

Submission to the COP30 Presidency’s Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030 by the observer organization Basque Center for Climate Change

Contents

This submissions contribution to the Roadmap	1
Main messages	2
Input regarding common effective good-practice national policy solutions for advancing the forest transition and halting DFD.....	2
Input regarding international governance of efforts to halt deforestation, forest degradation and broader sustainable land use transitions.....	5
Resources	6

This submissions contribution to the Roadmap

In a context where trends are off track for halting deforestation and forest degradation (DFD) by 2030, the goal universally adopted in the First Global Stocktake’s decision, we acknowledge the crucial leadership demonstrated by the COP30 Presidency in addressing this issue, and we welcome the invitation to contribute to the *Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030*. This submission presents observations regarding the importance of governance both at national and international levels for halting DFD from published and unpublished ongoing work. As such, the submission provides input on the second question for which input is requested, namely: “[w]hat potential levers, whether economic, financial, institutional, social or technological, exist for accelerating the implementation of the commitment to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation?”. It seeks to inform Part II - What Countries Can and Should Do and Part III - Fostering International Cooperation and Addressing Regulatory Bottlenecks of the roadmap structure as proposed by the COP30 Presidency.

Main messages

Main messages for Part II - What Countries Can and Should Do. National governments should enact coherent and comprehensive policy mixes for halting DFD and for broader sustainable land use transitions. Based on research into existing national policy mixes, components of such policy mixes include:

- Policies setting clear, unambiguous and quantified targets for halting DFD and for broader land use transitions, supported by strategies on how they can be achieved.
 - Continuous and stable domestic public finance to support halting DFD, including to mobilise private finance, provide long-term incentives to smallholders and companies in agricultural and forest-based value chains, to implement forest protection policies, and to monitor policy impact.
 - Legal protection and policies incentivising forest conservation or the sustainable use of forests.
- Furthermore, key areas where the coherence of the policy mix should be ensured include the following:
- Objectives on halting deforestation and forest degradation should be mainstreamed throughout national budgets.
 - Agricultural policies should enable rather than counteract efforts to halt DFD.

Ensuring a comprehensive and coherent policy mix for halting DFD requires interministerial coordination by a legitimate and influential agency with strong high-level political backing and with technical capacity to lead the work. Analyses of progress made toward target long-term targets is crucial in order to diagnose drivers of successes and remaining barriers blocking the full achievement of the goal on halting DFD.

Main messages for Part III - Fostering International Cooperation and Addressing Regulatory Bottlenecks. Given the fragmentation of international forest governance, coordination and orchestration of efforts is central. To be effective, however, this coordination should be led by an inclusive, nodal, influential and technically competent organisation — or constellation of organisations. Coordination among international organisations is particularly important in areas such as forest finance and the standardisation of monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) rules and frameworks. With respect to forest finance specifically, the objective should be to make a combination of financing instruments available through a coordinated and transparent approach, ensuring that all countries can access international resources in line with their needs for such resources for halting DFD.

Input regarding common effective good-practice national policy solutions for advancing the forest transition and halting DFD

This section speaks specifically to part II of the roadmap.

Policy mixes for halting DFD must balance this objective with multiple other environmental and socio-economic objectives, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, rural livelihoods and food security. Appropriate policy solutions to this challenge are highly context-specific, and depend on geographic, eco-climatic, institutional, political and economic factors. A review of the policy mixes of several countries and political entities in both the Global North and South nonetheless point to several common important policy-related messages regarding effective good-practice policy solutions for advancing the forest transition and halting DFD. Policies, legislation, presidential decrees, as well as political processes and institutional arrangements operating at the

national level were considered in the analysis.¹ The key messages emerging from this work are listed below:

