEP-WCMC led to the core of the work on safeguards, as well as on mapping mangrove biodiversity and ecosystem services. The Myanmar Environmental Rehabilitation-Conservation Network (MERN) was responsible for many of the activities at the community level and for community forests assessments, while community forests mapping in Rakhine and Tanintharyi has progressed in collaboration with Centre for Development and Environment (CDE).

Linkages to SDGs

The activities within the Mangroves Initiative, through the conservation and sustainable management of mangroves ecosystems, provide a key pathway to achieve progress across several SDGs. Through novel systems, including monitoring and sustainable forest management in mangrove areas, advances in supporting sustainable livelihoods, reducing social inequalities and supporting gender equity can be achieved. Among the goals most relevant to mangrove conservation are SDGs 5, 9, 13, 14 and 15.

Nepal

On track	Delayed
	X

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions rewarded

In 2022, the ART-TREES registration of Nepal's jurisdictional proposal to the LEAF Coalition was accepted. UN-REDD Technical Assistance to the country was discussed with counterparts, and at the time of the preparation of this report, it is being processed with the Ministry of Finance. Government commitment pursuing ART-TREES registration is apparent from the MoU signed between the government and Emergent, which aims to sign the ERPA by April, 2023. UN-REDD experts maintained technical exchanges on elements needed to accompany the government in the preparation of a registration document.

The UN-REDD team is persistently engaging with the REDD+ Implementation Centre to follow up on the likely timing for the project to be approved, allowing for the technical assistance to commence.

Challenges and solutions

The UN-REDD Programme experienced challenges in operationalizing its support in Nepal due to the delays in government project approval, without which even technical nature discussions are unlikely. To coordinate with the government and other stakeholders in a timely manner, a national coordinator position was established, and will be imminently filled, within the FAO country office.

Gender and social inclusion

UNEP has worked together with ICIMOD, within a separate UN partnership programme, to develop and present the publication, "*State of Gender Equality and Climate Change in Nepal.*" Published in 2021, the publication provides an in-depth analysis of the forestry sector in Nepal in the context of gender and climate change. Specifically, the findings of this assessment present an overview of the status of gender integration in forest sector, including which policies, strategies and recommendations can further strengthen gender mainstreaming in forests. This is valuable to inform the UN-REDD TA to the government.

Partnerships

The UN-REDD team has been in dialogue with the British High Commission's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), assisting in the LEAF jurisdictional project, namely through meetings in August, 2022. The FCDO is supporting the government of Nepal through ICIMOD, an international NGO, with the provision of national consultants to support the formulation of a project document for the LEAF jurisdictional project. Through the meeting, it was agreed the two processes of support would work in a coordinated manner for the implementation of deliverables.

The UN-REDD Programme has been in dialogue with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), supporting the government in the formulation of the initial proposal to the LEAF Coalition. IUCN was identified as the financial intermediary and plays an important role as the accredited entity of a GCF Gandaki project, falling within the jurisdiction of the LEAF proposal. In addition, the UN-REDD Programme has reached out to other donors and partners including the Team Europe Embassy - Germany and the World Bank.

Linkages to SDGs

All efforts under UN-REDD Technical Assistance contribute to SDGs 13 and 15.

Papua New Guinea

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

In 2022, Papua New Guinea focused on the development of overarching National REDD+ guidelines, as well as Benefit Sharing Distribution System Guidelines (BSDS), Grievance Redress Mechanism Guidelines (GRM), and the Free Prior Informed Consent Guidelines (FPIC). These documents will help guide the development of REDD+ activities, accommodate REDD+ Voluntary Market Projects and relevant initiatives under REDD+ for the country.

The REDD+ Development Guidelines summarize how the government will implement REDD+ at national and sub-national levels, considering the international implementation frameworks. The guidelines consider the following key areas: how Papua New Guinea can nest initiatives into the national reporting framework to the UNFCCC to avoid double counting; a section describing the safeguard requirements that must be fulfilled to effectively participate; criteria against which REDD+ initiatives will be tested; how to manage and report on REDD+ actions in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement and guidance from the UNFCCC. Importantly, Papua New Guinea began development of Climate Change Carbon Markets (Management) Regulation.

At the end of 2022, the country finalized their second FRL, which was submitted to the UNFCCC. The second FRL is based on historical average emissions with a reference period of 10 years (2009-2018). Considering PNG's HFLD (High Forest, Low Deforestation) status over the reference period, PNG proposes an upwards HFLD adjustment following the latest ART TREES 2.0 guidelines for HFLD adjustments. UN-REDD is assisting Papa New Guinea as they work to complete TREES Registration under the ART-TREES standards, thus allowing the country to begin ART-TREES monitoring processes. This includes addressing remaining gaps in relation to the ART-TREES. Contributing to the development of national REDD+ guidelines and other guidelines, as well as a submission of PNG second FRL.

Forest solutions rewarded

While a specific plan focusing on the development of a draft ART-TREES registration document was prepared for the second half of 2022, underlying compliance aspects and the completion of the registration document is planned for 2023. Progress has been made in the assessment of Papa New Guinea's eligibility against ART TREES 2.0; this assessment was completed in early 2023. Continued work is necessary to meet the requirements for participation under LEAF.

Forest solutions enhanced

Knowledge of Article 6 opportunities and requirements is delayed and will be advanced in 2023.

Challenges and solutions

Technical gaps to fulfill ART-TREES standards and requirements, as well as the other objectives the country agreed to work on with UN-REDD, such as national REDD+ guidelines and the second FREL, required considerable effort and lengthy consultations. To remain on track for TREES gegistration under the ART-TREES standards, the start of 2023 will be used finalize the gap assessment of Papua New Guinea's eligibility under ART TREES 2.0 and to develop a roadmap to engage with forest carbon markets and access RBF.

Gender and social inclusion

Papua New Guinea developed guidelines on FPIC in 2022 to provide guidance on how stakeholders should equally participate in implementing REDD+. The guidelines stress the importance of gender equality in REDD+ and the importance of assuming a gender sensitive approach and upholding the rights of local communities.

Partnerships

UN-REDD support is in synergy with ongoing work under the GCF Readiness project, and in particular, the development of an authorization process to allow the government to screen and monitor climate-related initiatives and investments in REDD+ and AFOLU sectors. Ongoing work includes the development of a NFMS/MRV Dashboard, which will enable green growth in Papa New Guinea to address climate change and conserve biodiversity.

All efforts under UN-REDD in Papua New Guinea contribute to SDGs 13 and 15.

Peru

On track	Delayed
X	

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

Technical support has been provided to define a nesting approach for REDD+, including in the development of deforestation risk maps, with additional social and environmental criteria, a key input for preparing an emissions reductions (ER) allocation tool. Support has been provided during the Technical Assessment of the FREL and during the revision of the Technical Annex Report draft review process by MINAM. Support was also provided to carry out ER exercises, based on the updated FREL and considering different scenarios (including for nesting), to inform decisions on the reference and crediting periods to be defined under ART-TREES. There has been ongoing participation and support for the Intercultural Dialogues, which MINAM has facilitated with three major Amazonian Indigenous peoples' organizations in Peru to discuss a range of topics related to REDD+.

In addition, there has been support on approaches to pilot and update the Safeguards Information Module (MIS) and Citizen Attention Mechanism (MAC).

Forest solutions rewarded

With support from UNEP and FAO, MINAM developed and submitted a [TREES concept note](#) in February, 2022, building on an assessment of the potential ERs generated for the period 2017-2021, as well as an analysis of conformance with safeguards requirements. A detailed workplan has been prepared to develop the ART-TREES registration document and monitoring report, including carbon, legal and safeguards elements. Technical support included a series of consultations with the ART Secretariat and the preparation of terms of reference to hire a team during 2023 to conduct ER estimations. There has been ongoing analysis of conformance with ART-TREES safeguards indicators, to feed into the registration document.

Initial approaches on strategies to access private sector finance, leveraged with public resources, in actions associated with the fulfillment of the new NDC have been discussed with MINAM.

Forest solutions enhanced

A roadmap to access climate finance from voluntary carbon markets (VCM), in alignment with the NDC and recent national legislation, has been prepared and discussed with MINAM. The roadmap aims to integrate different policy initiatives with private sector financing (VCMs).

Challenges and solutions

MINAM has not had enough resources to hire technical staff needed to advance in forest and carbon monitoring in a way that allows them to meet bilateral and international reporting commitments, including in relation to the ART-TREES registration document and the first monitoring report. Extra resources have been mobilized to support Peru in advancing with technical and participatory aspects needed to advance these ongoing commitments, and to potentially access additional financing.

Despite additional resources being available to support progress in 2022, coordination with MINAM has been limited, in part due to the context of the evolving political situation. Progress in recruitment was only feasible by the end of the year, and the team will start working during the first quarter of 2023. Additional resources have been mobilized to support continued Intercultural Dialogues and participatory processes particularly at the regional level. Implementation will take place over 2023.

Peru is currently experiencing a complex political and security situation. The operations of MINAM continue, with a post-pandemic return to the office. Due to changing government priorities and a lack of technical staff at MINAM, there have been delays in defining how to proceed with the activities related to finance and the private sector. Further discussions will take place to define this work area in 2023. Under the work on voluntary carbon markets, there is the potential to hire a national expert to support MINAM in the design, implementation and monitoring of the VCM roadmap. With approval from MINAM, the process will be expedited in order to have a dedicated person to coordinate topics relating to VCM.

Gender and social inclusion

A number of consultations were held during 2022 related to the National Registry for Mitigation Measures (RENAMI), which aims to avoid double counting and serves as a tool to keep track of all mitigation measures. In addition, Intercultural Dialogues have been held with Amazonian Indigenous Peoples organizations. Both of these have included gender approaches. The Intercultural Dialogues have included women speakers and participants. MINAM produced two infographics explaining RENAMI that were widely distributed and included a gender perspective highlighting the roles of women and men.

