Entity name:	Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC)
Date of submission:	November 15, 2019

Format for United Nations Forum on Forests regional/sub-regional partners reporting on progress towards the implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and the United Nations Forest Instrument

1. The format is structured around the global forest goals and targets of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030.
2. While considering the word limits, regional and sub-regional entities are invited to provide as much detail as possible in their answers, including regarding figures and deadlines, if applicable.
3. The year 2015 is used as a baseline.
4. Where possible, all terms used herein are consistent with the terms and definitions used by the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment.
5. Wherever possible, please indicate the source of information or provide a weblink.

Please submit the completed format to: unff@un.org with cc: tavora-jainchill@un.org by 15 November 2019.

General Information

Information on Entity

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Membership:	
Mandate:	Regional

Entity's focal point

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Global forest goal 1 and associated targets[1]

Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change

Associated targets

1.1 Forest area is increased by 3 per cent worldwide[2]

1.2 The world's forest carbon stocks are maintained or enhanced

1.3 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

1.4 The resilience and adaptive capacity of all types of forests to natural disasters and the impact of climate change is significantly strengthened worldwide

Questions on goal 1

(a) Since 2015,[3] what types of action have been taken by your entity to support Member States to advance or contribute to the achievement of targets 1.1–1.4?

Please indicate to which targets the actions relate and briefly describe the results to date, if applicable, (in a maximum of 250 words). For each action, please indicate whether it is continuous, planned, in progress or completed.

(i) Legislative and policy actions

List of actions:

- Consultations and workshops on significant forestry policies across the Greater Mekong region (**Target 1.1; 1.3**; continuous).

Description of actions:

- RECOFTC has worked with governments across the region to improve policies (see Global Forest Goal 5 text) related to sustainable forest management.
    - RECOFTC Viet Nam worked with stakeholders on the replacement of Circular 38 on sustainable forest management.
    - RECOFTC Myanmar took part in consultations to revise the 1995 Community Forestry Instruction in 2016, creating the legal foundations for community forestry members to commercially benefit from their forests.
    - RECOFTC Thailand organised committees to discuss the recent forestry laws and raise public awareness of their impact on local communities.

[1] Goal 1 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, targets 6.6, 12.2, 13.1, 13.3, 14.2, 15.1–15.4 and 15.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 7, 9, 11, 14 and 15, and are supported by paragraphs 6 (o) and 7 (d) and (e) of the United Nations forest instrument.
[2] Based on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015.
[3] Or earlier, where relevant to capturing important action. The same applies hereafter.

(ii) Institutional actions (actions to advance implementation of SFM)

List of actions:

- Scaling-up Community Forestry in Myanmar (SUComFor) project (**Target 1.1**; *completed*).
- FLOURISH project (**Target 1.1**; *continuous*).
- RECOFTC development capacity training on forest landscape restoration (**Target 1.1; 1.2; 1.3**; continuous).

Description of actions:

- The SUComFor project helped the government of Myanmar transfer 19,000 hectares of forests to 94 villages.
- The FLOURISH project has supported local government in Lao PDR to issue teak certificates and promote commercial plantations.
- RECOFTC trainings — on tenure rights, community-based enterprises and learning exchanges on policy — have improved the capacities of stakeholders to sustainably manage their forests.
    - The capacity development programme on forest landscape restoration included trainings (and a training manual), research and awareness raising to ensure that if forests are to be restored, the principles of forest landscape restoration are followed.

(iii) Financial actions

List of actions:

- Community Forestry Credit Scheme (**Target 1.1; 1.3; 1.4**; *continuous*).
- Green Value Tool (**Target 1.1; 1.3**; *continuous*).

Description of actions:

- RECOFTC Cambodia has piloted and expanded a community-led credit scheme that provides communities with a sustainable source of income to manage their community forests.
- In Indonesia, Thailand and Lao PDR, RECOFTC is piloting the Green Value Tool to help communities understand their financial viability when pursuing community-based enterprises.