1. **Clear long-term and short-term targets for DFD are central to provide actors in the land use system a clear sense of direction and guide their investments and production choices.** Such actors include smallholder farmers and forests, companies, civil society organisations and public ministries and agencies. This also applies to targets for related and mutually supporting areas such as greenhouse gas reductions and biodiversity conservation. Many countries have integrated commitments made internationally into domestic commitments and policy frameworks. However, to provide the clear signals that are needed to trigger actions, the targets should be defined in a clear and unambiguous way, avoiding confusion for instance around the definition of forests and different types of forests (e.g. primary and secondary forests), deforestation, and forest degradation. Furthermore, to truly guide action, strategies defining how targets can be achieved should accompany the targets.
2. **Making halting DFD a priority in fiscal and financial policy is key, including for mobilising international and private finance.** Domestic public finance constitutes a major share of finance going to the forestry sector in many countries², alongside international public and private and national private sources of finance. Governments can therefore contribute significantly to halting DFD by prioritising investments that support this objective. Such expenditure and investments should prioritise the mobilisation of private and international public finance. Furthermore, for maximum effect on the ability of smallholders and companies in agricultural and forest-based value chains to make the investments necessary for producing sustainably without causing deforestation and forest degradation, the public administration should provide long-term financial and incentive instruments. This can for instance be done through the establishment of dedicated funds with pluriannual replenishment rounds. Some interesting cases such as the Amazon fund in Brazil and other countries in the Amazon, and the Costa Rica's Payments for Ecosystem Services program managed by FONAFIFO.
3. **Legal protection and policies incentivising forest conservation or the sustainable use of forests is a cornerstone in policy mixes for forest transitions.** Such policies should be adapted to the context for being effective, and should balance forest conservation with improving the welfare of communities whose livelihoods depend on forests and agriculture. The Social Forestry Scheme in Indonesia constitutes an interesting example in this regard. Furthermore, forest protection policies are notoriously expensive to implement and enforce, partly due to the vast swathes of land on which they apply – yet effective implementation is crucial for their impact on the halting DFD target, and should therefore be prioritised in the expenditure priorities of governments (cf. point 2 above). Recent experiences, for instance in Brazil between 2005/2006-2015, illustrate well the potential effects on deforestation trends that can be achieved when implementation and enforcement of conservation policies is prioritised.
4. **A comprehensive and coherent policy mix should address the demand of high-risk products,** particularly agricultural commodities driving deforestation and land-intensive products. This should be done while preserving and improving the welfare of communities whose livelihoods depend on forests and agriculture. This includes efforts to establish deforestation free value chains and to provide information to consumers regarding the deforestation risks associated with the products they purchase, or the lack thereof. It also

¹ This work is in the process for publication. For more information, please contact the authors of this submission.

² United Nations Environment Programme (2025). *State of Finance for Forests 2025: Unlock. Unleash. Realizing forest potential requires tripling investments in forests by 2030*. Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/48718>.

includes policies targeting dietary shifts to reduce the consumption of land intensive and high-deforestation risk products, particularly when such products are consumed above healthy reference levels.

5. Furthermore, **a coherent policy mix for forests and land use is central to halt deforestation and forest degradation**. Some examples where the coherence of the policy mix is particularly important follows.
 - a. **Priorities on halting DFD should be mainstreamed in domestic public finance**, including in the national budgets. This is key to avoid goal conflicts between separate sections of the national public financial resources. Yet, mainstreaming sustainable forestry and forest conservation throughout the national budget emerges as a key issue in many countries. There are at least two barriers to a better mainstreaming of these priorities in the national expenditure. On a technical level, information is a barrier, as few countries have systems for tagging and mapping expenses according to their impact on forests. On a political level, real or perceived trade-offs between sustainable forest management and forest conservation, and alternative land uses is another barrier.
 - b. **Priorities on halting DFD should be mainstreamed in agricultural support policies**. Agricultural support policies, such as capacity building support through extension services, rural credit and subsidies to farmers, are powerful tools for guiding the actions of farmers. Handled by ministries for agriculture, whose primary objective are related to food- and agricultural production, forest conservation frequently plays no more than a marginal role in these policies. Where domestic support is conditioned on the absence of links to deforestation, this is generally effective to reduce deforestation. However, it is important that such conditionalities are imposed on the full range of agricultural support policies as opposed to a subset of them.
6. **Ensuring policy coherence across policy domains and between the policy-portfolios of different ministries requires active processes to coordinate the action of different actors within the national administration**. Experience from coordination on climate change show that the institutional setting and political importance given to this process greatly impacts its effectiveness.³ To effectively coordinate among different ministries, agencies and other organisations, **this coordination should be done by a legitimate and influential agency with strong high-level political backing and with technical capacity to lead the work, among other things**.⁴
7. **Lastly, ongoing analyses of progress made toward short-, medium-, and long-term targets is crucial in order to diagnose drivers of successes and remaining barriers blocking the full achievement of the goal on halting deforestation and forest degradation**. In contexts where procedures and institutional arrangements for performing this task are absent, governments should consider prioritising establishing such processes, including by dedicating sufficient public resources to this end. Such analyses should identify incoherencies and gaps in the national governance of forests and provide recommendations for how to address them within the national political system. It is important that such assessments can be carried out by both the government itself, as a form of self-assessment, and by independent bodies. In this regard, a technically strong and well-funded civil society is important.

