

Project Document

Project Title	Social Forestry - Switzerland support to UN-REDD 2026-2030
Location	ASEAN Region, Africa Region, Cross regional
Implementing Partner	UN-REDD Programme
Duration	2026 – 2030 (60 months)
Proposed budget	CHF 5,000,000

List of acronyms

ACB	ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFF	African Forest Forum
AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use
AFR100	African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AMS	ASEAN Member States
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASFSRF	ASEAN SF Strategic Response Fund
AWG-FCC	ASEAN Working Group on Forest and Climate Change
AWG-NCB	ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity
AWG-SF	ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CBO	Community based organization
CBF	Community-based forestry (commonly used term for social forestry in many African states)
CDNA	Capacity and system development needs assessment
COMIFAC	Central Africa Forest Commission
DINFRA-CRF	Climate Resilience Fund, Indonesia
EAC	East African Community
EbA	Ecosystem-based Approaches
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
goKUPS	Social forestry monitoring system (Indonesia)
GTF	ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund (GTF)
IPO	Indigenous Peoples Organization
KUPS	Social forestry enterprise development program (Indonesia)
LNGO	Local non-governmental organization
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NFMS	National forestry monitoring system
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
NTFP-EP	Non-Timber Forest Products – Exchange Programme
PfES	Payment for Forest Environmental Services
PIAPS	Indicative Map for Social Forestry Areas (Indonesia)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
Se.plan	Forest restoration planning decision support tool
SF	Social forestry
SFEs	Social forestry enterprises
SFMS	Social forestry monitoring system
SIMONTANA	National forestry monitoring system, Indonesia
SME	Small-medium enterprise
TLGF	Tropical Landscapes Grant Fund
VF	Village Forestry (Lao PDR)

Background

Social forestry (SF)¹ is a key strategy for sustainable forest management in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It empowers local communities with rights to manage forests, aiming to address deforestation, poverty, and climate change. Research² shows that when communities have secure tenure and adequate support, SF can reduce deforestation, boost incomes, and enhance climate resilience, advance gender equality, while contributing to environmental and development goals.

Despite SF's progress, and its great potential to scale its impact, key fundamentals still need addressing. This includes ensuring that tenure holders can fully and equitably benefit from their rights, particularly by having the means to profit from their forests and receive fair rewards for their stewardship, while also ensuring that decision and policy making are shaped through inclusive and well-informed processes.

Switzerland's initial support successfully showcased the potential of SF to improve livelihoods and advance climate goals in ASEAN, on the one hand, and, on the other, yield regional capacity development on REDD+ implementation, generated through knowledge management (trainings, learning platforms, regional exchanges, and communities of practice), in Africa. Continuing this support would allow Switzerland and UN-REDD to build on these achievements, helping both regions strengthen climate action, enhance biodiversity conservation, and promote sustainable economic development for millions of forest-dependent people.

Continued engagement would facilitate the transfer of effective SF best practices and business models between ASEAN and Africa, fostering South-South cooperation and innovation. It would help leverage additional contributions from other donors, mobilize much-needed climate finance and engage the private sector in sustainable supply chains, addressing both mitigation and adaptation challenges. Moreover, Switzerland's involvement would reinforce its global leadership in sustainable development, align with its international cooperation priorities, and contribute to the achievement of major international climate and biodiversity commitments.

UN-REDD and its core partner agencies, including leveraging on broader agency portfolios, have long been supporting SF in forest countries in Latin America, but also Asia and Africa, with efforts and key strategic partnerships especially embedded in Outcome 1 (Forests solutions realized) and Outcome 3 (Forest solutions enhanced) of the logical framework for 2021-2025. Recognizing the crucial role that communities and Indigenous Peoples play in reducing deforestation and sustaining long-term impact, the UN-REDD 2026–2030 Strategy highlights SF as a key element. SF is integrated throughout the Strategy's outcomes and outputs, with

¹ There are different terms used for SF around the world including Community-based Forestry in many African states, while at the ASEAN level the term social forestry is commonly used, though many AMS use different terms including community forestry and community-based forest management. Additionally, SF can take many forms, including within a country, with rights of tenure holders differing according to its objectives.

² Fischer, et al. (2023). Community forest governance and synergies among carbon, biodiversity and livelihoods. *Nature Climate Change* 13, 1340–1347, and Diansyah, et al. (2021). A systematic review on community forest management in Southeast Asia: Current practices and impacts on biodiversity conservation and livelihood quality of local communities. *Human Ecology Review*, 27(1), 3–21

particular emphasis in Outcome 4: Enhancing actions to address drivers of deforestation. Within this, Output 4.3 (Local solutions) and Output 4.1 (Forest solutions) serve as primary entry points, closely linked to other components such as Output 4.4 (Enhanced and aligned upfront investments and finance) and Outcome 3 (Enhancing climate ambition). Furthermore, the new Strategy's Cross-cutting element of "Social inclusion and gender equality" directly and indirectly supports SF, including through UN-REDD's commitment to the human rights-based approach. Additionally, UN-REDD can leverage its status as a trusted partner to make connections across scales and geographies to create opportunities and support frameworks to embed socially inclusive, gender responsive and rights-based measures into government programs and financial mechanisms, including carbon markets.

In **Africa**, UN-REDD has supported countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ghana, Uganda and Zambia to align SF with REDD+ efforts. Key areas include land tenure security, capacity development, and connections to payment for ecosystem services. At the regional level, UN-REDD collaborates with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Central Africa Forest Commission (COMIFAC), and the East African Community (EAC), leveraging initiatives like the ECOWAS-FAO, SIDA supported "[Global Transformation of Forests for People and Climate](#)", to advance SF among member states. Additional support is provided through SDC funding in the partnership between UN-REDD and the African Forest Forum (AFF) to strengthen mainstreaming of sustainable forest management among other aspects.

Switzerland has supported countries in Africa, including through UN-REDD, in progressing in their REDD+ Strategy implementation and broader climate goals, fostering partnerships with national forestry agencies, and promoting inclusive, evidence-based forest policies. Activities have included training, South-South exchanges, policy dialogues and knowledge-sharing platforms on REDD+ and climate finance, social inclusion and benefit sharing, deforestation-free supply chains.

Despite progress, challenges persist—especially in supporting SF tenure holders to develop sustainable livelihoods and track outcomes.

In **Southeast Asia**, UN-REDD, and its core partner agencies, through broader portfolios, have supported strengthening local communities' capacities on forest management, and the integration of SF into national policies, REDD+ strategies or NDCs, assisting, for example, Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR to strengthen community tenure rights, improve forest monitoring and access climate finance. Through partnerships with ASEAN bodies, ASEAN Member States (AMS) and non-state actors, as well as leading the "[Climate change mitigation through social forestry actions in ASEAN countries](#)" (in short ASEAN SF Initiative), UN-REDD has promoted inclusive decision-making and access to finance, capacitated forest dependent communities to benefit from climate and other finance mechanisms for sustainable livelihoods, created a holistic, sustainable, and replicable model for the commercial development, financing, and capacity development of Social Forestry Enterprises (SFEs), established the basis for concerted implementation of forest Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Ecosystem-based Approaches (EbA) in ASEAN following the development of the ASEAN Guidelines and Toolkit on NbS and EbA in the Forestry Sector, and improve evidence to support climate finance for SF.

Switzerland’s long-standing support for SF in ASEAN has supported major progress by AMS. For example, between 2010 and 2024, the area under SF in the region grew from 6.7 to over 15.3 million hectares, alongside stronger legal frameworks that secured clearer rights and greater benefits for tenure holders³⁴⁵. The SDC supported ASEAN SF Initiative has built capacity as well as a strong evidence base for SF’s role in climate mitigation and its integration into NDCs, supported integration of NbS⁶ in SF and built capacities on SFE development (see Annex 1 for further details).

Ongoing assessments, as part of the ASEAN SF Initiative, suggest that SF areas experience lower deforestation than non-SF areas. However, the impacts vary depending on the specific goals of each SF scheme and the rights and support provided. These findings underscore the need for robust monitoring systems to track the various inputs to monitor nature and climate outcomes and ensure that SF models align with NbS principles, particularly strong tenure rights and climate resilient livelihood options. Furthermore, it is also vital to connect the monitoring systems and reporting to support informed policy making, as well as facilitate access to finance.

Another key development under the Initiative has been the increased focus on enabling access to investment and economic incentives for SFEs. This is particularly evident in the ASEAN Blueprint being developed under the Initiative, which summarizes the support provided to SFEs through mentorship, technical assistance, improved product sourcing at the SFE level, mobilization of private sector investment to specific value chains and an enhanced market access⁷. These needs also reflect the priorities identified based on consultations with ASEAN, and country and regional stakeholders.

Overall, UN-REDD will adopt a deliberately bottom-up and localised implementation approach, working through and with national and regional partners from the earliest stages of work planning through to implementation and learning. Interventions will be grounded in countries’ strategies and policies and informed by local knowledge, existing institutional capacities and on-the-ground realities, with implementation pathways adapted to each national context. UN-REDD will engage a range of national and regional actors—including government institutions, civil society organisations, Indigenous Peoples’ and local community organisations, academic and technical partners — based on their comparative advantages and existing relationships in country. Modalities of engagement will be co-designed with partners during inception and

³ <https://www.aramis.admin.ch/Texte/?ProjectID=48051>

⁴ Wong et al. (2020). Social forestry in Southeast Asia: Evolving interests, discourses and the many notions of equity. *Geoforum*, 117, 246-258.

⁵ Also highlighted in the ongoing reviews of the AWG-SF Plan of Action (2021–2025)

⁶ ASEAN bodies have increased their emphasis on NbS in recent years, including in Draft Food, Agriculture and Forest Sectoral Plan (2026-2030). Note NbS is sometimes used interchangeably with Ecosystem-based Approaches by AMS and ASEAN bodies.

⁷ The “Blueprint for Accelerating Commercial Development of Social Forestry Enterprises (SFEs) in ASEAN”, which is scheduled to be endorsed by the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry in Q3 2026, includes 8 concrete examples of the project’s achievements at the SFE level, including key lessons for future scaling up.

implementation⁸, ensuring national ownership, strengthening local capacities, and enabling sustainable, context-specific results beyond the life of the Initiative.

Objective and outcomes

The overall objective is to **scale-up implementation and impacts of social forestry, by enhanced forest management capacities, enhanced investments in SF and access to markets and climate finance, and support through integration in national, regional and global actions for climate, livelihoods and nature.**

The work, over a five-year period (2026-2030), has **three complementary outcomes and corresponding components**, covering Southeast Asia, Africa and global knowledge and cross-regional sharing:

- A. ASEAN: Strengthened capacities and evidence base to achieve impact at scale for social forestry in ASEAN, aligned with Nature-based Solutions' principles, supporting access to markets and finance and informed integration and effective implementation within actions for climate, equitable livelihoods and nature.
- B. Africa: Strengthened social forestry capacities in Africa, building upon previous experience in the region, and utilizing global and regional learning and mechanisms, supporting access to finance and informed integration within actions for climate, improved equitable livelihoods and nature in selected hub countries to inform regional SF work.
- C. Accelerating policy and market uptake for social forestry to scale and sustain biodiversity, climate and equitable livelihood impacts.

The outputs for the two regions (Components A and B), are broadly similar although different in depth, focusing on **monitoring system and capacity development (Output 1), supporting impacts through: access to markets and finance (2), and informed policy support (3)**. The interconnected nature of the outputs is reflected in their activities, for example in ASEAN, where strengthening foundational systems, under ASEAN SF, supports effective implementation through improved access to finance and informed policymaking. See annex 7 for the draft theory of change, it will be further developed during the inception phase (i.e. endorsement and consultation process in Component A, and consultation process for Components B and C).

Climate action includes mitigation and adaptation with focus on NDCs, as well as other related initiatives. The action for nature focuses on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and their translation to national levels, including NBSAPs. The entire package also expects to bring in and enhance positive direct and indirect impacts on enhanced livelihoods,

⁸ This includes consultation process with various ASEAN bodies and relevant partners starting in Q1 2026 and hopefully culminating in Q3 2026 with endorsement of the Initiative's continued work in Southeast Asia by ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry in their Annual Meeting.

including through NbS pilots, SF enterprise development and strengthening the enabling environment to facilitate enhanced protection of forests.

The initiative is **gender responsive** and inclusive of **Indigenous Peoples and local communities** (IPLCs) in its approach to equitable livelihoods, recognising that women, men and youth have different roles, needs and opportunities in relation to forests and land use. Equitable livelihoods encompass fair access to resources, decision-making, capacities, benefits, markets and finance, including climate and nature finance, as well as safeguards for all. Example emphasis will be on women's leadership and economic empowerment in SF value chains and NbS enterprises, and to the rights, knowledge and effective participation of IPLCs.

The **work in the two regions reflects the different starting points, and priorities**. For example, the ASEAN SF Initiative has created strong foundations and identified various priorities for further scaling up. The work in Africa will focus on consolidating existing community-based forestry (CBF) efforts, generating and disseminating lessons learnt and good practices in SF and land use management in the region to support exchanges of knowledge and experiences on CBF. The work in Africa will also replicate and adapt the learnings and knowledge from the ASEAN SF Initiative, such as SFMS and link to, for examples, NDC development and reporting, as well as SFE development. Global knowledge and cross-regional sharing (Component C) will focus on facilitating the knowledge sharing within and between Africa and ASEAN.

SDC's continued engagement would be strategic, supporting scaling up the impacts of the work in ASEAN, strengthening many of the fundamentals for SF in Africa, including through the transfer of SF good practices and business models between ASEAN and Africa, fostering South-South cooperation and innovation. It would also help mobilise much-needed climate finance and engage the private sector in sustainable supply chains, addressing both mitigation and adaptation, as well as nature protection needs. Moreover, Switzerland's involvement would reinforce its global leadership in sustainable development, align with its international cooperation priorities, and contribute to the achievement of major international climate and biodiversity commitments.

Component A: ASEAN

Context

Forests and trees play a central role in ASEAN Member States' (AMS) climate strategies and are prominently featured in their NDCs. Beyond mitigation and adaptation, they contribute to biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction, and livelihoods. SF, if integrating the principles of NbS (as recognised by the ASEAN Secretariat and most AMS), is a key NbS in the ASEAN region. Countries are scaling up SF, for example, Cambodia targets 2 million by 2029 (31.58% of 2025 forest area), Indonesia 12.7 million hectares by 2030 (13.23%), while in Lao PDR the potential is approximately 6.23 million ha by 2030 (47.79%)⁹. If all the countries in the region are to meet their target area for social forestry, then it would cover over 27.4 million hectares (13.41% of

⁹ The data for Lao PDR is based on FAO's analysis of data from the Government of Lao PDR. It has not officially been endorsed.

the region's forests). Additionally, SF is increasingly integrated into NDCs, biodiversity strategies (NBSAPs), and green economy plans, supported by legal reforms and enterprise programs like Indonesia's innovative SF enterprise development program (KUPS).

Realising SF's full potential in the region¹⁰ requires stronger policy frameworks, reliable data, and greater capacity at local and institutional levels. Although tenure rights have improved, implementation challenges remain, particularly in monitoring and aligning with climate and nature conservation goals as well as supporting women and Indigenous Peoples to be powerful actors in jumpstarting and accelerating change. However, to unlock their full potential and ensure their meaningful participation, collective, rapid efforts by governments, development partners, civil society groups and local communities are essential. Research being conducted as part of the ASEAN SF has found that women and vulnerable groups are often sidelined from decision making, forest management and therefore benefit sharing, further undermining, among other things their resilience to external shocks. This is also reflected in academic research¹¹.

