

Modalities and Guidelines for REDD+ Reference Levels

Prepared for
The Government of Norway

Reports Available Online at www.REDD-OAR.org



Meridian Institute

Connecting People to Solve Problems

Authors

Arild Angelsen

Norwegian University of Life Sciences &
CIFOR

Doug Boucher

Union of Concerned Scientists

Sandra Brown

Winrock International

Valérie Merckx

European Forest Institute

Charlotte Streck

Climate Focus

Daniel Zarin (Project Leader)

Climate and Land Use Alliance

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Peter Aarup Iversen

Marco Albani

Ken Andrasko

Kemen Austin

Tasso Azevedo

D James Baker

Girma Balcha

William Boyd

Josefina Braña Varela

Michael Bucki

Augusto Castro

Andrea Cattaneo

Bas Clabbers

Tim Clairs

Steve Cornelius

Pham Manh Cuong

Andreas Dahl-Jørgensen

Florence Daviet

Christine Dragisic

Manuel Estrada Porrua

Mochammad Farhan Helmy

Jose Carlos Fernandez

Horst Freiberg

Alfred Gichu

Peter Graham

Nora Greenglass

Bronson Griscom

Pablo Gutman

Ragna John

Promode Kant

Jagdish Kishwan

Antonio La Viña

Donna Lee

Cyril Loisel

Fabien Monteils

Daniel Nepstad

Michael Obersteiner

Lydia Olander

Erika Oord

Yaw Osafo

Jim Penman

Per F I Pharo

Catherine Potvin

Audun Rosland

Lucio Santos

Maria Sanz Sanchez

Sebastian Scholz

Oswaldo Stella Martins

Bernardo Strassburg

Doddy Surachman Sukadri

Naomi Swickard

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

Natalie Unterstell

Andrew Ure

Gerardo Vergara Asenjo

Michael Wolosin

Goals – Inform SBSTA and COP-17

Stage I

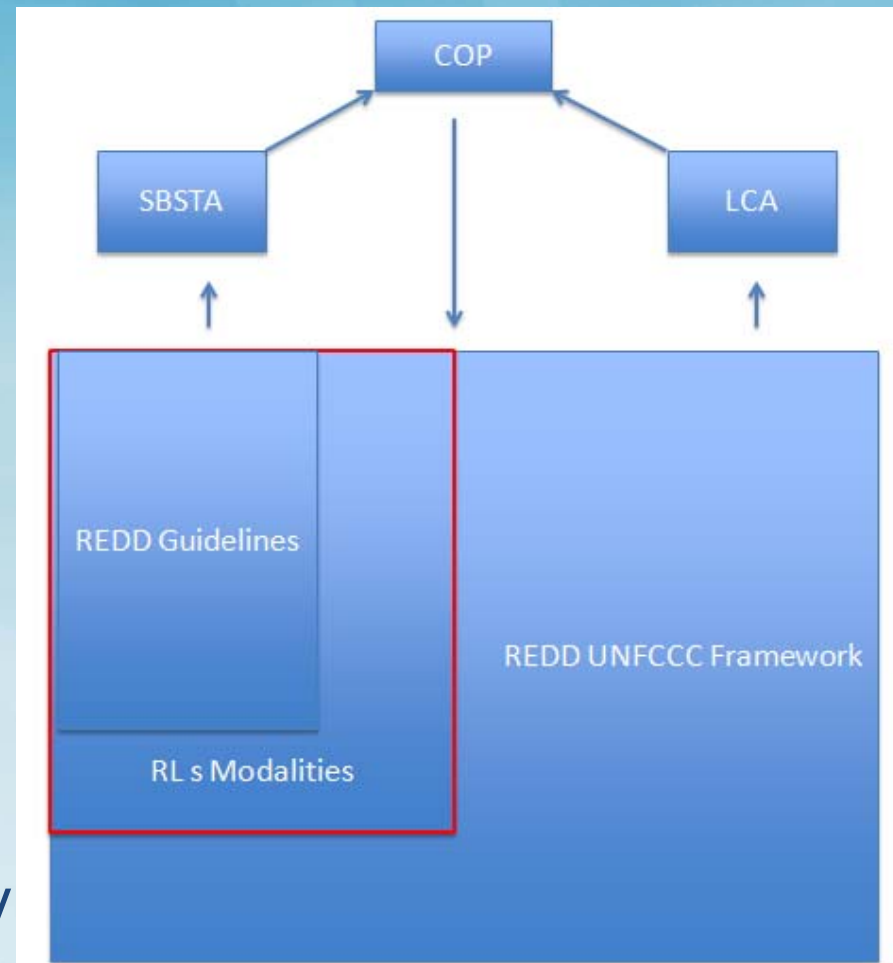
- Assess issues that UNFCCC negotiators need to address to develop modalities for REDD+ Reference Levels and Reference Emissions Levels (RLs).

