

Submission of comments and recommendations on the COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

**Community-Led
Forest Economies
PARTNERSHIP**

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The CLFE movement involves a growing number of partners, including the African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF), the Global Alliance for Territorial Communities (GATC), Ambition Loop, Tropenbos International, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), and the World Resources Institute (WRI). Several of these partners are also submitting separate and broader institutional comments.

CLFE partners welcome the opportunity to provide inputs to the proposed Roadmap. These inputs are not comprehensive but focus on key barriers, levers and opportunities related to the central role of forest communities on the frontlines of the destruction and degradation especially of tropical forests. Overall, we are convinced that in order to be effective, the Roadmap needs to move beyond compiling existing initiatives and instead focus on mobilising political will to define a clear pathway forward based on implementation of what was committed to already. We look forward to supporting your Presidency and the subsequent team of the COP31 Presidency in the subsequent process and efforts to successfully advance and integrate the Roadmap with the COP31 and broader UNFCCC agenda.

Summary

CLFE recommendations are directly shaped by the direct involvement of its partners in efforts to conserve the world's remaining tropical forest landscapes, advance the scientific knowledge about their ecosystems, and empower indigenous peoples and local communities that have been guarding them for centuries. Of most immediate relevance for the roadmap as a way to accelerate and deepen action to halt and reverse deforestation is our current joint work to expand sustainable forest economies and the well-being of forest communities. Our recommendations underline the following for your consideration:

- 1. The need for a fundamental shift in economic structures and systems**, in line with the powerful economic model of the sociobioeconomy that emphasises the central role, agency and well-being of forest communities to keep existing forests intact;
- 2. The urgency of realising existing rights and genuine power shifts** toward communities in the forests to make their own decisions concerning all relevant aspects of sustainable forest management at their level, including the payment and allocation of resources;
- 3. The importance of establishing direct access to finance** for indigenous and local forest communities, including as regular payment for their wide range of ecosystem services, and of a quick and full implementation of the original provisions under the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), alongside similar ones under GEF, GCF and other existing funding mechanisms while limiting bureaucratic hurdles and transaction costs for local communities; and
- 4. The opportunity to leverage existing political commitments for real action** through reinforced accountability mechanisms, including the independent and systematic tracking of implementation progress, enforcement of government policies and regulations to effectively address all drivers of deforestation, including by shifting diets and consumption patterns.

Overall comments

We express our strong support to the COP30 Presidency for advancing the development of this dedicated Roadmap, following important but inconclusive efforts during UNFCCC negotiations in November. This process is important given the urgency of the issue and the need for dedicated international collaboration to ensure that the agreed goal of ending deforestation by 2030 can finally move from ambition to concrete action.

As a consequence, the Roadmap needs to go beyond generic normative re-confirmations of the importance of forests, but instead focus on concrete practical steps by all willing states and other actors to move forward. This includes full support to existing initiatives and mechanisms (rather than the creation of new ones), including the Tropical Forests Forever Facility and its full, quick and community-oriented operationalization. The Roadmap's core concern of advancing implementation must therefore reflect a dual focus on action and public accountability by and of all actors, governments, companies and others.

Part I – Why Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation Is Central to the Paris Agreement

- Effective measures to halt and reverse deforestation – and the loss of nature and biodiversity more broadly – are not just central to the Paris Agreement. They are also central to the need to address extreme poverty and social injustice, as well as overall achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- One of the fundamental lessons of decades of combined efforts to address climate change, protect nature and expand human development is that local communities, including indigenous peoples, need to be not just considered but actively involved in all aspects of policy formulation and implementation.

Related to 3. *Socioeconomic Aspects*

- The concept of 'sociobioeconomy' was elevated during COP30 and is now universally recognized as a powerful approach and socio-economic model. Grounded in the productive systems and territorial knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities it represents one of the most structurally sound pathways to align poverty eradication with forest conservation.
- Unlike previous approaches, that of the sociobioeconomy promises to address the fundamental problem of valuing standing forests and making them economically competitive with land conversion. Failure to address this challenge in the past (and today) is the reason we are still seeing forests, including primary tropical forests, disappear in many landscapes across the globe.

Part II – What Countries Can Do

All parties of the Paris Climate Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity made clear collective commitments regarding the need to address, halt and reverse deforestation. Most recently under the UNFCCC as part of the Global Stocktake in 2023, and under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. While many countries have since developed and enacted new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), only very few of them include explicit national targets,

policy measures and other concrete steps accompanied by resources to translate these global commitments into action.

NDCs and NBSAPs, respectively, continue to represent the fundamental policy frameworks to address and operationalise at national level the key economic, financial, trade and other drivers of deforestation – at home and abroad. The frequent absence of deforestation and concrete measures in existing NDCs and NBSAPs is a critical warning signal not only regarding the risk of undermining existing political commitments on nature but also the relevance of multilateral agreements more broadly.

This Roadmap must unequivocally reassert the central role of these instruments, and the need for countries to correct this absence at implementation stage of new NDCs and NBSAPs. Furthermore, deforestation commitments must be reflected in national action plans and be supported by adequate resources, financial and otherwise.

For the Roadmap, it will be critical to link policy directly to practical implementation: how existing commitments can be translated into concrete policy measures; to identify who holds responsibility for action, what the needed resources are, and the immediate operational targets for addressing the main drivers of deforestation and degradation.