The UN-REDD ASEAN Social Forestry Initiative is addressing these gaps. During 2022–Q1 2026, the Initiative provided support at the ASEAN regional level and with focus activities in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Lao PDR, resulting in the advancement of SF monitoring systems which facilitated the development of SF climate mitigation assessments, facilitating the integration of SF in NDCs¹² and climate finance strategies. Furthermore, the Initiative worked with the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Working Groups on Forest and Climate Change (AWG-FCC) and Social Forestry (AWG-SF) on the development of Guidelines and a practical Toolkit to support the integration of NbS in forestry, including SF¹³. Additionally, the Initiative has worked to improve foundations and pilots of SFE development to be scaled up.

The new financial contribution proposed in this concept note not only builds on the above but also continues to respond to consultations with and requests from government agencies in the focus countries, in addition to the ASEAN Secretariat, AWG-FCC and AWG-SF, as well as those involved in SF and NDC implementation. The consultations and requests particularly from the ASEAN Secretariat, as well as the AMS, are reflected in the focus on NbS, and the desire to strengthen its integration in SF, as well as the development of the SF monitoring system (SFMS) to cover climate action more broadly, as well as nature conservation. The continuing focus on development of the SFMS differs from country to country, with Lao PDR for example, needing

¹⁰ As of 2024 approximately 15.34 million hectares of forest land, in Southeast Asia, is under some form of social forestry management, Data from various sources.

¹¹ For example, in Indonesia, despite the 2021 regulatory reforms aiming for gender equity, women hold only 19.5% of roles in Village Forest management bodies and 13.9% in Community Forests. They are often excluded from decisions on land allocation, training, and resource distribution. In Vietnam, women's and indigenous groups have limited access to credit, technology, and market information stifles growth. Only 21% of formal MSMEs are women-owned, often constrained by collateral requirements the Law on Support for SMEs (2017) is embedding gender quotas (e.g., 40% female ownership thresholds) for forestry cooperatives to qualify for state subsidies (Toumbourou et al. In press).

¹² Cambodia has finalised its NDC with inclusion of SF in qualitative and quantitative terms. Indonesia and Lao PDR are working to finalise their NDCs, with the Initiative having provided feedback and data for inclusion of SF.

¹³ UN-REDD, as part of ASEAN SF, worked with ASEAN Secretariat and AWGs FCC and SF, as well as Nanyang Technological University to develop the Guidelines and Toolkit. It is anticipated they will be endorsed by ASEAN in August 2025, with expectation that UN-REDD can support their mainstreaming in the region.

to address the many inconsistencies in data (e.g. overlapping SF boundaries) that have implications for the tenure holders. Indonesia, on the other hand, has a well-developed SFMS, built around goKUPS¹⁴, but is working to integrate the SFMS in the National Forest Monitoring System, as well scale out the monitoring to cover SF impacts on biodiversity, forest carbon, and other socio-economic indicators (see Annex 1, table 3 for more details). Another priority action is the development of ASEAN Guideline on monitoring social forestry which will support AMS to further enhance their social forestry monitoring systems to cover environmental and socio-economic impacts of SF, particularly through NbS actions.

Alongside the analysis and review of experiences with small catalytic financing for Indigenous Peoples and local communities in ASEAN, these measures will help to understand the impacts of SF programs, identify areas for refinement and scaling up, improve implementation arrangements, support regulatory reforms, and facilitate more direct access to finance at the local level.

Finally, the Secretariat and the AMS also expressed a desire to enhance access to climate finance, as well as scale up SFEs' contribution to livelihoods through enhancing market access and attracting investments, and are developing their regulatory framework reflecting this. The support to SF and SFEs, to be scaled up with the new financial contribution, alongside improved access to climate finance and complementary financial instruments grounded in strong tenure rights, can strengthen climate resilient livelihoods. This support also promotes gender equality, and enhance equitable access to, and control over, key resources such as finance, economic opportunities, information, and technology.

Outcome

Strengthened capacities and evidence base to achieve impact at scale for social forestry in ASEAN, aligned with Nature-based Solutions' principles¹⁵, supporting access to markets and finance and informed integration and effective implementation within actions for climate, equitable livelihoods and nature.

Outputs and key activities

While keeping in mind the interlinkages between the Outputs and their activities, the work would see **the enhancement of capacities and systems for strengthening the evidence base for SF (Output 1) leading to impacts through increased investments and access to finance (Output 2) and informed policy making (Output 3).**

1. Enhanced capacities and systems for monitoring to strengthen the evidence base and reporting on the impacts of SF to support its integration into climate and nature conservation initiatives (such as NDCs and NBSAPs), guided by NbS principles.

¹⁴ <https://gokups.menlhk.go.id/>

¹⁵ The NbS Principles are shared in the ASEAN Voluntary Guidelines and Toolkit on NbS and Ecosystem-Based Approaches (EbA) in the Forestry Sector, including SF. They were developed under ASEAN SF and were endorsed at the 28th Annual Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry (ASOF) in August 2025. Both were also endorsed in the 47th Meeting of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) held in September 2025 and will be published in April 2026.

- a. Assessment and planning, starting with updating and expanding the capacity and system development needs assessment (CDNA)¹⁶, and resulting action plan being implemented. This includes further system development and capacity development program, including for the SF Monitoring System (SFMS). This includes alignment with AMS integrating SF in national development, biodiversity and climate action initiatives such as Cambodia and Indonesia’s NDCs and NBSAPs, Lao PDR’s 2025 National Adaptation Plan, as well as the ASEAN Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sectoral Plan (2026-2030)¹⁷, and the forthcoming Strategic Plans of Action for AWG-FCC and SF (2026-2030). Currently the nascent SF monitoring systems in Cambodia and Lao PDR face numerous opportunities and challenges, for example, the VF Monitoring System (VFMS) Committee in Lao PDR, created as part of the Initiative, highlighted the need to integrate VFMS in relevant national monitoring systems to align with national programs, including monitoring progress towards 70% forest area target.
- b. Toolkit and guideline development, including ASEAN Guidelines / Toolkits¹⁸ for, 1. SF monitoring (including alignment with NbS), and 2. integrating SF into NDCs, NBSAPs (and their reporting), and operationalization with relevant tools to assess SF’s climate and biodiversity impacts using UN-REDD platforms. Options include ABC-Map (monitoring Adaptation, Biodiversity and Carbon), se.plan (forest restoration planning decision support tool), and Deforisk (predicts deforestation risk). Both Guidelines / Toolkit were part of the Plans of Action (2021-2025) of the AWG-SF, and likely included in the forthcoming PoA for AWG-SF for 2026-2030 (see Annex 1 for further details).
Guidance and capacity development will also be provided to support AMS to use these tools to, for example, further expand the SF area in a systematic manner.
- c. System development including establishment and expansion of SF database, data collection and analysis covering climate and nature actions. Work with government partners to conduct assessments of impacts of SF on, e.g. climate adaptation and biodiversity, building on the SF mitigation assessment capacity development activities conducted under ASEAN SF. The economic impact on livelihood enhancement will also be monitored. Integrate SFMS into existing national forest monitoring systems and other relevant platforms.
Facilitate reporting of results, including supporting access to finance (Output 2) and informed policy making (Output 3).
- d. Capacity development and knowledge sharing: learning from and leveraging

¹⁶ The CDNA conducted in ASEAN SF phase 1 is focused on SF monitoring for climate mitigation, the updated and expanded CDNA would include progress in SF monitoring, as well as increased consideration of SF monitoring in context of climate action in general (i.e. inclusion of resilience) and nature protection.

¹⁷ For example, Action Programme 3 of the new Plan includes alignment of national forestry policies with regional and international frameworks to ensure coherence in tackling issues related to carbon neutrality, illegal logging, and NbS/EbA, fostering greater policy effectiveness and implementation. Priority activities include Develop regional monitoring and evaluation systems.

¹⁸ ASEAN Voluntary Guidelines and Toolkits are resources developed with oversight of ASEAN Secretariat to support AMS to develop capacities and systems to address specific opportunities and gaps. The Guidelines and Toolkit proposed are included in the AWG-SF Plan of Action.

existing innovative grant mechanisms within the UN-REDD partner agencies' portfolios targeting SF tenure holders, including Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable communities to leverage scalability and policy impact across ASEAN and African countries. Pre-investments from UN-wide Climate Promise will be leveraged to curate lessons from existing initiatives with local communities and SFEs to strengthen technical and governance capacities by showcasing effective, community-driven models and by informing policy dialogue, capacity development, and strategic support (see annex 6 for more information). These tested approaches will help refine the design, operation and delivery of the ASEAN SF Strategic Response Fund (ASFSRF) in line with the Phase 1 progress, improving scalability, governance arrangements, and access to inclusive, locally responsive finance based on proven schemes and demonstrated real-world results and feedback from local actors (e.g. CBOs, LNGOs, IPOs) and communities. The selected cases to be examined focus on direct grant mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and local communities for community-based forest management in Cambodia¹⁹.

This will provide derisked proof of concept for bottom-up models to inform regional uptake. Tentative activities to capture these experiences could include stakeholder feedback consultations and participatory reviews, documenting cases to generate online capacity-building materials for SFEs and communities, complemented by knowledge products and REDD+ Academy integration. These may comprise structured online learning (micro-learning modules, short video lessons, modular learning pathways) and live, interactive formats (webinar series, virtual communities of practice, and peer-exchange). Specific activities will be refined collaboratively with the country team to ensure contextual relevance, impact, and scalability.

- e. The ASFSRF, which cuts across all three outputs, will be re-introduced to support strategic activities for AMS to strengthen their SFMS for supporting access to finance (Output 2) and / or informed policy making (Output 3). The Fund will also support the implementation of the Regional Guidelines and Toolkit for integrating NbS in forestry through concrete projects with forest-dependent communities (Output 2 and 3). It will aim to align with, for example, activities under Output 2 supporting SF enterprise development, with regional funding mechanisms provided by ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund (GTF) and the ADB Nature Solutions Finance Hub (see Annex 2).

The draft interlinked selection criteria for the Fund reflect prioritisation of community-level impact while testing approaches (e.g. NbS Toolkit) that can be sustained through government systems, finance mechanisms, or market

¹⁹ The Cambodia case leverages co-financing and partnership from UNDP's Direct Grants to Indigenous Peoples under the Climate Promise (2024–2026) and the monitoring improvements under UN-REDD support (2024–2025). These efforts support on-the-ground implementation aligned with NDC forest targets, focusing on securing community tenure, strengthening land-use planning and community governance arrangements, and testing field-level interventions that reveal practical challenges and opportunities for advancing bottom-up, community-driven financing models and facilitating access to NbS finance.

incentives beyond the grant period, include: 1. Community-level impact potential aligned with NbS triple wins, 2. Contribution to SF monitoring, SF market and finance access, and/or policy learning, 3. Feasibility and readiness, 4. Leveraging and complementarity (see annex 2 for further details), 5. Scalability and learning value and 6. Strategic alignment (e.g. ASEAN, AMS, UN-REDD). The criteria will be reviewed with relevant partners including ASEAN bodies, SDC and other strategic partners.

UN-REDD would seek to partner with a local organisation(s) to support management of the ASFSRF in SF landscapes in the focus countries. The identification of the regional organisation would follow the competitive selection process as required by FAO.

Additionally, UN-REDD's experience with direct grants to Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Cambodia will help inform the design and operational modalities of future ASEAN-level community grant mechanisms, including the ASFSRF. This includes lessons on participatory monitoring, community forest patrolling, safeguards, grievance mechanisms, and gender-responsive delivery models aligned with NbS, as well as REDD+ and NDC objectives.

2. Enhanced access to investment, markets and finance capacities for SF, in line with NbS principles and national policies, through integration with climate and nature protection initiatives.

Importantly, interventions will build on existing analyses to identify and address barriers limiting women's and marginalized groups' access to finance, markets, and decision-making. It will also promote and support women-led and gender-inclusive SF, adhering to NbS principles. Targeted awareness-raising and adaptation of products and work practices will be implemented to overcome potential barriers.

- a. Improved access to climate finance for SF, adhering to NbS principles, including by initiation through the ASFSRF, and upscaling through e.g. ADB's Nature Solutions Finance Hub for Climate, Biodiversity, and the Environment, and other blended finance facilities, building on the ASEAN Guidelines and Toolkit developed in the ongoing ASEAN SF SDC funded initiative²⁰ and adhering to relevant ASEAN guides including the ASEAN Taxonomy for sustainable finance.
- b. Pipelines of forest-positive MSMEs sourcing from SFEs are established at jurisdictional level. MSMEs sourcing products from SFEs will receive targeted business development support, including mentorship and capacity development.
- c. Access to markets for SFEs improved by stimulating nature-positive off-takers/traders (MSMEs) to open markets for SFEs products. Coordinated by the relevant jurisdictional authorities, MSMEs sourcing from SFEs will be supported in entering fairer markets and forming offtake agreements with SFEs to ensure sustainable economic growth. Extension officers will also be trained to facilitate

²⁰ For example, the Toolkit provides practical guidance supporting, among others the development of enabling environments for inclusive forestry investments and markets, and valuation of ecosystem services.

- business development at the SFE level.
- d. Support mobilization of private sector investment and creating incentives into MSME and SFEs through engagement with financiers and policy support. The focus on MSMEs and SFEs reflects our value chain approach to strengthening SF. All SFEs are composed of local communities managing social forestry areas - therefore, supporting SFEs directly supports community access to finance and market opportunities (Annex 4 provides further details on the SFEs supported). Through leveraging networks of impact investors, private sector, Development Finance Institutions and other investments sources at national and regional level and potentially through designing/refining financial instruments, MSMEs sourcing products from SFEs will be better positioned to attract investments that strengthen their supply chains. For example, make connections with initiatives such as the [Tropical Landscapes Grant Fund \(TLGF\)](#) and national funding mechanisms such as Indonesia's Climate Resilience Fund (CRF [DINFRA]), developed by UN-REDD, which aims at scaling-up finance and private sector engagement for NbS to tackle climate change, enhance biodiversity, and support sustainable development. Efforts will be made to link these finance streams to the below mentioned ASFSRF as a potential co-financing source.
 - e. Opportunities for MSMEs and SFEs to access carbon revenue through regulatory frameworks (e.g. national REDD+ / carbon schemes) will be explored, fostering an enabling environment for sustainable growth. For example, this will be explored in the Riau Province where UN-REDD supports on REDD+ readiness. This approach will build on UN-REDD's increased efforts to link jurisdictions with buyers and investors seeking high-integrity forest carbon credits. These efforts could be expanded to include SF schemes (as per item a), leveraging opportunities to unlock climate finance and scale responsible private investment in the sector. Capacity and knowledge development to support SF tenure holders benefit from their forest stewardship, including national and regional learning events. It will also make connections to UN-REDD agencies supported funds and support expanding on NbS with focus on marginalized groups, including women and youth. Additionally, this area of work will benefit from the knowledge and learning work, including e-learning, under Component C.
3. ASEAN's ambitious regional policy frameworks on integrating NbS in SF are effectively implemented in the AMS.
 - a. Policy and guideline development, including materials to support connecting policy and decision makers with the results from the SFMS. Implementation of the proposed ASEAN Guidelines and Toolkit on integrating SF in NDCs and NBSAP, and access to investment and incentives will also enhance SF access to climate finance. This would also support institutional strengthening and enhanced coordination (3b). Additionally, UN-REDD will support AMS to translate lessons from Climate Promise-supported pilots in Cambodia into policy-relevant guidance for integrating social forestry finance mechanisms into NDC

implementation plans, climate finance strategies, and enabling regulatory frameworks, including for community grants.

