Rainforest Foundation Norway

Submission: Roadmap to Halt Deforestation

Rainforest Foundation Norway is a leading independent international Non-Governmental Organization dedicated to protecting the world's rainforests and securing the rights of Indigenous and forest peoples, in collaboration with a broad network of partners in six rainforest countries.

Introduction

Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the COP 30 Presidency Roadmap on Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation by 2030. This submission compliments RFN's submission on the Roadmap on the Transition Away from Fossil Fuels and provides additional recommendations on how the Deforestation Roadmap can best address the barriers to halting deforestation and the levers needed to support communities and governments. In short, a roadmap that effectively addresses the barriers to halting deforestation requires a full accounting of the role tropical rainforests play in regulating the earth's climate, ensures the human rights of local forest-dependent peoples, and requires stable, long-term policies and financing that rewards ecosystem-wide rainforest conservation.

Barrier 1: Lack of Recognition of Rainforests Role in Global Climate Regulation

As an alternative to harvesting timber and/or converting the land for agricultural, climate policy discussions have traditionally framed tropical forests, and forests in general, as carbon sinks and storage. This is a narrative that has shaped mitigation strategies, finance flows, and international agreements. While effective in securing forest protection in some contexts, this carbon-centric framing underrepresents the broader, critical role forests play in regulating global climate.

Forests influence the climate far beyond carbon storage. Through transpiration, cloud formation, and vertical heat transport, forests regulate atmospheric dynamics, maintain regional and continental rainfall, and stabilize temperature gradients. Several studies suggest that deforestation can disrupt these processes, amplifying global warming not only through CO_2 emissions but also via altered water and energy cycles[1]. Land-atmosphere interactions and cloud feedback remain among the most significant uncertainties in climate science, a limitation explicitly acknowledged by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.[2]

In addition, forest loss and subsequent impacts on the local climate can lead to negative agricultural impacts. A 2024 RFN[3] report showed that in the Brazilian Amazon there is a correlation between the extent of forest loss in regions with historical deforestation and negative climate-related outcomes, such as delayed onset of the agricultural rainy season, reduced rainfall volumes, and increased temperatures.

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[1] https://arxiv.org/pdf/2301.09998, https://www.wri.org/insights/how-forests-affect-climate; https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/forests-and-global-change/articles/10.3389/ffgc.2023.1150191/full https://efi.int/forestquestions/q7_en; https://efi.int/forestquestions/q7_en https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228528788_The_Biotic_Pump_Condensation_atmospheric_dynamics_and_climate; https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844022024616; https://journals.bilpubgroup.com/index.php/jasr/article/view/9887/6382

[2] https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/ and https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/.

[3] https://www.regnskog.no/uploads/documents/RFN-Rainforest-Payback.pdf

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A recent study published in the journal Nature goes further, providing new evidence that ongoing deforestation in Brazil is leading to a tipping point at which an incremental but profound and irreversible ecosystem transformation begins[4]. According to the analysis, in a scenario where 22 percent or more of the Amazon rainforest is deforested, the majority of the ecosystem becomes vulnerable to collapse at temperatures over 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming. The Brazilian Amazon is estimated to have already lost 17 to 18 percent to deforestation.

Recommendations

- The roadmap should call for immediate actions at national, regional and global levels to halt deforestation and degradation by 2030, in line with the Glasgow Declaration on Forests, to avoid reaching tipping points for crucial ecosystems such as the Amazon.
- The roadmap should call for additional science on the role of tropical rainforests in both local weather and climatic patterns and in the functioning of the global climate and water cycles.
- Land-use planning processes and monitoring systems should include localized rainfall patterns, and potential implications of widespread deforestation, as part of their decision making.
- The roadmap should clearly communicate that tropical forests are not only at risk of deforestation and degradation from local activities but are also directly impacted by the changing global climate.

