



GOAL ASSESSMENT

PROGRESS ON THE NEW YORK DECLARATION ON FORESTS

Goal 7 assessment

Reducing emissions in accordance with global climate agreement

November 2020

The New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF) is a voluntary and non-binding international declaration aimed at halting global deforestation by 2030 with more than 200 endorsers: national and sub-national governments, multi-national companies, groups representing Indigenous and local communities, and non-governmental organizations. Published annually, the NYDF Progress Assessment evaluates the global status of forests as well as overall efforts made toward achieving the NYDF goals.

This update presents progress as of 2020 toward achieving Goal 7:

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°C warming.

Key messages

- With the exception of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, the multilateral frameworks necessary for the implementation of REDD+ are in place.
- More than 30 countries are in advanced stages of REDD+ readiness preparation. However, only a handful have signed results-based payment agreements, indicating significant barriers preventing the implementation of REDD+. Such barriers may relate to program requirements, lacking de-facto country readiness, and insufficient finance.

- While forest mitigation targets are increasingly included in nationally determined contribution (NDC) targets, they are often unquantifiable or lack the necessary detail for monitoring.
- The updated NDCs that have been published this year so far show some improvement in the scale and quality of forest and land use targets.

Overview of goal and indicators

Goal 7 aimed to get forests included in the post-2020 climate agreement. The Paris Agreement, which was adopted in December 2015, dedicates a full article (Article 5) to land use and forests, emphasizing the role of forests and other carbon sinks in achieving its overall mitigation goal.

Since our 2016 NYDF assessment, when the Paris Agreement entered into force in November 2016, we have considered this goal to be met.

Since then we have monitored the effectiveness of the Paris Agreement in incentivizing forest-related mitigation actions. Every year, we conduct a “light” assessment of the following indicators:

Table 1. Criteria and indicators to track Goal 7

Criteria	Indicators
1. Implementing the land-use provisions of the Paris Agreement	1.1. Operationalization of REDD+
2. References to land use (including REDD+) in submitted nationally determined contributions (NDCs)	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 form of future assessments of Goal 7 will be determined after the NYDF undergoes a review in late 2020 and early 2021.

Findings

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

Indicator 1.1: Operationalization of REDD+

Countries can access results-based finance for REDD+ via bilateral programs, multilateral funds and the financial mechanism of the Paris Agreement. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) acts as the operating entity of the financial mechanism and as such as the main multilateral REDD+ or “reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of carbon stocks in development countries” financing mechanism. The GCF launched a pilot Results-Based Payments (RBP) scheme for REDD+ in October 2017, and by August 2020 had signed four RBP agreements with Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, and Paraguay.¹ The World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility has also signed

four Emission Reductions Purchase Agreements (DRC, Mozambique, Ghana, and Chile), and several bilateral agreements have been concluded with Norway and Germany. For details see the Goal 9 update. However, the signing of the Agreements allows only limited conclusions on the operationalizing of the programs. Progress reports are often not publicly available and the status of the programs not always clear.

In order to access finance under most REDD+ RBP programs, countries must complete the readiness and implementation phases of their REDD+ plans. The GCF does not systematically publish its pipeline. In summer 2019, the GCF portfolio in the forest and land use sector included 15 projects (two mitigation and 13 cross-cutting) taking place in 32 countries. These projects are expected to deliver a mitigation impact of 70 metric tons of CO₂ (MtCO₂) reduced over 10 years of implementation.² Updates have not been published. The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) Readiness Fund has supported 24 countries so far and expects 7 more countries to conclude the readiness process in 2020.³

So far, 50 countries have submitted their FRELs (Forest Emission Reference Levels) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).⁴ The FRELs cover more than 70 percent of forest areas in developing countries. The information hub of the UNFCCC lists countries, FRELs and RBP received.⁵ Only 10 of the countries that submitted FRELs have listed their FREL and results there, and only Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador list RBPs indicating that progress among countries as well as funding for REDD+ remains insufficient.

Two platforms, the Lima REDD+ Information Hub and the Enhance Transparency Framework introduced by Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, have been established to ensure transparency on REDD+ RBP activities. The UNFCCC facilitated the development of the Lima REDD+ Information Hub in 2020. This platform publishes and documents REDD+ actions and corresponding payments (including information about requirements to receive result-based finance). The platform provides an opportunity for developing countries to display their results to potential donors.⁶ Under the transparency framework, REDD+ results are required to be submitted as part of the biennial transparency report (BTR).⁷ The Global Environment Facility has the mandate to support developing countries with preparing their BTR, as well as strengthen their institutional and technical capacities through the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency.

