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|  | **A black background with red and blue text  AI-generated content may be incorrect.** |  |
|  | **Output 4.1: Forest Sector Policy and Governance Changes Supported** |  |
|  | **UN-REDD Multiyear Programming Document 2026–2030 Illustrative Support Overview** |  |
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|  | **Prepared by UN-REDD Programme**  **June 2025** |  |
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|  | *This brief has been prepared by the UN-REDD Programme team based on preliminary analysis, internal assessments, and strategic insights from prior engagements and consultations. It is intended to provide illustrative information on potential areas of UN-REDD support for the 2026–2030 period. The content, including indicative budgets and activities, is for donor engagement purposes only and has not yet been discussed or consulted with the respective country authorities. As such, it does not represent an official position or commitment from the country concerned or from the UN-REDD Programme.* |  |

# Output 4.1: Forest Sector Policy and Governance Changes Supported

**This is one of four outputs forming Outcome 4: Enhancing Actions to Address Drivers of Deforestation:** Linking and leveraging actions and actors to address deforestation drivers. Strengthening and aligning policies, governance, and incentives within the forest sector and across relevant land use sectors and stakeholders towards protection of forests and reduction in forest emissions. Promoting appropriate solutions towards transformative change that address and respect safeguards. and support rural and smallholder producers, engage private sector actors, and foster cross-sector collaboration. UN-REDD will promote solutions that support transformative change, aligning mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity agendas, and strengthening access to upfront finance to enable implementation of these solutions

# The Challenge

The world's forests store a significant amount of carbon, approximately 662 gigatonnes according to FAO's [Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020](https://www.fao.org/3/ca9825en/ca9825en.pdf), in living biomass, soil organic matter and dead wood. Over the past three decades, carbon stocks in forest biomass have decreased by nearly 6 gigatonnes, primarily due to deforestation and forest degradation. The ability of forests to fulfil their carbon storage, sequestration and substitution functions, is under. Wildfires, droughts, floods and other natural disasters, and other direct and underlying deforestation drivers are [converting](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-03629-6) forest and land carbon sinks into sources of emissions. Similarly, the ecological integrity of forests is severely impacted by biodiversity loss, which further undermines their ability to contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation. As the impacts of climate change increase, the role of forests in mitigation and adaptation becomes particularly relevant, including through restoration efforts.

Despite forests' critical socio-economic and environmental role, forest management remains one of the most underdeveloped components of national climate strategies. Deforestation and degradation continue at alarming rates, while efforts to restore, sustainably manage, and utilize forests often operate in silos, disconnected from climate and development goals.

Forests need to be conserved, as much as sustainably managed and restored to continue contributing to the reduction of GHG emissions and the enhancement of removals, while improving the adaptation of ecosystems and population. Current policy agendas for the forestry and land-use sector are fragmented, management and restoration capacities are limited, while Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and smallholders are not sufficiently supported to play their role of forest stewards and local climate actors. The management and restoration of forests require collective action, including the government, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, smallholders and the private sector.Enhancing the forest sector's contribution to climate change has multiple social, economic and environmental co-benefits. It can be a win for **forests** which are being maintained and managed sustainably, with positive impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem health, in addition to climate mitigation and adaptation. A win for its contribution to **low-emission and resilient economic development** through forest livelihoods and enterprises that add value to forests *versus* other land uses and contribute to a low-emission and resilient national economic growth. A win for **Indigenous Peoples and local communities**, who are empowered as guardians of forests, enhancing local governance and livelihoods.

Forest mitigation action has the potential to address local, national and global challenges. However, the window to harness forest mitigation at scale is closing. With mounting pressure from climate impacts, commodity expansion, and governance challenges, failing to coordinate and elevate forest sector efforts within climate policy frameworks would represent a major missed opportunity. Forests can deliver high-impact climate mitigation results, at relatively low-cost - compared to other mitigation measures, in a socially inclusive manner including gender euqality, and with multiple social, economic, and environmental co-benefits. Nonetheless, delivering such results requires coherent, timely, and collaborative action across stakeholders and levels of governance.

# The Value Proposition

This output benefits from extensive technical resources and methodologies of UN-REDD agencies by leveraging in-house experts on sustainable management of forest and restoration, forest products value chains, social forestry, social and environmental safeguards (given their deep roots in forest and land-use governance and policies), and social inclusion and gender. The deliverables are closely tied to support deployed within, and reinforce local solutions covered by, Output 4.3. Under UN-REDD, these technical resources strengthen capacities and generate new knowledge that are shared through global publications and interactive resources, for example the “Legal and Sustainable Forest Value Chains for Climate Action Examples of Country Experiences” or E-learning on Community Forestry.

Under UN-REDD, recent initiatives have elevated and enhanced the contribution of social forestry as an approach for local climate mitigation, integration in NDCs and national policies, and disseminating good practices.The existing UN-REDD agency portfolio for this output is extensive and varied. Recent country and regional examples of support under UN-REDD agency portfolio have included in Cote d’Ivoire (agroforestry), Colombia (community forestry, timber enterprises), DRC (carbon payments, restoration & agroforestry) and Zambia (forest management plans, community-based forestry, forest value chains), Cambodia/ASEAN (forest value chains and social forestry contribution to NDCs).