Barrier 2: Incomplete recognition and protection of IPs and LCs Land Tenure rights

With the right enabling conditions, Indigenous Peoples and local communities are the best stewards of forestland and ensuring their rights is crucial to protecting the world's remaining tropical forests[5]. The 2026 Global Forest Report estimates that 58 percent of the world's remaining intact forest landscapes are on Indigenous land while only about 14% of lands and forests globally are formally recognized as belonging to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Without formal land rights, forests stand less protected and more vulnerable to deforestation driven by land insecurity and/or conflicting interests. In addition, without recognition of land rights, communities accessing resources are unlikely to be compensated for the job they do protecting the forests. One example of an initiative working to address this disparity is Path to Scale, which aims to secure the land and resource rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples so that over 50% of forestland owned or designated for use by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in low- and middle-income countries[6].

During COP30, a group of rainforest countries and supporters committed to ensuring better protection of 160 million hectares of IP and LCs lands as part of the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment (ITLC). This includes 63 million hectares in Brazil, 50 million hectares in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and 29 million hectares in Colombia. This initiative provides a good opportunity for making sure rights-based forest protection can both be instituted in more forest areas and implemented more effectively. Together with the renewed *Forest and Land Tenure pledge* of $1.8 billion (also launched at COP 30) this Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment is a positive step forward for supporting rights and reducing deforestation, while involving the IPs and LCs in the decision making.

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[4] https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-026-10456-0

[5] https://gfr.wri.org/social-governance-issues-indicators/indigenous-community-forests; https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/fee.2148?ref=blog.aspiration.com; and https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Who-Owns-the-Worlds-Land_Final-EN.pdf

[6] https://www.pathtoscale.org/targets

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Despite these efforts, tenure rights and forest management by Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities continue to receive only a small share of climate-related philanthropy and official development assistance (ODA). This share has grown in recent years but remains below one percent. RFN's 2021 Falling Short report found that, between 2011 and 2020, just 0.74 percent of the equivalent climate ODA was directed to Indigenous Peoples and local communities' tenure and forest management in tropical countries. This share reached 0.91 percent between 2019 and 2023, however the most recent analysis cautions that reduced development aid, particularly the closure of USAID, will have a significant impact on funding for land tenure.[7]

Recommendations

- Recognition of land rights is fundamental but not sufficient alone. The roadmap should detail ways governments should support locally-led management and protection of indigenous territories and community managed lands. On top of clear land rights, communities need recognition and real opportunities to enact on them, including participation, recognition of traditional knowledge, protection from threats and illegalities, and financial support to govern areas, improving livelihoods based on sustainable use of forest resources and implement their role as forest guardians.
- The roadmap should call on governments to improve their accountability and transparency towards Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities regarding financial support to realize their rights. This includes public authorities and private donors who provide financial support, including through the COP30 Forest and Land Tenure Pledge and the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment. Tracking tools like the Path to Scale Funding Dashboard[8], which opens access to all publicly available funding data on IP, LC, and ADP tenure rights projects since 2011, can help improve transparency and accountability. However public and private donors can and should improve their own transparency on financial support for Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants and local communities.

Barrier 3: Lack of Finance for Standing Tropical Rainforests

UNEP's 2025 State of Forest Finance (SFF) report found that to achieve the Rio Convention targets related to climate change, biodiversity and land degradation, annual forest investments need to more than triple from US$ 84 billion in 2023 to US$ 300 billion per year by 2030 and reach US$ 498 billion per year by 2050. The forest finance gap that needs to be closed with both public and private sources of capital between now and 2030 is estimated at US $216 billion per year.[9] The report also finds that this burden impacts tropical rainforest countries in particular, which spend far more on conserving their forests than they receive in ODA. In 2023, 22 rainforest countries spent on average 36 times more than the external support they received, highlighting a structural imbalance and the critical role of domestic public finance in forest-rich countries.

The support rainforest countries do receive comes through a variety of mechanisms, each with differing monitoring and verification schemes, governance processes, and reporting requirements. For example, jurisdictional REDD+, bilateral and multilateral aid, and philanthropic initiatives support countries and communities that are facing active threats to tropical forest ecosystems. However, even combined, these mechanisms provide insufficient economic incentives to counter competing economic interests.