Stage II

- Propose guidelines for RLs for developing countries as part of REDD+ RL modalities to be considered at COP-17.

Modalities and Guidelines for RLs

- Modalities: a set of binding requirements included in a COP decision formulating rules and standards.
- Guidelines: a set of principles, criteria and steps included in a COP decision that assist countries in preparing a submission or that meet an objective formulated by the COP.



A REDD+ RL is a benchmark for monitoring progress in reducing emissions

- RLs are business-as-usual (BAU) baselines against which actual emissions are compared.
- BAU baselines are developed by taking into account historic data, and adjusting for national circumstances.
- Emission reductions are estimated as the difference between RLs and actual emissions within an established period.

Functions of RLs

- RLs underpin the credibility of REDD+.
- The process of establishing RLs can inform development and implementation of (sub)national REDD+ policies.
- The effectiveness of REDD+ interventions can be measured against RLs.
- RLs can inform the determination of results-based payments for REDD+.

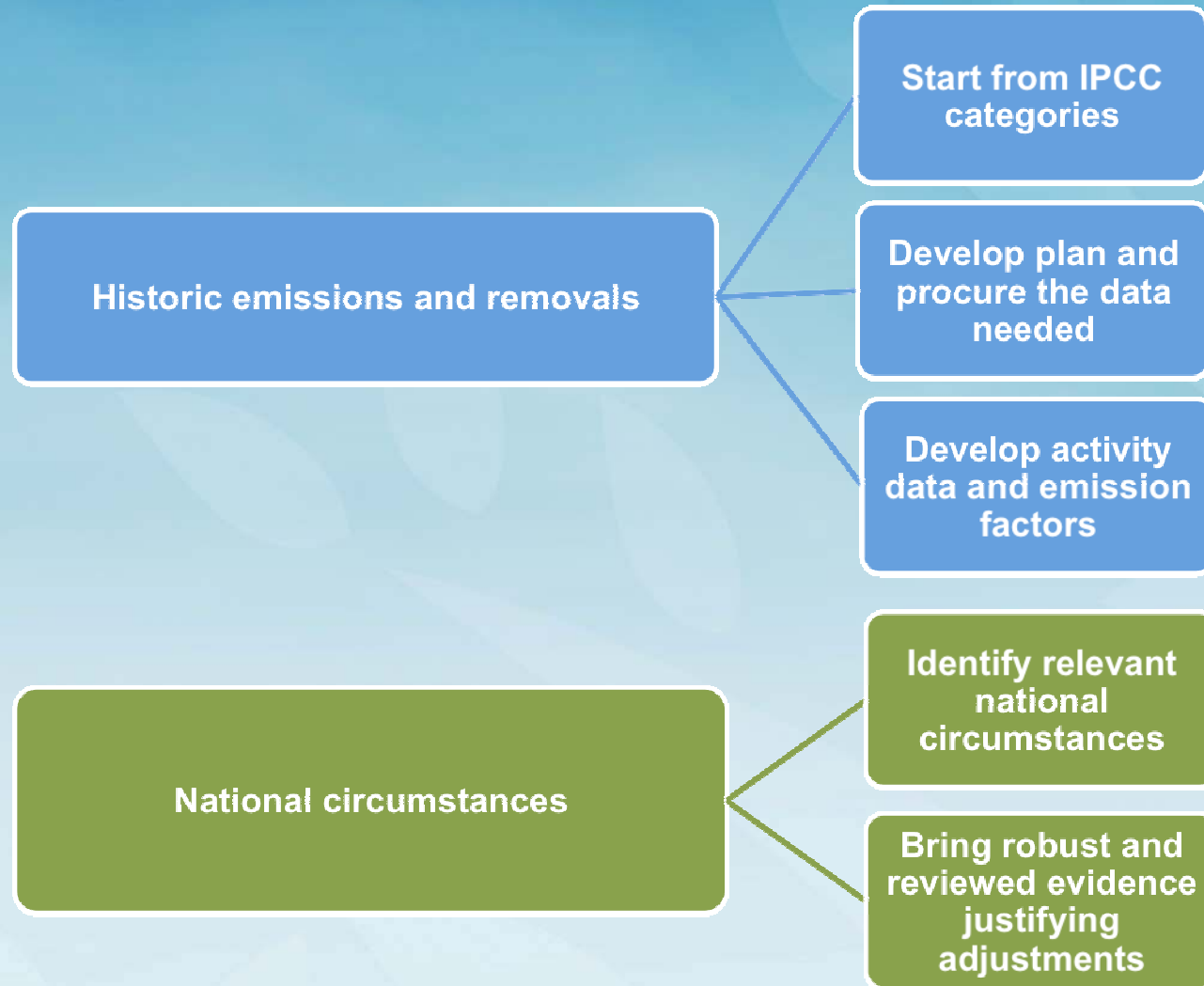
IPCC Reporting Principles

- **Transparency**
 - Assumptions and methods are clearly and fully described.
- **Completeness**
 - Relevant pools and activities are included.
- **Consistency**
 - Accepted standards of carbon accounting are followed.
- **Comparability**
 - Comparisons among countries should be straight-forward.
- **Accuracy**
 - Bias is avoided, and uncertainty is reduced.

