

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2015 Annual Report of the UN-REDD Programme Fund

1. This Seventh Progress Report presents the results of the UN-REDD Programme between January and December 2015 with emphasis on country progress against the [Warsaw Framework for REDD+](#). The Report also summarizes the key outcomes of the UN-REDD Programme since its inception in 2008 and under the UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015 with linkages to the new [UN-REDD Programme Strategic Framework for 2016-2020](#).
2. The UN-REDD Programme has grown significantly from nine Partner Countries in 2009 to 64 Partner Countries by December 2015. Countries have received assistance tailored to their national circumstances and specific support requirements in REDD+. UN-REDD has operated through the following support mechanisms:
 - National Programmes, where countries define a programme of work, typically over a three-year period and work across a range of focal areas.
 - Country specific assistance through targeted support (through formal requests from countries) and technical backstopping.
 - Country/regional needs assessments: Countries are supported to undertake a participatory readiness assessment, covering the principle areas defined under the Warsaw Framework.
3. This range of delivery mechanisms has provided flexibility to match the country's needs in advancing its readiness into implementation with the required support, and to complement the contributions of other initiatives in ways that maximise efficiency and effectiveness.
4. As of 31 December 2015, the UN-REDD Programme has supported a total of 23 countries through National Programmes. In addition, funding requests for three additional National Programmes (Chile, Myanmar and Peru) were approved on a provisional basis. In 2015, five countries (Argentina, Bangladesh, Honduras, Mongolia and Uganda) marked the start of their National Programmes with the signatures of their National Programme Documents and first fund transfers having been completed. 2015 also saw the closure of National Programmes in Cambodia and Panama

Partner Countries of the UN-REDD Programme



In addition, support to Cook Islands, Gambia, Kribati, Marshall Islands, Niger, Palau, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tongo and Tuvalu.

★ New Partner Country in 2015

and the submission of National Programme final evaluations for Cambodia, Ecuador and Solomon Islands. The total funding allocation to all (active and closed) National Programmes as of 31 December 2015 is US\$ 86.6 million of which US\$ 85.3 million has been transferred and US\$ 57.4 million was spent – representing a delivery rate of 67 per cent.

5. Since targeted support was introduced in 2012, 46 requests from individual countries and four regions have been approved for US\$ 18 million in total. In 2015 the total amount of support approved (US\$ 3.8 million) was less than in 2014, yet 16 country requests and three regional requests on behalf of 23 countries, were approved by the UN-REDD Programme. Targeted support together with backstopping is provided under the “Support to National REDD+ Action: Global Programme Framework 2011-2015” (SNA) which has been extended through 2016 to support the transition period of the Programme.
6. Out of the seven countries and two regions (Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Peru, South Sudan, Tunisia and Zimbabwe; and Mesoamerica and West Africa) with needs assessments being undertaken, the regional assessment in Mesoamerica and the country assessments in Guatemala, Madagascar and Zimbabwe were concluded in 2015. Between the six pilot countries (Cambodia, Democratic of the Congo [DRC], Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay and Sri Lanka) for CBR+, over 200 proposals were received by December 2015 from communities. Out of these 56 CBR+ projects were approved, representing over US\$ 1.65 million in grant funding.

Progress against the Warsaw Framework for REDD+

7. The Warsaw Framework, adopted in 2013, sets out the initial requirements of REDD+ readiness that allow a country to receive results-based payments. In terms of supporting countries to achieve REDD+ readiness, support has increasingly been focused on helping countries develop and deliver the key “pillars” within the Warsaw Framework, namely the development of National REDD+ Strategies and Action Plans (NS/APs), National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMSs), Forest Reference Emission Levels/ Forest Reference Levels (FREL/FRLs) and Safeguards and Safeguards Information Systems (SISs).
8. Since 2013, the UN-REDD Programme has increasingly aligned its support and results reporting with the Warsaw Framework for REDD+. A summary of progress against the four Warsaw pillars over the programme period of 2008-2015 is presented below. In 2015, joint assessments between the UN-REDD Programme and the partner countries with active National Programmes were undertaken through the annual reporting process, which provided an overview of where a country stands against the pillars. (It is included within the country summaries in Section 3).

