

GOAL 7: Agree in 2015 to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as part of a post-2020 global climate agreement, in accordance with internationally agreed rules and consistent with the goal of not exceeding 2° Celsius warming

Key Messages

- Goal 7 was achieved in 2015 through the inclusion of land use and forests (Article 5) in the Paris Agreement.
- Of 165 countries that have submitted nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, 116 countries included land use as part of a quantified emissions target. Given the proper ambition and speed of action, the land-use sector could contribute about 25 percent of the global emissions reductions needed by 2050 to keep warming at or below 1.5°C.
- A framework for operationalizing the Paris Agreement by providing finance for REDD+ is currently being piloted.

OVERVIEW OF GOAL AND INDICATORS

Goal 7 aimed to get forest-related mitigation measures included in the post-2020 climate agreement negotiated in 2015. The Paris Agreement, which entered into force in November 2016, includes a full article (Article 5) dedicated to land use and forests, cementing the role of forests and other carbon sinks in achieving its overall mitigation goal.

In recent assessments, we modified previous indicators to track progress, removing an indicator on adopting the agreement itself, and instead focusing on finalizing and operationalizing a framework for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) under the Paris Agreement, and on including land-use or forest commitments in NDCs.

Table 1: Criteria and indicators to track Goal 7

CRITERIA	INDICATOR
1. Implementing the land-use provisions of the Paris Agreement	1.1 Finalization and operationalization of the operational framework for REDD+
2. References to land use (including REDD+) in submitted nationally determined contributions (NDCs)	2.1 Inclusion of land-use or forestry mitigation targets in NDCs and, in the absence of final NDCs, in intended nationally determined contributions

FINDINGS

Criterion 1: Implementing the land-use provisions of the Paris Agreement

Indicator 1.1: Finalization and operationalization of the operational framework for REDD+

The decisions made by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in operationalizing REDD+ are explicitly recognized in the Paris Agreement. The completion of the operational framework depends on the adoption of financing modalities for REDD+ results-based payments under the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

In 2017, the GCF Secretariat undertook consultations on the development of the operational framework for REDD+ and published two draft proposals for REDD+ financing. The first laid out a pilot program for REDD+ results-based payments, and the second proposal addressed finance for the first two phases of REDD+, namely the readiness phase (Phase 1) and the implementation of national policies, measures, strategies, and/or action plans (Phase 2). These decisions were approved by the GCF Board in late 2017 and a call for proposals was issued for REDD+ results-based payments.

Criterion 2: Inclusion of land-use or forestry mitigation targets in NDCs and, in the absence of final NDCs, in Intended Nationally Determined Contributions

Indicator 2.1: Inclusion of land-use or forestry mitigation targets within NDCs and, in the absence of final NDCs, in Intended Nationally Determined Contributions

The decision of a relatively large majority of countries to include land use within their emission targets, and of most other countries to at least adopt a nonemission target on land use means that Indicator 2.1 can be considered to have been met.

As of September 2017, 116 countries out of 165 had proposed a quantified emission mitigation target that includes land use.¹¹ Of those, 91 countries plan to adopt an economy-wide or multisector target that includes land use, while 20 plan to adopt only a specific emissions target on land use, and five plan to adopt both. In addition, 63 countries proposed a nonemission target or action on land use, either in lieu of or in addition to an emissions target covering the sector. The nonemission targets include goals on overall forest cover; forest conservation; and afforestation, reforestation and restoration, in many cases quantified in terms of hectares of forest. They also include goals to designate a proportion of forests as national parks or other protected areas, as well as goals related to adopting specific policies or measures for forest conservation and restoration.

If all conditional and unconditional NDCs were implemented, emissions reductions from land use would account for 10 to 30 percent of total emissions reductions by 2030, but substantially greater ambition would be needed to reach either the 2°C goal or the 1.5°C goal laid out in the

Paris Agreement, according to a 2017 report.^[2] Also noteworthy is that as of September 2017, 105 countries had made at least some of their land-use targets conditional on the provision of international financing. Realizing those targets will likely require significantly more finance than has been pledged currently for land-use mitigation.

Developments

As of 2018, we consider Goal 7 in the context of the New York Declaration on Forests to have been achieved. The Paris Agreement, which entered into force in November 2016, includes a full article (Article 5) dedicated to land use and forests, solidifying the role of forests and other carbon sinks in achieving its overall mitigation goal.

Resources for information

For more information related to Goal 7, please see the following resources:

- [Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Financing Flows in 2018 from the UNFCCC](#)
- [Forest Landscape Restoration in NDCs Analysis](#) by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Climate Focus: In 2018, IUCN and Climate Focus conducted a detailed policy analysis of all 165 NDCs submitted under the Paris Agreement, focusing on the role of forest landscape restoration practices in current climate targets. The analysis provides policy makers with accurate and detailed information on the role that forest landscape restoration could play in increasing climate ambition and enabling more robust implementation of their countries' NDCs. For more results from this analysis, see [Goal 5, Criterion 2](#).
- [Environmental Defense Fund updates on REDD+ and progress of NDCs](#) (June 2018)
- [REDD+, hype, hope and disappointment: The dynamics of expectations in conservation and development pilot projects](#).^[3] This report from the Stockholm Environment Institute evaluates the impact of REDD+ pilot projects on local communities, which is relevant for understanding the references to land use (including REDD+) in submitted NDCs ([Goal 7, Criterion 2](#)). The study finds that pilot projects offer high expectations of success that are often not met, creating a negative impact mostly on the community where the project is sited. However, high expectations are often a driving force for motivating action among project stakeholders.

^[1] Note that this analysis on the role of land use and emission-based targets in NDCs is separate from that in Goal 5, Criterion 2, which focuses specifically on forest landscape restoration through both emission-based and hectare-based targets.

^[2] Roe, S., Streck, C., Weiner, P.H., Obersteiner, M., & Frank, S. (2017). [How improved land use can contribute to the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement](#). Working paper prepared by Climate Focus and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis.

²⁴ Massarella, K., Sallu, S. M., Ensor, J. E., & Marchant, R. (2018). [REDD+, hype, hope and disappointment: The dynamics of expectations in conservation and development pilot projects](#). *World Development*, 109, 375–385.