



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

A photograph of a lush tropical forest landscape. The foreground is filled with dense green foliage, including various trees and palm trees. The background shows a hazy, misty forest extending up a hillside. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

**Forest  
governance  
and timber  
legality  
for REDD+**

# Forest governance and timber legality for REDD+

## Governance and reduction of deforestation and forest degradation

The successful reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation requires forest governance to be efficient, effective and equitable.

The concept of forest governance has evolved to engage public and private actors at many levels to make and enforce decisions that are clear, transparent, just, and lead to the sustainability of forests and the fair distribution of the benefits derived from their use. Forest governance also refers to the institutional, policy and legal dimensions addressing both direct and indirect drivers of forest loss and degradation. A set of principles and pillars has been defined to assess good governance applying to the forest sector (Figure 1).

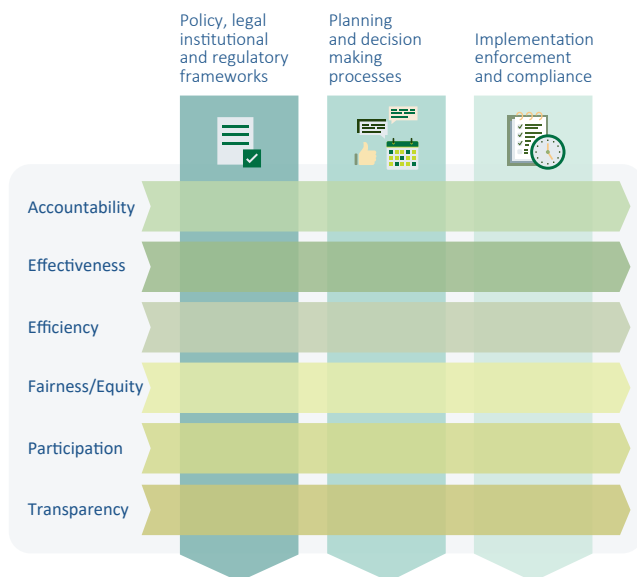


Figure 1. Pillars and principles of governance (adjusted from: Framework for assessing and monitoring forest governance. FAO-PROFOR. Rome, 2011)

Governance gaps or weaknesses represent threats to REDD+ in terms of its effectiveness (i.e. efficient and long-term reduction of deforestation and forest degradation, and related greenhouse gas emissions) and in terms of its legitimacy, and consequently on potential broad support and engagement from stakeholders. Putting REDD+ strategies into practice is made easier and more successful when governing institutions are strong, policies and laws are clear and coherent, and the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples are respected.

## FAO's support

REDD+ provides a meaningful opportunity for countries to improve decision-making practices and inclusive stakeholder participation, to enhance law enforcement and benefit distribution, and to address corruption and illegal practices. FAO facilitates seizing these opportunities by providing direct assistance to strengthen national technical capacities, generating new knowledge, and facilitating national and international discussion fora.

### Developing and harmonizing legal and policy frameworks:

The policy and legal frameworks of many countries often require reform in order to avoid inconsistencies and contradictions that may trigger forest loss, as well as to harmonize laws related to forest and land use and to establish linkages with climate change strategies and/or policies that support Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

### Promoting transparent and inclusive dialogue among stakeholders:

Significant progress in strengthening forest governance can be made where States have established decentralized processes promoting dialogue and substantial exchange with civil society, indigenous peoples and the private sector.

FAO has extensive experience in facilitating multistakeholder processes for reaching consensus and for resolving conflicts during REDD+ activities, including the formulation of REDD+ strategies and investment plans or the design of National Forest Monitoring Systems.

### Working with countries to strengthen institutionalization and cross-sectoral coordination:

Institutions with clear mandates, roles and functions are key for achieving climate change targets. FAO has wide experience in strengthening institutionalization and cross-sectorial coordination.

The Organization is putting its experience and knowledge at the service stakeholders also in the evolving context of REDD+ and climate change, where national and subnational institutions as well as private organizations, civil society and indigenous peoples need to rapidly adapt to new roles and responsibilities.

These include developing stronger inter-institutional and multi-sectoral coordination, and creating linkages between national and subnational government, which need to be mutually supportive.