The pilot version of Peru's Safeguards Information Module (MIS) also included an approach to rights, gender equality and interculturality. In addition, the assessment conducted against ART-TREES 2.0 safeguards requirements analyzed specific gender elements, including the rights established by the Peruvian state to equality and non-discrimination based on gender, and the full and effective participation of women in the design and implementation of REDD+ actions.

The concept of comprehensive climate change management in general includes participatory, transparent and inclusive planning for the design, execution, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and dissemination of policies, strategies, plans, programmes and projects. These aim to reduce the vulnerability of a country against the effects of climate change, while reducing emissions and increasing GHG removals. Considering intercultural, gender and intergenerational approaches, they were developed under a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder and multi-level consultation process.

The effective and culturally relevant participation of non-state actors in the comprehensive management of climate change is established in the Framework Law on Climate Change (LMCC) and its Regulations, which have included extensive consultation processes with Indigenous peoples. The participatory and decentralized consultation processes to elaborate the LMCC's regulation included seven workshops and 2,212 participants, with the involvement of Indigenous peoples.

The Indigenous Peoples' Platform for Climate Change (PPICC) and the Indigenous REDD+ Roundtables for Participation and Contribution in Different Processes were also created as spaces to manage proposals for adaptation and mitigation measures of Indigenous peoples, valuing their traditional and ancestral knowledge, practices and experience. These spaces also aim to strengthen and build capacity of Indigenous representatives in REDD+, and in taking actions that contribute to the reduction of emissions from deforestation.

There was also broad participation from various stakeholders during the socialization of the Registration of Mitigation Actions (RENAMI). Multiple sessions were organized throughout the country with a particular emphasis on the Amazon area. In addition, special infographics were designed to reach a broader audience.

Partnerships

The Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) is an international cooperation agreement on REDD+, updated in May, 2021, with endorsement from the governments of Germany, Norway, UK and the USA. This agreement includes performance finance for REDD+, under ART certification, which requires compliance with TREES. Peru is committed to updating Phase 2 of its JDI by establishing clear annual GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation reduction targets to inform resource allocation. Such targets should be the result of a participatory process between national sectors, Amazonian regional governments and Indigenous organizations, with a gender approach.

Additionally, the JDI addendum confirms Peru is committed to reducing its GHG emissions for compliance with the NDCs by accessing payment by results, in line with the TREES standard and considering national circumstances.

Peru is also committed to establishing an appropriate financial mechanism for REDD+ Results-based Payments. During COP27 Peru and Norway signed an agreement in which Norway committed to disburse $10 million through PROFONANPE (the Peruvian Trust Fund for National Parks and Protected Areas)[1], to continue supporting Peru with its efforts to halt deforestation and to implement the RENAMI.

Peru is also part of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI), an international, multi-faith alliance that works to bring moral urgency and faith-based leadership to global efforts to end tropical deforestation. Activities being implemented since 2018 aim to protect rainforests and safeguard the Indigenous peoples that serve as their guardians.

The UN-REDD Programme is serving as a point of coordination for a number of commitments and partnerships that have been developed in support of REDD+ implementation in Peru, with regular planning and coordination calls held with the Norwegian Embassy in Peru, as well as with NICFI, NORAD, GIZ, USAID and CIFOR.

Linkages to SDGs

Peru has strong national commitments and policies in place on climate and forests, as evidenced through its NDC, which includes a number of specific measures related to forests. Peru's continued progress on implementing its NDC, and REDD+ actions, contributes directly to SDGs 13 and 15 and indirectly to SDGs 5, 6, 8 and 12. Also, the RENAMI guidelines include some clauses related to alignment of mitigation action with SDG goals.

Uganda

On track	Delayed
X	

Forest solutions realized

In 2022, UN-REDD TA supported the country by designing an approach for high integrity Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) compliance with emerging carbon accounting standard requirements. The MRV progress made in 2022 comprises the development of an interpretation key, the assessment of a target sampling intensity, the testing of an ensemble approach combining multiple time-series analysis algorithms, the creation of a forest mask (a spatial layer identifying where the likelihood of the occurrence of forest is highest) and the updating of a spatial layer with forest plantations.

Moreover, Uganda also made great and significant progress to finalize Warsaw Framework elements by working to complete its SIS by having a webpage and submitting its first summary of information (SoI) to the UNFCCC. Following this achievement, the programme also helped national counterparts on data gathering to identify gaps and complete a TREES safeguards assessment for the country. The scope of such work focused on updating the template to gather data in order to include information needed to show conformance with TREES indicators and to complete the TREES safeguards assessment with new information. This work is still ongoing and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2023.

Forest solutions rewarded

To enable the country to mobilize $5 billion from Results-based Payment schemes, carbon markets and/or other transactions under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, the country's accredited entity submitted a GCF RBP concept note with support from UN-REDD to the GCF Secretariat in March, 2022, in order to be ready for a potential phase two of this GCF window. In addition, with support from UN-REDD and informed by initial results from the time-series analysis, Uganda submitted a TREES concept note in December, 2022.

To guide the country in this approach of accessing carbon markets and to have a more global picture on the topic, UN-REDD TA also supported the design of a diversified strategy to access REDD+ Results-based Payments from both market and non-market sources. This report examined the current and evolving Results-based Payment schemes, exploring key issues for Uganda to access these schemes and to maximize revenues for forest and land use mitigation actions. This allowed Uganda to identify possible gaps needing to be filled, together with a strategy and a roadmap of key actions. These would need to be fulfilled in order to be in a strong position to access these results-based financing schemes.

Despite not being included in the 2022 workplan, UNDP worked closely with national counterparts on the Uganda Climate Change Act. This defined climate change mechanisms as tools to deliver the NDC commitments and boost climate ambition.

To further target the objective of the National Climate Change Act (2021), and in accordance with the mandate of the Ministry of Water and Environment, a National Task Force on Climate Change Mechanism was inaugurated in August, 2022. The task force is composed of representatives from relevant government ministries, departments and agencies, the private sector, academia, and civil society. The overall objective of the task force is to provide technical support expertise to support the design and operationalization of the climate change mechanisms defined in Section 9 of the National Climate Change Act.

The task force also met in September, 2022 to learn more about carbon markets, the key areas to be considered including integrity, standards, accounting, Article 6 architecture and the possible options for Uganda. A roadmap was developed and will include a framework and guiding manual for carbon market mechanisms. In addition, through partnerships with the different agencies, such as the UNFCCC RCC, UN-REDD, GIZ and others, UNDP plans to support further capacity building for the task force.

Challenges and solutions

Similar to previous years, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt national and field processes, as well as the ability of the UN-REDD Programme to provide timely and qualitative technical assistance to the country. In-country missions happened in 2022 as Uganda remained active in its endeavours, and UN-REDD used digital means and in-country experts to keep the mentioned streams active.

Gender and social inclusion

Uganda established a technical working group with different actors (including CSO representatives and local communities) to deliver on REDD+. The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) and the National REDD+ Focal Point organized some consultations to gather information and inputs in order to support REDD+ implementation and to start discussions on ART-TREES. Women were also represented in these consultations, following UN-REDD guidance.

Partnerships
UN-REDD ad hoc work carried out in 2022 benefited from the partnership with the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) and the National REDD+ Focal Point. The Focal Point within the MWE played an important role in coordinating closely with the UN-REDD team and all members within the working group in providing contents and consolidating inputs. UN-REDD, through FAO, also established a partnership, though not formal, with GCF when submitting the concept note.

Linkages to SDGs

REDD+ activities in Uganda contribute directly to achieving SDFs 13 and 15, with linkage to other SDGs such as poverty reduction, health and well-being, gender equity, hunger alleviation and improving institutions.

Viet Nam

On track	Delayed
	X

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

With support from the UN-REDD Programme, the testing of the National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP) monitoring application continued, though progress was slow. The country is undergoing an important restructuring of government institutions across the forestry sector; the continuation, modality and thematic focus of the UN-REDD TA for future years should be reconsidered once the restructuring is complete.

Under carbon accounting, some important gaps were filled, including the development of consistent time series of land use maps and the tracking of conversion areas from natural forests to plantations.

Both required Viet Nam to register its LEAF jurisdictional project under the TREES Standard 2.0. The study, "*Identifying approaches for promoting forest-friendly supply chains particularly with smallholders and SMEs engagement,*" delivered various recommendations, including the differentiated roles of forests with certification for large-diameter timber supply chains, as well as short-rotation plantations for the woodchip industry. The study demonstrated how in the Central Annamite region, local governments played a key role in facilitating smallholder access and engagement in forest certification. Importantly, the study acted as an opportunity for plantation sector stakeholders in the region to reflect on a sustainable pathway for their currently lucrative industry, highlighting the anticipated challenges and potential opportunities with view to the EU's deforestation-free regulation.

Building on the ART-TREES safeguards analysis completed in late 2021, terms of reference were developed for further support to close identified gaps, and complementary work related to assessing and updating the national SIS is underway through the UN-REDD Lower Mekong Initiative. In addition, a draft monitoring plan template reflecting ART-TREES requirements was prepared, for finalization in early 2023.

The above developments from the UN-REDD Technical Assistance to Viet Nam are complementary to the achievements made in Viet Nam through the UN-REDD Lower Mekong Initiative on supporting the strengthening of socio-environmental information systems and national institutions for a national forest certification system, namely the Viet Nam Forest Certification System (VFCS).

Forest solutions rewarded

Viet Nam submitted a proposal for jurisdictional emissions reductions targets to the LEAF coalition, which was approved in 2021 and was followed by a letter of intent. In 2022, the country progressed modestly towards an ART-TREES registration of Viet Nam's jurisdictional proposal which was accepted by the LEAF Coalition. The government's commitment to pursuing ART-TREES registration is apparent from the MoU signed between the government and Emergent, aiming to sign an ERPA by October, 2023.