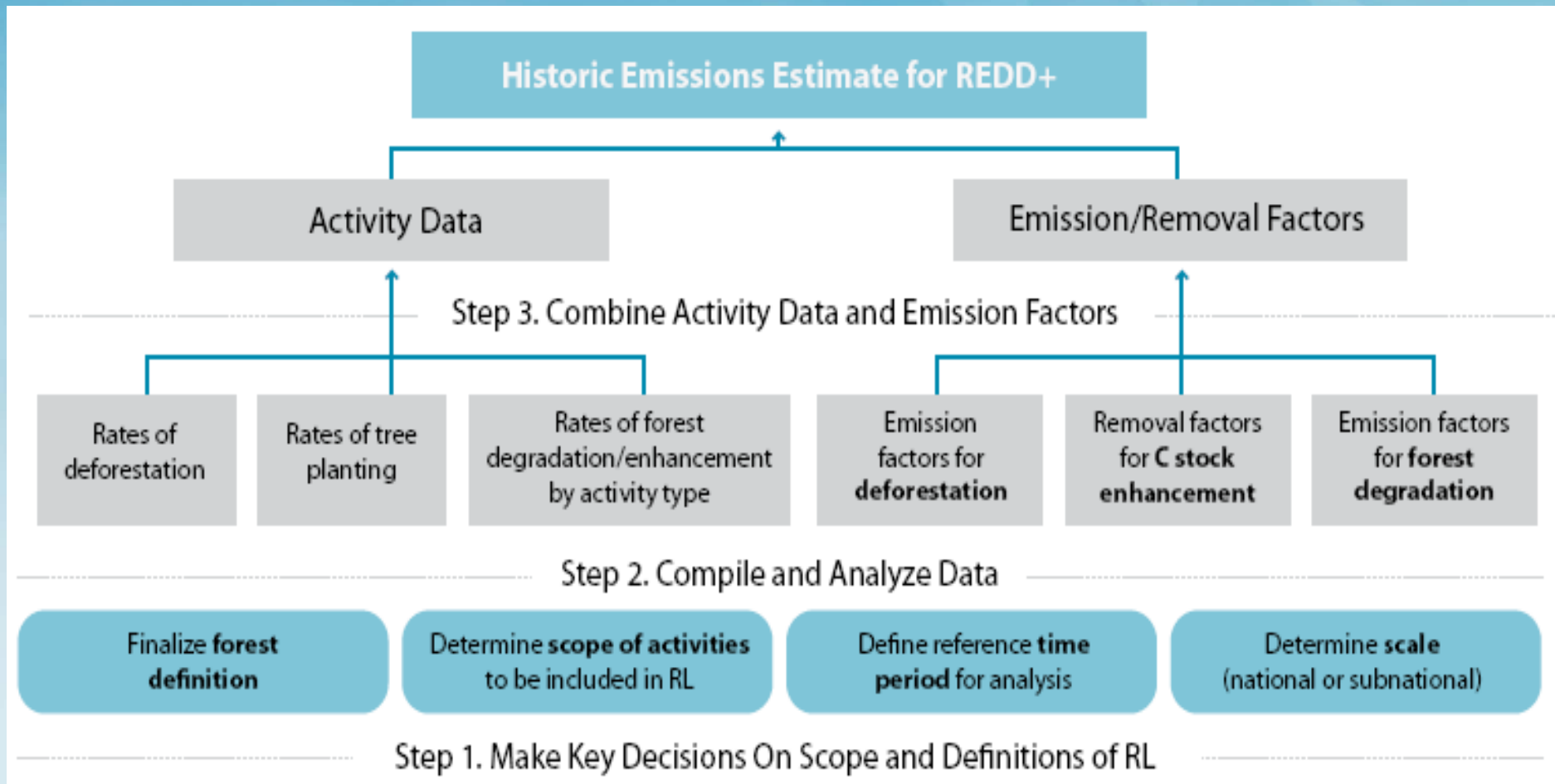
Scope of REDD+ RLs, within IPCC Categories

- Forests converted to other lands
 - Deforestation
- Forests remaining as forests
 - Forest degradation
 - Conservation of forest carbon stocks
 - Sustainable management of forests
 - Enhancement of forest carbon stocks in existing forests
- Other lands converted to forests
 - Enhancement of carbon stocks through A/R