The inclusion of REDD+ in Article 6 may mobilize additional funding. The modalities and procedures for Article 6 are not yet finalised. It remains uncertain whether REDD+ will be a permissible project category under Article 6.4. Transactions under Article 6.2 may be possible bilaterally.

Criterion 2: References to land use (including REDD+) in submitted nationally determined contributions (NDCs)

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

Land-use and forestry mitigation targets are increasingly being included in NDC targets. As we established in our previous assessment, 116 out of 165 countries have included

quantified emissions targets for the forest sector in their NDCs. Specifically, 91 plans were related to an economy-wide or multi-sector target that involves land use sector, 20 plans merely target on land use, and 5 plans cover both.

However, the inclusion of concrete and ambitious measures is limited. Forest solutions included in the NDCs are often incomplete, lack the necessary detail for monitoring, or do not have quantifiable commitments.⁸ For instance, fewer than 10 percent of those countries that include objectives for the forest sector include quantitative greenhouse gas (GHG) or CO₂ emission reduction or removal information. Additionally, about 64 percent of the GHG targets related to forests are conditional on international support.

The updating of NDCs to be carried out until 2021 offers countries an opportunity to increase ambition on forests and land use.

So far, 16 countries have submitted an update to their first NDC.^a Eleven NDCs include land use, land use change, and forests in their mitigation targets and actions. From these, five countries included land use and forests in their GHG mitigation targets, while two countries included mitigation action in land use as measures to support their economy-wide GHG targets. Moreover, four countries mention REDD+ in their NDC updates by including goals to set up REDD+ frameworks and develop national strategies. In comparison to their previous NDCs, several countries have included stronger commitments in relation to land use and forests this year. Jamaica, for instance, has expanded its sectoral commitment from merely energy to both energy and land use change and forestry sectors, specifying quantitative commitments.⁹ Rwanda included quantifiable targets for the forestry and land use sectors (which were only qualitative targets in the previous NDC), and in Chile, the forest measures were expanded to include rehabilitation, REDD+ development, conservation and restoration.

^a 15 countries submitted an updated document after their first NDC submission, and one country, Kyrgyzstan, submitted its first NDC in early 2020. We take into consideration all 16 NDCs in this analysis.

Endnotes

¹ Green Climate Fund: Projects, <https://www.greenclimate.fund/redd#projects>

² Green Climate Fund. (2019). Working paper No.2: Accelerating REDD+ implementation. *Green Climate Fund*. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/accelerating-redd-implementation.pdf>

³ Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. (2020). PC Progress Update. https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/Final%20FCPF%20PC%20Progress%20Updates%20Presentation_3.pdf

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) REDD+ Web Platform: Forest reference emission levels, <https://redd.unfccc.int/fact-sheets/forest-reference-emission-levels.html>

⁵ UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform: Lima REDD+ Information Hub, <https://redd.unfccc.int/info-hub.html>

⁶ UNFCCC REDD+ Web Platform: Lima REDD+ Information Hub, <https://redd.unfccc.int/info-hub.html>

⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2019). *From reference levels to results reporting: REDD+ under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: 2019 Update*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome, Italy. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca6031en/ca6031en.pdf>

⁸ World Resources Institute. (2019). *NDC Enhancement: Opportunities in the Forest and Land-use Sector. Working Paper*. Washington, DC, and New York: World Resources Institute and United Nations Development Programme. <https://www.wri.org/publication/ndc-enhancement-opportunities-forest-and-land-use-sector>

⁹ This analysis is based on forthcoming data by Climate Focus and WWF.

Acknowledgments

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About the NYDF Progress Assessment:

The NYDF Progress Assessment is a continual and collaborative process achieved collectively by partner organizations and researchers. Since 2015, the NYDF Assessment Partners have annually published updates on progress toward each of the ten goals of the NYDF. Working groups for individual goals form the basis for developing and revising goal-specific assessment frameworks. They also generate key data and analytics on findings, attempting to narrow knowledge gaps. All assessment findings undergo a rigorous peer review process conducted by experts across the globe.

The NYDF Assessment Partners include:

CDP, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Chatham House, Clean Cooking Alliance, Climate Focus, Conservation International (CI), Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Fauna & Flora International, Forest Foundation Philippines, Forest Trends, Global Canopy, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Instituto de Manejo e Certificação Florestal e Agrícola (Imaflora), The

Alliance of Biodiversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Levin Sources, National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Rainforest Alliance, Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Sustainability Consortium (TSC), Woodwell Climate Research Center, World Resources Institute (WRI), World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US), Yiaku Laikipiak Trust, and the Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) Sustainability Policy Transparency Toolkit (SPOTT) initiative.

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