Forest solutions enhanced

Viet Nam submitted an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in November, 2022, which, notably, includes raising emissions reductions targets from 9 to 15.8 percent (unconditional) and from 27 to 43.5 percent (conditional) across all sectors, including LULUCF. In parallel to the process to update the NDC, UN-REDD facilitated discussions with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), which is mandated to oversee the NDC, and VNFOREST to identify opportunities to finance the implementation of its NDC targets through, among others, international cooperative approaches under Article 6.

Challenges and solutions
The UN-REDD Programme experienced challenges in operationalizing its support in Viet Nam due to, in large part, uncertainty surrounding the restructuring of the government's forestry sector institutions, as well as the resulting hesitation of personnel to take defining action. In 2022, the government dismantled the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST). This was followed by the establishment of two forestry-related departments, the Department of Forestry and the Forest Protection Department. Personnel are currently being appointed to new positions, and this is expected to address current obstacles.

Further delay, which is now mostly addressed, resulted in the processing of the UN-REDD TA for government approval. As indicated in the 2021 UN-REDD Annual Report, the Government of Viet

Nam's new Official Development Assistance (ODA) regulations have specific requirements for project start-up, with complex administrative requirements.

With the new departments and ongoing re-structuring, it is anticipated that personnel for institutions, including the formerly established task force for negotiating the LEAF ERPA (including technical work on ART-TREES registration) will need to be re-appointed.

To better coordinate with the government on the above-mentioned, country-specific circumstances, a national coordinator position was established and filled within the FAO country office.

Gender and social inclusion

A study was conducted focusing specifically on approaches to engage smallholders and SMEs in forest-friendly supply chains, identifying the gaps and corresponding efforts that can be taken to more effectively engage these often-marginalized groups. Linking to the findings of this study, under the UN-REDD Lower Mekong Initiative, efforts in 2022 directly invested in the piloting of guidelines tailored for smallholders in Viet Nam, for both certified supply chains, as well as controlled sources (not including controversial sources) of timber.

Partnerships

UN-REDD is providing support to the government, ensuring the government widely consults stakeholders, including REDD+ partners. This has been particularly important in the efforts related to the LEAF jurisdictional proposal. UN-REDD is working in coordination with JICA, the main provider of technical support in REDD+ and the agency proposed to take on the accredited agency role under the GCF Results-based Payment. UN-REDD is also working in coordination with SilvaCarbon and the US Forestry Service, which are both active in supporting the government on the LEAF jurisdictional project.

UN-REDD continues to coordinate with partners under the EU-funded project for the Central Highlands.

Various more country-based and regional partnerships were cultivated relating to work in Viet Nam, through the UN-REDD Lower Mekong Initiative (see dedicated section on the Lower Mekong Initiative.)

Linkages to SDGs

Viet Nam is a partner in the NDC support programme and the partnership for the 2030 Agenda. Results from the programme are expected to contribute to the achievement of the country's objectives in relation to SDGs 5, 13 and 15, among others.

All other efforts under UN-REDD Technical Assistance contribute to SDGs 13 and 15.

Zambia

On track	Delayed
	X

REDD+ implementation

Forest solutions realized

During 2022, technical support was provided to the Forestry Department for the operationalization of a technical approach for district-level forest change monitoring. Such an approach has many

applications. Notably, there was interest from the Forestry Department in an approach that could enable tracking progress of a potential reduction in charcoal production. For a district scale, the technical approach to forest change monitoring needs to be specifically tailored, using high-density time series algorithms in the Sepal platform. This work built on a first set of online trainings conducted in 2021, including through further online learning and through a dedicated in-person workshop that could be conducted during a mission by remote sensing specialists to Lusaka.

Forest solutions rewarded

In early 2022, the UN-REDD carbon finance scoping for Zambia was concluded. In the second half of 2021, updated activity data was collected for the years 2019-2020, and during early 2022, the data was analysed to enable an assessment of Zambia's emissions trends during 2019-2020.

The comparison against Zambia's current FREL (historical period 2009-2018) delivered information on emissions reductions. Rather than any emissions reductions, the emissions trend in 2019 continued at the same level as observed during the reference period.

Results were presented to the Forestry Department in a dedicated strategy session in April, 2022. It was concluded the absence of emissions reductions in Zambia at a national scale provides a difficult starting point for developing a national-scale programme and for attracting carbon finance. During the meeting, it was highlighted the national-scale results provide little information on sub-national trends and sub-national programmes, such as those in the Eastern Province or North-Western Province, might very well be feasible.

Forest solutions enhanced

In the framework of Zambia's efforts to develop a jurisdictional REDD+ programme in the North-Western Province, the UN-REDD Technical Assistance initiated a detailed market and value chain assessment to identify entry points for sustainable value chain development and for uplifting alternative livelihoods for the local communities. The purpose is to uplift alternative livelihoods for the local communities, increasing the value of forests versus other land uses, contributing to resilient rural development in the province and boosting potential future emissions reductions.

In 2022, the UN-REDD TA initiated the development of the methodology for the value chain assessment and established a partnership with CIFOR for the mapping of non-wood forest products (NWFP) in the North-Western province.

The forest value chain assessment is in its initial stages. The following planned activities in 2023 will enable the completion of the assessment, facilitating the identification of entry points to strengthen value chains and enhance related rural livelihoods:

- mapping of forest products in North-Western Province;
- selecting priority value chains, through a methodology considering (i) social criteria, (ii) economic criteria, and (iii) environmental criterial;
- value chain assessment of priority forest products as per agreed methodology, including the identification of main actors, the mapping of the value chain, (local, national, regional) markets, quantification of the physical material flows and of value accumulation, identification of the socio-economic structure and typical relations between actors, the drivers of the value chain.

A rural finance assessment of existing and financial services targeted to rural communities in Zambia was undertaken in 2022. The assessment was undertaken to facilitate the identification of specific actions to enhance access to finance in rural areas in support of investments in forest positive

activities. An easier and more inclusive access to financial products and services will be an engine for climate mitigation and sustainable development.

During the field mission in November and December, 2022, meetings were organized with more than 50 institutions, including government institutions, development partners, banks, microfinance institutions, saving groups, producers associations and cooperatives, community forestry management groups and private companies.

The findings of the assessment were shared during two workshops with relevant stakeholders in Solwezi and Lusaka. Some general recommendations were discussed and validated as possible future actions: i) building on best practices of financial inclusion, ii) designing specific financial products for Non-Wood Forest Product (NWFP) value chains, iii) enhancing the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), iv) facilitating the use of guarantee schemes and the collateral registry; v) experimenting with blended finance mechanisms; and vi) developing carbon credit mechanisms.

Challenges and solutions

The results of the carbon finance scoping review drew attention to shortcomings of the development of Zambia's REDD+ programme, including that it has not yet delivered significant emissions reductions. It will be challenging to work towards accessing carbon finance for Zambia's forest and land use sector. The country is reacting to this challenge by focusing much of its efforts on sub-national programmes, with the expectation that emissions reductions will be easier to achieve than on a national scale. In addition to the Zambia Integrated Forest Landscape Project (ZIFL-P) in Eastern Province, Zambia is investing effort into the development of a jurisdictional programme in North-Western Province.

Gender and social inclusion

The assessment of rural finance in the North-Western province considered women's inclusion at the community level. It concluded women are under-represented in Community Forest Management Groups (CFMGs) and over-represented in saving groups; attention must be paid to gender equity when planning rural finance activities. The assessment report, that will be finalized in 2023, will include related recommendations on contributing to women's empowerment and gender equity, which will inform future REDD+ jurisdictional programmes, as well as UN-REDD country support.

Partnerships

For the mapping of NWFP in the North-Western province, a partnership was established with CIFOR, building upon previous research on NWFP undertaken between FAO and CIFOR. UN-REDD TA is assessing active actors linked to forest value chain development, with the intent of establishing partnerships and synergies.

Linkages to SDGs

UN-REDD TA in Zambia is aligned to SDGs 1, 13 and 15.

Lower Mekong Region

UN-REDD Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong Region (Lower Mekong Initiative) Addressing Forest Crime through Improved Governance in the Lower Mekong Region

On track	Delayed
X*	

As assessed against the workplan following the no-cost extension granted in January, 2023

Picking up on the momentum from 2021, the Lower Mekong Initiative delivered on a number of important results and saw the first physical regional meeting take place in 2022, following the ease of COVID-era restrictions on in-person meetings.

Regional dialogue and analysis

Wood products trade in the Lower Mekong region has undergone significant changes over the last decade. One of the most dramatic changes was a plunge in exports of primary wood from natural forests, and a corresponding increase in production and trade from plantations, particularly from Viet Nam and Thailand. On the other hand, wood processing demand from the region was supplied by imports or primary products from other "high risk" regions (Africa, Pacific). Over the last decade, exports of primary wood products from the region have been overwhelmingly heading to China. Processed wood product exports are mainly headed to extra-regional destinations, including the United States, EU and Japan, countries with stricter requirements for legality and sustainability. Proximity of the region to China presents opportunities, in terms of the significant market size, but also threats, in terms of the historical illegal cross border trade and less stringent market requirements for sustainability.

Through the initiative's first face-to-face regional dialogue in October, 2022, the circumstances of each country's forest products value chains and their trajectory towards achieving transformational change were discussed. The vision for transformational change is a shift in forest product value chains from systems that support deforestation and forest degradation, illegal logging and trade to systems that support sustainable management of the region's forests and legal and sustainable forest product value chains.