- b. Institutional strengthening and coordination through the establishment and support for existing multi-stakeholder National Working Groups²¹ to coordinate SF programs, strengthen regulatory frameworks, facilitate data and knowledge sharing from SFMS, and promote integration of NbS in SF programs and NDCs, NBSAPs and other relevant sectoral policies. In addition to business and value chain development and access to markets for SFE, and finance access.
- c. Capacity development and strategic support through, for example, national and regional sharing events and e-learning, based on the Guidelines and Toolkit on integrating NbS in SF. Additionally, operationalize the ASFSRF to support strategic pilot activities that apply the NbS Guidelines and Toolkit²². This will build on the outreach campaign for when the Guidelines and Toolkit are published in 2026, in consultation with ASEAN Secretariat.
- d. Building on the Blueprint and its dissemination among AMS, work together with ASEAN Secretariat to develop regional commitments/actions in the form of regional-specific roadmaps for scaling forest-based economies aligned with AFOLU sector targets and biodiversity and SDG commitments, as well as relevant ASEAN Commitments, Plans and Strategies.
- e. Support ASEAN Secretariat, relevant AWGs and other ASEAN bodies to implement and monitor the Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sectoral Plan (2026-2030), AWGs' 2026–2030 Plans of Action, as well as ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (2025-2030), including enhanced coordination and technical assistance through regular meetings and fundraising efforts²³. This work will also utilize UN-REDD's collaboration with other Divisions (i.e. Environment Division), Working Groups (e.g. ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWG-NCB)) and centers, at the ASEAN level such as the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity.

Scope and partnerships

In simple terms the focus of the work in ASEAN will be moving towards scaling up impacts and further strengthening the foundations built in the ongoing ASEAN SF SDC funded Initiative, including through access to finance and supporting informed policy making. The scale of the activities reflects the funds available at this stage. UN-REDD has designed a program

²¹ For example, in Lao PDR ASEAN SF has, with partners, worked with Department of Forestry to revive the Village Forestry Working Group (VFWG), and formalised its connections with other government and multi-stakeholder WGs to ensure coherent support for VF. While in Cambodia ASEAN SF engages with WG at national and sub-national levels, including with SDC supported CASFor, while in Indonesia ASEAN SF indirectly engages with SFWG, including through DG SF.

²² The selection of the pilot activities will be based on the Guidelines and Toolkit's Guiding Principles which include 10: Recognise and respect knowledge, traditions and choices of local communities, 11: Support gender equity and social inclusion and 12: Ensure safeguards and tenure rights.

²³ This will include continuing discussions on the functioning of the AWGs post-2030, including financial sustainability in-line with the new Plans of Action (2026-2030).

recognising the need to build on the work under ASEAN SF, as well as meeting the expectations of the ASEAN Secretariat and AMS. For example, the size of grants for the ASFSRF²⁴ and funds for capacity development are limited considering their objectives. However, UN-REDD will continue to work with donors and related initiatives, such as ADB Nature Solutions Finance Hub, and related EU and UK programs in the region, to access funds to help us meet these expectations, including having a comprehensive capacity development program, including in-person events to support mainstreaming NbS, and opportunities to scale up the reach and impact of the ASFSRF, as well as having grants supporting implementation of NbS with focus on marginalised groups, including women and youth.

In close partnership with the **ASEAN Secretariat, the work will be implemented at the ASEAN level with additional national focus and work on the ground in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR** (based on the strong foundation of the ongoing SDC-UN-REDD ASEAN SF initiative). Potential inclusion of Timor Leste is being explored based on identified needs to strengthen SF in the country, opportunities to build on existing work, and requests from the ASEAN Secretariat, AWGs and the relevant government agencies, as well as Timor Leste becoming a UN-REDD partner country. The inclusion of Indonesia, as a pioneer in many areas of SF development in Southeast Asia and globally also allows for enhanced sharing, including with Timor Leste.

Additionally, following the consultation process with the ASEAN Secretariat a “project advisory or steering committee” will be established, which would include strategic partners at ASEAN levels.

Building on the strong partnerships developed in the current phase of ASEAN SF, the Initiative will continue working with ASEAN bodies (including ASEAN Secretariat (Forestry and Agriculture, as well as Environment Divisions), AWG- FCC, AWG-SF, as well as seek synergies with AWG-NCB and others including ACB), supporting regional coordination, development of Guidelines and Toolkits, and knowledge exchange across the AMS and with relevant African partners through South-South exchanges. The collaboration at ASEAN level will not only be directly with the relevant bodies, but also through collaboration with the, for example, the ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund (GTF) and their grant recipients, who are working with the Environment Division of the Secretariat, as well as AWG-NCB and ACB.

The partnership with ASEAN bodies will be further enhanced through the anticipated endorsement by ASEAN Secretariat for Component A. Additionally, the collaboration between ASEAN SF and AWG-FCC and AWG-SF on the development of their new Plans of Action for 2026-2030 will also provide a strong basis for buy-in and collaboration for the work under the ASEAN Component. Furthermore, there is also a great deal of alignment building on existing collaboration on the ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework for Climate Change: Agriculture and

²⁴ Noting the ongoing consultation and endorsement process with ASEAN, it is anticipated that the ASFSRF will be at least CHF330,000 for the duration of the Initiative, with additional funds being sought. This amount includes budget for management of the Fund by a local organisation. This organisation will be selected following a competitive process adhering to FAO policies. These funds will align with the additional agreements by UNREDD with government agencies under the Initiative (e.g. at present FAO has allocated roughly CHF280,000 for these additional agreements with each country for the duration).

Forestry Towards Food and Nutrition Security and Achievement of the SDGs and the forthcoming ASEAN Climate Change Strategic Action Plan (ACCSAP, 2025–2030) which will have significant emphasis on NbS across various sectors. The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Strategic Plan (under ASEAN Community Vision 2045) also emphasises NbS (and EbA) including Strategic Goal 11 (climate/disaster resilience), it includes a measure to “implement nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches” to strengthen mitigation / adaptation²⁵. Additionally, the ASEAN Biodiversity Plan (2024–2030)²⁶ includes actions that explicitly reference capacity development and stocktakes on NbS / EbA and mainstreaming across sectors, including forestry, as well as enhancing monitoring systems including for NBSAPs. A further example, are the regional (including the 1 Billion Trees Initiative as set out in the ASEAN Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sectoral Plan 2026-2030), and national restoration and forest area targets (e.g. 60% in Cambodia by 2035 and 70% in Lao PDR by 2030) that can be supported through, for instance, the use of FAO developed se.plan which is being piloted in the three focus countries, as well as RESULT Asia-Pacific program to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land in the region, including ASEAN (see annex 2 for further examples of how the Initiative may support AMS meeting forest area targets).

The Initiative will continue to strengthen its partnership with government and non-state partners, including ensuring buy-in to embed the work in relevant initiatives and programmes, including the ASEAN Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sectoral Plan 2026-2030. For example, raising awareness and supporting the use of the ASEAN Guidelines and Toolkit on NbS and EbA in the Forestry Sector, on social forest monitoring, disseminating and raising awareness of the Blueprint for Accelerating the Commercial Development of SFEs in ASEAN, among ASEAN Member States, as well as the broader ecosystem of actors, including development partners, donors, NGOs, and other stakeholders engaged in SF and forestry through participation in relevant regional and national events. Arrangements with key regional / international implementation partners will be further developed based on competency-based selection during inception. The initiative will coordinate with key regional and national partners other ongoing initiatives to ensure complementarity, for example ADB Nature Solutions Finance Hub, ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund, EU TAF-GTEI project, IUCN and the SCSNe Coalition and Swiss-funded initiatives²⁷ (also see Annex 2 for further information).

RECOFTC will remain as a key strategic partner in the Initiative, bringing a strong link to national and subnational government agencies and partners, as well as communities and forestry enterprises. RECOFTC’s engagement will likely take different forms to ensure synergies are developed and maximised (e.g. RECOFTC may be invited to join the Steering / Advisory Committee for the work under Component A). Discussions on the specific roles are ongoing and

²⁵ The ASCC sets broad, cross-sectoral development priorities for people, environment, health, culture, resilience, etc., while the ACCSAP sits within the ASCC ecosystem and translates climate priorities into concrete cooperation actions.

²⁶ <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/48-Final-ASEAN-Biodiversity-Plan.pdf>

²⁷ CASfor - Community Action for Sustainable Forests – Cambodia, Land Management and Decentralised Planning in Lao PDR - Enhancing land tenure in forest areas, STAF - Skills For Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry in Lao PDR, SEACAI, Integrated approaches to climate mitigation and air quality improvement in Southeast Asia (active in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and ASEAN under the Environment division– one of the thematic focus areas will be on forest fire management), ISFL - BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (SDC), Sustainable Landscape Program Indonesia (SECO).

will be determined following consultations with ASEAN, as well as relevant AMS, and RECOFTC itself. At this stage collaboration at regional levels will include regular meetings to identify and build on synergies, this includes continuing direct engagement, as well as through, for example, the SCeNe Coalition, of which RECOFTC is a member. Specific engagement with the SCeNe Coalition could, for instance, include indirect engagement through ASEAN bodies including the Environment Division and AWG-NCB. Direct engagement will continue with synergy development, including through the piloting of the ASEAN NbS Guidelines and Toolkit developed under the ASEAN SF Initiative potentially in SCeNe Coalition project landscapes, as well as explore synergies with their NbS Tool and Incubator.

RECOFTC's potential roles in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR will also reflect the organisation's value-added at national and landscape levels. This can include possible piloting the NbS Toolkit and Guidelines in RECOFTC program and project landscapes. While at national levels, in Lao PDR for example, RECOFTC may be engaged to facilitate the work in the country, including implementation of the work by government agencies. In Cambodia, the collaboration will build on existing partnerships under, for example, the CASFor project (see annex 2 for more information). Additionally, under Output 2, RECOFTC and the Non-Timber Forest Products – Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) are considered as key delivery partners²⁸.

The Initiative will also continue to engage with multi-stakeholder processes, as well as those driven by non-state actors, such as the regional CSO Forum. For, example, national and regional CSOs participate in online and in-person events, with the plan being to continue this engagement in 2026-2030. Discussions are ongoing to continue the CSO Forum, led by NTFP-EP, in some form, with focus likely to be on online events that are linked to strategic activities and needs of the Forum members.

Component B: Africa

Context

Progress on SF in African states reflects different overall objectives, as well as priorities, capacities and support. In general terms, there is increasing engagement of local communities in managing forests. Over the past 20 years, SF²⁹ has gained momentum across the continent as a strategy to decentralize forest governance, improve conservation outcomes, and enhance rural livelihoods.

Over 20 million hectares of forests are now under some form of SF in Africa. While progress has been uneven across countries, the overall trajectory shows increased recognition of the role that local communities can play in sustainable forest management. Countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda and Zambia have institutionalised frameworks for SF. The improvement in SF extent and effectiveness

²⁸ Locally-anchored business and value chain actors under Output 2 will be determined through open procurement

²⁹ Comprising different community-based forest management approaches such as Participatory Conservation, Joint Forest Management Community Forest Management, or smallholder forestry.

throughout Africa is helping balance forest conservation with development of sustainable livelihoods of forest communities, including through eco-tourism and sustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products. Progress is most evident where there is a supportive policy and institutional framework, secured forest tenure, strong local governance and technical, capacities economic benefits are realized and partnerships exist, though widespread adoption remains mixed.

Overall, while there are successes, greater investment and policy support is needed to expand the benefits for communities and the environment. Various challenges must be addressed, including continued unclear land tenure, and insufficient technical and financial support, reflected in many ways including limited coordination, poor monitoring, and lack of investment in enterprise development. Additionally, stronger regulatory frameworks, based on an enhanced evidence base and deeper community engagement, coupled with enhanced access to finance are essential to make SF a viable pathway to environmental sustainability and improved livelihoods across the region.

With SDC support, UN-REDD has partnered with AFF to support REDD+ implementation in Africa. The collaboration involves the provision of capacity development to African countries through technical assistance (trainings, peer-learning via knowledge exchange and community of practice). One of the prioritised topics related to REDD+ implementation is social inclusion ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and other forest communities benefit from the REDD+ process, with growing emphasis on the role of SF for local climate action.

The partnership with AFF has provided valuable lessons on how strategic collaboration can amplify implementation efficiency and impact potential. By leveraging AFF's extensive regional network, and strong capacity for stakeholder engagement, the project was able to maintain a cohort of 13 African countries that directly benefited in terms of capacity building through peer learning, policy dialogue, and knowledge exchange activities. AFF's research orientation facilitated the rapid generation and dissemination of knowledge products, extending the project's influence beyond its duration. Moreover, the partnership demonstrated that collaborating with regionally rooted organizations can enhance operational efficiency and strengthen African civil society organizations' technical capacities and engagement with member states.

UN-REDD has also supported Community Forestry in West Africa region, through practitioners' workshops, South-South exchanges, community initiatives and collection and dissemination of knowledge and good practices on SF. The continued SDC support will enable, among other things, further leveraging of regional mechanisms through COMESA, in the region to facilitate learning and knowledge sharing, as well as to enhance cooperation between member states and mechanisms, as well as among networks and associations of forest communities. COMESA's Forest Management Strategy is designed to facilitate cooperation on forestry issues in the region promotes regional economic integration, including support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), value chain development, and intra-regional trade. Social forestry enterprises (SFEs) can benefit from COMESA's programs that improve access to markets, harmonize product standards, and facilitate regional trade—especially for non-timber forest products (NTFPs), community woodlots, and ecotourism. Regional mechanisms provide strong

platforms for sharing learning and knowledge, providing impetus and support to member states. The initiative will link to and support enhanced collaboration between these mechanisms.

Learnings from the SDC-funded UN-REDD ASEAN Social Forestry Initiative (see Annex 4) will be tailored to the context, needs and priorities of Africa.

This specific initiative will work to achieve the following outcome, outputs and activities:

Outcome

Strengthened social forestry capacities in Africa, utilizing global and regional learning and mechanisms, supporting access to finance and informed integration within actions for climate, livelihoods and nature in selected hub countries.

Outputs and key activities

As with Component A, the outputs and their activities are interlinked, with output 1, enhanced capacities and systems for monitoring, supporting output 2, access to finance, and output 3 informed policy making.

Regional mechanisms such as COMESA will play a key role in all the outputs. The significance of the hub countries is that they are strategic member of these regional mechanisms, vital for regional learning and knowledge development. For UN-REDD, involving COMESA offers a strategic pathway to scale SF across the region by linking it with regional economic integration, SME development, and climate-smart market access. This collaboration will embed SF within COMESA's broader green growth and climate resilience frameworks, supported by UN-REDD capacity building for COMESA's climate platforms (e.g., the Climate Unit and the COMESA–EAC–SADC Tripartite on Climate Change). It will also connect forest communities in the countries to promote regional value chains, harmonize enabling policies, and leverage trade, finance, and climate mechanisms to scale SF in the regional economy.

1. Enhanced capacities and systems for monitoring to strengthen the evidence base for SF's impacts on climate action and nature conservation in the selected hub countries³⁰.
 - a. Capacity and system development needs assessment (CDNA) conducted in the hub countries to identify the priorities for the development of SFMS for understanding the impacts of SF on climate action, nature protection and communities' livelihood.
 - b. Adapting Guidelines and Toolkits³¹ developed in ASEAN for relevant regional mechanisms in Africa, to strengthen SF extent and effectiveness and support SF integration in NDCs.
 - c. Capacity development and knowledge sharing, including e-learning courses, shared under Component C.

³⁰ To be confirmed depending on the financial envelop. Tentatively two or more among DRC, Ghana, Zambia, Uganda. With larger financial envelope Kenya could also be considered.

³¹ Based on ongoing discussions with partners in Africa.

2. Enhanced access to markets and finance for SF in priority landscapes.
 - a. A pipeline of forest-positive MSMEs sourcing from SFEs established and receiving targeted business development support including incubation, mentorship, capacity strengthening.
 - b. Access to markets improved for selected SFEs by stimulating nature-positive off-takers/traders (MSMEs) to open markets for SFEs products³². MSMEs sourcing from SFEs will be supported in entering fairer markets and forming offtake agreements with SFEs to ensure sustainable economic growth.
 - c. Enabling access to investment and incentives into MSME and SFEs through engagement with financiers. Through leveraging networks of impact investors and designing appropriate financial instruments, MSMEs sourcing products from SFEs will be better positioned to attract investments that strengthen their supply chains.
 - d. Capacity and knowledge development to support forest communities and smallholders benefit economically from their forest stewardship, including e-learning modules developed under Component C, and guidance for informed access and benefit from forest carbon markets.
3. Regulatory framework for SF programs facilitates effective integration of national climate and nature protection initiatives.
 - a. Policy and guideline development including focus on enabling SF access to climate finance. This will be built on ASEAN Guidelines / Toolkit and existing resources in the focus countries.