(iv) Technical and scientific actions

List of actions:

- Management plan and better forest management under community forestry (**Target 1.1; 1.3,** *continuous*)
- Demonstration of community forestry-based climate adaptation (**Target 1.1; 1.4; 2.5,** *continuous*).

Description of actions:

- RECOFTC supported communities and government agencies to develop community forest management plans and sustainable management of about 30,000 hectares of forest in seven countries in the region. This included 21,435 hectares in Myanmar through the SUComFor project.

- In Nepal and Myanmar, RECOFTC supported local community forests to conduct climate vulnerability assessments, and identify and implement priority actions. Local communities were supported to plant about a million seedlings on nearly 3,000 hectares of land.

    - Myanmar: In Pyar Pon Township of Ayeyarwady Region, 585,000 mangrove seedlings were planted on 1,500 hectares in 2017, and 225,000 mangrove seedlings on 600 hectares in 2018.

    - Nepal: RECOFTC introduced a program linking afforestation / reforestation with bee-keeping. Communities in Sarlahi planted more than 12,000 seedlings of Indian butter tree on more than 50 hectares to increase forest cover, carbon stocks and forage areas for bees. Another 100,000 seedlings are due to be planted on more than 200 hectares in 2020.

(b) How do the actions listed above support Member States in the implementation of the United Nations forest instrument?

Members States acknowledge the actions listed above through ASEAN, the UNFCCC (NDCs) and directly to UNFF through national level reporting.

(c) What are the main challenges in supporting Member States in achieving goal 1 in your region?

Most countries (Viet Nam is an exception) lack real political commitment to afforestation/reforestation. The focus is on economic development, often at the cost of forests and the environment. This is exacerbated by limited capacity of state institutions in afforestation/reforestation in the modern context. Most of the countries have forest cover targets but lack programmes to support achievement of these targets. While the legal environment is strengthening, the main issue is implementation (see paper here).

(d) Any additional comments on goal 1:

None

Global forest goal 2 and associated targets[4]

Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people

Associated targets

2.1 Extreme poverty for all forest-dependent people is eradicated

2.2 Increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets

2.3 The contribution of forests and trees to food security is significantly increased

2.4 The contribution of forest industry, other forest-based enterprises and forest ecosystem services to social, economic and environmental development, among other things, is significantly increased

2.5 The contribution of all types of forests to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation is enhanced, taking into account the mandates and ongoing work of relevant conventions and instruments

Questions on goal 2

(a) Since 2015, what types of action have been taken by your entity to support Member States to advance or contribute to the achievement of targets 2.1–2.5?

Please indicate to which targets the actions relate and briefly describe the results to date if applicable (in a maximum of 250 words). For each action, please indicate whether it is continuous, planned, in progress or completed.

(i) Legislative and policy actions

List of actions:

- Supporting company-community partnerships (timber plantation) in Lao PDR with the FLOURISH project (**Target 2.4**; *ongoing*).
- Supporting non-state actors in Lao PDR and Thailand in FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations with the European Union, and associated legal reforms (in conjunction with tenure reform programs) (**Target 2.4**; *ongoing*).
- Supporting legal reforms in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region to support livelihood development through community forestry (**Targets 2.1** and **2.2**; *ongoing*).

Description of actions:

- RECOFTC has provided capacity development support (i.e. on free prior informed consent; facilitation skills) to staff of two companies in Lao PDR to improve their community engagement skills and promote better collaboration and communication. RECOFTC is also a member of the Lao Planted Forest Products Group, an initiative of plantation companies and NGOs that aims to contribute to the sustainable development of a commercially-viable tree plantation and wood industry sector.