Verification of timber legality and sustainability and smallholder engagement

Smallholders and micro, small and medium enterprises (m-SMEs) make up 80 - 90 percent of forest enterprises and produce the majority of timber in the Lower Mekong region. Yet, they often remain de facto excluded from legal and sustainable supply chains due to their informal status and lack of knowledge of requirements for legality and sustainability. In 2022, substantial support was provided to develop and strengthen voluntary certification and CITES permitting systems. An important aspect of this work was to facilitate the integration of smallholders and communities into legal and sustainable forest product supply chains by adapting, piloting and promoting adequate legal requirements and certification standards, and by building corresponding capacities including in traceability. During the reporting period, over 200 individuals underwent capacity building (28 percent women) and three initiatives were launched to pilot legal timber harvests in community forests. Smallholder engagement was improved by emphasizing there are different pathways for smallholders to engage in these supply chains, and useful steps can be taken that are common to all pathways, such as supporting group formation, improving access to finance and enabling smallholders to advocate for easing regulations to create a more "smallholder-friendly" regulatory framework.

Also in 2022, enterprise incubation programmes were launched in Thailand and Viet Nam. This work is supporting m-SMEs and forest groups to increase their capacity to execute and scale up sustainable business models and attract private finance. In Thailand, the [e-Tree](#) platform was launched in collaboration with the Royal Forestry Department, allowing smallholders to generate online documentation on evidence of timber legality and source of origin.

Strengthening data and monitoring

Monitoring the trends of unsustainable or illegal forest activities is challenging without taking a proxy approach. On the other hand, using multiple sources of data can help understand the trends in forest, forest management, forest products production and trade, and thereby glean insight into the trends of legal and illegal forest activities. There are also multiple sources of data and approaches for building an understanding of social and environmental impacts in the forest sector.

The use of global and regional datasets, platforms and tools can support this process. In 2022, an [online resource for understanding and tracking environmental and social trends in the forest sector](#) was launched, which compiles a set of global and regional platforms, datasets and tools to support the exploration and monitoring of environmental and social outcomes in the forest sector. In addition, 2022 saw the first two in a series of regional webinars, featuring best practices, innovations and initiative experiences related to data and monitoring to support sustainable forest trade and management in the Lower Mekong region.

In the region, countries are interested in developing capacities to monitor forest changes in 'near real-time' which can make monitoring and forest law enforcement efforts much more effective. Under the Lower Mekong Initiative, a near-real-time tool for the region was developed within [SEPAL](#). The Change Alert application allows users access to a synthetic[3] time series algorithm to detect changes at a user defined frequency, such as changes in the past month or two weeks; . The application allows users to tailor parameters to local conditions which can reduce false detection and overestimation of changes. The Deforestation Alert Analysis application helps verify the change alerts using high resolution satellite imagery, such as NICFI planet daily data or monthly mosaics. The output can be exported in common formats for further distribution and visualization on a web map server. This allows integration in existing national systems, and outputs can be exported into a format suitable for the end user, for example for forest rangers. Both applications are being tested in Lower Mekong countries. Initial results are showing promise, especially for detecting changes in evergreen forests.

In addition, the Lower Mekong countries are working to strengthen information and information systems linked to social and environmental trends in forests. In 2022, for example, Thailand continued to work with stakeholders to move from design of its SIS towards operationalization; Cambodia began collecting data and mapping environmental and social parameters to complement analysis of deforestation and forest degradation in four target provinces; and, Lao PDR concluded an assessment on the availability and opportunities for strengthening data on forest and land tenure.

Behavioural change campaigns

The 2022 Knowledge, Attitude, Practices (KAP) Survey on Forest Crime conducted in five Lower Mekong countries and in China shows that only half of the respondents care enough to act against illegal logging and illegal forest trade. Across the region, the KAP scores were lower than 60, indicating a need for interventions to bridge the gap from low awareness to enhanced knowledge, and from apathy to interest and concern on forest crime issues.

These results and further analysis were published in a handbook, "*Communications handbook on forest crimes based on Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey results*," launched during the 2022 regional dialogue and through various country-level meetings. The handbook guided the development of national campaign plans in [Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. Myanmar is still in the process of drafting.](#)

---

[3] synthetic data is information that is artificially manufactured rather than generated by real-world events

With nine out of 10 Chinese consumers intent on purchasing rosewood in 2023, a 20 percent increase from 2022, the China campaign 'Forest for Life' shifted its focus on reducing demand for rosewood by making more people care about forests. The campaign was soft launched in March, 2022 and has been engaging young people through social media. China Daily, China Financial Times, Asia Pacific Times and other national media outlets have covered the campaign, garnering about 200,000 impressions. In addition to guiding the campaign strategies, the survey results provided an evidence base for monitoring and advocacy purposes by establishing key performance indicators. These indicators are captured in a Monitoring & Evaluation Framework that will keep track of the campaign progress over time.

Promoting Finance for Sustainable Forest Use

Many high-risk or even destructive forest activities would not be able to take place without external finance. These activities require capital not only to buy equipment and machinery, but also to pay for the costs of harvesting, processing and transporting the finished products to the markets. This is facilitated by banks through lending or credit provision and underwriting services. Similarly, shifting to more sustainable land use practices requires capital, at least in the stages during the transition. However, due to the heightened risks faced by lenders, many banks are not willing to invest or lend in forestry activities, and many banks have insufficient capacity to discern between what is sustainable and what is unsustainable. In 2022, the Lower Mekong Initiative developed a regional financial collaboration forum. The forum is designed to raise awareness of illegal logging and forest conversion among capital providers operating in the region and to increase capacity of lenders to redirect capital to more sustainable practices.

In parallel, the Lower Mekong Initiative analysed the main financial actors involved in timber, pulp and paper and rubber wood value chains in the region. This will help to identify financiers that are knowingly or unknowingly financing deforestation and unsustainable forest activities. The exercise will, in turn, support the forum to target specific financiers for engagement with offers of support and capacity building, where necessary.

Challenges and solutions

Noting the implications of COVID-19 related constraints to the initiative, and the shortened initiative duration due to the delayed start up, a total of two years' no-cost extension was granted, enabling the initiative to achieve completion, and in effect, extending the initiative's lifetime until the end of 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact was reduced significantly in 2022, allowing for the first face-to-face regional meeting to take place in October, 2022, with COVID-19 measures in place to ensure the safety of participants. Notwithstanding, there is no denying the loss in terms of opportunity for regional and cross-border dialogues, due to restrictions from the pandemic. For a regional initiative, designed specifically to enhance regional collaboration, the timing of the pandemic could not have been worse.

Political turmoil in Myanmar has all but removed the country from activities since the first half of 2021. In 2022, the Lower Mekong Initiative made pointed efforts to continue supporting communities in sustainable forest management, specifically with the provision of training and studies and pilots on forest management and harvesting planning.

Gender and social inclusion

Gender balance and women's participation were measured and promoted in meetings. Women's participation was recorded at 37 percent at the face-to-face regional dialogue held in October, 2022,

but more substantively, women participants from the region played key roles in presenting, offering comments and demonstrating active engagement. In Thailand, an interview under the Thai communication campaign showed that female officers play a significant role in conflict resolution to mediate with local people on forest encroachment in community forests.

Social inclusion has been a larger focus, as data platform development and data transparency interventions are designed to promote inclusive access to information. For example, in Myanmar, social and environmental impact monitoring is being incorporated into procedures for legal timber production.

As mentioned in the section above, a significant focus of the initiative is to facilitate smallholder and community access to legal and sustainable forest product value chains. This has been achieved in the form of trainings to community stakeholders and the development of tools that institutionalize smallholder needs and perspectives into forest certification and legal procedures related to sustainable forest management and harvesting, among others. In Thailand, the development of principles, criteria and indicators for the SIS consider gender and social inclusion, with a number of proposed indicators to be disaggregated for local and ethnic communities, women, youth, the elderly and other vulnerable groups. At the regional level, an effort was made to identify data and tools related to gender in the development of the [online resource](#). Although there is a lack of dedicated platforms on the topic regionally, four resources with gender information were included, such as Servir Mekong and UN Women's ''Women Count'' portal.

Partnerships

The initiative works closely with the governments of the Lower Mekong countries (with the exception of Myanmar), including, but not limited to forestry agencies, and with stakeholder partners operating in each country. In 2022, the initiative strengthened strategic engagement including with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), focusing on regional forest trade statistics and trends; Global Green Supply Chain (GGSC) from China, which conducted a survey on the trends of Chinese timber buyer companies; CITES Secretariat, to support CITES implementation and address ongoing compliance processes under CITES; the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), to support sustainable forest management through development or strengthening of forest management standards and promotion of compliance with legal requirements; Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), to foster networks between demand and supply sides of certified wood products markets, particularly between China and the Lower Mekong countries; The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), to build national capacities and enable community-based groups and smallholders access to legal and sustainable forest product value chains; and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to identify innovative sustainable models for timber production and trade for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), among others.

Linkages to SDGs

The activities under the initiative contribute to progress against SDGs 12, 13 and 15.

ASEAN Region

Climate change mitigation through social forestry actions in ASEAN countries

On track	Delayed
X	

Forest solutions enhanced

Social forestry is widely recognized within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region as a viable and positive approach for achieving sustainable forest management. However, the connection between social forestry and climate change mitigation is often loose or not evident. The initiative, "Climate change mitigation through social forestry actions in 3 pilot ASEAN countries," started working with ASEAN member states to strengthen the evidence base for climate mitigation contributions of social forestry.

The initiative was formally launched in June, 2022 through an online launch event co-hosted by the ASEAN Secretariat and the UN-REDD Programme. At the time of writing this report, consultations with three target countries, Indonesia, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic, were being finalized. Work has started on assessing the current state of social forestry models, the potential extent of implementing social forestry interventions, screening the landscape for successful social forestry incubators and financiers and social forestry enterprises and programmes and conducting analyses of their economic and commercial gaps and potential in the target countries.

