

COP30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030

A submission from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Introduction

IUCN welcomes the opportunity provided by the Brazilian COP30 Presidency to provide inputs to the [Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030](#). Drawing on our global experience in forest conservation, restoration, sustainable management, and governance, we are pleased to provide the following inputs to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement in relation to forests and, particularly, to advance the implementation of paragraphs 33 and 34 of the *Outcome of the First Global Stocktake* agreed to by Parties at COP28 ([Decision 1/CMA.5](#)).

Halting and reversing forest loss and degradation by 2030 as specified under the Global Stocktake can make a crucial contribution to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC on both mitigation and adaptation. It can simultaneously also help achieve the goals of the other two Rio Conventions, the CBD and UNCCD, in terms of conserving biodiversity and combatting desertification.

The COP30 Presidency Roadmap offers a valuable opportunity to convert these internationally-agreed goals on forests into an action-oriented framework for delivery that links ambition with implementation. The roadmap needs to focus on protecting primary and old-growth forests, expand integrated restoration initiatives like the [Bonn Challenge](#), and ensure stronger integration of forests and sustainable land use management into national planning and implementation, including in support of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Long-term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS). Additionally, it should serve as a catalyst that brings together, complements and boosts existing ongoing global efforts on forests, including those under the United Nations Forest Forum (UNFF), the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership (FCLP), and the relevant Plans to Accelerate Solutions (PAS) under the COP30 Action Agenda.

Given the increased urgency of action needed to limit climate overshoot and keep the 1.5°C goal within reach, and the risks of the diminishing mitigation and adaptation potential of forests amidst accelerating climate change, the roadmap should help bridge the gap between current national commitments and global goals by addressing both the direct and indirect causes of forest loss and degradation. In particular, it should aim to support systemic changes to promote sustainable and resilient food systems, deforestation-free value chains, and coordinated land-use planning, noting that agricultural expansion remains a primary driver of deforestation.

In this context, the roadmap should aim to further advance ecosystem restoration and nature-based solutions, including forest landscape restoration, to revive ecosystem functions that support local livelihoods. Noting the critical role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in forest conservation and restoration efforts worldwide, the development and implementation of the roadmap should be carried out in an inclusive, participatory, and transparent way, ensuring Free, Prior, and Informed Consent for Indigenous Peoples, while also being gender-responsive.

The roadmap as a process

To maximize effectiveness, the roadmap should be designed as an **ongoing, multi-year process extending to 2030 and beyond**, with clear milestones and regular progress

assessments across all actions, including reducing deforestation and forest degradation, as well as promoting afforestation, reforestation, and forest landscape restoration.

It is crucial to **build political momentum** in support of the roadmap, not only from Parties but from a wide range of stakeholders including sub-national authorities, businesses, civil society and local community groups on the ground, building on existing initiatives and coalitions. To ensure its longevity beyond the COP30 Presidency, it will also be important to embed the roadmap within an **institutional structure with the widest political buy-in** that can help to strengthen and monitor its delivery. In doing so, the roadmap can also serve as a platform that promotes the exchange of knowledge, scalable solutions, financing strategies, and best practices tailored to regional and national contexts, and grounded in the best available science.

Robust monitoring, reporting, and periodic scientific assessments will be essential to track progress and strengthen synergies across mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and land degradation neutrality. This process can also generate timely inputs to inform future Global Stocktake cycles.

Ensuring policy coherence across global frameworks will be critical. Stronger alignment across existing policy processes, including the UNFCCC/ Paris Agreement, the UNFF, the CBD/ Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the UNCCD, and the Sustainable Development Goals, and their respective instruments, can help reduce duplication and ensure that forest-related processes and actions are mutually reinforcing, thereby improving overall effectiveness.

Critical barriers to halting and reversing forest loss and degradation

Despite increasing global commitments, persistent structural barriers continue to impede progress. These barriers are interconnected across economic, governance, social, and environmental dimensions and require systemic responses that reflect the complexity of forest landscapes and competing land-use pressures.

Institutional and governance barriers remain a major constraint, including unclear definitions of primary and old-growth forests, limited enforcement capacity, weak regulatory frameworks, and competing policy priorities across sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and mining. Fragmented mandates and weak coordination between national and subnational authorities further hinder coherent implementation. The absence of harmonized definitions enables the continued degradation of ecologically valuable primary forests to be offset by secondary or plantation forests under “net zero” approaches that fail to account for biodiversity, carbon storage, and ecosystem service losses. Land tenure insecurity, unresolved land-use conflicts, and weak monitoring and enforcement, particularly in remote and fragmented landscapes, further undermine effective forest management.