**UN-REDD's unique value in this output is in the support to coordination and alignment of forest and land-use sector policy and governance processes with a focus on climate mitigation.** The fragmentation of forest and land-use sector initiatives often limits their effectiveness. UN-REDD as an impartial convener has an essential role to play to ensure different forest sector initiatives connect into and contribute to the forest-based climate mitigation agenda, and more specifically to the implementation of REDD+.

Beyond the convening role, **UN-REDD's trusted in country support can ensure that the forest and land-use policy and governance reforms are guided by the climate agenda, recognizing the critical role of forests on this agenda.** UN-REDD operates through the collective technical and policy capacities of the Agencies, leveraging their considerable country’s presence. As much as possible, UN-REDD technical support in this output leverages Agency support through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), NDCs, and engagement with relevant UN conventions including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues – UNPFII. As a trusted provider of technical assistance, UN-REDD catalyzes policy coherence across ministries and partners, enables coordinated technical inputs, and fosters knowledge-sharing that supports REDD+ implementation by working, as much as possible, with existing multi-stakeholder platforms and coordination spaces on climate, forests, and natural resources governance agendas at the national level.

UN-REDD support builds on and strengthens existing forest-related platforms and initiatives, including the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), Forest Landscape Restoration Mechanism (FLRM), the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and the Global Fire Management Hub. Opportunities exist to collaborate more closely with the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), further reinforcing institutional coherence and FAO’s role as a global forest knowledge hub.

Partnerships and alignment will be further strengthened other global and regional forest governance actors such as CIFOR-ICRAF, ITTO, TFA, FSC, CBD, UNFF, and national-level forest commissions and civil society networks, ensuring that UN-REDD facilitates and enhances coherence, rather than duplicating efforts.

# Scenarios

Output 4.1 will focus on connecting, aligning, and climate-linking ongoing national, regional, and global forest policies, governance frameworks, and incentives initiatives with national REDD+ strategies and broader climate objectives.

This output will enhance the evidence-based on the contribution of social forestry, community-based forestry and sustainable forest management to climate mitigation and associated co-benefits. By generating new knowledge and connecting to the climate agenda, proven conservation and management approaches can become more prominent in international discourse.

At a country level, this output will connect forest policy and governance initiatives with the climate mitigation agenda by strengthening and aligning policies, governance frameworks, and incentives within the forest sector and across relevant land-use stakeholders. The focus is to contribute to national efforts to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, to then realize climate mitigation outcomes, fostering social inclusion, social and environmental safeguards, and delivering co-benefits.

* UN-REDD will leverage its convening power, country presence, and strong technical partnerships to elevate climate action as a core objective of forest governance reforms.
* Strengthen national institutional capacity and align existing forest initiatives with national REDD+ architecture, safeguards, and climate finance instruments.
* Advocate for forest-sector climate action through studies, knowledge dissemination and capacity development.
* Promote integrated, community-based, and multi-benefit approaches to the sustainable management, restoration, and use of forests.
* Add value to standing forests *versus* other land-uses through low-emission and resilient forest value chains, livelihoods and bioeconomy.

| **Deliverable** | **Activities** |
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| 1. **National Forest Institutions, policies and strategies strengthened** to enable sustainable management, conservation and restoration of forests for climate | 1. Strengthen forest institutions at national and subnational levels for climate action. 2. Develop data and knowledge for informed decision making. 3. Assessment of the carbon impact of sustainable forest management and community-based forestry, as well as co-benefits to biodiversity, adaptation and food security, to support advocacy efforts. 4. Capacity development to national administrations to implement forest-sector solutions to climate change. 5. Technical assistance to REDD+ strategy development, and alignment with biodiversity and adaptation agendas, policies and incentives. |
| 1. Countries supported to **align forest policy and initiatives for climate action** | 1. Align and improve forest policies to REDD+, NDCs and BTRs. 2. Align FLR with REDD+ and NDC targets; Restore carbon-rich ecosystems; Collaborate with relevant UN-REDD agencies’ adaptation team to strengthen mitigation-adaptation synergies 3. Technical assistance to develop forest management plans at subnational level to guide and coordinate forest-sector climate action. |
| 1. Countries supported to **accelerate and value the contribution of** s**ocial forestry and community-based forestry for Climate Action** | 1. Support the development of national policies and regulations to enable the expansion of social forestry including community based forestry. 2. Support the realization of economic benefits from social forestry to ensure sustainability. 3. Undertake studies on the climate impact of social forestry. 4. South-South exchanges -at government and local level-on community-based forestry for local climate action. |
| 1. Forest-Climate businesses contribute to low-emission and resilient livelihoods, **bioeconomy and the substitution of high-emission materials.** | 1. Technical assistance to the sustainable development of timber value chains, businesses and trade, including certification and traceability and legality. 2. Technical assistance to the sustainable development of low-emission and resilient NWFP value chains, businesses and trade. |
| 1. **Enhance non-carbon mitigation benefits of forests,** and bridge climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity agendas | 1. Supporting the mitigation and adaptation potential of Forest-Water-Climate nexus. 2. Align forest climate mitigation objectives with biodiversity, adaptation co-benefits and through forest-related disaster risk management |