Project activities started up for data collection (tabular and geo-spatial) of existing social forestry models and the potential extent of those models in each of the three pilot countries. A subsequent analysis and validation of collected data will follow. Specifically, an estimate of potential climate mitigation contributions resulting from existing social forestry interventions in each of the three pilot countries commenced.

The approach will utilize activity data and emissions factors developed as part of National Forest Inventory (NFI) and/or Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL) processes. It will leverage FAO's technical expertise in remote sensing, land cover assessments and the organization's institutional knowledge and experience in Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV). This approach is innovative given its sub-national scale and will be instrumental in informing similar efforts to quantify and include mitigation contributions as part of national approaches to nested REDD+ actions and their relevance to Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. The OpenForis SEPAL, and other tools currently under evaluation for potential use in this process, will support monitoring at the community/village forestry scale and is both scalable and integrates with National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Indonesia.

To understand the landscape of successful social forestry Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) and timber/timber products enterprises in Cambodia, Indonesia and Laos PDR, research and assessment of the commercial potential of social forestry models were initiated.

To facilitate and standardize assessment, a set of criteria with indicators for all three aspects were established. For social forestry programs, this included socio-economic impact, promotion of sustainable forest management and trade, building partnerships and connections, and many key elements of a holistic program such as capacity building and funding. For enterprises, the criteria included financial viability and market access; social, institution and governance; alignment of business with resources; capacity and technology; and right security and ownership or legality. For incubators and financiers, these were systems or foundations in place, access to finance, networking, mentoring, capacity programme and flexibility to adapt programme or services. A scan of the programmes, enterprises, incubators and financiers then started. Sources of information included online databases, key informants from various actors in the value chain, as well as government representatives.

Challenges and solutions

Evidence requires sound data, and ideally, spatial data, and countries have historically made different choices or degrees of investments to pursue. However, challenges, such as identifying and gaining access to relevant datasets, must be addressed if the completion of assessments is to be achieved. Therefore, the initiative is operating in strong partnership with participating countries and the ASEAN Secretariat to ensure access to data is possible; this work includes improving some of the available datasets. Key positive lessons will be captured, working closely with and where applicable through formal ASEAN mechanisms, such as dialogues with ASEAN working group on Social Forestry (AWG-SF) and furthering dialogues with the ASEAN working group on Forest & Climate Change (AWG-FCC).

Gender and social inclusion

The initiative places an emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion across activities and work in partnerships established under the initiative. In 2022, when the initiative was in its inception phase, equal gender representation was ensured for the launch event. Gender and social inclusion considerations continue to be a project priority, and this is reflected in all ongoing activities and initiatives.

Partnerships

The initiative works in partnership with the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN working group on Social Forestry (AWG-SF) and the ASEAN working group on Forest & Climate Change (AWG-FCC). It also works with the governments of Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao People's Democratic Republic, RECOFTC, and the Non-Timer Forest Products Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) , and various other partners and stakeholders in the ASEAN region and target countries.

Linkages to SDGs

Work in the ASEAN region contributes to SDGs 5, 13 and 15.

Knowledge management results

2022 has seen unparalleled momentum for forest solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises. Kicked off shortly before the year started by the Glasgow Forest commitments, an unstoppable groundswell of attention and action has anchored forest protection and restoration squarely in the minds of decision-makers in politics and business: from UNEA 5.2. which delivered a universal definition of nature-based solutions, to the World Forestry Congress in Korea, the European Union's regulation on deforestation-free trade and finally to the UNFCCC COP27, where the Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership and UN-REDD's Making Good on the Glasgow Climate Pact paper were launched.

For UN-REDD, successfully moving from readiness to increased delivery for implementation will depend to a large extent on upscaled knowledge and capacity amongst REDD+ practitioners and decision-makers. In support of increased delivery of REDD+ readiness and implementation, the Programme is taking a new approach for improved Capacity Development and Knowledge Management (CDKM). It was developed to improve capacity development and knowledge management in terms of increased speed, quantity and quality. The approach acknowledges a universal value-adding role witnessed from breakthrough; suggests an accessible framework – The Breakthrough Passage – featuring key domains upon which breakthrough is based; and identifies game-change as a typical (value-adding) outcome. This was made necessary by several intertwined developments: the urgent need to pivot from an era of readiness to an era of massively scaled up

financing, implementation and impact; the Programme's and its partner countries' significantly raised ambition to deliver climate action and contribute to the Paris Agreement and Glasgow Declaration; the urgency of action and results; frontier technologies that allow the use of previously impossible or costly tools; and, a renewed commitment by donors to the UN-REDD Programme, particularly CDKM. The latter is expressed by significant funding for 2023-2025 by Korea, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

The programme pivoted in 2022 towards an approach where (i) annual thematic priorities guide all outputs, (ii) CDKM outputs are connected, coherent and sequenced and (iii) UN-REDD's CDKM work links to the knowledge of partners outside of the programme. The new approach builds on an intrinsically linked three-step knowledge journey, from knowledge generation to knowledge sharing and knowledge-based advocacy. In this knowledge value chain, not one step is more important than the other. It is their interconnectedness that enables the programme to deliver.

The UN-REDD Executive Board, which met at the end of 2022, defined three KM priorities for 2023: REDD+ finance, social inclusion, and the agriculture-forest nexus. As UN-REDD prepares and delivers the new KM plan, these three priorities will remain at the core. Connecting the first two, a training and dialogue programme for Indigenous peoples on climate finance started to be developed, under UNDP direction and together with various global and regional networks of Indigenous peoples, for inception during 2023 and implementation in 2023-2024, as new KM funds reach UN-REDD.

Knowledge is captured, managed and disseminated to accelerate climate action

Building on the new approach, technical assistance in 2022 was supported by a number of cross-cutting knowledge management and communications activities, responding to needs of partner countries, communities of technical practice and wider forest solution constituencies. These activities also achieved wider reach by further elaborating global-level normative best practices, informed by real world experiences in the countries. Finally, as in 2021, a prime goal of UN-REDD's knowledge management has been to support partner countries in their LEAF and ART-TREES journeys.

A flagship product, in support of social inclusion in of the implementation of forest solutions, was launched, in 2022: an analysis of Indigenous peoples rights and NDCs, prepared by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact and Forest Peoples Programme. The four-part report was launched at a side event at the UN Climate Conference in Bonn in June, 2022 and further communicated through multimedia stories featuring Indigenous climate action and leadership.

To support capacity building on social inclusion in REDD+, UN-REDD convened training sessions and dialogues to connect social equity with REDD+ policy and finance, including a training for Indigenous peoples on Climate Finance during the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May, 2022 and a training on Climate Finance as a Catalyst for gender equality and women's empowerment in the forest sector during the Committee on the Status of Women in March, 2022. UN-REDD also launched an info brief on carbon rights and the deep-dive comparative legal study on carbon rights this year.

Responding to partner countries' requests, UN-REDD focused its knowledge sharing activities on global exchanges and trainings. First, an in-person seminar at FAO's headquarters in Rome, to help REDD+ countries understand the increasingly complex financing context, convened REDD+ countries government representatives to exchange experiences and views in a safe and neutral space on their efforts to leverage finance from various sources to advance REDD+ implementation. This included knowledge sharing on aligning project level and jurisdictional level REDD+ projects to national level circumstances (nesting) and carbon market strategies. Second, a webinar on REDD+ safeguards requirements in the current climate finance landscape was held twice to cover different time zones and languages. The interactive webinar, for REDD+ focal points in governments and REDD+ safeguards

specialists, outlined key safeguards requirements of ART-TREES, Verra, and LEAF and discussed how approaches, tools, and processes can be harmonized. Third, trainings for IPLCs were held at UNPFII and UNFCCC SB56.

Collective political and societal support to NbS increased

Following the logic of the new approach, knowledge-based advocacy events were organized at the World Forestry Congress (WFC) and UNFCCC COP27. At the WFC, UN-REDD organized or participated in twelve sessions, from Global deforestation: challenges and opportunities for concrete action to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030, to a ministerial forum on finance. At WFC, UN-REDD also welcomed Korea as a donor, establishing a partnership to enhance implementation of REDD+ through capacity development and knowledge management.

A series of high-profile side events, including the launch of the paper, "*Making Good on the Glasgow Climate Pact,*" marked UN-REDD's engagement at the UNFCCC COP27 in Sharm El- Sheikh. The paper, the associated campaign and high-level side event outlined the need and pathway for a milestone of 1 gigaton of CO_2 reductions from forest emissions by 2025 (and every year thereafter) based on incentives (carbon price above $30, volume and predictability), upfront investments, high-integrity emissions reductions and inclusion of Indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as women and youth. The event, increasing access to forest carbon finance, with the United Kingdom, a leader on global forest finance who became a UN-REDD donor in 2022, positioned UN-REDD as a key source of support for countries to become REDD+ and LEAF-ready.

Also at COP 27, UN-REDD was featured at a side event, Harnessing carbon markets: a conversation with Women Leaders from Africa, where the critical role of women in forest sector climate action and carbon market participation and benefit distribution was explored.

In cooperation with partners, such as the Nature4Climate coalition and the World Economic Forum, UN-REDD continued to make the case for Nature-based Solutions, particularly forest solutions and jurisdictional REDD+, influencing the framing of several op-eds and articles, and providing interviews and media briefings.

UN-REDD collaborated with and supported various platforms and networks of Indigenous peoples on policy and finance dimensions of forest solutions, from NDC engagement to new finance streams such as carbon markets. They comprised the UN Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), the UNFCCC Local Communities & Indigenous Peoples Platform, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), and the Amazon Indigenous Federation (COICA). These collaborations and support were conducted through different avenues, such as public events, training programmes, publications and contributions through social media.