As agriculture remains a main driver of deforestation in many developing countries, FAO also supports the strengthening or establishment of new communication and cooperation channels between the forest and agriculture sectors to ensure comple-

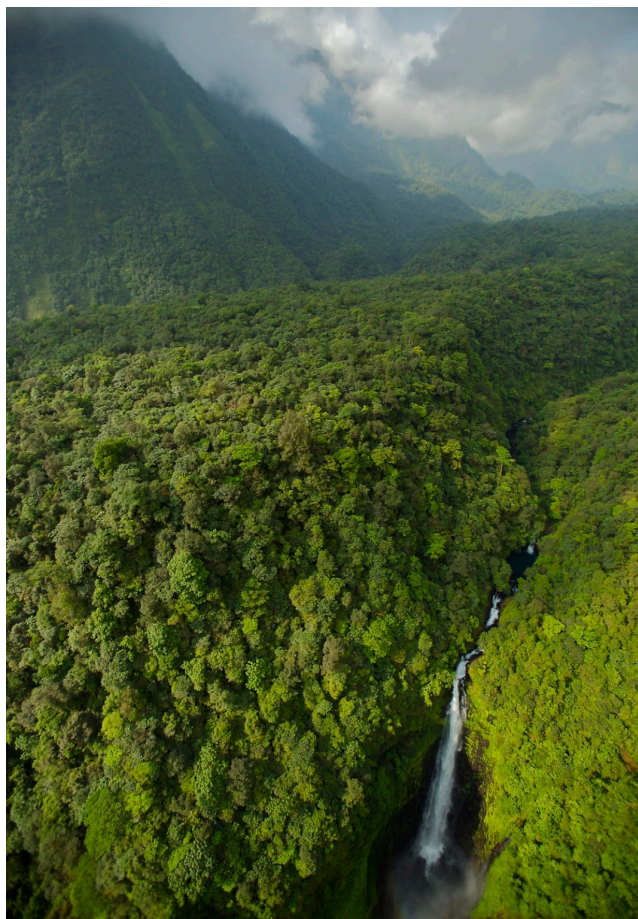


mentarity and win-win situations that would bolster food security without forest loss.

**Supporting informed decision-making, transparency and accountability:** FAO complements its efforts to strengthen forest governance for REDD+ with specific support to enhance informed decision-making.

FAO accompanies countries as they move from Measurement, Reporting and Verification to the Enhanced Transparency Framework requirements established in the Paris Agreement, in relation to tracking of climate action.

The collection, analysis and dissemination of forest-related data, including land resources and socio-economic information, are key for informed decision-making and accountability, as well as for tracking the implementation of NDCs, including REDD+ actions.



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## REDD+ and FLEGT Working together to strengthen forest governance

Country commitments to REDD+ and to the European Union's "Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade" Action Plan (FLEGT) present important opportunities for common action to address forest loss, strengthen forest governance, and mitigate climate change.

FAO actively supports countries in identifying and building on synergies between REDD+ and FLEGT to reinforce their complementary objectives and make progress in such areas as strengthening forest governance, clarifying land tenure, facilitating stakeholder engagement, increasing transparency and addressing illegal logging.

## Examples from the ground

### Latin America

FAO has provided technical support in the drafting of a regional climate change law for Latin America aligned with the latest developments following the entry into force of the Paris Agreement. The draft regional climate change law, which is based on a legal assessment of the climate change legislation adopted by Latin American countries, is pending adoption by the Regional Latin-American Parliament at the time of publication.

### Côte d'Ivoire and Colombia

In Côte d'Ivoire, FAO supported REDD+ and FLEGT programmes are jointly working with the Ministry for Water and Forests in the elaboration of the implementing decrees of the Forest Code. Joint actions have also been implemented in Colombia, where thanks to the two processes the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development developed a timber traceability system and a community forestry programme.

## Key resources

FAO Sustainable Forest Management Toolbox module on forest governance web page:

[www.fao.org/sustainable-forest-management/toolbox/modules/forest-governance/basic-knowledge/en/](http://www.fao.org/sustainable-forest-management/toolbox/modules/forest-governance/basic-knowledge/en/)

FAO. 2011. Climate change for forest policy-makers:

[www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2429e/i2429e00.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2429e/i2429e00.pdf)

FAO. 2015. Climate change and forestry legislation in support of REDD+:

[www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/legal/docs/lpo\\_92.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/legal/docs/lpo_92.pdf)

FAO. 2017. The work of FAO to enhance national capacities to report on climate change:

[www.fao.org/3/a-i7210e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7210e.pdf)

FAO. 2017. Turning Nationally Determined Contributions into action:

[www.fao.org/3/a-i7791e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7791e.pdf)

FAO-ITTO. 2010. Forest law compliance and governance in tropical countries:

[www.fao.org/docrep/012/al044e/al044e00.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/al044e/al044e00.pdf)

FAO-PROFOR. 2011. Framework for assessing and monitoring forest governance:

[www.fao.org/climatechange/27526-0cc61ec-c084048c7a9425f64942df70a8.pdf](http://www.fao.org/climatechange/27526-0cc61ec-c084048c7a9425f64942df70a8.pdf)

FAO-PROFOR. 2014. Assessing forest governance: A practical guide to data collection, analysis and use:

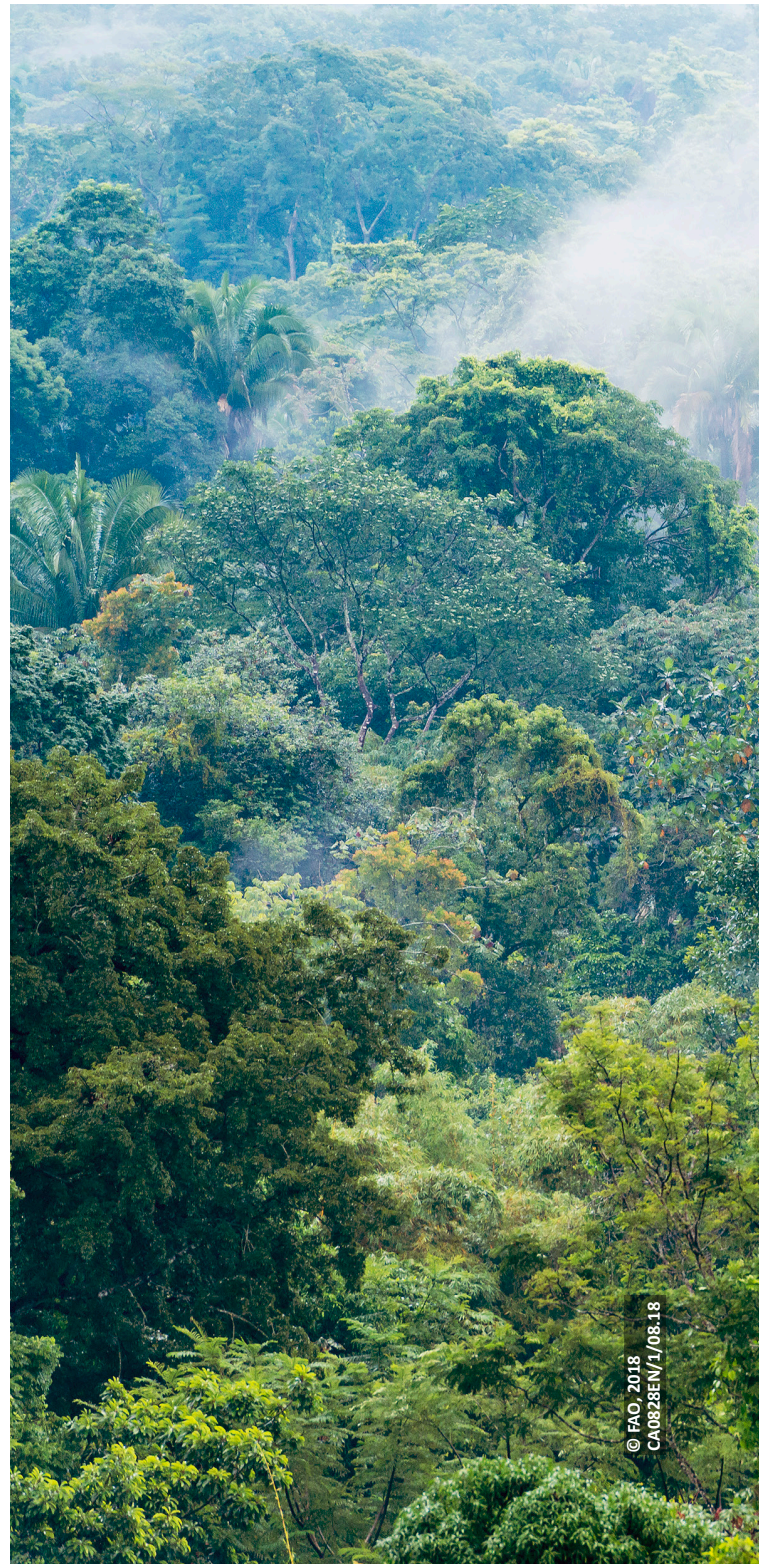
[www.fao.org/3/a-i3918e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3918e.pdf)

For more information, please visit the **FAO REDD+ webpage**: [www.fao.org/redd](http://www.fao.org/redd)

Join the discussion group on “REDD+ law, forest governance and tenure” at:

[dgroups.org/fao/law-for-redd-plus/](http://dgroups.org/fao/law-for-redd-plus/)

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