[7] https://www.regnskog.no/uploads/documents/2025-State-of-Funding_final.pdf
[8] https://dashboard.pathtoscale.org/
[9] https://wedocs.unep.org/items/ac9bd3a0-f0d5-4e6b-9970-ed7156182055

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Recognizing the slow pace of tropical forest financing, ahead of COP30 34 countries under the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership (FCLP) launched a Forest Finance Roadmap[10], outlining six priority actions. These are:

- Establishing innovative financial mechanisms and the Tropical Forests Forever Facility,
- Expanding demand for high-integrity jurisdictional forest credits,
- Accelerating the forest bioeconomy,
- Redirecting supply-chain finance,
- Aligning fiscal policies, and
- Leveraging sovereign-debt instruments to reward forest resilience.

The Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) was launched at COP30, and aims to fill a critical gap in existing schemes by providing incentives for long-term conservation of tropical forests, including large and intact forest areas that are not yet under immediate pressure from deforestation. The TFFF differs from existing mechanisms in that rainforest countries will receive support based on the amount of standing forest, rather than reduced carbon emissions from deforestation, combined with a sharp reduction in support for each hectare that is either deforested or degraded. By providing support based on all rainforests in a country, and not just those under direct deforestation pressure, TFFF complements existing mechanisms such as REDD+ and gives countries the incentives to preserve intact rainforest areas – areas that contribute to major global and local ecosystem services.

At the same time, harmful financial flows continue to undermine forest conservation efforts. Private financial institutions provided US$ 8.9 trillion in active financing to companies with the highest deforestation risk as of November 2024 (Global Canopy 2025) and environmentally harmful agricultural subsidies reached approximately US$ 406 billion in 2023, according to the SFF. The Convention on Biological Diversity's Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework recognized the need for addressing harmful subsidies in establishing its Target 18, which commits countries to reduce harmful subsidies by at least US$ 500 billion per year and ensure that incentives, including public and private economic and regulatory incentives, are either positive or neutral for biodiversity. In addition, efforts to increase finance for standing forests should be complemented by measures to address the market and financial drivers of deforestation. Global commodity supply chains continue to create incentives for forest conversion, while weak transparency and traceability can obscure deforestation risks.

Articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, as well as the voluntary carbon markets, can provide financial incentives for tropical forest conservation, but should be seen as a part of a broader set of financial incentives that together help tip the scale in favor of maintaining forests. High integrity jurisdictional REDD+ has the greatest potential to provide incentives for governments to reform and implement more ambitious policies and regulation, and through that contribute to curbing deforestation at scale. It should therefore be prioritized by buyers and regulators, but not used to offset or delay reductions of emissions. To ensure high integrity jurisdictional credits, having full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and complying with all the Cancun Safeguards is essential.[11] This can be achieved by implementing international standards like ART's TREES in an ambitious way, which can add ambition to the Paris Agreement and help increase global climate action in tropical forest countries.[12]

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[10] https://forestclimateleaders.org/news-and-resources/34-governments-the-forest-finance-roadmap-for-action/

[11] https://www.un-redd.org/glossary/cancun-safeguards

[12] https://www.artredd.org/trees-3-0/

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Recommendations

- The roadmap should recognize the size of the forest finance gap, and urge all governments, both developed and developing countries, to act fast to close this gap. The Forest Finance Roadmap for Action launched by 34 governments at COP30 should be taken as a starting point to develop joint policies and processes to close this gap.
- A global roadmap should identify, and encourage, government contributions for the Tropical Forest Forever Facility as part of a comprehensive tropical forest financing architecture.
- The roadmap should include a call to substantially increase the dedicated funding to secure land tenure for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This should include financial support to ensure IP&LC participation in, and the social integrity of, jurisdictional REDD+ programs.
- The roadmap should account for the market drivers of deforestation and call for strengthened due diligence, transparency, and traceability across forest-risk supply chains to reduce these pressures and ensure that economic incentives increasingly reward forest conservation rather than forest loss.
- The roadmap should highlight the importance of reforming harmful subsidies, in line with Target 18 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, which aims to reduce harmful incentives by at least $500 billion per year, and suggest concrete steps for countries to advance towards reaching this target.