- Developing capacities of small-scale timber operators to comply with the supply chain controls and timber legality assurance system being developed in Thailand, through its FLEGT-VPA

[4] Goal 2 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, targets 1.1, 1.4, 2.4, 4.4, 5.a, 6.6, 8.3, 9.3, 12.2, 12.5, 15.6 and 15.c of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 4, 14 and 18, and are supported by paragraphs 6 (d)–(f), (h), (j), (p), (q), (t)–(v) and (y) and 7 (k) of the United Nations forest instrument.

programme. One example, is work to record geolocated smallholder trees in a database so as to help smallholders (over 500 to date) to plan future harvesting regimes.

- Another objective of RECOFTC's work on FLEGT is to ensure that VPAs recognise small and medium enterprises — including community-based ones — as sources of timber / wood products (for example, in VPA legality definitions).

- With a lack of experience in ASEAN on partnership-building between communities and the private sector in the forestry sector, the RECOFTC-supported — through the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change — Community Forestry Instructions (2016, 2019) highlight the importance of preparing communities for commercial opportunities from their forests in Myanmar.

- A recent example of RECOFTC's support to legal reforms on community forestry is in Myanmar, including revision of the Community Forestry Instruction (2016) supporting the commercialisation of community forestry (moving it beyond meeting subsistence needs).

(ii) Institutional actions (actions to advance implementation of SFM)

List of actions:

- Community based enterprise development in Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia (**Target 2.2**; *continuous*).
- Community based enterprise-private sector partnership in Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Viet Nam (**Target 2.4**; *continuous*).
- Private sector (timber plantation) engagement in Lao PDR (**Target 2.4**; *continuous*).

Description of actions:

- Community based enterprise development: Through training, participatory value-chain research, stakeholder events and business plan development, the communities managing community forests, communal forest areas, agroforestry and smallholder plantation areas have better understanding about value chains and are acting to improve their position in them.

    - Examples include the Akar Tani coffee cooperative in Indonesia, which developed a business plan to trade both green and roasted coffee beans. Other examples are in Myanmar (rattan, bamboo), Thailand (non-timber forest products, teak) and Cambodia (bamboo).

- RECOFTC's FLOURISH project is helping to build market links and develop agreements between the private sector and communities / smallholders. RECOFTC supports communities to ensure they can improve their wellbeing through, among other things, better accessing market/product information and gaining negotiation skills to agree on product prices. Examples are:

    - Community based rattan enterprises in Rakhine, Myanmar have agreed to supply two types of semi-processed rattan canes to the Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Enterprise Association (gaining 15,000 USD in the first year).

    - Teak smallholders from two villages in Bokeo province in Lao PDR are trading a range of log sizes with a sawmill that can process smaller diameter logs into finger-

joint products.

(iii) Financial actions

List of actions:

Description of actions:

(iv) Technical and scientific actions

List of actions:

- RECOFTC is working with various partners to strengthen the support that community forestry and agroforestry can provide food security and climate change adaptation. (**Target 2.3; 2.4; 2.5**; *continuous*).

Description of actions:

- RECOFTC Nepal assessed a women-led community forest's vulnerability to climate change and adaptive capacity. Interventions were then implemented with the work being scaled-up throughout the region.

(b) What other action is being taken by your entity in support Member States to achieve goal 2?

(c) How does the action listed above support Member States in the implementation of the United Nations forest instrument?

(d) What are the main challenges in supporting Member States in achieving goal 2 in your region?

- Communities are getting tenure to their forests, but struggle to invest time and money in them because of:
    - Limited access to capital and labour.
    - Regulations that prohibit communities from making a living from timber from their forests.
    - Limited infrastructure, including market access, to support livelihood development.
    - Limited capacity among community members to develop livelihoods and enterprises (e.g. business planning; preparing loan applications; managing labour; technology).
    - Limited support from civil society organisations and local government once communities get tenure.

- Governments are target-driven in terms of the area of community forests but are failing to

ensure that these forests, once established, are meeting economic, environmental and social objectives.