³ Navroz K. Dubash *et al.* National climate institutions complement targets and policies. *Science* **374**, 690-693 (2021). DOI: [10.1126/science.abm1157](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abm1157)

⁴ NDC Partnership, Country Coordination Mechanisms: Best Practice Brief. July 2024. <https://ndcpartnership.org/knowledge-portal/climate-toolbox/best-practice-brief-country-coordination-mechanisms>.

Input regarding international governance of efforts to halt deforestation, forest degradation and broader sustainable land use transitions

This section speaks specifically to part III of the roadmap.

A fragmented landscape of the international institutions supporting efforts to halt DFD calls for effective coordination and orchestration across existing initiatives. Existing global governance of forests is highly fragmented across all three Rio-conventions, programmes and specialised agencies under the UN-umbrella, multiple and overlapping funds, private initiatives on supply-chain governance, etcetera. This leads to a multiplication of efforts, and at times conflicting narratives that complicate implementation.⁵ Coordination and orchestration across initiatives is necessary to avoid unhelpful overlaps and make the most of limited resources. However, **such coordination can only be performed effectively by a both powerful and broadly legitimate organisation on matters relating to deforestation and forest degradation.** The fragmentation of the global governance of forests manifests itself in multiple ways. Some examples are discussed below:

- **Coordination among international forest finance initiatives is necessary to make the most of limited resources and facilitate access to those resources by national administrations.** The forest financing gap is such that no individual fund or financial mechanism could close it on its own – a multiplicity of funding mechanisms and financial strategies is needed. Yet, the emergence of various funding mechanisms, with differing requirements often disconnected from the UNFCCC guidance, has increased complexity of accessing funds and placed a significant burden on recipient countries. A comprehensive mechanism to coordinate the different sources, terms, and levels of finance for the AFOLU sector within or beyond existing funding schemes is still missing. Given the sensitivities of matters relating to finance, this coordinating function can only be performed by a competent and trusted constellation of organisations.
- **Coordination on the rules and standards related to halting DFD is necessary to avoid uncertainty and facilitate national compliance efforts.** The lack of harmonised rules and standards, especially for the monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) of land use changes and carbon fluxes relating to forests across different initiatives. Disparate MRV frameworks across funding mechanisms and voluntary carbon initiatives undermine transparency and comparability, leading to uncertainty and hindering trust among stakeholders.

Strengthening international AFOLU governance requires does not require building new institutions, which could further add to an already crowded landscape. Instead, strengthening coordination and coherence within existing arrangements could be more cost-effective and politically feasible. Arrangements could comprise a platform or working group focused on orchestrating existing institutions to help resolve overlapping functions, align guidance, and promote synergies in MRV and finance.

⁵ Sanz & Blasquez (2025). Analysis of international climate change governance for the agriculture, forest and land use sector: Gaps and recommendations for future improvement. [Earth System Governance, Volume 25](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2589811625000448)100278. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2589811625000448>

Resources

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