IISD Submission on the COP 30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

Mandate

This submission is made in response to the COP Presidency Invitation to submit contributions to the COP 30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030.

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Introduction

This submission draws on IISD research on policy measures to enhance forest conservation and reduce deforestation, based on the comparative analysis of measures implemented by five producer countries: Costa Rica, Gabon, Indonesia, Peru, and Rwanda. The analysis examined in detail five specific measures: Costa Rica's Payment for Ecosystem Services program, Gabon's mandatory compliance with private FSC certification for forest concessions, Indonesia's national Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil certification scheme, Peru's land use formalization through agroforestry concessions, and Rwanda's forest landscape restoration strategy. These measures were examined as part of broader national efforts and policy frameworks aimed at halting deforestation, promoting sustainable land use, and strengthening forest governance. The measures were selected to represent a range of policy types, including incentive-based, enabling, and public-private approaches, across different geographic contexts and stages of forest recovery. The report identifies practical lessons from implementation experience and highlights policy approaches to address drivers of deforestation while supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Country Experiences, Best Practices, and Lessons Learned Regarding Forest Conservation and Restoration

Governments have adopted a range of policy measures to halt deforestation, including payments for ecosystem services (PES), land tenure systems, national certification schemes, forest landscape restoration strategies, sustainable forest management, and value addition through certification.

Based on our analysis, IISD identifies the following seven key lessons learned:

1. **Reducing deforestation and improving forest conservation requires a combination of measures that respond to the country context and address the causes of deforestation.** All five countries rely on policy mixes rather than single interventions. For example, in Costa Rica, incentive measures like the PES program are combined with disincentives, such as the prohibition of land-cover change in established forests with sanctions of up to 3 years in prison under the Forestry Law 7575. In Indonesia, the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil certification is complemented by the forest moratorium, which prohibits the conversion of primary natural forests and peatlands for palm oil, and the palm oil moratorium, which mandates the evaluation of palm oil permits and temporarily suspends the issuance of permits. These cases highlight that no single measure is sufficient. Effectiveness depends on coherent policy mixes adapted to local conditions and institutional capacities.
2. **Measures to enhance forest conservation and address deforestation need to target areas that are at high risk of deforestation.** Focusing interventions on areas under the greatest pressure allows for more efficient allocation of resources and stronger impact. For example, several studies on the effectiveness of Costa Rica's PES highlight that the program's impact increases when high-risk deforestation areas are targeted. Moreover, the cases of Peru and Costa Rica show that introducing eligibility criteria can help target the areas that should be prioritized, such as those that are at high risk of deforestation, or, alternatively, High Conservation Value or High Carbon Stock areas.
3. **Recognizing the economic and environmental value of forests is critical for reversing deforestation, restoring land, and preserving forests as part of a long-term government commitment and strategy.** Long-term success and halting deforestation depend on making forest conservation economically viable. For example, in Rwanda, the landscape restoration strategy is used to increase the economic and environmental value of forests, building an economy with a strong component of forest conservation. By integrating trees and crops, soil fertility is increased, soil erosion is reduced, and farmers have access to an alternative line of income. Rwanda's strategy is cross-cutting, with several ministries and government agencies supporting its implementation.
4. **An enabling environment is required to support producers, forestry operators, and smallholders in complying with policy measures that prevent deforestation and enhance forest conservation.** Policies are only effective if producers, particularly smallholders, are able to comply. Secure land tenure, access to finance, and technical support are key preconditions for effective implementation. For instance, a study in Costa Rica revealed that poorer smallholders have less access to the PES program, with land titles among the barriers preventing them from enrollment. In Peru, insecure land tenure has been a central driver of deforestation, leading to the development of a specific policy reforming land tenure rights and introducing agroforestry concessions. Similarly, in Indonesia, the lack of land titles prevents farmers from obtaining the

permits required to comply with the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil criteria. Implementation also requires time, transition periods, and sustained capacity building, as compliance often entails significant financial and structural adjustments.

5. **Engaging with multiple actors and mobilizing funds from both the public and private sectors to support efforts to reduce deforestation and enhance forest conservation are important methods to achieve results across various scales.** Effective approaches require coordination across governments, private sector actors, and local communities, alongside the mobilization of funds from both the public and private sectors. Rwanda stands out as an example of public and private sector participation, as its 2018 National Forest Policy explicitly encourages private sector investment and the development of public–private partnerships in the forestry sector, while also recognizing communities and smallholders as key actors in policy implementation through raising awareness of the value of forest restoration, delivering training, setting up demonstration sites, and providing seedlings. At the same time, diverse funding mechanisms are critical. For instance, Costa Rica combined government funding with private sector contributions, particularly from hydroelectric plants, as well as international funds and support from bilateral agencies and global funds.
6. **Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSSs) can complement and support the implementation of measures to enhance forest conservation and reduce deforestation.** Governments can intentionally collaborate with VSS systems to support farmers in adopting sustainable practices that protect forests and prevent deforestation. VSSs can support implementation by promoting good agricultural practices, enhancing traceability, and facilitating market access where there is demand for certified products. They can also strengthen monitoring and product sustainability information systems, including traceability to the farm level. However, their effectiveness depends on public support to address compliance costs and ensure inclusiveness.
7. **A combination of both physical and digital monitoring can help ensure the proper implementation of the measures while allowing for real-time monitoring and obtaining meaningful information on forests and biodiversity inventories.** All the case studies rely on hybrid monitoring approaches. For instance, Costa Rica's assessment of compliance combines field visits by the National Fund for Forest Financing (in Spanish, Fondo Nacional de Financiamento Forestal) staff and monitoring reports by forest regents, as well as the use of advanced digital monitoring systems like the geographic information system to monitor canopy cover every 5 years. Similarly, Peru combines field inspections with remote sensing and satellite imagery, as well as an early warning system that reports on forest cover at least every 7 days to enable rapid interventions in cases of illegal deforestation. Rwanda also relies on remote sensing, satellite imagery, and ground-based data collection to assess changes in forest cover, but also in

biodiversity and ecosystem services. These systems are essential to ensure compliance, enable timely interventions, and improve forest data.

Conclusion

Experience across countries shows that halting and reversing deforestation is achievable when policies are coherent, context-specific, and supported by adequate finance, capacity, and monitoring systems.

The COP 30 Presidency Roadmap provides an opportunity to move beyond commitments toward implementation-oriented approaches, grounded in practical experience and aligned across climate, trade, and finance frameworks.

References

Sarmiento, F., Larrea, C., Oeschger, A., & Jose, R. (2024). *Measures to enhance forest conservation and reduce deforestation: Viewpoints and lessons from producing countries*. International Institute for Sustainable Development.