In response to the campaign by Indigenous peoples globally to raise questions and concerns on new finance developments in the REDD+ domain, such as carbon markets, UN-REDD organized the training and dialogue on carbon finance and the forest sector during the annual UN Indigenous Peoples Assembly, mentioned above. This saw the gathering together of experts, representatives from REDD+ financing schemes and Indigenous peoples themselves. More than 200 Indigenous representatives and development practitioners participated. The event was deemed successful by Indigenous peoples and thus further, similar efforts will be considered. This served also to coalesce and disseminate a rich package of information and knowledge products, made available to Indigenous leaders and practitioners.

UN-REDD continued its storytelling strategy of highlighting the key role of forests in the green recovery, featuring regional and global stories on national progress on REDD+, Indigenous approaches to forest monitoring, and local forest community empowerment, among others.

In the Lower Mekong region, a survey was conducted to understand the population's knowledge and attitude toward forest crimes. The findings provided the scientific basis for communications campaigns in the Lower Mekong countries and China to trigger behavioral change, and ultimately, to reduce illegal logging and the illegal forest trade.

Strategic, event-driven social media campaigns, supported by social videos, increased the UN-REDD Programme's social media following to more than 94,000 followers. The promotion of the messaging around the new *Making Good on the Glasgow Climate Pact* during COP 27 received over 1 million impressions.

Knowledge and country-based lessons on REDD+ were shared through 63 blog posts, often in several languages. They were also promoted in the quarterly REDD+ Resource newsletters and the topical Round-Up newsletters, which have over 11,000 subscribers. The blog posts were seen by 189,913 visitors to the website.

Digital cooperation and frontier technologies deployed

The 2023 knowledge journey will focus on three strategic priority knowledge topics: REDD+ finance, social inclusion and deforestation-free supply chains and agriculture. These topics are in direct response to the knowledge and capacity needs of UN-REDD partner countries and build on the outcomes of the 2023 inception and the 6th UN-REDD Executive Board meeting. Knowledge on these three (and other) topics will be generated through a series of webinars and regional and global exchanges, continuously ensuring gender balance and inclusiveness. The knowledge gleaned from these events will be shared in a targeted manner, both regionally and globally. Throughout 2023, the knowledge generated will additionally serve to provide the content for the update and development of REDD+ Academy Learning Journals, as well as for the Switzerland-funded knowledge and advocacy partnership with the African Forest Forum. In addition, it will provide the basis for the Green Gigaton 2023-2025 advocacy campaign to deliver forest solutions at speed and at scale.

Gender

Throughout 2022, the UN-REDD Programme continued to support 18 partner countries[4] in integrating gender equality and women's empowerment principles within REDD+ action.

This support ranged from integrating gender within REDD+ benefit sharing systems and carbon market readiness efforts, to ensuring women's active and equitable involvement in REDD+ efforts, including in REDD+ imagery training, value chains and communication campaigns. To illustrate, in an example from Chile, through building capacities at the institutional level, gender and social inclusion have been integrated at the operational level of the ENCCRV and the +Bosques project, including in the design of projects under the Benefit Sharing System (SDB in Spanish). In Costa Rica, gender considerations were comprehensively integrated into ART-TREES standard compliance documentation for emissions reductions and removal credits.

---

[4] Argentina, Chile, Colombia , Congo (Republic of), Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ghana, Indonesia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Thailand, Uganda, Viet Nam and Zambia

In the Republic of the Congo, a minimum threshold of at least 30 percent women participation rate was set, which, in turn, helped to achieve an almost 50 percent women's participation rate in a radar imagery training. In Ecuador, 35 percent of the local producers who had their capacities strengthened on commercialization to international markets of their deforestation-free products were women. This active engagement of women in UN-REDD support in 2022 has also shed light on the critical role women can play around sustainable management of forests. To illustrate this, under the support provided in the Lower Mekong region, an interview in Thailand showed that female officers play a significant role in conflict resolution to mediate with local people on forest encroachment in community forests.

At the global level, an internal UN-REDD Seminar on Gender was organized in August 2022 to enhance skills across UN-REDD professionals and to increase gender mainstreaming efforts within UN-REDD TA services. In total, 58 UN-REDD staff members (18 men and 40 women) joined. This seminar was instrumental in identifying key gender gaps and needs as well as various recommendations for planning, monitoring, reporting and communication on gender mainstreaming. Based on the feedback obtained, the UN-REDD Gender Team[5] reviewed and revised its support and work plan for 2023 in order to address the gaps, needs and recommendations identified.

Furthermore, in 2022, UN-REDD also developed a new tool[6] (available in English, French and Spanish) in order to help i) measure men's and women's participation in workshops/events/trainings, ii) track the quality and effectiveness of their participation, and iii) assess how often their ideas or proposals are accepted or adopted in a given meeting or workshop. To help create a common location for and compile resources related to gender and forestry, UN-REDD also developed a new Gender and Forestry Resources Library. It contains a growing collection of both UN-REDD and non-UN-REDD gender and forestry resources ranging from country specific examples and technical papers to infographics and scientific papers.

---

[5] The members of UN-REDD Gender Team include UNDP's Gender and REDD+ Specialist and the UN-REDD gender focal points from FAO and UNEP.
[6] This tool is adapted from CIFOR's "Field guide to Adaptive Collaborative Management and improving women's participation." (2014)

Financial reporting

[The financial report will be provided by the MPTF separately in May, 2023.]

Looking ahead

COP27 and beyond

The need to accelerate actions for forests and climate has never been greater, nor has the ability to deliver. 2023 presents a number of strategic opportunities to accelerate into a critical decade of implementation.

In 2023, the programme will continue to support forest partners – countries, donors, private sector, civil society, Indigenous peoples, women and local communities – to turn the tide on deforestation and to contribute to advancing a number of strategic commitments in the forest and climate agenda, as discussed by the UN-REDD Executive Board:

- supporting policies and investments for forest solutions, including cross-sectoral approaches and multi-stakeholder processes, particularly in the agricultural and rural development sectors;

- supporting countries to continuously improve their forest monitoring and MRV systems, in order to ensure the high-integrity of REDD+ actions and financing, and to meet requirements of evolving jurisdictional standards for REDD+ results, such as ART-TREES;

- supporting countries to assess and access climate and carbon finance, both upfront (for the implementation of forest solutions), as well as for REDD+ (rewarding forest-climate results);

- promoting social inclusion and gender equality in forest policies and the associated climate finance, with a specific focus on Indigenous peoples and local communities;

- assisting countries in building the necessary support regulations and institutional arrangements to ensure the environmental integrity of the mix of carbon finance options they choose to deploy, ensuring environmental integrity and social equity;

- assisting forest countries in the Global South and relevant stakeholders to explore and enhance private sector investments, including through LEAF;

- supporting countries in monitoring and enhancing the forest components of their NDCs.

On the road to COP28, there will be a strong focus of attention on scaling up action in the Amazon, as well as discussions on topics such as carbon finance, the voluntary carbon market, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), to name a few.

At UN-REDD, we will continue to work towards making forests an exemplar of progress being made on the Paris Agreement, bringing forward evidence that forest solutions and finance are progressing, for a successful recognition of the forest action agenda at COP28.

Looking to the 2030 horizon, the goal of UN-REDD is to help realize forest solutions to the climate emergency by avoiding carbon emissions and fostering carbon sequestration for at least 5 GtCO2e per year.

Annex 1: Impact stories

Making sense of the complex solutions to agriculture-related deforestation

The global deforestation rate is estimated at roughly <u>10 million hectares</u> per year, with nearly <u>90 percent</u> of forest loss driven by agricultural expansion. The global food system produces as much as <u>one-third</u> of global greenhouse gas emissions. These alarming statistics highlight the need to ramp up efforts to make food systems more sustainable. Taking action to remove forest conversion from agricultural value chains offers significant potential to achieve climate mitigation, enhanced livelihoods and food security.

The global community has started to focus on halting deforestation from agriculture commodities and transforming food systems as a key solution to turning the tide on deforestation. Discussions of integrated landscape approaches, climate finance opportunities and tools that may be used to assess and mitigate forest risks throughout agricultural supply chains are growing as countries, international organizations and private businesses take measures to increase the adoption of more sustainable and equitable practices. The <u>UN Food Systems Summit</u> and a set of <u>Independent Dialogues</u> organized by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan provided a space for countries to exchange on these topics in 2022. Among the topics discussed: the key role of governments in halting agriculture-related deforestation and transforming food systems, as well as emerging climate finance opportunities.

In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, national and local level strategic planning, including the <u>National REDD+ Strategy</u> and regional plans for Green Growth and <u>Zero Deforestation Agricultural Production</u>, provide a framework for sustainable cocoa production, land use and multi-stakeholder engagement.

A prime example of public-private partnerships using responsible business practices to address agriculture-related deforestation is The <u>Cocoa and Forests Initiative</u>. This, and similar initiatives like the *Zero-deforestation Agreements* in Colombia, highlight the shared responsibility of industry and government to achieve food systems transformation. Public labelling, as developed by Costa Rica, can further enhance market benefits for committed companies, facilitating consumer support for forest-positive business practices.

Emerging climate finance opportunities will also play a significant role in scaling up forest-positive agriculture. Innovative finance strategies include new investment mechanisms, strategic use of public investments, de-risking private investment and Results-based Finance. Examples from the public and private sectors show growing efforts to implement these actions, particularly through REDD+ Results-based Payments (RBP). <u>Argentina</u>, for example, uses REDD+ RBP proceeds to reduce competition and manage trade-offs between livestock farming and forests. The <u>Indonesia</u> Environment Fund has used various financial instruments to support environmental activities.

"Recognizing the mutual benefits between forestry and agriculture, decoupling deforestation from agriculture supply chains and transforming agri-food systems is essential for the world to win the quadruple challenge of food security, economic, biodiversity and climate crises," says Serena Fortuna, FAO REDD+ Team Leader and UN-REDD Management Group member. "UN-REDD is delivering a range of technical assistance to support tropical forest countries to move in this direction, and these countries - supported by international initiatives and programmes like <u>UN-REDD</u> - are now shifting the needle by taking bold steps to turn these commitments into practical actions."