- Lack of data, research and knowledge management on the status and impacts of community forests.
- Societal challenges — such as weak rights for women and other marginalised groups — often play out in decision-making and benefit-sharing at the community forest level.
- Despite recent progress, there are still inconsistencies in the legal and institutional environment. The lack of coordination between government offices is leading to missed opportunities. For instance, if a community wishes to establish a community forest enterprise or a climate change adaptation strategy needs inter-ministerial approvals.
- There are opportunities for learning, and a need for collaboration in addressing common problems across the region. The value includes providing input into ASEAN-level initiatives cutting across the land use sectors, addressing issues linked to community forests, including climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Capacity gaps hinder stakeholders — including government, private sector and local communities themselves — from the landscape to national and regional (i.e. ASEAN) levels.

Any additional comments on goal 2:

None

Global forest goal 3 and associated targets[5]

Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests

Associated targets

3.1 The area of forests worldwide designated as protected areas or conserved through other effective area-based conservation measures is significantly increased

3.2 The area of forests under long-term forest management plans is significantly increased

3.3 The proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests is significantly increased

Questions on goal 3

(a) Since 2015, what types of action have been taken by your entity to support Member States to advance or contribute to the achievement of targets 3.1–3.3?

Please indicate to which targets the actions relate and briefly describe the results to date if applicable, (in a maximum of 250 words). For each action, please indicate whether it is continuous, planned, in progress or completed.

(i) Legislative and policy actions

List of actions:

- National Working Groups (**Target 3.2**; *ongoing).*
- Social forestry policy framework development (**Target 3.2**; *ongoing*).

Description of actions:

- RECOFTC's ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) project supports the ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry, which is an intergovernmental network endorsed by ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry. ASFCC facilitates national working groups to better incorporate social forestry principles in ASEAN forestry policies. ASFCC also hosts learning exchanges and trainings to increase the capacities of government officials working on issues of social forestry in the region.

(ii) Institutional actions (actions to advance implementation of SFM)

List of actions:

- Learning exchanges between ASEAN governments (**Target 3.1**; *ongoing*).
- Forest management plan development (**Target 3.2**; *ongoing*).
- RECOFTC capacity development programme on Market Analysis and Development (Target **3.3**; *continuous*).

Description of actions:

[5] Goal 3 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, targets 7.2, 12.2, 12.6, 12.7, 14.2, 14.5, 15.2 and 15.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 7, 11, 12 and 16, and are supported by paragraphs 6 (p), (q) and (x) and 7 (f) and (g) of the United Nations forest instrument.

- Under the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) project, RECOFTC brought six Malaysian forestry officials to Thailand to learn about its recent policies on national parks and community forests.

- RECOFTC is working with forest communities, and relevant government staff throughout the region to ensure they have appropriate forest management plans in place. This includes work in Myanmar, where RECOFTC is working with the Forest Department to develop a forest management plan template and ensure the system for developing, implementing and monitoring the plans is in place.

- Through the programme on Market Analysis and Development, RECOFTC and its partners are working with forest communities throughout the region to ensure that communities can sustainably manage and benefit from their forests.

(iii) Financial actions

List of actions:

- Sedge-based handicrafts financial viability research (**Target 3.3**; *continuous*).
- Teak plantation timber financial viability research (**Target 3.3**; *continuous*).

Description of actions:

- Participatory research into the financial viability of sedge-based handicrafts and teak plantation timber developed by smallholders/communities took place in Thailand (peat swamp) and in Lao PDR (teak plantations).

- The research explored potential ways to improve supply chain operations, including through allocation of labour, technology and finance, and by selecting viable products.

(iv) Technical and scientific actions

List of actions:

- Training on Teak finger-joint products (Lao PDR) (**Target 3.3**; *continuous*).
- Connecting communities and companies to produce Bamboo slats (Cambodia) (**Target 3.3**; *completed*).
- Developing networks for Rattan canes (Myanmar) (**Target 3.3**; *continuous*).