Scope and partnerships

The hub countries will be Kenya and Zambia³³. The countries will have different focus on the three outputs, based on continuing discussions with relevant government agencies. UN-REDD's collaboration with COMESA, and AFF as an implementing partner, will also be strengthened to support scaling up of the work across the region. The ongoing collaboration with AFF will continue, the scope of their responsibility will be more focused as an implementing (rather than an institutional) partner whose expertise and experience in organizing events and mobilizing stakeholders across the continent will be crucial. Furthermore, the hub countries active engagement in regional mechanisms provides an important platform for scaling up, not only through Kenya and Zambia's membership of COMESA, but also that the former is current COMESA Chair, while the latter is the host country of COMESA's headquarters, both countries are also active members of the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100). These platforms have a strong mandate to support its members to share learning and collaborate on common issues in the forest landscape sector, and to work with other relevant international

³² With emphasis on non-timber forest products and other selected value chains in the hub countries

³³ The hub countries were selected based on criteria including being a UN-REDD country, with agencies' direct and indirect support for SF, having SF program with active support from government, and strength as a hub country to scale-up through regional mechanism.

bodies. Arrangements with key regional / international implementation partners will be further developed based on competency-based selection during inception.

During the inception phase, UN-REDD will consult with partners to identify appropriate mechanisms to enhance project efficiency, effectiveness and coordination, including strengthening synergies with existing initiatives and platforms. Where feasible, this will build on existing coordination mechanisms in the hub countries and at regional levels.

Component C: Policy and market uptake

Context

Component C will focus on influencing policy and market actors so social forestry can scale and sustain biodiversity, climate and livelihood impacts. The Component will build on the proof-of-concepts that will be generated from components A (ASEAN) and B (Africa), including enterprise incubation pipelines, monitoring systems aligned with climate and biodiversity reporting requirements, policy tools such as the Social Forestry Enterprise Blueprint, the ASFSRF, as well as regional guidelines.

Evidence shows that a key constraint to sustained social forestry impacts is not the need for more proof-of-concept pilots nor knowledge products, but the extent to which policy frameworks, financing conditions and investor risk perceptions enable scaling. This makes influencing policy and investment a high-leverage, cost-effective way to scale impact beyond direct implementation in the hub countries of the two regions.

The scaling potential is significant. Africa has around 20 million hectares under some form of community forestry, while ASEAN has more than 15.3 million hectares under social forestry, with targets approaching 27.4 million hectares by 2030. Across both regions, enterprise pipelines already involve hundreds of enterprises and thousands of forest-dependent households, with clear potential to grow if finance and markets become more accessible.

Several structural barriers continue to limit this transition. Investors often see tenure uncertainty, weak performance data, small enterprise scale and uneven business capacity as major risks. Policymakers may support social forestry, but continued effort is needed to translate this progress into operational models that can be embedded in climate, biodiversity and forest economy programmes, and to strengthen learning on the impacts of social forestry to support scale-up. Social forestry enterprises also remain weakly linked to sustainable supply chains and deforestation-free sourcing commitments, limiting market access even where viability has been shown.

Without investment and market uptake, social forestry risks remaining a policy commitment rather than an economic opportunity. This is why Component C focuses on two linked areas of work:

- First, knowledge brokerage and policy influence are required to embed social forestry guidelines, enterprise pipelines, monitoring systems and policy tools developed under Components A and B. This involves using strategic communications and policy advisory

inputs to translate operational evidence into decision-relevant formats, for example, presenting enterprise pipelines to public finance institutions and private investors, and translating social forestry monitoring evidence into inputs for climate and biodiversity policy and financing processes.

- Second, deliberate brokerage with finance institutions, investors and market actors is needed to translate policy readiness into actual capital flows and market access for social forestry enterprises. This would include engagement through regional policy and investment platforms like Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Asia Development Bank (ADB), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other relevant actors.

The impact pathway is outlined in Figure 1. The pathway shows that when operational evidence is consistently brought into policy, finance and investor processes, perceived risks can fall, eligibility barriers can be reduced, and enterprises can gain clearer routes to finance and markets. Better access to finance and markets can then help community enterprises grow, stabilise revenues and create jobs, while strengthening incentives for sustainable forest management, climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation.

ASEAN and African countries also share comparable tenure contexts, where forests largely remain state-owned and community access is conditional. Lessons from one region can therefore inform policy and market uptake in the other. In summary, Component C uses UN-REDD's comparative advantage as a convenor and knowledge broker to align policy frameworks, financing criteria and market incentives around tested social forestry models, helping translate them into larger-scale impact.

Policy dialogue and advocacy to accelerate market uptake of social forestry

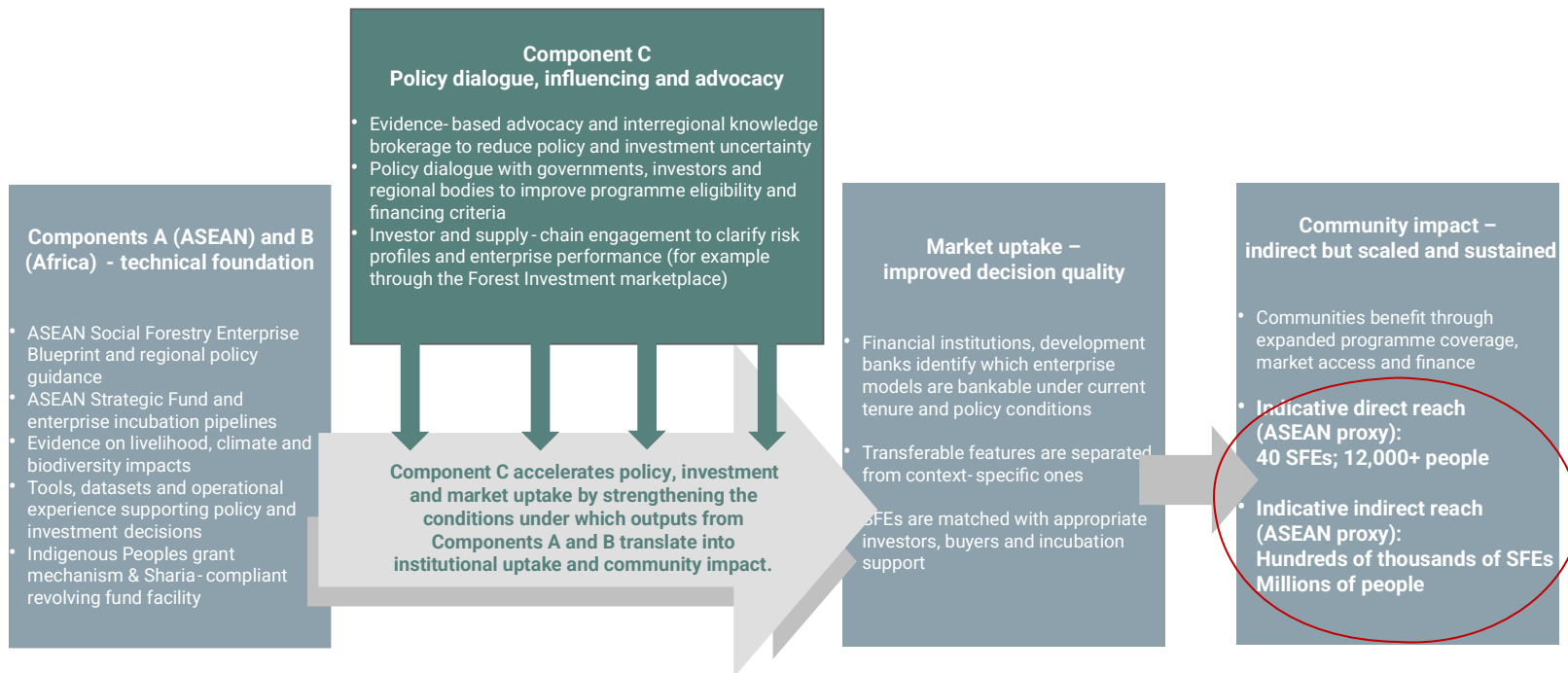


Figure 1. Impact pathway for policy dialogue and advocacy to accelerate market uptake of social forestry and scale biodiversity, climate and livelihood results

Outcome

Accelerating policy and market uptake for social forestry to scale and sustain biodiversity, climate and equitable livelihood impacts.

Outputs and key activities

Output 1. Knowledge brokerage and policy influence

Many social forestry activities and enterprises struggle to access climate and public finance not because of lack of viability, but because policy frameworks, investment protocols and risk perceptions do not adequately recognize them.

This Output, therefore, focuses on integrating tested approaches, tools and evidence from Components A and B into policy and planning processes so that financing frameworks become more inclusive and investment-ready.

Target audience: ASEAN, African Union, AFF/COMESA; ministries of finance, forestry and environment.

- To strengthen political legitimacy, access to investment, including reducing perceived investment risks, identify and engage with 3 or more national and regional policy processes (NDC updates and reporting, biodiversity strategies, nature investment plans) where outputs from Components A and B can be integrated.
- Support informed policy making processes using strategic communications such as policy briefs, expert media commentary and social forestry success stories to provide inputs, via relevant Working Groups in ASEAN and other formal and informal mechanisms in ASEAN and Africa, into the abovementioned policy processes focusing on:
 - Enterprise pipeline evidence (income potential, social compliance, other metrics)
 - Monitoring data aligned with climate/biodiversity/NDC and other relevant frameworks
 - Climate finance readiness.
- Linked to support for policy processes, conduct annual 3-5 targeted technical sessions or briefings (mainly virtual or in person where necessary and leveraging other convening opportunities as appropriate and possible) with regional bodies ASEAN, AFF/COMESA to review how social forestry cases/models/outputs from components A and B can be incorporated into:
 - Financing priorities (e.g. NDC investments, biodiversity/NbS funding, etc.)
 - Programme design (e.g. design of financing windows accessible to community actors)
 - Eligibility criteria for financing (e.g. tenure security, safeguards compliance, MRV alignment, enterprise capacity needs).
- Leverage multiple strategic partnerships at landscape, national and regional levels, for example through the ASFRSF in ASEAN, recognizing the Fund as a strategic learning and

system-testing mechanism to support the practical integration of social forestry as an NbS into informed policy making.

These engagements aim to achieve specific changes in policy and planning frameworks rather than general awareness raising.

Output 2. Market uptake, investment mobilization and investor matchmaking

Even where policy conditions improve, financing will not flow without deliberate brokerage between investors, buyers and enterprise pipelines.

This Output, therefore, focuses on connecting enterprise pipelines and models from Components A and B with finance and market actors, and supporting uptake.

This includes converting readiness into actual investment by connecting validated SF enterprises with development finance institutions, climate and biodiversity funds, impact investors and responsible corporate buyers.

Target audience: Development finance institutions (ADB, AfDB, AIIB), climate and biodiversity funds, impact investors and corporate buyers with deforestation-free sourcing commitments.

- Identify suitable finance intermediaries for different types of social forestry actors, broker introductions, and support tenure holders to prepare the documentation, business cases and follow-up engagement needed to access grants, public programmes, incubators and blended finance mechanisms.
- Select and present 8-12 enterprise cases from Components A and B that demonstrate viable business models, climate, biodiversity benefits and community impact.
- Facilitate 4-6 targeted engagement opportunities where these enterprise cases can be directly presented to development finance institutions (ADB, AfDB, AIIB), climate funds and impact investors.
- Conduct primarily virtual bilateral engagement (or in person where necessary) to support concrete follow up actions such as: investor interest or due diligence; inclusion of enterprises in existing investment pipelines and engagement of corporate buyers for sourcing.
- Run a curated forest investment marketplace process (virtual introductions, pipeline reviews, follow-up advisory support) to convert investor interest into transactions, building on UN-REDD's inaugural Asia-Africa Forest Investment Marketplace that took place in Hanoi, Viet Nam in March 2026.
- Provide follow up support to interested partners on tenure security, business models, revenue streams and environmental performance to help move from initial engagement to early uptake.

The objective of these activities is to trigger uptake such as inclusion of social forestry enterprises in financing pipelines, pilot investments or integration into supply chains.

Implementation arrangements (components A-C)

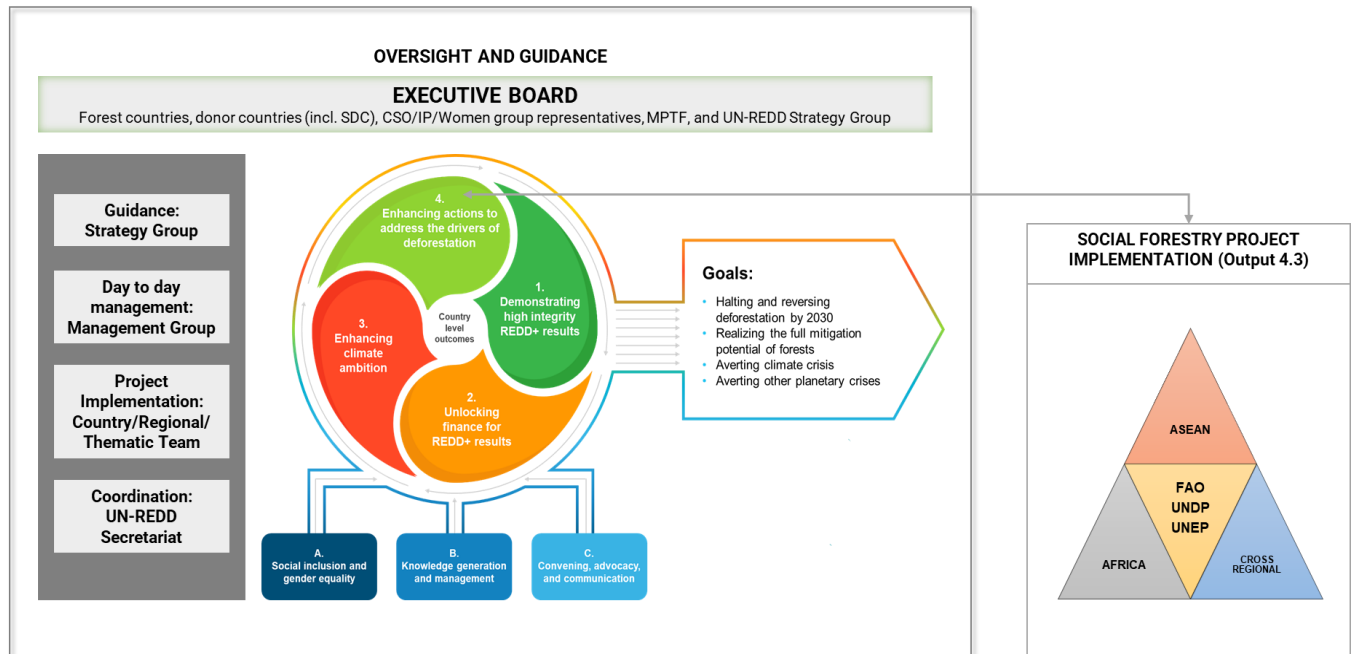
The UN-REDD Programme will be implemented under a joint governance and management structure that ensures coordinated delivery, strategic oversight, and operational efficiency across all levels. Building on the collaborative strengths of the participating UN agencies, the governance model emphasizes shared responsibility, transparency, and responsiveness to evolving needs.