Given the international dimension of deforestation and its drivers, especially international trade of commodities and agricultural products, the roadmap also needs to establish transparent mechanisms for international collaboration and regulatory matters related to the pressures stemming from consumption and diets.

Related to 4. *Deforestation*

- Deforestation will not be halted without a rethinking and shift to alternative economic models and structures that are aligned with agreed climate and biodiversity objectives. As a consequence, policy frameworks must explicitly enable and resource community-led forest economies as dominant land-use model, rather than continuing to treat conservation as a constraint on economic development.

Illustrative case:

Brazil's experience with "extractive" reserves and the Amazon's community-managed territories demonstrates that tenure security combined with market access for sociobiodiversity products can make standing forests economically self-sustaining. As this model and its approach is expanding in South America it is also a model to be considered for the respective contexts of other tropical forest countries, including in the Congo Basin and Southeast Asia.

Related to 5. *Forest Degradation*

- It is well established across all tropical forest landscapes that forest degradation is driven in large part by economic precarity in forest communities. A sociobioeconomy approach allows for diverse, community-governed income streams from non-timber forest products and agroforestry systems that will reduce local dependence on prevailing extractive or degrading practices.

Illustrative case:

In the Amazon, community-monitored degradation indicators that were developed with Indigenous and traditional knowledge holders have proven more sensitive and locally legitimate than what can be done through remote-sensing alone. This experience

underlines the importance of integrating community monitoring into national reporting systems.

Related to 6. *Forest Restoration, Reforestation and Afforestation*

- Restoration mandates must prioritize community-led and agroforestry-based approaches that generate lasting livelihoods, rather than monoculture plantations that fail to restore ecological function or economic autonomy for local peoples.

Illustrative case:

In the Brazilian Amazon, agroforestry systems that were co-designed with traditional communities have delivered important co-benefits — biodiversity, carbon, food security — that are measurable. They demonstrate the importance of systemic restoration approaches that are grounded in local stewardship, rather than depend on external projects.

Related to 7. *Sustainable Forest Management, Bioeconomy, Agroforestry*

- It is critical to move beyond a framing and perception of deforestation as an environmental challenge or side effect of the existing economic system and structures. Instead it needs to be understood and addressed as an inherent consequence of the existing economic systems that systematically reward land conversion over standing forests. A shift to a sociobioeconomy model for forest economies will be able to fundamentally reframe the active role of communities, making forest ecosystems the productive base of territorial economies.
- Establishing a sociobioeconomy model as a strategic pillar of economic development will place communities at the center, equipped with dedicated financial instruments that reach communities directly, reduce compliance burdens for small-scale producers, and support territorial value chains from agroforestry to non-timber products.
- A systemic shift to a sociobioeconomy model, adjusted to local governance, political and legal context, represents the most promising policy lever available to governments across different tropical forest countries, in order to make sustainable forest management and conservation structurally self-sustaining.
- Similarly, the monitoring of practices and progress of forest management indicators, trends and developments must evolve beyond just the superficial calculation of deforestation rates. A more comprehensive tracking and evaluation of broader criteria aligned to a sociobioeconomy approach would include the measuring of income, employment, and other human development indicators, as well as value retention at the community/territorial level. Communities must play an active role from the definition, collection, interpretation and integration of traditional knowledge of these indicators into national reporting.

Illustrative case:

Experiences from Amazonian extractive reserves show that forest-based economies are viable at scale when communities hold tenure, access markets, and co-govern the enabling frameworks. The replicable unit is not a project but a set of institutional conditions that are established and institutionalized at scale.

Related to 8. *Forest Conservation*

- Forest conservation depends on resources and payments to those that have the power to do so. Not only more finance is needed; it must also fundamentally shift from paying

communities to not destroy forests, toward a system where finance is invested in the sociobioeconomy where conservation of nature is the logical rational economic choice. This requires a structural transition from externally-funded compliance approaches to internally-generated benefit.

Illustrative case:

Across regions and models, protected areas that are co-managed with Indigenous Peoples and local communities consistently outperform state-only conservation in biodiversity and carbon outcomes. With this evidence at hand, these approaches should be considered the norm for all forest conservation efforts globally.

Related to existing frameworks under the UN and multilateralism

Past efforts by countries to develop and expand innovative ways to protect forests have raised many concerns and achieved a mixed record of impact. At the same time and in the context of many challenges to multilateralism it is important to recognize the existence and legitimacy of multilateral frameworks. This is particularly true for the REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) framework with 197 countries, including the emergence of jurisdictional approaches that are beginning to connect forest protection with finance at scale. While still evolving and adjusting to changing parameters, this framework provides a strong platform, transparency and clarity for all parties to facilitate the mentioned structural shifts and incentives for addressing deforestation and conserving the standing forests.

We also support the TFFF as a much needed and urgent innovation to address the ‘standing forest’ challenge, and hope the roadmap will explicitly call for its rapid operationalization in line with the provisions for direct access of finance to indigenous and local communities.

Related to the evidence on the critical role of IPLCs in preventing and halting deforestation

Globally, Indigenous Peoples and local communities steward an estimated 50% or more of the world's land, including many of its most pristine ecosystems. Existing and emerging evidence shows that these lands often house more species and see lower rates of deforestation and degradation than lands managed by public or private entities. Where community tenure is secure, deforestation rates are between 30-50% lower.

<https://www.wri.org/insights/indigenous-and-local-community-land-rights-protect-biodiversity>

For questions or clarifications, as well as engagement in the Roadmap process, please contact us by email at secretariat@CLFPartnership.org.