Description of actions:

- Lao PDR: Linking 500 teak smallholders selling thinned tree materials (and thus sustainably / productively managing their plantations) with a local sawmill that produces small diameter timber components using finger-jointing technology adds value to the timber while providing new markets.

- Cambodia: Linking three bamboo communities (27 members) in Keo Seima district, Mondulkiri province with 2-3 local private companies. RECOFTC support to commercialise their resources

was through community forest management and business plans. These groups lack previous experience in dealing with private sector and are only at the early stages of trading forest products.

- Myanmar: See answers for Global Forest Goal 2.

(b) What other action is being taken your entity in support Member States to achieve goal 3?

RECOFTC, IUCN and FAO organised a regional stakeholder dialogue on financing forest landscape restoration among governments, private sector/investors and nongovernmental organisations from across the ASEAN region. The event provided a platform to better understand how forest landscape restoration is regarded and what roles each actor plays, and to discuss challenges and opportunities for expanding financing for forest landscape restoration. Governments were able to discuss their national restoration targets with investors and timber-growing companies.

(c) How does the action listed above support Member States in the implementation of the United Nations forest instrument?

Creating a better understanding of the different reasons why governments, communities or businesses engage in forest landscape restoration is important for developing partnerships. Such restoration might be limited in places where investments are at risk because of an uncertain enabling environment. By emphasising a landscape approach and an inclusive participatory process, governments can develop restoration programmes that will attract greater investments, as well as ensuring that local communities benefit equally and adequately.

Community forestry can be an effective vehicle to mainstream forest landscape restoration, because it includes:

- Improved governance and tenure
- Increased carbon stocks through better forest landscape management
- Strong platforms for achieving restoration targets
- Increased opportunity for livelihood improvement.

Community forestry can therefore be valuable to attract sustainable investments, especially considering its risk-management attributes. More, however, needs to be done to ensure that community forestry can deliver for sustainably-managed landscapes, including for successful forest landscape restoration.

(d) What are the main challenges in supporting Member States in achieving goal 3 in your region?

- **Scale:** Most investors are attracted to large-scale investments, while many sustainable projects are smaller in scope.
- **Time frame:** Achieving an attractive return on a sustainable investment can take many years, sometimes far longer than might be the case for other private sector investments.
- **Governance and management:** Investing in sustainable projects often involves dealing with burdensome government bureaucracy, which absorbs resources.
- **Risk:** Sustainable projects bring their own complex risks for investors, for example: a lack of clarity regarding the land tenure of local communities could create conflict, delays and costs.

A recent policy brief summarises the governance challenges and opportunities facing forest landscapes in the five countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion, and puts forward a programme to address these by strengthening the role of non-state actors.

(e) Any additional comments on goal 3:

Global forest goal 4 and associated targets[6]

Mobilize significantly increased, new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and strengthen scientific and technical cooperation and partnerships

Associated targets

4.1 Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

4.2 Forest-related financing from all sources at all levels, including public (national, bilateral, multilateral and triangular), private and philanthropic financing, is significantly increased

4.3 North-South, South-South, North-North and triangular cooperation and public-private partnerships on science, technology and innovation in the forest sector are significantly enhanced and increased

4.4 The number of countries that have developed and implemented forest financing strategies and have access to financing from all sources is significantly increased

4.5 The collection, availability and accessibility of forest-related information is improved through, for example, multidisciplinary scientific assessments

Questions on goal 4

(a) Please describe major actions taken in your region to move towards goal 4 and its associated targets. More detailed information on actions for each target may be supplied below.

Progress towards targets 4.1 and 4.2

RECOFTC secured core funds from Sweden (2018-2021) and Switzerland (2018-2023) that will be mobilized to support forestry related activities and the implementation of RECOFTC's strategic plan.

(b) Since 2015, has your entity been able to mobilize significantly increased financial resources to support Member States in the implementation of sustainable forest management?