Guidelines for Developing a RL



Historic Emissions and Removals



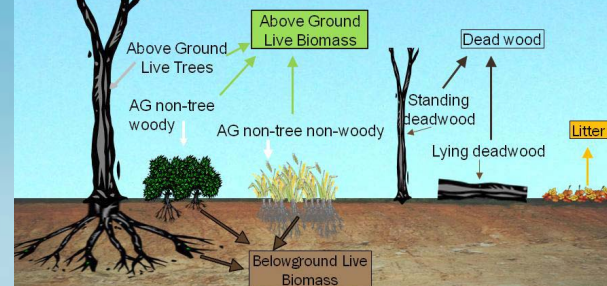
Some key decisions and data needed to determine historic emissions and removals

1. Definition of Forest- determines which lands to include

15% cover

30% cover

2. Select which pools to include



4. Identify drivers of forest cover change



3. Measures of C stocks

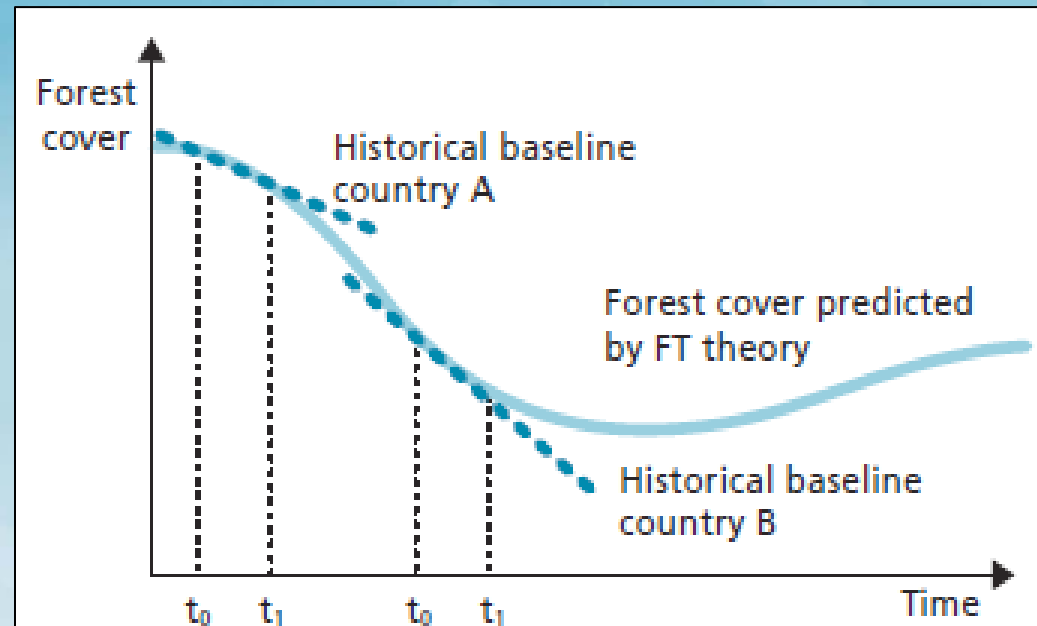


5. Interpret remote sensing imagery



National Circumstances: General adjustments considered

- Forest Transition Stage (forest cover, GDP).
- Drivers (e.g. agricultural commodity prices).



National Circumstances: Conclusions

- To date there is insufficient empirical evidence to support generalized adjustments to RLs from projections based solely on historic emissions and removals.
- Case-by-case adjustments should be supported by robust and verifiable empirical data, e.g.
 - Evidence of implementation of national policies that have major impacts on future forest use.
- Equity-based adjustments (e.g. forest cover, GDP) to influence REDD+ financing should be considered separately from adjustments to RLs.

Subnational RLs

- Parties can develop subnational RLs that constitute a step toward adopting national RLs.
- Subnational RLs should follow the same principles and steps laid out here for national ones.
- Subnational RLs should follow a common set of criteria that facilitate the subsequent reconciliation of RLs on the national level.

UNFCCC adoption of RLs

- RLs could be adopted through one of several alternative procedural approaches, including:
 - A single-undertaking top-down process
 - A country-driven sequential process
 - Hybrid process: political decision at the international level and consolidation with country submissions

Temporal Validity of RLs

- RLs may be:
 - Re-negotiated within a specific timeframe
 - Re-submitted for review and adjustment
 - Automatically revised
 - Reviewed every X number of years e.g. in the context of national communications

Potential Outline for REDD+ RL Modalities: A Suggestion for SBSTA

- Principles
- Guidelines on RL Development
 - See Appendix 1
- Data Submission
- Notification of Preliminary RLs
- International Adoption of Final RLs
- Data Administration

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