Economic and financial barriers continue to drive forest conversion. Agriculture, mining, and infrastructure often generate higher and faster returns than conservation or sustainable management, reinforced by rising global demand and complex supply chains with weak traceability and transparency. Limited access to long-term finance, combined with higher upfront costs of sustainable production systems, constrains transitions to deforestation-free pathways. Existing mechanisms such as payments for ecosystem services remain small in scale and unreliable, while financial flows linked to deforestation often outweigh investments in sustainable alternatives. Poverty, food insecurity, and dependence on wood fuel further contribute to forest degradation.

Technological and data-related barriers limit effective action, including gaps in forest monitoring systems, up-to-date inventories, and accessible data for policy and land-use planning. Inconsistent definitions of primary and old-growth forests further complicate

monitoring and can obscure degradation. These gaps reduce transparency, weaken enforcement, and create uncertainty for investment.

Social and cultural barriers remain significant. Forest and climate policies often do not fully integrate the needs, knowledge, and rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Insecure tenure, limited participation, and weak benefit-sharing mechanisms undermine trust and effectiveness, while poverty increases reliance on forest resources. Strengthening inclusive governance and local capacities remains essential for success.

Environmental pressures are intensifying. Agricultural expansion, infrastructure, mining, and urban growth continue to fragment forest landscapes, while climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of droughts, wildfires, storms, pests, and diseases, reducing resilience and complicating restoration.

Together, these barriers highlight the **need for integrated approaches** that align governance, finance, data systems, social inclusion, and ecosystem resilience. Overcoming them is critical to enable countries to deliver on commitments to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.

Solutions and levers to accelerate forest conservation and restoration

Addressing the identified barriers requires a coherent set of economic, institutional, technological, social, and international levers that work together to tackle both direct and indirect drivers of forest loss and degradation, while ensuring equitable benefits for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). Experience shows that the most effective interventions integrate finance, governance, science, and local participation.

Economic and Market Levers

Financial incentives need to be realigned to make conservation and sustainable land use competitive with forest conversion. Instruments like payments for ecosystem services, sustainable commodity value chains, and green bonds can support long-term financing, while emerging mechanisms such as the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) show the importance of linking sustained finance to verified outcomes. Expanding forest resilience bonds, debt-for-nature swaps, and results-based payments under REDD+ can help mobilize blended finance at scale. What is critical is that these mechanisms allow direct access for countries and particularly communities, including through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and include strong social safeguards so that IPLCs benefit fairly.

Institutional and Governance Levers

Strengthened governance and secure land tenure are foundational. Clarifying and enforcing land and resource rights, supporting community-based forest management, and improving enforcement of forest laws are essential to reduce illegal activities and enable sustainable management. Cross-sectoral coordination across agriculture, infrastructure, energy, and mining is critical to reduce competing land-use pressures. Strengthening national and subnational institutions, alongside participatory decision-making, can improve transparency, compliance, and long-term resilience.

Technological Levers

Robust monitoring and data systems are essential for implementation. Advances in remote sensing, satellite monitoring, and digital platforms enable near real-time tracking of deforestation, degradation, and restoration and need to be more widely shared. Integrating geospatial data with local knowledge improves planning, enforcement, and transparency, while enabling more accurate accounting of carbon, biodiversity, and socio-economic outcomes, including employment.

At the same time, the landscape of restoration reporting remains fragmented. Reliable tracking requires combining multiple sources across UNFCCC, CBD, and UNCCD processes, as well as FAO assessments and other emerging global datasets. Initiatives such as the *Global Restoration Commitments Database* and the *State of the World's Forests* demonstrate the potential for more integrated approaches, but access to underlying data remains a constraint. The roadmap can help improve coherence across reporting platforms and reduce duplication.

Social and Capacity-Building Levers

Empowering IPLCs and strengthening gender-responsive approaches are central to effective implementation. Targeted capacity building, technical support, and inclusive governance structures enable meaningful participation in forest management and restoration. Strengthening local institutions and networks supports equitable benefit-sharing, enhances resilience, and ensures that interventions are socially and culturally appropriate.