National REDD+ Strategies and Action Plans (NS/APs)

9. The UN-REDD Programme’s support for credible, inclusive governance systems for REDD+ has contributed to advancement by 21 countries in the UNFCCC REDD+ processes as demonstrated by the status of their NS/APs or REDD+ road map. (*National REDD+ Strategies*: Cambodia, Costa Rica, DRC, Ecuador, Indonesia, the Congo, Viet Nam and Zambia; *Roadmaps*: Argentina, Bangladesh, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Paraguay, Sri Lanka and Uganda). This includes the generation of robust data on drivers of deforestation and degradation and other key inputs for informed decision-making. An additional 19 countries have benefited from support to advance related aspects of governance and institutional arrangements for REDD+ implementation, which are also inherent components of NS/APs.
10. An increasing number of NS/APs are also benefitting from significant political support and the formulation of REDD+ policies and measures (PAMs), which are gradually integrated into national planning processes and development objectives. The UN-REDD Programme has started working with countries to support implementation of PAMs, which is identified as crucial if REDD+ is to advance.
11. Countries have explored opportunities to promote multiple benefits of REDD+ and incorporate the results of multiple benefits analyses into the formulation of PAMs. Support from the UN-REDD Programme has evolved into complementary work streams: (1) REDD+ finance, including drafting investment plans, access to investments for implementation and funding for results-based payments; (2) REDD+ economics, e.g. cost-benefit analysis for PAMs; and (3) private sector engagement in REDD+ including establishing the business case and options to leverage public funding with private finance.

National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMSs)

12. The UN-REDD Programme has provided comprehensive support to 40 countries on the development of NFMS, including overall guidance on the methods, approaches and minimum standards required for development. Several Partner Countries are now producing forest data for the first time. The Programme has developed an innovative system for the flexible, efficient and transparent collection, analysis and reporting of forest and carbon monitoring information through the “Open Foris” tool. From the wide range of support provided to participating countries, eleven countries are being provided with support on the development of national forest cover maps, 20 countries are being assisted in the development of national web portals for their NFMS, and twelve countries now have operational portals or web-dissemination platforms that display information on NFMS information. Twelve countries are being supported in the development of national forest inventories (NFIs), with two

countries (Argentina and Panama) having completed their NFIs. Capacity development is a core, cross-cutting element within this work, given the new and emerging technical area. In 2015 alone, 163 persons from 13 Partner Countries increased their expertise on setting up web-portals for geospatial data distribution, supporting the dissemination of results related to mapping and achieving advances in transparency as encouraged under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Forest Reference Emission Levels / Forest Reference Levels (FREL/FRLs)

13. Of the 15 submissions of FREL/FRLs made by countries to the UNFCCC, 14 are from UN-REDD Partner Countries. This reflects the positive trend and progress being made by countries through UN-REDD support. Six countries (Cambodia, Costa Rica, DRC, Honduras, Nepal and Uganda) received support to start initial steps for submission of the FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC; including consultations with a broad group of stakeholders (e.g multiple government ministries, NGOs, academia and private sector and development of roadmaps for submitting a FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC. Additionally, nine countries (Argentina, Bhutan, Colombia, Fiji, Honduras, Côte d'Ivoire, Myanmar, Panama and Sri Lanka) have increased their knowledge on FREL/FRL through UN-REDD Programme trainings on the UNFCCC requirements for FREL/FRLs, discussing political and technical implications of FREL/FRL construction and assisting countries in drafting FRL submission documents or, when requested by the country, specific support on for example how to deal with displacements.
14. Being a technically demanding and complex area, one of the major contributions of the UN-REDD Programme in this area has been developing workable guidelines and approaches that reflect global best practice in the development of FREL/FRLs (as well as NFMS).

Safeguards and Safeguards Information System (SIS)

15. The UN-REDD Programme has worked with more than 30 Partner Countries to support the development of their national (or jurisdictional) approach to safeguards. Eight countries are in the process of developing a SIS: Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico have outlined a design process and DRC, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uganda are making progress in this area. Twelve countries (Bhutan, Cambodia, Costa Rica, DRC, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, PNG, Paraguay, the Congo, Uganda and Zambia) have developed core elements of their country approach to safeguards with a further nine in the initial stages of development. Eight countries (Bhutan, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Kenya, Mexico, PNG and Paraguay) have conducted assessments of policies, laws and regulations (PLRs) with UN-REDD support.
16. A variety of technical tools, strategic framework and guidance documents have been developed and disseminated

by the UN-REDD Programme to support the development of national approaches to safeguard development, including the establishment of SISs. An underlying principle of this support is the development of a country-approach to safeguard development, that builds upon existing national safeguard systems and needs, while meeting international commitments to UNFCCC and others.