How Chile is incorporating gender into its REDD+ actions

In Chile, only 28 percent of native forest management plans are led by women, according to the National Forestry Corporation (CONAF). With support from the UN-REDD Programme and other international organizations, Chile has made significant progress over the years to ensure a gender perspective is fully integrated into REDD+ actions, both in policy and practice. The country's multi-pronged approach has demonstrated that both women and men are key agents of change in climate action, while also generating good practices to help guide other countries.

CONAF conducted participatory focus group discussions in the design of its National Strategy on Climate Change and Vegetation Resources (ENCCRV), allowing women and men to submit proposals and ensuring their perspectives and priorities were equitably collected, particularly those of Indigenous and rural women who are key stakeholders, dependent on forests. A gender approach was integrated into the UN-REDD National Programme in Chile from 2017 to 2021, with a focus on ENCCRV implementation and the payment for results phase of REDD+.

A gender approach is also incorporated as one of the priorities in the design of the Safeguards Information System (SIS). Similarly, within Chile's Benefit Sharing Mechanism (SDB), projects that are led by a women's organization or prioritize women's participation are a criterion for selection. And in the evaluation of public tender and prioritized projects, additional points are given to initiatives formulated by women and to initiatives with one or more women as owners of the property or project.

"Considering the tenure of forest lands is considerably unequal in Chile, and in the world in general, having equitable results in terms of gender in the award of projects is a great challenge," said Gabriela Soto Nilo**,** Head of the Department of Climate Change and Environmental Services of the National Forestry Corporation in Chile. "In this regard, we can assert with real data that giving a higher score to projects led by women does allow them to improve their access to the benefits of REDD+. I think it's important to note that in the first cycle of the benefit distribution plan of the ENCCRV, 49 percent of the people benefited from awarded projects are women."

UN-REDD support of Chile's REDD+ actions over the years has provided insights and lessons on integrating gender into REDD+ implementation. One of those insights is the critical importance of gender baseline data to create a point of comparison and to understand existing conditions between REDD+ actors of all genders and across all relevant stakeholder groups. Another insight is that it is crucial to promote and support the active and equitable participation of women and youth in fields often dominated by men, such as forest fire training and prevention efforts. Lastly, ensuring a gender approach and promoting women's empowerment and involvement in training, environmental education programs and decision-making structures is key to ensuring REDD+ implementation and sustainability.

Efforts to integrate and strengthen the gender approach within public policy, particularly during the payment for results phase, continue today and range from highlighting gender actions in the development of operational guidelines to gender capacity building of local professionals in charge of project design, implementation and monitoring.

Reforestation program in Côte d'Ivoire restores biodiversity and creates sustainable communities

Women are disproportionately affected by climate change, but research shows that educating girls and empowering women are key climate change solutions. Since 2021, an ambitious forest restoration project covering 1,000 hectares of sacred forest in Côte d'Ivoire funded by UNEP has been helping women and their families by promoting rural economic development through integrated agricultural production systems.

"The rain has become irregular," said Seri Lehaba, a 45-year-old mother and president of the women's association in the village of Gnogboyo. "It doesn't follow the seasons anymore. And when it comes, it comes down with such force that rather than nourishing the plants and trees, it destroys the soil. Growing vegetables and cultivating other crops has become very difficult."

The project, which has benefitted from the overall advance in knowledge on REDD+, aims to collaborate with landowners and communities to provide alternative livelihoods and skills to prevent the need for forest destruction through illegal logging, charcoal production or poaching. In addition to a greenhouse donation from the Swiss foundation, FarmStrong, used to grow vegetables for sale, the project includes reforesting the area, as well as planting micro-forests in villages and organizing a local women's group, now with 144 members.

"We also plant trees outside schools to create barriers and shade," says Kone Moussa, who follows up on the reforestation projects. "We plant flowers and engage the students by teaching them about the importance of nature. We have produced 75,000 seedlings in the past three years. We involve the local youth to make this happen. Since the project buys the saplings, the young adults have a job, salary and knowledge."

The project has also worked to restore the area's sacred forest, le Forêt Classée du Mont Kourabahi, parts of which were destroyed during the conflict in 2010. Now, two hectares have been reforested and are growing back.

"We've worked with farmers to help them find ways to diversify and grow their incomes, as well as with communities to access credit for unexpected costs or loans to start a new business," said Gishlain Andoh, project manager. "Tackling deforestation in the long term is about more than just planting trees. It is about creating the right conditions for farmers to earn a living income and for their families to access education and plan for the future."

Andoh says they work collaboratively with all stakeholders, including traditional village chiefs, ethnic representatives, Nawa government authorities and cocoa producers, to protect the land in the long term. Alongside new trees, the community plants peppers, manioc, banana and cacao. The cacao benefits from the shade of trees around it, while the community can earn an income from the fruit trees and learn about zero-deforestation cacao production at the same time.

"Reforestation is a key and essential process to capturing carbon and achieving both UN-REDD Programme and Paris Agreement objectives. It is also a pre-requisite for bringing back the forest and its biodiversity within the landscape. However, initiatives like this can't be successful if not done for and by local communities," says Yoann Allanic, Technical Advisor for Africa for the UN-REDD Programme.

Carbon rights and the importance of benefit sharing

Clarifying forest carbon rights is crucial for any effective REDD+ system. Often linked to debates about forest tenure, carbon rights also have a significant influence on who can benefit, how and to whom emissions reductions can be sold and under what circumstances. Debates about forest carbon rights are strongly linked to debates about equity in REDD+. Clear and secure forest carbon rights and benefit sharing arrangements are important to catalyzing change with gender-responsive, forest carbon finance and to encourage public and private investment into REDD+.

Currently, there is no internationally accepted definition of carbon rights, and very few countries have adopted definitions in their national legal systems. However, carbon markets can be part of the solution to protect natural resources, but only if the rights of those who depend on and live in forest areas are recognized and protected.

The UN-REDD Programme provides support to forest countries to clarify carbon rights, with a goal to ultimately accessing forest carbon finance. Many forest carbon schemes are located in lands historically claimed, inhabited and used by Indigenous peoples and local communities, but often their rights are not secured, putting their well-being at risk and threatening the future of carbon markets.

As private and public carbon markets develop, the potential benefits and risks of carbon trading for Indigenous peoples and local communities must be carefully assessed. Potential benefits include increased financial flows for forest protection and conservation, better recognition of community rights and improved livelihood opportunities, such as the sustainable production of non-timber forest products. But to mitigate the risks, governments, public and private investors and others involved in carbon finance must adopt rights-based approaches to fully respect, protect and realize the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, research shows that forest communities are the best guardians of the region's forests and that supporting them is a highly cost-effective way to reduce carbon emissions. In other parts of the world, like Cameroon, Nepal and Zambia, community-based forest management initiatives have been shown to reduce deforestation and poverty, while improving biodiversity protection and carbon sequestration.

Large-scale programs that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as part of the REDD+ process, produce the high-integrity, high-quality carbon credits that buyers demand. Mozambique's Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPAs) is one example that demonstrates an emerging market for jurisdictional REDD+ carbon credits.

As countries progress towards the often complex agreements between the emissions reductions program entity, and/or participants and landowners, communities and rights holders for the transfer of carbon rights, lessons can be learned from previous experiences and programs, especially as it relates to formalizing tenure rights. Consistent effort is needed to recognize and formalize community forest tenure at large-scale. Additionally, benefit-sharing plans at the jurisdictional level must be developed to guarantee transparency and equity in the distribution of REDD+ payments and to target vulnerable groups and small stakeholders based on their actions and contributions, in line with REDD+ safeguards.

The expanding role of African women in harnessing carbon markets

Many African countries are in the process of understanding how to harness the opportunities provided by carbon markets, with the broader aim of financing and fulfilling their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Carbon markets, which have quadrupled in transaction value over the last two years, support climate change mitigation by creating economic incentives to reduce emissions while supporting a transition towards a low carbon, climate resilient global economy. But as Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Under Secretary General, told an audience of African women leaders at COP27: ''If we do not focus on the contribution of women in this fight, we shall loose the battle. Putting women at the forefront of decision-making processes is what is going to do it for a decarbonized world.''

Indeed, a UN-REDD event held at the Sharm el-Sheikh Climate Change Conference in November, 2022 heard from a number of African women leaders on progress being made in their countries to align with carbon market opportunities.

In Uganda, for example, a multi-sectoral taskforce has been established to assess and implement a strategy with respect to carbon markets and implementation of NDCs. ''Every day, I get a request to join the taskforce, the first of its kind with expertise in finance, green bonds and a number of ways to channel resources to implement on NDCs," said Margeret Mwebesa, Commissioner for Uganda's Ministry of Water and Environment. "Uganda has high hopes for action to take place. Indeed, we even have the participation of our Central Bank, the Bank of Uganda.''

In Ghana, the Carbon Fund has issued the country's first Results-based Payment, providing an opportunity to advance its approaches and to apply for the REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard to verify reductions. Furthermore, REDD+ strategy implementation is underway with a program run by UNDP and the Global Shea Alliance to restore degraded savannah forests and shea landscapes. This is in addition to deliberate efforts to build the capacity of women stakeholders in Ghana.

According to climate focus consultant, Nsikan-George Emana, women and gender concerns are being represented in the implementation of NDCs, but there is a need for rapid, targeted capacity building. Mirey Atallah, Head of UNEP's Climate for Nature branch and UN-REDD Programme partner, discussed the need for developed countries to channel Results-based Payments to developing countries without continuously changing the rules of the game, creating new rules or raising the bar on various mechanisms to access to climate finance, as this is eroding trust.