International Cooperation Levers

Enhanced international cooperation is essential to scale impact. Regional partnerships, knowledge exchange platforms, and alignment with REDD+, nature-based solutions, and other multilateral initiatives can accelerate implementation by sharing best practices, harmonizing standards, and mobilizing finance and technical support. Coordinated approaches are also critical to address leakage and transboundary drivers of deforestation.

Country, regional, and sector experiences and best practices

IUCN's experience across global forest and landscape restoration and conservation initiatives shows that scaling impact requires aligning ecological, social, and financial dimensions, supported by robust monitoring and participatory governance.

The [Bonn Challenge](#), co-led by IUCN, demonstrates how voluntary, country-driven commitments can mobilize large-scale restoration aligned with climate, biodiversity, and development goals. Through regional platforms such as [AFR100](#) and [Initiative 20x20](#), it has supported countries in translating pledges into action by embedding restoration into national strategies, strengthening technical capacity, and facilitating partnerships among governments, communities, and investors. A key lesson is that restoration gains traction when linked to national priorities and supported by measurable targets and reporting frameworks.

IUCN's [Restoration Barometer](#) highlights the importance of standardized monitoring systems to track progress and improve accountability. Supporting countries in reporting on restoration commitments and outcomes enables more transparent decision-making and helps align national reporting with global processes. This experience underscores the importance of credible data systems for maintaining momentum, attracting finance, and ensuring adaptive management.

Through the Forest Landscape Restoration [FLR Hub](#), IUCN is supporting countries in Africa and Latin America in developing pipelines of restoration investments, strengthening enabling conditions, and connecting projects to finance. This experience shows that unlocking finance requires not only capital but also technical support, risk reduction, and alignment with national policies and community priorities.

IUCN's work on nature-based solutions, including the application of the [IUCN Global Standard for NbS](#), demonstrates how integrated approaches can deliver multiple benefits across climate mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity, and livelihoods. Applying such standards helps ensure that restoration and conservation interventions maintain ecological integrity while generating social and economic value. IUCN's work on nature-based solutions for climate change is also supported by the [ENACT Partnership](#) aimed at addressing the interlinked climate, land degradation, and biodiversity loss challenges in an integrated manner.

Across these initiatives, **consistent lessons** emerge:

- Restoration and conservation efforts are most effective when embedded in national development and climate strategies
- Strong monitoring and reporting systems are essential to sustain political and financial support
- Blended finance and pipeline development are critical to scale investment
- Inclusive governance, particularly with IPLCs, is central to long-term success

Inclusive approaches for diverse national contexts

Key principles for equity and inclusion

A just, orderly and equitable transition from forest loss and degradation to forest conservation and restoration should reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development and with varying degrees of dependence on land-use systems, while ensuring fairness in participation, outcomes, and benefit-sharing. Key principles to ensure this transition include:

- *Recognition of IPLC Rights:* Land tenure, customary rights, and decision-making authority must be recognized to ensure both effectiveness and social equity. This includes respecting Free, Prior and Informed Consent and ensuring that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are full partners in planning and implementation, with equitable access to benefits.
- *Context-Specific Strategies:* Forest conservation, restoration, and management must be tailored to countries' development stages, forest cover, and socio-economic realities. Nationally determined approaches should allow for differentiated pathways that balance environmental objectives with development needs and livelihood security.
- *Integration with Climate and Development Goals:* Forest and land-use interventions should be embedded within broader climate, biodiversity, and development strategies, including NDCs. Applying integrated approaches, such as nature-based solutions, can help deliver multiple benefits while avoiding trade-offs and strengthening coherence across the Rio Conventions.
- *Gender and Social Inclusion:* Women, youth, and marginalized groups should be active participants in forest governance and decision-making. Strengthening inclusive and gender-responsive approaches will be essential to ensure equitable outcomes and long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

Forests are not merely a sectoral issue; they underpin global biodiversity and climate stability. The COP30 Presidency Roadmap represents a historic opportunity to build political momentum in support of the goals that have already been agreed to on forests and to translate them into coherent, measurable, and time-bound action plan for delivery that safeguards the future of the world's forests, the livelihoods of the vulnerable, and the global climate system.

IUCN expresses its appreciation to the COP30 Presidency for this opportunity to contribute to this important process and looks forward to supporting it in achieving the goal of halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.

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