

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

AIM:Forests Accelerating Innovative

Monitoring for Forests

Accelerating innovative monitoring for forests

Reducing deforestation and forest degradation, restoring forests, and sustainably managing forests are all critical pathways to meeting the 2030 global goals.

Since 1990, more than 420 million hectares of forest have disappeared. Although deforestation rates have slowed, 10 million hectares of forest are still lost every year.

World leaders have committed to halting deforestation and restoring more than 1 billion hectares of degraded land. However, progress has been hindered due to the lack of information at various levels:

- those who are responsible for forests, who need accurate data to inform the right course of action to reduce deforestation, as well as implement plans for restoration and sustainable management;
- countries, which urgently need National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) that are institutionalized in government institutions and that deliver high-quality data;
- government institutions, which must provide critical information for domestic forest-related priorities and policies, and emission reductions reporting through measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) processes in order to access climate finance and raise levels of ambition related to international commitments under the Paris Agreement; and
- Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and local communities, whose role in forest management and conservation is increasingly recognized – AIM4Forests will support efforts for IPs and local communities to monitor their forest areas and explore how their role as forest stewards can be further strengthened.



Leading the way to more effective forest monitoring

Goals

To address such challenges, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have launched AIM4Forests, a five-year programme that aims to support forest monitoring based on modern monitoring technologies and technical innovation, as well as the use of space data and remote sensing.

The main goals of AIM4Forests include:

- to address remaining technical and institutional gaps, as well as embed NFMS that are fit for purpose into national institutions;
- to accelerate the alignment, innovation, and deployment of high-integrity datasets to overcome MRV methodological challenges; and
- to enhance the participation of IPs and local communities in forest monitoring.

Driving technical innovation

The new program is all about leveraging technical innovation to create data and information to inform the right courses of action to reduce deforestation and restore forests.

AIM4Forests will leverage everything that technology and innovation offers such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. In addition, it will also make sure that the capacity is transferred to countries, including IPs and local communities who manage the forests – only that way can we see real change.

Specific innovations include:

- the continued strengthening of FAO's digital public goods such as the SEPAL cloud computing platform, as well as the leveraging of AI, machine learning, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's research and development on remote sensing and space data;
- the programme's leveraging of innovative learning approaches, such as online facilitated courses and self-paced e-learning opportunities;
- FAO's developing of country-led planning processes to design technical assistance, with the Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI), putting countries in the driving seat in the decision-making process for what sort of technical assistance is provided under the programme; and
- the programme's ensuring that all methods, platforms, and data created under the programme are open, accessible and transparent to all stakeholders.

Planned actions

Some planned actions of AIM4Forests are:



advancing technical innovation, open access, and novel learning platforms to accelerate NFMS and MRV;

enhancing harmonization, reliability, and utilization of high-quality agriculture, forestry, and other land-use data and technical solutions;

promoting tailored forest and land monitoring, and MRV modules with learning material, enabling IPs and local communities to participate in emerging standards;



facilitating a comprehensive country-led planning process, deployed by GFOI, for identifying critical gaps and ultimately embedding MRV systems in national institutions;



providing technical assistance to countries for addressing gaps in NFMS and MRV systems; and



institutionalizing NFMS and MRV in national institutions, as well as ensuring that results are open, transparent, and accessible to all.

Impact

AIM4Forests will work with 20 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean to institutionalize their NFMS and provide high-integrity MRV through modern monitoring technologies, novel learning approaches, and innovation.

This will enable participation in emerging accounting standards and reduce global emissions from the forest sector, while strengthening agriculture, forestry, and other land-use contributions in national climate action plans to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

Ensuring our forests are restored, protected, managed, and used sustainably will positively impact people and nature, contributing to the battle against climate change.



GBP 24.5 million in funding



supporting 20 countries

across the span of 5 years (2023–2028)

Figure 1 Better forest information leads to better decisions and actions

The following graphic explains how the planned actions are interrelated and contribute to the fulfillment of the programme's objectives.

Countries enabled to measure high-quality and accurate activity data, emission factors, emissions and emission reductions with policy-relevant monitoring systems (UN-REDD Output 1.4)



Main partners

The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

> Those that are responsible for forests need accurate data and information to inform the right course of action.

In this regard, countries urgently need National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) that are institutionalized in governments and that deliver high-quality data, and provide the critical information needed for domestic forest-related priorities and policies, including on land-use decisions.

They also need high-quality data on their forests to access climate finance through measurement reporting and verification.

Forestry Division – National Forest Monitoring

Contact: AIM4Forests@fao.org Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Rome, Italy

Discover the impact

AIM4Forests https://www.fao.org/national-forest-monitoring/projects/aim4forests National Forest Monitoring

https://www.fao.org/national-forest-monitoring/en/

Subject to State State

Open Foris https://openforis.org/

SEPAL https://sepal.io/

AIM:Forests





© FAO/Thomas Nicolon