Cross-cutting support

17. In addition to these concrete results related to the operationalisation of the Warsaw Framework, the UN-REDD Programme has continued to provide cross-cutting support across a range of areas including multi-stakeholder engagement and participation in REDD+ readiness, gender mainstreaming, strengthening forest governance and tenure, and building capacity through knowledge management support.
 - A key impact of *stakeholder engagement* support has been strengthening the participation of civil society organisations, indigenous peoples as well as marginalised, forest dependent communities by giving them a greater voice in decisions that affect forests, land use and land-use change. The establishment of multi-stakeholder, decision-making platforms across many countries has been a defining feature of this support. Furthermore, joint guidelines on stakeholder engagement, developed jointly with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) have been used widely by partner countries.
 - Through the UN-REDD Programme support, 29 countries have been able to integrate activities designed to strengthen the participation of women in decision making as well as other actions to mainstream *gender equality* across REDD+ planning and implementation. South-South exchange and learning events are proving a valuable approach to capacity building.
 - Cross-cutting support to *governance* has been provided to all countries and has ranged from helping partner countries to develop new policy and legislative instruments in the forest sector to allow integration of REDD+; facilitating the identification of priority governance issues using robust data from Participatory Governance Assessments (PGAs); corruption risk assessments; supporting the revision of PLRs; integration of transparency and accountability elements into NS/APs; gender mainstreaming; tenure considerations; fund management systems; and options for equitable benefit sharing, as well as the technical aspects associated with developing comprehensive and robust NS/APs.
 - Currently, the UN-REDD Programme is providing support to nine countries (Benin, Lao People's Democratic Republic [PDR], Madagascar, Malawi, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Viet Nam and Zambia) to assess land and forest *tenure* situations in the context of REDD+ in order to incentivize sustainable forest and other land use management, strengthen accountability, and ensure that community livelihoods are not adversely affected by

REDD+ implementation. Enabling conditions for tenure in other countries have also been supported together with awareness raising, trainings and south- south exchanges on tenure. The UN-REDD Programme has been providing support to many of these countries, based on the specific situation in each country and through the application of the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](#).

- The UN-REDD Programme has facilitated capacity development processes in all partner countries. The outcome of this work has been the development of a network of highly qualified practitioners and experts across the world, which is helping countries implement key technical aspects of the UNFCCC decisions. Specifically, UN-REDD has facilitated over 100 knowledge exchanges, made available more than 400 [knowledge documents](#), trained more than 2,000 REDD+ practitioners through its REDD+ Academy initiative and in-person technical trainings, and has provided its Partner Countries and the wider global REDD+ community with a comprehensive online global REDD+ knowledge hub - [UN-REDD Programme Online Collaborative Workspace](#). South-South exchanges through regional meetings and workshops have increasingly been used to ensure a transfer of emerging experience and best practice between Partner Countries.

Financial summary

18. Thanks to the continuous support from Denmark, the European Union, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway and Spain, the total funding was US\$ 269.7 million as of December 2015. Of this, a net amount of US\$ 238.7 million, or 89 per cent, was received by the agencies (FAO, UNDP and UNEP) and US\$ 180.2 million (or 76 per cent of the net funded amount) was spent. In 2015, contributions received amounted to US\$ 22.2 million, transfers to the agencies totaled US\$ 49.0 million and expenditures stood at US\$ 42.6 million. The UN-REDD Programme was pleased to welcome Switzerland as a new donor.

Challenges encountered and responses

19. Political constraints have impacted progress in a number of countries, caused by events such as changes in government, elections and in some cases unrest. Unrealistic expectations related to the speed of establishing REDD+ and the delivery of performance based payments within a short time period was seen in many countries, particularly those where

REDD+ readiness activities were new and at an early stage. REDD+ presenting multiple technical challenges as well as wide-ranging and cross-sectoral demands has placed limitations on a number of national governments who are unable to identify sufficiently qualified and experienced staff. Throughout the development of REDD+ readiness, engagement and shared decision making with external stakeholders has been crucial.

The way forward

20. Since its inception in 2008, the UN-REDD Programme was instrumental in developing capacities in REDD+ countries. To meet the challenges of moving from readiness to results based payments, the UN-REDD Programme has reoriented its programme objectives at all levels - country, regional and global - to the new guidance by the UNFCCC that has progressively developed through COP decisions (notably in Cancun and culminating in Warsaw in 2013).
21. The [UN-REDD Programme Strategic Framework for 2016-2020](#) describes this new approach, responding directly to both the current international context for REDD+ and the challenges of designing and implementing REDD+ at country level. Consistent with the lessons learned and the impacts of the UN-REDD Programme so far, the Programme will support changes that impact:
 - i. how countries meet the requirements of the UNFCCC, progressing from REDD+ readiness to result-based payments; and,
 - ii. the implementation of national REDD+ PAMs as results-based actions that produce both carbon and non-carbon benefits.
22. The new approach will ensure that the Programme will help Partner Countries meet their evolving and changing needs as they make the transition from REDD+ readiness to implementation, as well as helping countries harness social, economic and environmental benefits that will arise from REDD+ more generally.

The full Annual Reports of individual *National Programmes* and the *Support to National REDD+ Action: Global Programme Framework 2011-2015 (SNA)*, are found in Annexes 1-13 and Annex 14, respectively ([accessible here](#)).