

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

Indicator 1.1
Indicator 2.1

Key Messages

- The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has developed a pilot program for REDD+^[1] results-based payments that is expected to be finalized in October 2017. This would add an essential missing piece to the operationalization of REDD+ under both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. Funding will also be provided for the early stage of REDD+ through standard GCF modalities.
- Twenty-five countries submitted at least one Forest Reference (Emissions) Level, with 13 countries having at least one approved. This paves the way for the GCF to make results-based payments.
- One hundred and sixteen countries proposed a quantified emission mitigation target that includes land use as part of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Of these, 91 plan to adopt an economy-wide or multi-sector target that includes land use, while 20 plan to adopt only a specific emissions target on land use, and five plan to adopt both. Sixty-three countries propose a non-emissions target or action on land use, either in lieu of or in addition to an emissions target covering the sector.

OVERVIEW OF GOAL AND INDICATORS

Goal 7 aimed to get forest-related mitigation measures included in the post-2020 climate agreement being 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.

Against this background, the indicators we formulated in 2015 reflect elements of an agreement on REDD+, focusing on both the framework and the substance of mitigation actions, excluding assistance to developing countries, which is addressed in Goals 8 and 9 (Table 1). This year's assessment modifies previous indicators somewhat, most notably by removing the indicator relating to the adoption of the agreement itself, and instead focusing on the finalization and operational framework for REDD+ under the Paris Agreement and on whether the NDCs submitted as of September 2017 include commitments in relation to the land-use or forestry sector.

Table 1: 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 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

FINDINGS

Criterion 1: Implementing the land use and REDD+ 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 (COP) to the 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 GCF.

Throughout 2017 the GCF Secretariat has been undertaking consultations on the development of the operational framework for REDD+, and in June it published two parallel proposals that reflect a “two-track approach” to REDD+ financing:

- The first proposal lays out a pilot program for REDD+ results-based payments, with draft terms of reference that set out eligibility criteria, access modalities, a proposed price of USD 5 per tCO₂e, program approval processes, and rules on safeguards assessments and monitoring and progress control.
- The second proposal addresses 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). According to the proposal, the GCF would finance these activities through its standard funding modalities, including through its Private Sector Facility. The focus would be on filling the financing gaps that have not been addressed by other sources of REDD+ finance.^[2]

The GCF Board considered the Secretariat’s proposals at its meeting in July 2017 and requested that the Secretariat finalize the design of the pilot program and the request for proposals by the time of its next meeting (30 September to 2 October 2017).^[3] The Board did not require any changes to the proposal on finance for the early phases of REDD+, indicating that this can be considered final.^[4]

It is worth noting the progress countries have made on complying with the requirements for accessing REDD+ results-based finance under the UNFCCC. One important measure of this is the submission and approval of forest reference levels (FRLs) and forest reference emission levels (FRELs) – key preconditions for receiving results-based finance. As of September 2017, 25 countries had submitted at least one FRL or FLER, with 13 countries having had at least one approved. Twenty-one of those countries submitted national FRLs/FRELs, while four countries submitted sub-national FRLs/FRELs, in some cases for multiple biomes.

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

Indicator 2.1: Inclusion of land-use or forestry mitigation

targets

For this indicator, we build on last year's analysis of NDCs and add analysis of four additional NDCs that have been submitted since October 2016. This analysis indicates that 116 countries out of 165 have proposed a quantified emission mitigation target that includes land use. Of these, 91 plan to adopt an economy-wide or multi-sector 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 propose a non-emissions target or action on land use, either in lieu of or in addition to an emissions target covering the sector. The non-emissions targets include goals on overall forest cover, forest conservation, and afforestation, reforestation and restoration, in many cases quantified in terms of hectares of forest (see Indicator 5.2 on afforestation, reforestation, and restoration commitments). They also include goals on a given proportion of forests to be designated as national parks or other protected areas, as well as goals related to the adoption of specific policies or measures for forest conservation and restoration.

These overall numbers are somewhat higher than those in last year's assessment, which is partially due to some minor changes in the categories used in this year's assessment, as well as to four additional NDCs being assessed.

As with last year's assessment, the decision of a relatively large majority of countries to include land use within their emission targets, and of most additional countries to at least adopt a non-emission target on land use, means that Indicator 2.1 can be considered to have been met.

However, a recent report found that if all conditional and unconditional NDCs were implemented, reductions from land-use would account for 10 to 30 percent of total reductions by 2030, but that 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.^[5] It is also important to note that 105 countries have made at least some part of their land-use targets subject to the provision of international financing, and their implementation will likely require significantly more finance than has currently been pledged for land-use mitigation.

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[1] REDD+ stands for countries' efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

[2] Green Climate Fund. (2017). Green Climate Fund support for the early phases of REDD+ plus.

[3] Green Climate Fund. (2017). Decision B.17/18.

[4] Green Climate Fund. (2017). Decision B.17/19.

[5] Stephanie Roe et al. (2017). Contribution of the Land Sector to a 1.5 °C World. In press.