In order to bridge the divide between finance and African countries' aspirations, countries need to demonstrate the value of Nature-based Solutions and put together strategies to unlock various streams of finance. "Trust must be the basis for harnessing carbon markets in Africa," said Eziakonwa. The role of women in decision-making circles is key to bringing a human face to decarbonization and to successfully negotiating the future.

Democratic Republic of Congo takes steps to strengthen safeguards reporting

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continues its efforts to finalize Warsaw Framework elements by working to complete its Safeguards Information System (SIS). In 2021, thanks to UNEP's technical assistance and strong involvement from national counterparts, led by the Executive Secretariat of National REDD+ Funds (FONAREDD), the country achieved important milestones towards a complete and operational SIS.

DRC is the second largest tropical forest country in the world with 152 million hectares of forest. Almost 70 percent of the country's land area is covered by forest, representing 60 percent of the Congo Basin Forest area. In 2018, forest cover for the whole country was 61.5 percent, with a deforestation rate of 0.17 percent. Main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are slash-and-burn agriculture, wood exploitation and charcoal production. This is exacerbated by the combined effect of population growth and deteriorating life conditions.

Since 2009, the country has committed to reduce forest loss in its territory through REDD+. In 2012, the country developed its National REDD+ Strategy with an aim to stabilize forest cover to 63.5 percent by 2030. In 2015, they developed a National REDD+ Investment Plan. A National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) was also developed and in 2018, a Forest Reference Emissions Level (FREL) was submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). DRC was one of the first countries in the world to implement a National REDD+ Fund in 2015 and the first country in Africa to sign an Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) for the Mai-Ndombe jurisdictional programme in 2018.

Despite all these efforts, one of the key requirements to access Results-based Payments - the SIS - was missing. This gap became apparent during the submission of a RBP proposal to the Lowering Emissions through Accelerating Forest Finance (LEAF) Coalition in July, 2021. By then, DRC's work on safeguards was underway, including defining national, social and environmental standards as an interpretation of Cancun Safeguards, the identification of principles, criteria and indicators to ensure the integration and compliance of social and environmental considerations and the development of a Social and Environmental Strategic Assessment and Management Framework (SESA and ESMF respectively), as well as complementary policy frameworks following the requirements under the FCPF. However, DRC still needed an operational SIS and to draft the first summary of information on how safeguards have been addressed and respected.

As such, UNEP provided support to the country in 2021 to finalize the SIS and the first summary of information. The country now has its SIS website (), which documents the safeguards-related advances and showcases important achievements. In addition, an initial version of the country's first summary of information was developed. A national validation workshop will be held in 2023 by the FONAREDD Executive Secretariat, with leadership from the Ministry or Environment and Sustainable Development. The workshop will include key REDD+ stakeholders, including representatives from government institutions and civil society organizations, to launch the webpage and to validate and receive feedback on the first summary of information.

National Forest Inventories Key for Climate Reporting

Carbon emissions from deforestation account for 11 percent of total global carbon emissions, double what is generated by the transportation sector. Recognizing the role forests play in climate mitigation, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) developed the framework, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), to guide forest activities that reduce emissions. Key to obtaining the necessary statistics for REDD+ accounting are robust national forest monitoring systems (NFMS) that enable countries to collect information related to land use, forestry changes and REDD+ activities. The National Forest Inventory (NFI) is one of the most critical components of the NFMS and provides information on forest carbon stocks, among other things.

Through NFIs, countries systematically collect forest data, including composition, status, stock and distribution of resources. These field measurements are essential to calculating emissions factors that enable the estimation of forest-related greenhouse gas emissions. But NFIs go beyond providing carbon stock-related information. Often, they inform on forest biodiversity, health, management and use, among other things. NFIs also allow for more accurate information on forest and emissions trends and can serve to increase data transparency, vital for making informed national policy and management decisions. Greater transparency also helps countries meet international reporting requirements, such as those outlined with the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.

Despite being a fundamental component of NFMS, NFIs are complex, and their implementation is time consuming, expensive and often requires support. FAO, as a part of the UN-REDD Programme, has helped more than 50 countries develop their NFMS, providing support in the form of technical assistance and capacity development, to countries implementing various aspects of NFMS, including NFIs. In addition to capacity-building efforts and technical support, FAO has developed supporting materials for NFMS development that strengthen country capacities and generate greater awareness of the importance of NFMS to climate action. For example, FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring (VGNFM), were developed to guide governmental bodies in the creation and operation of NFMS.

Most recently, FAO developed the NFI eLearning Modules, a series of lessons available for free online. The NFI modules, launched in 2021 with financial support from the CBIT-Forest project, were designed to provide users with a basic understanding of NFIs and are particularly targeted at forestry technicians and forestry students. The NFI Modules serve as a primer and offer lessons supported by real world examples. The aim of the NFI Modules is to help countries plan and prepare for the complexities and challenges associated with forest inventories. They also seek to promote the benefits of conducting NFIs and the role they play in NFMS at large. The creation of these modules supports capacity development in forest monitoring on the ground and helps demystify the technical processes associated with NFI planning and implementation.

NFIs play a significant role in monitoring and understanding changes in forest carbon stocks. Continuing to develop resources that share and promote this information will help support forest-related climate mitigation.

Failure to recognize Indigenous rights will derail achievement of global climate pledges

A new study reveals that Nationally Determined Contributions, a cornerstone of the international framework aimed at addressing climate change, are likely to fail unless Indigenous peoples' rights to their land, forests, waters and territorial management are included.

Working with Indigenous authors in ten countries across Asia, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), a regional Indigenous peoples' network, led a review of the way in which promises made by governments to date under their NDCs have translated into real strategies, policies, laws and outcomes at the national and local levels. The report found a broad failure to recognize customary tenure rights of Indigenous peoples and their contributions towards climate mitigation and adaptation.

"NDCs are an opportunity to realize international commitments and obligations to protect human rights and to find just ways to address climate change. But rights can't be protected if they are not recognized," said Oda Almås Smith, an advisor with Forest Peoples Programme who collaborated with AIPP on the study.

The study shows that traditional occupations and sustainable use patterns go largely unrecognized and are sometimes criminalized. However, supporting Indigenous systems of sustainable management could scale up impact quickly, securing critical ecosystems by securing the rights of those managing them.

"We call on governments to stop criminalizing our traditional occupations and livelihoods, particularly shifting cultivation, and to recognize and promote it as our cultural heritage," said Noraeri Thungmueangthong, the first woman chief of Huay Ee Khang Village in northern Thailand. "We, Indigenous women, must be recognized as key practitioners, innovators, and transmitters of knowledge and culture relating to our traditional occupations and livelihoods based on natural resources."

The review also found that while Indigenous women and youth feel impacts of climate change particularly strongly and carry the weight of adapting, they also hold specific and valuable knowledge to address climate change.

"We strongly recommend countries ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples," said Kittisak Rattanakrajangsri, Chairperson of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP). "NDCs must specifically identify and recognize customary land rights and knowledge of Indigenous peoples as a major strategy in the fight against climate change, loss of biodiversity and unsustainable development."

With support from the UN-REDD Programme through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Development Cooperation Section of the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) through Swedbio at the Stockholm Resilience Centre, the review looks in detail at national and local policies, laws and regulations in ten countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

"This review is a first step - the first of its kind - a locally grounded and Indigenous-led review of how global climate commitments are felt at national and local levels," said Lakpa Nuri Sherpa, Coordinator of the Environment Programme of AIPP. "We plan to repeat this assessment annually, shedding light on what global commitments really mean and providing an avenue to understand the perspectives of Indigenous peoples."

From forest to furniture: the quest to save the Lower Mekong's last standing rosewood trees

China's fascination with rosewood furniture dates back thousands of years. With its red color attributed to luck, rosewood furniture is considered a prized cultural investment handed down over generations. But after wiping out its rosewood supply during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the country is turning to the last standing forests in Lower Mekong countries for their rosewood supply.

"Twenty years ago, we still had a lot of huge rosewood trees in our forests. Now, we only have thinner, smaller rosewood trees, but even these are being cut down illegally by loggers. Each tree costs between $100 to 200, making it very attractive to loggers. It is very, very difficult to protect rosewood," said a forest ranger in Cambodia.

High demand for rosewood furniture and log prices worth tens of thousands of dollars per cubic metre are making it highly attractive for illegal loggers and traders in the Mekong region. The illegal cutting of rosewood has knock-on effects and irreversibly damages forest ecosystems and nearby forest communities.

In order to protect rosewood from extinction in the Lower Mekong, while also preserving the rosewood furniture industry and Chinese cultural legacy, an initiative led by the UN-REDD Programme on Sustainable Forest Trade in the Lower Mekong (UN-REDD Lower Mekong Initiative) has been working to green the supply chain for rosewood and other timber products and to promote sustainable forest trade with China.

"Our initiative is unique in that we not only work with governments to tighten laws against illegal trade, but increasingly, we focus on small- and medium-sized timber enterprises in the Lower Mekong to help them access sustainable supply chains. We do this through building entrepreneurial skills and capacities based on market research, product development and certification, among other things," said Alexis Corblin, coordinator of the UN-REDD Lower Mekong Initiative and a technical expert on forests and climate at UNEP.

Strengthening governance is just one part of the fight against the illegal rosewood trade. Protecting rosewood also requires changing the attitudes and behavior of enterprises, traders and consumers of rosewood furniture. For this reason, the UN-REDD Lower Mekong Initiative is also running a public campaign that calls on Chinese consumers to protect rosewood by purchasing second-hand products or shifting to more sustainable alternatives. It also challenges furniture makers to come up with new furniture designs that blend traditional style with sustainable sources.

The goal of the campaign is to help usher in a future where rosewood flourishes both in the region's forests and in the cultural legacy of Chinese people.