Within this joint governance arrangement, implementation responsibilities will be allocated according to the comparative advantages, mandates and country and landscape presence of the UN-REDD agencies. FAO will serve as the coordinating organisation for Components A and B, reflecting its long-standing leadership in social forestry, sustainable forest management, national forest monitoring systems, as well as its strong country presence in the ASEAN focus countries and African hub countries. Under Component A, FAO will also provide technical and coordination support to ASEAN sectoral bodies, including the AWG-SF and AWG-FCC, supporting implementation of regional plans of action, guidelines and monitoring frameworks, as well as the activities of the AWGs (e.g. implementation of their PoAs 2026-2030). UNEP will coordinate Component C, building on its comparative advantage in knowledge management, policy coherence and global advocacy, including the synthesis and translation of evidence into policy- and investment-relevant guidance. Drawing on their significant experience, UNEP will coordinate the work on MSMEs and SFE development, strongly aligned with related activities of FAO and UNDP. UNDP will contribute across Components A, B and C, drawing on its expertise in governance, climate policy integration, inclusive and innovative finance, and community-level delivery mechanisms, including grant-based approaches for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Coordination across agencies will be ensured through UN-REDD's established management structures, enabling integrated delivery, joint learning and adaptive implementation within and across regions, noting the various opportunities for synergies with other UN-REDD initiatives (see annex 2).

For the SDC contribution, implementation will be channelled through the UN-REDD pooled fund and aligned with the Programme's results framework. Specifically, SDC's support will contribute to Output 4.3: Indigenous and local solutions scaled up and supported, which strengthens tenure rights, promotes social forestry, and supports community-based approaches to sustainable forest management. A draft theory of change is shared in Annex 7, and a draft logframe in Annex 8. Both will be further developed during the inception phase (i.e. before end of 2026).

This arrangement integrates SDC's support within the broader UN-REDD strategy, while ensuring a clear line of contribution to the scaling up of social forestry and community-based solutions.

UN-REDD 2026-30 Management Structure



The work under Component A (ASEAN) will be guided by a Steering / Advisory Committee. The decision on the role and composition of the Committee will be determined following consultations with the ASEAN Secretariat. The consultations are scheduled to be completed by end of quarter 3 2026.

Partnerships

Partnerships will be central to the work, with a focus on regional bodies and national government agencies as key implementing partners. Arrangements with key regional / international implementation partners will be further developed based on competency-based selection during inception. In the sections describing component A, B and C, more details are provided on the specific partnerships. Additional collaboration will involve non-state actors at both national and regional levels. Emphasis will be placed on participatory methods to ensure buy-in and access to data, supporting informed decision-making and policy development.

Budget 2026-2030

Table 1. Budget in CHF

COMPONENT	ASEAN			AFRICA			CROSS REGIONAL			Total
	FAO	UNDP	UNEP	FAO	UNDP	UNEP	FAO	UNDP	UNEP	
UNDG Harmonised Categories										
Staff and other personnel costs	822,105.50	90,000.00	180,000.00	620,808.80	82,500.00	185,000.00	68,144.00		126,738.00	2,175,296.30
Travel	50,211.00		22,000.00	22,316.00		115,000.00	5,579.17		100,000.00	315,106.17
Equipment, Vehicle & Furniture	4,782.00		8,000.00	4,782.00						17,564.00
Transfers & Grants to counterparts	705,942.75	120,000.00	553,541.31	151,430.00	86,625.00	315,000.00			140,000.00	2,072,539.06
Supplies, Commodities, Materials										0.00
Gen Operating & Other direct costs					25,367.28	10,295.41			10,000.00	45,662.69
Subtotal Direct Costs	1,583,041.25	210,000.00	763,541.31	799,336.80	194,492.28	625,295.41	73,723.17	0.00	376,738.00	4,626,168.22
Indirect Support Costs (7%)	110,812.89	14,700.00	53,447.89	55,953.58	13,614.46	43,770.68	5,160.62	0.00	26,371.66	323,831.78
Sub Total Programmable	1,693,854.14	224,700.00	816,989.20	855,290.38	208,106.74	669,066.09	78,883.79	0.00	403,109.66	4,950,000.00
AA Fee %										50,000.00
Grand Total	1,693,854.14	224,700.00	816,989.20	855,290.38	208,106.74	669,066.09	78,883.79	0.00	403,109.66	5,000,000.00

Table 2. Overview per year in CHF of Programmable Budget

COMPONENT/ YEAR	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Total
ASEAN	543,940.57	764,705.45	727,985.19	491,097.73	207,814.40	2,735,543.34
AFRICA	357,677.05	492,731.38	407,206.13	324,240.71	150,607.93	1,732,463.21
Cross Regional	86,609.41	109,594.89	106,609.41	94,477.43	84,702.33	481,993.46
Grand Total	988,227.03	1,367,031.72	1,241,800.73	909,815.87	443,124.66	4,950,000.00

Co-financing and resource mobilization

In addition to SDC's prospective contribution, the UN-REDD Programme is supported through complementary financing from other donors. Notably, Norway has confirmed support of NOK 100 million for 2026, with discussions on continued financing for the 2027–2030 period expected to advance further in 2026. The Programme also benefits from support from the Republic of Korea through the Korea Forest Service (KFS), including an ongoing contribution of KRW 2.5 billion (2023-2027) to sustain the REDD+ Academy as a key global platform for policy dialogue, capacity development and knowledge exchange. In addition, the United Kingdom remains a key donor, with a total contribution of £33,283,969 committed through 2030, and the Programme will engage the UK in Q2 2026 regarding potential additional support to strengthen technical assistance delivery under the 2026-2030 phase. Beyond these confirmed and ongoing contributions, the Programme has an established resource mobilization strategy and is proactively advancing dialogue with additional partners, including the European Union, Canada and Germany, as well as a range of emerging donors, to broaden the co-financing base and scale up delivery in support of REDD+ readiness, implementation, and transformational forest governance outcomes.

Annex 1. Overview of progress under ASEAN SF Phase 1 (2022-2025) and priorities for 2026-2027

Progress under ASEAN SF Phase 1 (2022-2025)

Outcome: Strengthened evidence base for climate mitigation contributions of social forestry that facilitates integration of related actions in NDCs and that enhances climate finance opportunities

Interlinked **Outputs:**

1. Contribution of social forestry schemes towards climate change mitigation in ASEAN assessed to inform action and climate finance in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR
2. Capacities to assess and monitor social forestry to the NDCs/climate change frameworks built in the three countries
3. Facilitate the integration of social forestry actions in NDC implementation and in the upcoming NDCs revision (2025) in the three countries
4. Promote and accelerate responsible private investments in social forestry
5. Capacities of ASEAN member states to quantify benefits, connect partners and operationalize Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Ecosystem-based Approaches (EbA) in the context of social forestry enhanced.

The first phase of the ASEAN SF Initiative had three broad interlinked stages:

1. **Foundation building and identification of priorities at ASEAN and focal country levels**

Consultation meetings with government partners in the three focal countries, as well as with the ASEAN Secretariat and the AWG-FCC and AWG-SF. Furthermore, consultations were also held with relevant non-state partners that are key in the development of SF in the region such as RECOFTC and NTFP-EP.

Development of various assessments, using participatory approaches to:

- Understand systems and capacity needs for monitoring of SF in the three focus countries (covering Outputs 1, 2, 3)
- Understand the investment needs for SF to meet its potential in the three countries (Outputs 1)
- Assessment of use of SF management plans (SFMPs) to support sustainable forest management, including climate mitigation, in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR (Outputs 1, 2, 4)
- Mapping of key market intermediaries and analysis of timber and NWFPs' value chains for selection in the pilot focus countries that exhibit characteristics for further commercial development (Output 4)
- Analysis of non-financial determinants of success that predict SF enterprise's ability to implement their business and bring to scale (Output 4)
- Understand if and how NbS / EbA is integrated in the forestry sector, including SF in AMS (Output 5)

2. Implementation of program of activities

Based on the consultations and the various assessments a program of activities was developed in each country and at the ASEAN level to address the priority issues within the scope of the Initiative³⁴ (also see Figure 2).

These activities were developed and implemented with government partners and strategic non-state partners (i.e. NTFP-EP, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and RECOFTC), including:

Output 1.

- Collate various datasets on SF to address the need to centralize and systematize SF monitoring in Cambodia and Lao PDR.
- Establish the multi-sectoral Committee for Development of Village Forestry Monitoring System (VFMS) and re-establish the VF Village Forestry Working Group (VFWG) in Lao PDR to support coordination in oversight of projects, and development of the framework for the VFMS and alignment of VFMS with other relevant monitoring systems.
- Development of draft mitigation assessments for SF at national and sub-national levels in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR. Findings are complex - relating to data inconsistencies, overlapping areas (e.g., allocated for SF and concessions), different SF modalities and locations. In above context the findings provide different results. We are working with governments to address the data issues as well as identify good practises.

Output 2.

- Draft manual developed for conducting a mitigation assessment for SF in Indonesia and Lao PDR, and co-organized trainings to support staff from relevant agencies to conduct the assessment.
- Co-organized workshops to support further development of the mitigation assessment and use of the findings to support development of SF in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR, including its integration in NDCs and reporting.
- Development of Guideline to support development of sustainable carbon projects in social forestry landscapes in Indonesia. The Guideline was piloted in a social forestry landscape in West Kalimantan Q4 2025.
- Organized regional learning events and exchanges on development and components of SFMS.

Output 3.

- Co-organized events to support systematic integration of SF in NDC in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR, as well as participated in related events organized by government and non-government partners.

³⁴ Letter of Agreements (LoAs) were developed with relevant government agencies in Cambodia and Lao PDR to embed the program of activities in national initiatives. LoAs were also developed with NTFP-EP, NTU and RECOFTC to support development of the Initiative at ASEAN and national levels.

- In consultation with relevant ASEAN bodies on development of ASEAN Guidelines on Integration of SF in NDCs and reporting.
- In consultation with government agencies in Cambodia and Lao PDR for integrating the findings of the SF mitigation assessment in the NDCs.
- As of April 2026:
 - Cambodia NDC 3.0 submitted in September 2025 contains enhanced commitments including overall emissions reduction target of 55% by 2035 (3.0), compared to 41.7% by 2030 (NDC2.0). NDC3.0 commits to halve deforestation by 2035, completely halting it by 2045; and to bring CF/CPA and all forest lands under management plans by 2050 (60% by 2035). The new NDC also has addition of SF qualitative and quantitative terms for mitigation and adaptation as well as way forward to achieve this.
 - While 3.0 is more explicit, it still does not always specify how many MtCO₂e reduction will come from SF (i.e. CFs / CPAs. It includes SF within the FOLU sector as a whole. UN-REDD is working with the government to develop this further, including disaggregating the data.
 - The NDC's priority that all SFs (CFs and CPAs) having a management plan is a key target (and a key recommendation to the government from the work conducted under phase 1), UN-REDD is working with the government on the development of a practical pathway, including capacity development, timelines, and resources needed.
 - The NDC affirms the importance of community rights, but there are areas for improvement including addressing overlap and/or boundary conflicts which will be partly addressed through development of SFMS
 - Indonesia's new NDC, submitted in November 2025 features SF for both mitigation and adaptation through its expansion and strengthening of forest, including Indigenous (i.e. Adat) communities, promotes sustainable forest management, and supports Indonesia's FOLU Net Sink 2030. In simple terms, the first NDC (2016) recognises the potential role of SF, the second NDC (2022) introduces a clearer path for SF to support mitigation efforts moving from 'recognition' to programmatic detail (e.g. capacity development, addressing gender issues), but still lacked explicit, nationally aggregated targets. While the new NDC sees consolidation and embedding of SF in other related national initiatives including the SRN (National Registry System) and village-level programmes (ProKlim) helping to embed SG within MRV/registry and finance/policy frameworks. The latest NDC also renews the country's commitment to 12.7 million ha of SF by 2030. The NDC submission coincides with the government:
 - committing to sell carbon credits from sustainable forest management, including SF,
 - developing a Regulation for SF tenure holders to benefit from the sale of carbon through their stewardship of forest resources. FAO is

supporting the government on this including reviewing the draft Regulation and developing and piloting a guideline to support its implementation.

- Lao PDR is working to finalise their NDC, with the Initiative having provided feedback and data for inclusion of SF.
- Organised, together with the ASEAN Secretariat a workshop for the development of the common position for forestry for AMS for UNFCCC COP30 (Q4 2025). The Common Position was subsequently shared in the COP, social media and integrated in workplan for the Initiative.

Output 4.

- Assessment of the economic and business potential of selected SF Enterprises (SFEs) and engagement with off-takers/market intermediaries, or market access providers in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR.
- 13 SFEs supported through the development and implementation of business and investment plans in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR³⁵. This also included introductions and negotiations between the selected SFEs and market and financial actors.
- Development of Regional Blueprint for commercial development of SFE in the region.

Output 5.

- Development of Guideline on integrating NbS/EbA in forestry in c.
- Development of Toolkit for integrating NbS/EbA in forestry sector, including SF in AMS.
- Dissemination of Guidelines and Toolkit at regional and national levels including through workshops (e.g. 23rd ASOF International Seminar: Scaling up NbS/EbA Implementation in forestry, August 2025), meetings and communications.
- The Guideline and Toolkit were endorsed by the ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry and the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry in their annual meetings in August and September 2025, respectively.

3. Consultation and assessment for prioritizing activities for second phase of ASEAN SF

It is foreseen that major milestones will have been achieved by the end of the first phase (Figure 1, see also annex 4), however, there is a clear need in each country and at the ASEAN level to address the various gaps, as well as opportunities to ensure that the system and capacities for developing the evidence base is strong. These priorities have been identified based on direct consultations with the AMS, as well as relevant ASEAN bodies.

Additionally, the Initiative is also working with the ASEAN Secretariat, and AWG-FCC and AWG-SF to finalise the review of the AWGs' 2021-2025 Plans of Action (PoA) and identify priorities for the

³⁵ Cambodia, 3 SFEs supported, covering 1,917 ha. Total of 1,243 members including 609 women. Indonesia, eight SFEs supported: total area managed approximately 700 ha combined; women active in six out of eight SFEs; two SFEs are indigenous peoples-led; average of 10–30 core members and up to 200 farmers per enterprise. Lao PDR, two SFEs supported, covering approximately 170 ha; total of 150 households.

new PoAs (2026-2030). These PoAs are strategic documents for the workplans for the AWGs and are used to support collaboration of the AMS on common issues. The consultation process includes interviews and surveys of key stakeholders, such as national focal points for the AWGs. This complements ongoing consultations with government and non-government partners for the identification of priority areas for Phase 2.

These consultations are important on numerous levels, including further embedding the work under the different workplans of relevant ASEAN bodies to maximise synergies at regional and national levels. This is particularly important in recognition the lessons learned under ASEAN SF Phase 1, including the often ad-hoc requests by government agencies for support on their own workplans, but also to get agreement on accessing the fundamental data to monitor and assess the impact of SF.

The data access issue stems from the fact that data, particularly in Cambodia and Lao PDR, is not centralised and is held by different agencies. Therefore, access requires getting agreements at the ministerial level, as well as department and sub-department levels. In Lao PDR this is being addressed through investing a great deal of time in consultations, and re-establishing the Village Forestry Working Group, as well as creating the Committee on Monitoring VF in the country. These bodies, and their connection to other platforms not only facilitate access to data, but also help to embed the work under ASEAN SF in other government and development projects and programs.

The work under ASEAN SF’s Outputs 1-3 have highlighted the challenges of limited capacity for assessing the mitigation impacts and potential of SF in the three countries. While FAO is working to develop the capacities including developing manual and guidelines for conducting mitigation assessments, in addition to organising trainings, it is also utilising other tools to support the work such as Deforisk – to help identify areas of risk of deforestation areas, as well as se.plan to support identification sites with restoration potential. These are important, not least to identify potential SF sites, but also potential impacts in terms of mitigation through reduced deforestation and degradation, but also restoration.

Table 3. Priority actions for 2026 and 2027 for supporting SF monitoring in ASEAN under SDC support for SF

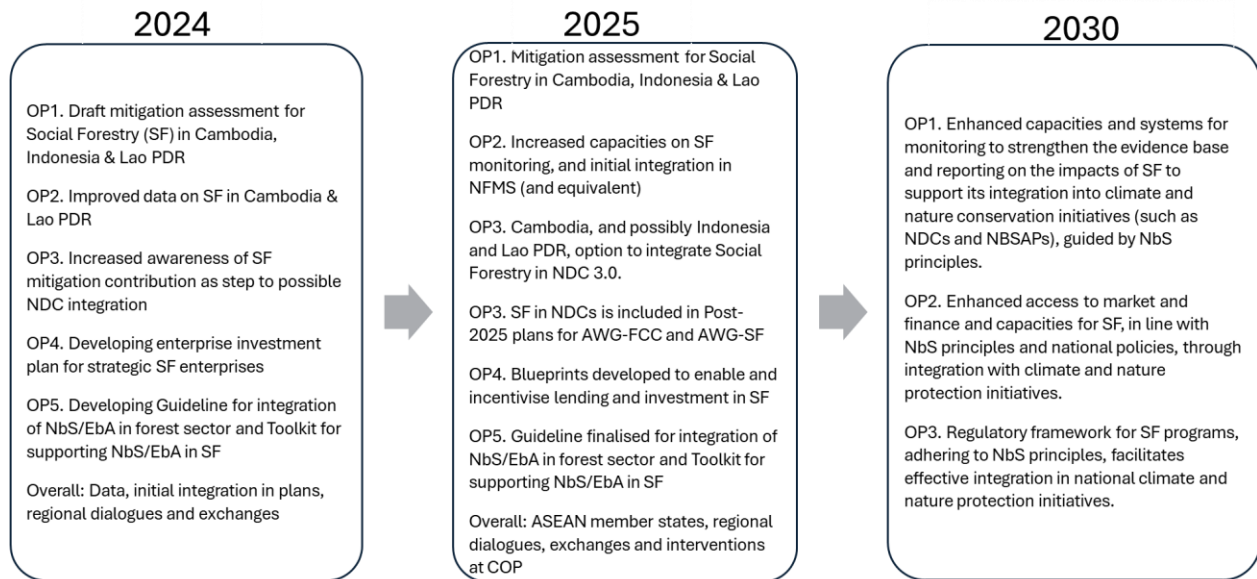
	Priorities
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve data inconsistencies • Continued capacity development for government staff and improvement of databases, • Linking to initiatives beyond social forestry, such as BTR and NBSAP
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SFMS (GoKUPS) linked to NFMS (SIMONTANA) • Integration of SF impact on biodiversity in GoKUPS • Mainstreaming of carbon guidelines for SF building on piloting conducted in Q4 2025.
Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First iteration of SFMS running, connected with implementation of “Action Plan for the Recognition of Land Use Rights in Forestland” (2025-2030),

	<p>building on first SF database ready in Q4 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large number of data inconsistencies (e.g. overlapping SF boundaries) are addressed through development of SFMS, this will include guide for field staff to address the data issues in an inclusive and effective manner. • Continued capacity development for government staff on development of SFMS, including data collection and entry, and use for e.g. BTR reporting • Support development of PfES regulation including potential disbursement of funds to VF rightsholders utilising the VFMS
ASEAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of ASEAN Guidelines and/or Toolkit on development of SFMS as aligned with draft Plans of Action for AWG-FCC and AWG-SF for 2026-2030, and ensure NbS is mainstreamed for SF development and climate action.

Under output 4, it was evident that most SFEs face persistent barriers including limited access to long-term finance, weak connections to formal markets, lack of investment readiness, lack of capacity to manage and grow enterprises, and policy environments that do not yet support enterprise development at scale. Despite these challenges, field experiences across Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Indonesia have demonstrated viable entry points to strengthen SFE clusters and promote investment readiness across ASEAN.

The Blueprint is not a ‘silver bullet’. It does not provide a singular solution or tool that can solve all the challenges facing SFEs operating in ASEAN Member States. Instead, it follows a value chain approach that provides a suite of business, finance and policy solutions, especially tailored along forest-product value chains to empower SFEs and create engines of growth that can scale up with limited external support.

Figure 2. Overview of the main achievements of ASEAN SF phase 1 at the end of 2024, anticipated achievements by the end of 2025 and the expected achievements by the end of Phase 2 (2028)



Annex 2. Potential synergies with initiatives in ASEAN and Africa

ASEAN

Table 4 provides an overview of strategic initiatives that are or maybe be engaged under ASEAN SF. The list includes lead organisation, as part of UN-REDD. Other non-UN-REDD initiatives are also provided, providing details of current potential collaboration.

Table 4. Overview of UN-REDD engagements, FAO, UNDP and UNEP initiatives, as well as related projects in the focus countries and regional level.

<p>Multi-country, ASEAN and cross-cutting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADB Nature Solutions Finance Hub - Scale up finance from private, public and philanthropic sources into a growing pipeline of NBS projects across Asia and the Pacific • ASEAN-UK Green Transition Fund (GTF), particularly Pillar V: Nature based Solutions for Climate Mitigation with support for three projects (1. Transboundary policy frameworks and platforms for collective action on NbS, 2. NbS models and monitoring. Financing for NbS research and development, 3. Nature-positive financing and businesses). (October 2025-December 2026) • EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies including Cambodia and Indonesia. Being implemented by UNEP. Support from SDC. • EU Technical Assistance Facility to the Green Team Europe Initiative (TAF-GTEI) particularly Outcome 1. Climate Change (incl. Enhancing EU-ASEAN collaboration on Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), Enhancing Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) to increase productivity and resilience to climate change, natural disasters, and other vulnerabilities), and Outcome 2. Natural Resources (Advancing sustainable forest management and promoting NbS to support economic growth) • FAO. Assessment - Fifty years of community-based forestry. 2025-2026. Global • FAO. Assuring the Future of Forests with Integrated Risk Management (AFFIRM). 2023-2027. Includes Cambodia and Lao PDR. • FAO. Study on the contribution of collective and customary land rights to climate action and nature conservation in Asia. 2025-2026. • SCeNe Coalition - developed a suite of tool and resources designed to support the delivery of and investment in high-quality, triple-benefit NbS in Southeast Asia. • FAO, UNDP & UNEP. RESULT Asia-Pacific which represents collective action by countries and partners to restore and sustainably manage a consolidated 100 million hectares of the region’s degraded landscapes; transforming them into productive, ecologically functional and resilient landscapes by 2030³⁶. This, among other things support 1 Billion Trees Initiative as set out in FAF SPA (2026-2030), building on the ASEAN Green Initiative (AGI) 2021-2031 to plant 10 million trees. The Initiative will discuss this further with ASEAN Secretariat
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³⁶ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e0444dd9-9dc5-47ee-88df-7f6e4c7eef46/content>

	<p>and implementing bodies to support this including through utilisation of se.plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP’s Climate Promise. It supports the development of blended finance instruments for Social Forestry in Indonesia through a Sharia-based scheme, and in Cambodia it supports Indigenous Peoples’ Direct Grants through the Small Grants Programme.
Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO and UNDP. Community Action for Sustainable Forests (CASFor). Dec 2023-Dec 2027. CASFor, supported by SDC, aims to advance sustainable forest management and enhance local livelihoods in Cambodia.
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISFL - BioCarbon Fund Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (SDC) • Sustainable Landscape Program Indonesia (SECO) • UNEP. The Tropical Landscapes Grant Fund (TLGF), supporting investments that generate financial returns and contribute to climate resilience, degraded land restoration and biodiversity protection as well as improving local livelihoods and gender equality. • UN-REDD (UNEP) The “CRF DINFRA” is being established to support financing on Nature based Solutions.
Lao PDR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GiZ. Land Management and Decentralised Planning in Lao PDR - Enhancing land tenure in forest areas (2025-2027) • SDC supported, RECOFTC implementing Transformative land Investment (TLI) project (2022-2025) • STAF - Skills for Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry in Laos (2023-2027) • UN-REDD. FAO. Deforestation risk mapping (AIM4Forest) and UN-REDD TA. Apr 2023-Apr 2028 – Deforisk tool will be used to assess the VF deforestation risk areas to identify priority villages which need support to avoid deforestation. • World Bank – “Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Carbon Emissions” (EnABLE) project (2025-2027) being implemented by RECOFTC. • World Bank. Lao Landscape and Livelihoods Project. 2021-2027. FAO is engaging to support strengthening monitoring of VF, conducting mitigation assessment of VF, and increasing use of VF management plans to support sustainable forest management.

These potential synergies for the work in ASEAN, will among other things emphasise leveraging the ASFSRF covering:

- ASFSRF targets strategic gaps where small, timely investments can unlock much larger public, private, and blended finance flows for SF and NbS. For example, alignment will be sought with work under Activity A.2 to complement the support to social forestry value chain development at the jurisdictional level.
- Leverages government programmes through LoAs. ASFSRF activities are implemented alongside LoAs with government agencies, anchoring community pilots in national systems and regulations (SFMS/NFMS, carbon, PFES) and leveraging substantially larger government and donor-supported programmes.

- Complement relevant initiatives (e.g. ADB NSFH) to support sustainability, impacts and scale.
- Selection criteria including “Leveraging and complementarity”
- Crowds-in regional and international finance platforms by making SF landscapes finance- and policy-ready, ASFSRF positions them for follow-on support from regional mechanisms such as the ASEAN-UK GTF and the ADB NSFH.
- Lessons and evidence from ASFSRF-supported activities are scaled through UN-REDD country programmes and AWGs (e.g. AWG-SF, AWG-FCC), enabling a pilot to inform action and investment across multiple AMS.
- Evidence-driven leverage for climate and nature finance by strengthening monitoring and use of data at landscape level.
- Capturing good practices from other related UN-REDD grant mechanisms and innovative financing instruments, including in Cambodia and Indonesia, to support effective design, implementation and management of the ASFSRF.

In this context, UN-wide Climate Promise support, especially in Cambodia, provides a strategic entry point for linking SF with national climate finance and NDC implementation processes. Component A will leverage UNDP’s work on community-level finance, such direct grants to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, to inform ASEAN-level approaches for inclusive, scalable, and NDC-aligned SF financing. This could include both the design and scope of the fund and the practical aspects of implementation, such as procedures, safeguards, and support measures that enable delivery on the ground. Furthermore, the lessons learned from the funding mechanisms in Cambodia will facilitate design, implementation and management of the ASFSRF.

Africa

Zambia

Zambia has formally adopted Community Forestry (CF) as an approach that recognizes the crucial role of local communities in sustainable forest management. Since 2014, policies and legislation have enabled local communities to form Community Forestry Management Groups (CFMGs), granting them legal authority to manage, use, and trade forest resources. Over 200 CFMGs have sought formal recognition in recent years, with many groups currently in the process of formalization and legal recognition, mostly driven and supported by forest carbon project initiatives or donor-funded projects.

UN-REDD has supported:

- A recent assessment of CFMGs in North-Western province, which concluded that most CFMGs struggle to complete the formal 7-step process, including to take evidence-based decisions through a strong local governance, to generate economic benefits and to develop forest enterprises that support their sustainability and ability to achieve management objectives. For a variety of reasons (access to resources, politics, legislation around carbon, etc.), the Forestry Department struggles to keep pace with the many

requests from CFMGs looking for formalisation and transfer of rights over resources.

- A Rural Finance Assessment in North-Western province, Zambia, which aimed to better understand the local landscape for financial services and provide recommendations to improve access for rural communities that would enable a clearer pathway for development of forest-based climate action. While financial inclusion has improved nationally, rural populations—especially women—remain reliant on informal services like savings or village-banking groups. Formal financial institutions are limited in reach and often inaccessible for small enterprises due to barriers like high interest rates and complex loan requirements and procedures. The study recommends strengthening informal finance systems, developing tailored financial products, and enhancing government and development partner support to bridge the gap. A Technical Brief on Finance options to enable CF and climate action in North-Western Province, Zambia. The brief suggests strengthening financial literacy, intentionally linking CFMGs with informal and formal financial institutions, developing tailored financial products for forest enterprises, exploring blended finance mechanisms, and awareness-raising to unlock the full potential of forest-based enterprises.

These assessment aim to inform a replicable model of climate action at jurisdictional/local level.

Zambia's ongoing efforts to operationalize Community Forestry Management Groups (CFMGs) offer strong opportunities for synergy. The country's policy framework and growing number of locally managed forest enterprises create an enabling environment for piloting UN-REDD's proposed interventions on monitoring systems, finance access, and policy integration. Collaboration with the Forestry Department and partners supporting CFMGs will help strengthen community governance, accelerate formalization processes, and link emerging forest enterprises to regional markets through COMESA's trade and finance mechanisms. This alignment will also complement national restoration and climate action priorities under the AFR100, reinforcing Zambia's role as a regional hub for scaling community-based forestry and nature-positive value chains.

Kenya

The Forest Conservation and Management Act (2016) provides a comprehensive legal framework that recognizes and supports community forestry as a central pillar of sustainable forest governance in Kenya. It classifies forests into three types: public, private, and community, with community forests entrusted to local communities that have historically occupied or used them. The Act allows these communities to form Community Forest Associations (CFAs), which may enter into formal management agreements with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS). Through these agreements, CFAs gain rights to sustainably access forest resources such as herbs, firewood, honey, and timber and engage in ecotourism, conservation, and tree planting.

Participatory Forest Management (PFM) serves as the foundation for community-led conservation, empowering CFAs through the Act to access resources, benefit-sharing, technical support, and financial assistance. Moreover, Kenya's carbon finance framework, under the Climate Change Act (2016) and Carbon Markets Regulations (2024), enables community forestry

groups to access carbon markets, requiring that at least 40% of revenues from land-based projects benefit local development. Together, these frameworks strengthen grassroots restoration efforts by linking conservation with economic empowerment. Most recently, Kenya's Forest and Conservation Management Act (2025), Clause 6, include a new function for The Kenya Forest Service which is to “...develop agroforestry and commercial forestry in private and community land in collaboration with county governments and individual landowners”.

Across Kenya, vibrant grassroots initiatives, led predominantly by youth and women's groups, are spearheading community-based forestry and landscape restoration. For instance, indigenous organizations such as the Green Belt Movement, founded by Wangari Maathai, continue mobilizing women and youth to establish tree nurseries and restore degraded areas, planting tens of thousands of native trees in places like Kakamega Forest, which is Kenya's last remaining tropical rainforest.

In Mukogodo and Makueni counties, women-led collectives and youth champions are reforesting rangelands, developing nurseries, distributing beehives, initiating agroforestry, beekeeping, and sustainable firewood projects to both regenerate ecosystems and diversify incomes, while along the coast, similar grassroots groups are restoring degraded mangrove forests, promoting natural regeneration, and enhancing coastal resilience through community-driven conservation efforts. Complementing these community efforts, the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), has supported the formation of local forest and farm producer organizations across several counties, offering business planning, finance access, technical training, and market links to women, youth, nursery owners, beekeepers, and smallholders.

Through the UK-funded AIM4Forests programme, the Young Forest Champions Initiative, launched in Kenya in 2024, has mentored youth for forest conservation and action. Ten young women from eight counties were selected in the first cohort and have since engaged over 10,550 community members and planted more than 150,000 trees in restoration efforts across the country. Building on this success, the initiative is expanding in 2025 to Zambia, Ghana, Peru, and Uganda. This growing movement reflects a powerful shift, young people are not just participants but leaders at the heart of grassroots restoration efforts, shaping the future of forest stewardship and climate resilience.

With targeted funding, these grassroots entities could scale up nursery development, secure improved seed stock, enhance agroforestry and biodiversity restoration, expand beekeeping enterprises, and solidify gender-equitable governance frameworks. Moreover, seed grants and capacity-building investments would enable local groups to transition to sustainable enterprise models, connecting them to value chains, carbon finance, and crucial forest restoration targets, while ensuring youth and women remain at the forefront of ecological stewardship and climate resilience.

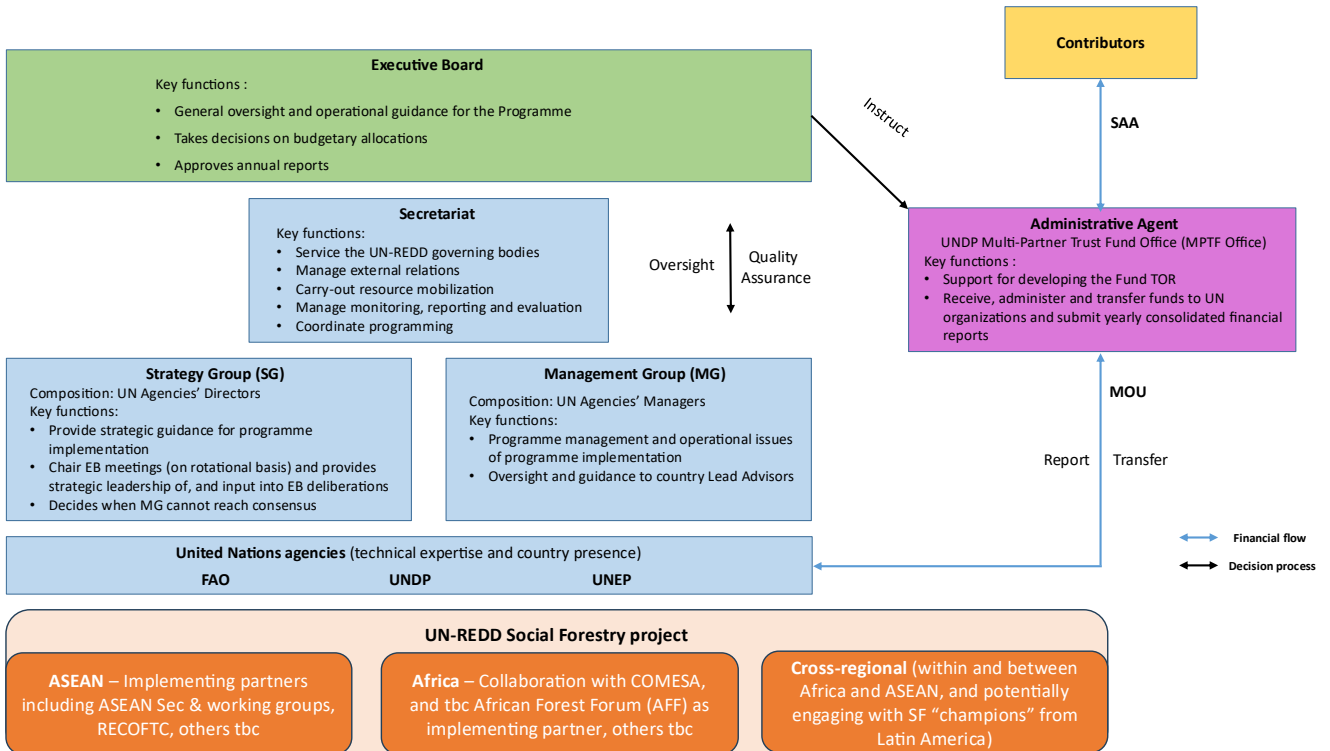
Kenya's well-established Participatory Forest Management framework, supported by active Community Forest Associations (CFAs), provides a solid foundation for integrating social forestry into national and regional green growth agendas. Synergies can be built with initiatives such as the Forest and Farm Facility, the Green Belt Movement, and youth-led restoration programs like the Young Forest Champions Initiative, which are already advancing community-based enterprises and restoration efforts. By connecting these grassroots networks to regional value

chains and climate finance opportunities through COMESA, UN-REDD can strengthen market access, enhance financial inclusion for women and youth, and scale up best practices in social forestry monitoring and policy integration across the region.

Leveraging UNDP's Climate Promise work in Kenya, synergies can be drawn on a concrete set of tested models from the Climate Promise Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities (IP & LC) direct grants mechanism, which provide grants to locally-led organisations, several of them women- and youth-led, to deliver community-driven climate and nature action with strong relevance for social forestry and community-led forest economies. Supported interventions span restoration and tree growing (including nursery development), protection of water sources and watersheds, agroforestry and rangeland rehabilitation, mangrove/coastal ecosystem restoration, and strengthening local governance and inclusive community organisation. Examples include an indigenous women's collective (Paran Women's Group), coastal biodiversity initiatives around Mida Creek (COBEC), and youth and women's organisations in forest and rangeland landscapes (e.g., Eshinamwenyuli Youth CBO; Baringo Women and Youth Organization).

These grant-supported experiences provide practical learning on what enables communities to organise, govern, implement and sustain restoration and forest-adjacent livelihood actions, including partnership models, inclusion approaches and the types of "last-mile" support that make community action more scalable and finance-ready. The SDC support enables consolidating these lessons into policy-relevant insights and replicable approaches that strengthen engagement with county and national counterparts, inform enabling frameworks for community forestry and agroforestry on private/community land, and support broader uptake of community-led forest economies through SMEs and value chains.

Annex 3. UN-REDD Organisational Chart



It is planned for representatives from UN-REDD, SDC, and the ASEAN Secretariat, AWG-FCC and AWG-SF as well as national focal points from focus countries to meet at the minimum once a year, as part of Steering / Advisory Committee, to assess the progress of the initiative and take joint decisions on way forward. The process will be clarified during consultations and endorsement for the planned work by the ASEAN Secretariat. Additional partners may also join the Committee as members following consultation with the ASEAN Secretariat.

Annex 4. 2025 Highlights in the three focus countries (Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR) and at ASEAN level under ASEAN SF Phase 1

- Enhanced understanding of the climate mitigation impacts of social forestry (SF) including through development of mitigation assessments for Cambodia (four Provinces/nationwide by end of 2025), Indonesia (nationwide) and Lao PDR (nationwide).
- Enhanced capacities and systems support the development of SF databases in Cambodia and Lao PDR to better inform policy and decision making.
- Enhanced capacities to implement Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in forestry, including SF. This includes through the development of ASEAN Guidelines and Toolkit on NbS for the forest sector prepared in consultation with ASEAN bodies and key stakeholders. Guidelines and Toolkit endorsed by ASEAN Senior Officials of Forestry and ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry.
- 13 Social Forestry Enterprises (SFEs) have operational Business and Investment plans, which included facilitating introductions and negotiations between the SFEs and market and financial actors, with additional support to address business and financial management gaps.
- Enhanced capacities through capturing learning in the field leading to the development, by Q1 2026 of “Blueprint for the Commercial Development of Social Forestry Enterprises in ASEAN Countries”.

Summary of impacts, deliverables and activities

Note the interlinkages between Outputs 1-3.

ASEAN SF Output	Outcomes/impacts	Deliverables	Activities (with disaggregated data by sex where possible)
<p>1. Contribution of social forestry (SF) schemes towards climate change mitigation in ASEAN assessed to inform action and climate finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced understanding of the climate mitigation impacts of SF (Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR) Improving framework and enhanced capacities for conducting mitigation assessment for SF (Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR) supporting SF access to climate finance (Indonesia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation assessments for Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR. Knowledge brief and report on SF access to investment in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR Knowledge brief and report on use of SF management plans to support climate action in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR 	<p>Multi-country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research in Cambodia (291 participants/80 women) and Lao PDR (742/207) to understand the use of SF management plans to support climate action. <p>Indonesia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop “Supporting development of mitigation assessment and supporting manual for SF”. 04/03/25. (11 participants/3 women) Workshop “SF Mitigation assessment”. 28/04-01/05/25. (26/6) Workshop “Carbon guideline for SF”. 30/09/25. (37/15) Training “Sample-based area estimation to assess the accuracy of land change maps” (26 /6) Reviewed draft Regulation for carbon trading for SF. Fieldwork “Piloting the Carbon Guideline for SF” <p>Lao PDR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop “Findings of Mitigation Assessment for Village Forestry”. 08/04/25. (27/6) Workshop on Village Forest Database Development and Integration in the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS). 24/03/2026

ASEAN SF Output	Outcomes/impacts	Deliverables	Activities (with disaggregated data by sex where possible)
<p>2. Capacities to assess and monitor SF to the NDCs/climate change frameworks built in 3 countries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced capacities and strengthened systems for monitoring SF (Cambodia, Lao PDR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piloted deforestation risk mapping Blog “GoKUPS, a social forestry monitoring platform in Indonesia” Established Village Forestry Monitoring System Committee (Lao PDR) Supported re-establishment of Village Forestry Working Group, under the Technical Forestry Working Group (Lao PDR) SF database established (Cambodia, Lao PDR) Guide for social forestry (CF and CPA) data management with QGIS and mitigation contribution assessment (Cambodia) SF mitigation assessment manual (Indonesia) Carbon Guideline for SF (Indonesia) Blog “Understanding the impacts of social forestry in Lao PDR” 	<p>Multi-country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF and forest change data collated and reviewed (Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR) Meetings on needs and availability of SF datasets (Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR) <p>Cambodia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training “Basic geo-spatial data management with QGIS for social forestry (CF and CPA)”. 17-19/06/25 (15 participants /3 women) Training “Monitoring Community Forestry” <p>Lao PDR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop on Progress of development of VF monitoring. 08/04/25. (27/6) Results sharing workshop for fieldwork on assessment of VFMPs. 09/04/25. (30/6) Workshop “Findings of Mitigation Assessment for VF”. 08/04/25. (27/6) Various VF Working Group meetings
<p>3. Facilitate the integration of SF actions in NDC implementation and in the upcoming NDCs revision (2025) in 3 countries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SF explicitly included in NDC3.0 Cambodia SF referred as method for emission reductions in draft NDC (Indonesia, Lao PDR) Common position for COP30 of AMS for forest related climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared mitigation assessments with governments for possible integration in NDCs in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR Pre-COP – development of common position on climate action for forests, including SF Blog “Cambodia’s NDC3.0: Unlocking SF’s potential” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with officials supporting preparation of NDC3.0 (Cambodia, Lao PDR) Workshop “Supporting AMS’ Common Position on Forestry for UNFCCC 30 in Belém, Brazil”. 20 – 21/10/25

ASEAN SF Output	Outcomes/impacts	Deliverables	Activities (with disaggregated data by sex where possible)
<p>4. Promote and accelerate responsible private investments in SF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambodia, 3 SFEs supported, covering 1,917 ha. Total of 1,243 members incl. 609 women. • Indonesia, 8 SFEs supported total area managed approx. 700 ha combined. Women active in 6 out of 8. 2 SFEs are indigenous led. Average of 10–30 core members and up to 200 farmers per enterprise. • Lao PDR, 2 SFEs supported, covering approx. 170 ha. Total of 150 households. <p>Short term impacts of Business and Investment Plans development and implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved legal recognition and formalization of smallholder groups. • Facilitated connections with buyers and off-takers, enhancing market access. • Raised awareness among smallholders and SFEs of production, financial and management gaps. • Enhanced capacity to support growth and financial sustainability of SFEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Social Forestry Enterprises (SFEs) have operational Business and Investment plans. • “Blueprint for the Commercial Development of Social Forestry Enterprises in ASEAN Countries” developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 SFEs supported through the development and implementation of business and investment plans. • Supported introductions and negotiations between the selected SFEs and market and financial actors, marking the final steps of the process documented in the ASEAN Blueprint below. • Regional online consultation “Blueprint for accelerating commercial development of Social Forestry Enterprises in ASEAN.” • Regional workshop “Development of Blueprint for accelerating commercial development of Social Forestry Enterprises in ASEAN.”
<p>5. Capacities of ASEAN member states (AMS) to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced capacity of AMS to integrate NbS/EbA in forest related climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEAN guidelines on NbS and EbA in the forestry sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Meeting “Developing Guidelines for NbS / EbA in ASEAN”. 20/03/25 (44 participants/13 women)

ASEAN SF Output	Outcomes/impacts	Deliverables	Activities (with disaggregated data by sex where possible)
quantify benefits, connect partners and operationalize nature-based solutions (NbS) and ecosystem-based approach (EbA) in the context of SF enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplan, building on Guidelines and Toolkit to integrate NbS/EbA in forest related climate actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASEAN toolkit on NbS and EbA in the forestry sector, including SF Blog “ASEAN Toolkit for achieving Triple-wins for forests, people and climate through NbS” Knowledge brief “Potential of SF as an NbS in Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Workshop “Developing ASEAN Toolkit on NbS / EbA in the Forestry Sector, including SF”. 2-03/05/25. (37 /16) Expert Discussion “Investment Opportunities on NbS / EbA for Forestry, including SF in ASEAN”. 26/06/2025. (15/6) 23rd ASOF Seminar “Scaling up NbS/EbA Implementation and innovative Sustainable Financing Mechanisms”. 06/08/25. (68/20)

<p>Cross-cutting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review (2021-2025) and Development of (2026-2030) Plans of Action of AWG-FCC and AWG-SF ASEAN Pavilion at COP30. Side event: ASEAN NbS Principles: Considerations in NbS Implementation in Forestry and SF in support of climate action Indonesia Pavilion at COP30. Side event “The Role of Adat Law in Climate Change and Forest Protection through SF” Asia-Pacific Forestry Week (4-7/11/25) Side event “SF in Southeast Asia: Food security and climate action” and exhibition booth showcasing SF products E-learning “Foundation course on Community Forestry” drafted Interventions at meetings by ASEAN bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21st ASEAN Working Group – Forest and Climate Change (AWG-FCC) Annual Meeting (29/04) 19th AWG-Social Forestry (AWG-SF) Annual Meeting (07/05) The 14th Meeting of ASEAN Steering Committee on Climate Change and Food Security (17/07) 28th ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry Annual Meeting (06/08)

Annex 5. Lessons learned from ASEAN that can be adapted to Africa

Development of SF monitoring systems

The lessons learned from ASEAN on development of SFMS, supports better understanding of the impacts of SF on climate action, and subsequently nature conservation, and linkage to socio-economic development. The focus countries in ASEAN have provided contrasting histories in the development of SF, including the roles of donors and development organisations, objectives of SF, and linkages to respecting rights of Indigenous Peoples and ethnic groups. These differences are also seen in consideration on how SF is monitored. These lessons learned will prove valuable to agencies in Kenya and Zambia. One key sharing will be through the development of the ASEAN Guideline for monitoring SF to be developed in 2026, which can be adapted and developed for COMESA member states, or Africa as a whole – depending on consultations.

A further potential focus area is developing capacities and systems to enable conducting a national level mitigation assessment for the priority countries in Africa. This may also be expanded to cover associated priority activities as needed such as developing a carbon guideline for SF.

SFE enterprise development

The ASEAN experience captured in the Blueprint for Accelerating Business Development of Social Forestry Enterprises (SFEs) offers a rich set of lessons on how community-based forest enterprises can become viable engines of green growth. Its experiences in linking social forestry with markets, finance, and policy reform provide valuable guidance for Africa’s emerging regional initiatives under COMESA. Some of the key lessons include the following:

- Regional coordination platforms (like ASEAN’s AWG-SF) were essential for harmonization, knowledge sharing, and scaling.
- Transparent governance, gender responsive approach, and internal fund management-built trust and long-term sustainability.
- Linking social forestry to trade, SME development, and green finance created real economic incentives for communities to conserve forests.

Strengthened role of Social Forestry and Integration in NDCs

Lessons learned on development of a common position on climate action for forests, and integration of social forestry in national climate ambitions can provide valuable lessons that can be mirrored in Africa. The ASEAN SF Initiative worked both at regional level with the ASEC, AWG-SF and AWG-FCC and at national level with the governments of Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR to advance the role of social forestry in climate mitigation leading to a more prominent role of social forestry in NDCs and the development of a common position on Forestry for Climate Action at COP30 reaffirming to empower local communities and indigenous peoples and social forestry actors to participate in and benefit from climate action.

In terms of likely application of the lessons learned from ASEAN to the context of Africa,

1. Strengthening Capacities and Monitoring Systems

Lesson learnt

Evidence-based value chain development: ASEAN applied participatory value chain assessments to identify high-potential forest products using economic, environmental, and social criteria.

Business incubation as a catalyst: Structured mentoring, business model design, and practical training enabled SFEs to move from subsistence to investment readiness.

Knowledge and data platforms: ASEAN's regional databases and capacity assessments informed national planning.

Potential application for Africa context

Africa can adapt this approach to prioritize key value chains and monitor their contribution to climate, biodiversity, and livelihoods.

Regional hubs in Africa can serve as incubation centers, offering e-learning, technical guidance, and peer-to-peer exchange.

COMESA could host similar monitoring and learning systems to strengthen evidence-based policy and regional knowledge sharing.

2. Expanding Access to Markets and Finance

Lesson learnt

Cluster-based enterprise support: Grouping SFEs into cooperatives or clusters improved economies of scale, bargaining power, and investor confidence

Innovative local finance mechanisms: ASEAN's Community Forestry Development Funds and revolving micro-credit schemes financed reinvestment and compliance costs.

Market facilitation and partnerships: Long-term offtake agreements and certification (e.g., FSC, fair trade) created predictable income and market credibility.

Potential application for Africa context

African initiatives should promote aggregation models linking SFEs with MSMEs and nature-positive off-takers.

Africa can establish community-based funds or blended finance schemes to reduce reliance on grants and attract impact investors.

Facilitated market matchmaking and responsible sourcing incentives could help African SFEs access premium markets.

3. Enabling Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

Lesson learnt

Simplified and harmonized regulations: ASEAN countries reduced administrative burdens through pre-approved templates for legality, registration, and transport permits.

Potential application for Africa context

African governments can streamline licensing and compliance processes to unlock market entry for SFEs.

Integration into national climate and green growth strategies: SFEs were linked with NDCs, REDD+, and PES schemes.

Public-private collaboration and inclusion: ASEAN leveraged public procurement, gender-responsive policies, and private sector engagement to scale SFEs.

Africa can embed social forestry within national climate frameworks to tap carbon and ecosystem service finance.

COMESA can promote inclusive partnerships and regional procurement incentives favouring sustainable forest products.

In sum, ASEAN's experience shows that social forestry thrives when local enterprise capacity, market access, and enabling policy frameworks evolve together. For Africa, embedding these lessons through COMESA and hub countries can accelerate the transition from community forestry to viable, climate-smart rural economies.

Annex 6. Experience with direct grants to Indigenous Peoples in Cambodia and potential contribution under UN-REDD Social Forestry

This annex summarizes lessons from UNDP’s experience under the UNREDD and Climate Promise initiatives, highlighting community based forest financing activities in Cambodia through the [Direct Grant Mechanism](#). The work in Cambodia, supported by the United Kingdom’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), will help to inform the design of the ASFSRF, helping to enhance its scalability, governance, and access to inclusive, community driven forest finance.

In Cambodia, UNDP has supported Indigenous Peoples (IPs) through the direct grant mechanism implemented by GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), which operates a transparent, inclusive selection mechanism guided by a multi-stakeholder steering committee. The initiative is designed specifically to:

- Strengthen IP participation—including women and youth—in national FOLU sector targets under the NDC; and
- Scale up IP-led forest measures aligned with the National REDD+ Strategy.

Eligibility criteria: Funding was open to registered IP organizations (IPOs), local NGOs, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that work directly with IPs. At least 30% of supported projects must be implemented by Indigenous women and youth.

Selection process:

- In October 2023, 39 IP organizations and communities were trained on project proposal development. Fifteen proposals were submitted to the SGP steering committee.
- By March 2024, [grants were awarded to 5 organizations](#): Osoam Community, Indigenous Bunong Community of Antres Village, North-Eastern Cottage Organization, Kampong Domrey, and Anlong Phe Community Protected Areas.
- Under a second funding round (BMZ-supported, 2025–2026), [two of the original five IP community projects were selected to continue support](#).

[Key achievements of the first round](#):

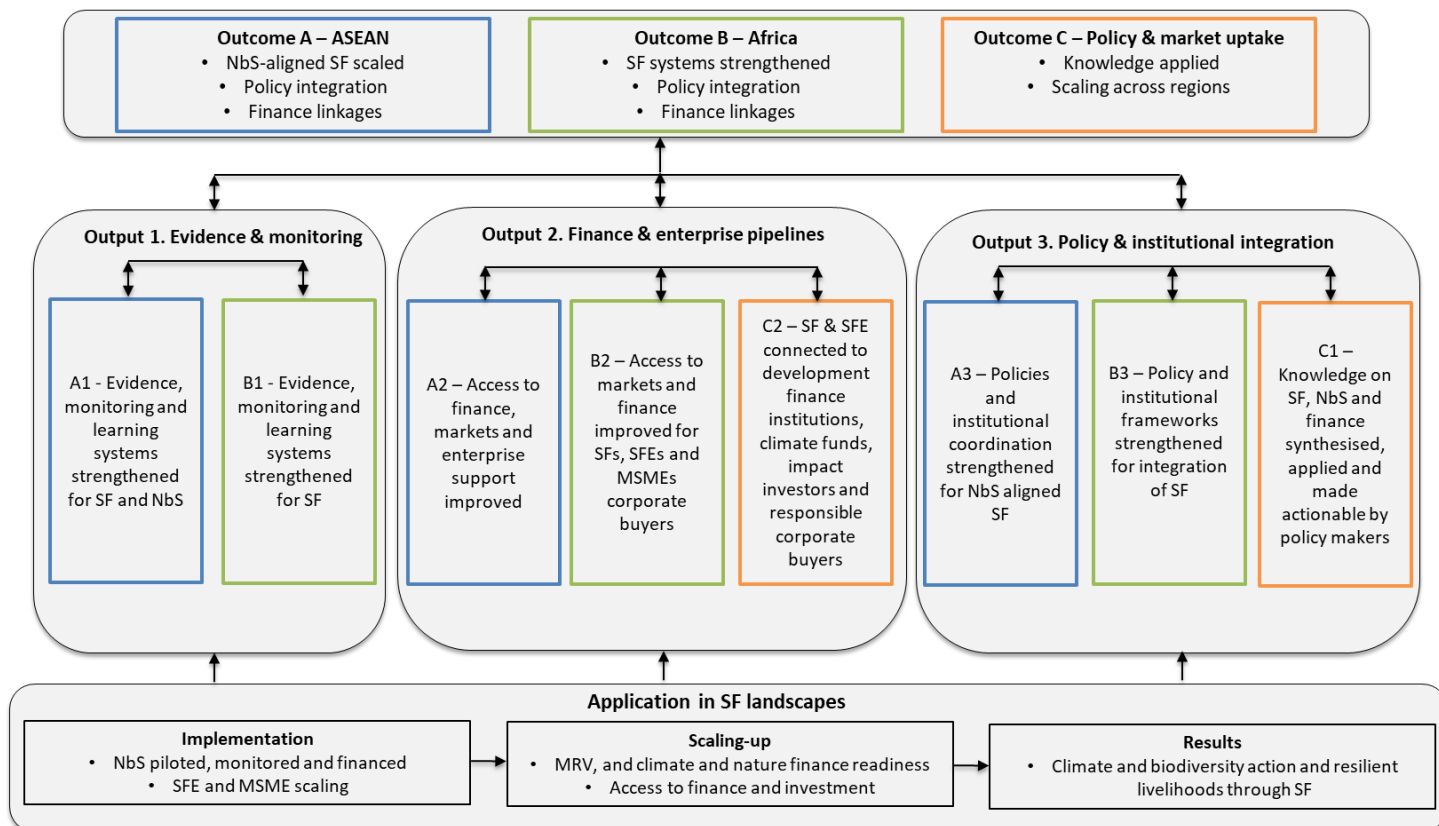
- **Land and Forest Protection:** Over 7,000 ha of IP land and community forests demarcated and patrolled.
- **Identity and Legal Recognition:** Supported completion of communal land titling for ten Kuy, Poar, and Bunong communities.
- **Livelihoods:** Improved resilience through agroecology, agroforestry, savings groups, low-interest loans, value-chain initiatives (honey, livestock, Talipot production).
- **Capacity and Governance:** More than 90 Indigenous leaders trained in FPIC, forest governance, legal frameworks, and SMART patrolling.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Supported documentation of Kuy culture, traditional instruments, and Indigenous knowledge.

Building on lessons from Cambodia, the expected contributions and impact pathways envisaged by UNDP highlight the potential for scalable community-driven financing models that enhance inclusive, gender-responsive, and sustainable Social Forestry practices across the ASEAN region.

Annex 7. Theory of change

IMPACT (2030)

Through enhanced SF programmes, forest-dependent Indigenous Peoples and local communities in ASEAN and Africa sustainably manage forests as high-integrity NbS, contributing measurably to climate mitigation and adaptation, nature conservation, and resilient, equitable livelihoods, with results embedded in national, regional and global climate and nature frameworks.



Cross-cutting principles: Gender equality, IPLC rights & FPIC, Tenure security, Learning & scaling, Regional mechanisms

Assumptions: Government commitment, Responsive markets and finance actors, Capacitated communities, Engaged regional platforms

The draft theory of change will be further developed during the inception phase – i.e. endorsement and consultation process in Component A, and consultation process for Components B and C (annex 8).

Annex 8. Draft Logframe³⁷

The logframe will be further developed during the inception phase, in consultation with strategic partners.

SDC Indicator	UN-REDD indicators	Project indicator	Alignment/Contribution	Targets (by 2030)	Assumptions / risks
Beneficiaries from climate change adaptation and natural resources management measures: Number of persons benefiting from concrete climate change adaptation and natural resources management (CCE_ARI 1)	Number of countries with increased mitigation ambition in their latest NDCs, and enhanced engagement of non-state actors, particularly those more marginalized, such as Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth, in the development and implementation of NDCs (Output 3.1)	Countries reflecting SF in NDCs (incl. BTRs), NBSAPs, and related frameworks (i.e. integrating NbS in SF programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries integrating SF into NDCs, NBSAPs and related frameworks (project indicator) directly count towards UN-REDD Output 3.1. Each country where SF mitigation/adaptation targets are added or strengthened constitutes increased ambition. SF-2 contribution to UN-REDD Output 3.1 rolls up to SDC CCE_ARI 1 and CCE-ARI 3 because NDC integration enables communities to access climate finance and NRM support, translating policy gains into concrete beneficiary reach 	≥ 3 countries (TBC)	1. Policy / framework windows remain open
	Number of countries with strengthened policy, institutional, and knowledge frameworks to better value the contribution of social and community-based forestry for climate action (Output 4.1)				
	Number of local level initiatives implemented to strengthen the rights and tenure of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities with support from UN-REDD (Output 4.3)	Households benefiting from social forestry support including through access to markets and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household-level beneficiaries tracked by the project (SF and SFE support, market access, climate finance readiness) aggregate into UN-REDD Output 4.3's IP/LC capacity and access indicators. Improved incentive alignment and upfront finance mobilised through SFE development 	Direct impact 32,000 households (TBC) ³⁸	1. Communities remain engaged, 2. access and safeguards maintained

³⁷ This table is indicative and provided to illustrate alignment between the proposed project, SDC global indicators, and the UN-REDD Results Framework. The full operational logframe, covering all project components and including baselines, targets, and detailed implementation arrangements, will be finalized during the inception phase following funding confirmation and consultations with government counterparts and strategic partners.

³⁸ Unless otherwise stated, beneficiary-level targets will be report in households, with individual-level units used only where the nature of the indicator requires it (e.g. capacity development, or inclusion).

SDC Indicator	UN-REDD indicators	Project indicator	Alignment/Contribution	Targets (by 2030)	Assumptions / risks
	Number of MSMEs generating REDD+ carbon revenues supported by UN-REDD incubated and accessing to finance (Output 4.4)		<p>(Output 4.4) sustains NRM benefits at household level, contributing to SDC CCE_ARI 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and finance access count as household benefit pathways. Component C's curated investment marketplace and corporate buyer engagement are one of the mechanisms 		
Number of climate change, DRR, environmental policies and/or legal frames supported. (CCE_ARI 3)	Number of countries with increased mitigation ambition in their latest NDCs, and enhanced engagement of non-state actors, particularly those more marginalized, such as Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth, in the development and implementation of NDCs (Output 3.1)	Number of countries whose Social Forestry Programmes have enhanced access to climate and nature finance for tenure holders through integration into NDCs (incl. BTRs), NBSAPs, and related frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each national policy instrument (NDC, NBSAP, SF regulation) or regional guideline (ASEAN SF monitoring toolkit, NbS integration guidelines) developed/revised with project support counts as policy/legal frame under SDC CCE_ARI 3. UN-REDD Output 4.1's socially inclusive forest policy indicator is the direct equivalent to CCE_ARI 3; Similarly, Output 3.1 captures the NDC-specific subset. Component C's helps embed SF in financing frameworks and promoting stronger policies. 	≥3 (TBC)	1. Policy/framework windows remain open
	Number of countries with strengthened policy, institutional, and knowledge frameworks to better value the contribution of social and community-based forestry for climate action. (Output 4.1)				
Ecosystems conserved, restored and/ or sustainably managed: Number of hectares of ecosystems conserved, restored and/ or sustainably managed (CCE_ARI 6)	Increase in forest area (ha) conserved, restored, and/or sustainably managed in tropical forest countries (Outcome 4)	Area under social forestry covered by social forestry monitoring systems that supports informed policy making and access to finance (ha)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project does not directly create new SF areas but facilitates the enhancement of national SF programs, including management quality, monitoring coverage and financial sustainability of existing and emerging SF tenure. SF area with improved monitoring (SFMS expansion) or policy backing (NDC/NBSAP integration) directly measures ecosystem coverage under Outcome 4 ha indicator. The project will strengthen national SF 	≥ 22 million ha (TBC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued government commitment, stable tenure frameworks Continued support of donors for SF

SDC Indicator	UN-REDD indicators	Project indicator	Alignment/Contribution	Targets (by 2030)	Assumptions / risks
			<p>programs by supporting impact monitoring and, where relevant, the systematic expansion of SF to meet national targets, including through tools such as Deforisk for deforestation risk mapping to identify priority landscapes for SF supporting sustainable forest management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFMS data translated into investor-facing evidence and policy-relevant products (incl. briefings, enterprise pipelines, performance metrics) helps enable upfront finance mobilization. 		
<p>Number of supported revised or new laws, policies which promote gender equality and/or address gender-based violence. (GEN_TRI 7)</p>	<p>Number of countries, with forest-related policies, strategic plans, laws or regulations developed, revised or adopted as a result of UN-REDD support, with the aim of strengthening socially inclusive and gender responsive forest protection, restoration or sustainable forest management (Output 4.1)</p>	<p>Number of countries with enhanced legal framework for socially inclusive gender responsive social forestry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project indicator for GEN_TRI 7 is aligned the UN-REDD Output 4.1. Each policy instrument with gender-responsive SF provisions count at both levels. Across all three components, support for informed policymaking will help leverage opportunities for policy reform and share findings through formal and informal channels to promote more socially inclusive social forestry Component C further contributes through investor briefing materials and regional engagements that embed gender performance criteria (e.g. women's leadership in SFEs, W+ Standard metrics) into financing eligibility requirements, elevating gender provisions from text to measurable conditions. 	<p>≥3 countries (TBC)</p>	<p>1. Policy/framework windows remain open</p>