✓ Yes

[6] Goal 4 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, targets 12.a, 15.7, 15.a, 15.b, 17.1–17.3, 17.6, 17.7 and 17.16 -17.19 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Target 19, and are supported by paragraphs 6 (h), (i), (m), (r) and (s) and 7 (a)–(c) and (l)–(q) of the United Nations forest instrument.

Please describe the main challenges in mobilizing funds in a maximum of 250 words:

- Shifts in global agenda of core donors (change in government direction in terms of country-specific development agenda)
- Shifts in national agenda of member countries (change in national development priorities and local administrative rules and operation)
- Shift in development agenda of traditional funders.

Progress towards target 4.3

(c) Please specify the actors/stakeholders with which your entity is cooperating:

✓ Governments

✓ Intergovernmental organizations/processes

✓ Private sector

✓ Non-governmental organizations

✓ Other (please specify): Youth and students. Women-led groups.

Types of cooperation:

✓ North-South

✓ South-South

× North-North

✓ Triangular

✓ Technical

× Financial

× Other (please specify):

Areas of cooperation:

✓ Forests and climate change

✓ Forest biodiversity

✓ Valuation of the ecosystem services provided by forests

✓ Socioeconomic issues, including livelihoods

✓ Forest degradation and rehabilitation

✓ Scientific cooperation*

✓ Forest monitoring/data collection

✓ Technology transfer and capacity development

✓ Production of timber or non-timber products

× Other (please specify):

* **Note**: UNFF looks at both natural and social science cooperation. RECOFTC does this at three levels:

- Institutional: Contract partner, or holder of an institutional partnership agreement, with CIFOR and IUFRO.
- Collaborative: With science agencies such as GISTDA, or scientific journal publishers (i.e. RECOFTC co-authored articles).
- Community or project intervention: i.e., testing new technology for forest management; non-timber forest

products; social enterprise; capacity building.

Progress towards target 4.4

(d) Since 2015, has your entity supported Member States in developing or implementing financing strategies to achieve sustainable forest management and to implement the United Nations forest instrument?

✓ Yes

Comments if needed:

None.

Global forest goal 5 and associated targets[7]

Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management, including through the United Nations forest instrument, and enhance the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Associated targets

5.1 Number of countries that have integrated forests into their national sustainable development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies is significantly increased

5.2 Forest law enforcement and governance are enhanced, including through significantly strengthening national and subnational forest authorities, and illegal logging and associated trade are significantly reduced worldwide

5.3 National and subnational forest-related policies and programmes are coherent, coordinated and complementary across ministries, departments and authorities, consistent with national laws, and engage relevant stakeholders, local communities and indigenous peoples, fully recognizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

5.4 Forest-related issues and the forest sector are fully integrated into decision-making processes concerning land use planning and development

Questions on goal 5

(a) Please describe major actions taken in your region to move towards goal 5 and its associated targets. More detailed information on actions for each target may be supplied below.

Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements between timber-exporting countries and the European Union (EU) Indonesia ratified its VPA in 2014 and began issuing FLEGT licences to verified legal timber exported to the EU in November 2015. Viet Nam is now implementing its VPA, having ratified it in 2019, following negotiations that began in 2010. Lao PDR and Thailand each began negotiating a VPA with the EU in 2017. Myanmar is exploring the potential of a VPA and is engaged in in-country consensus building. Myanmar, Lao PDR and Thailand are already working to develop systems to control and verify the legality of timber and timber products. See RECOFTC's handbook on FLEGT in the Mekong region.

[7] Goal 5 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement, among other things, of targets 1.4, 2.4, 5.a, 15.9, 15.c, 16.3, 16.5–16.7, 16.10 and 17.14 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2 and 3, and are supported by paragraphs 6 (a), (c), (k), (l), (n) and (w) and 7 (c) and (h)–(j) of the United Nations forest instrument.

Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+)
Many countries in the region are making progress on REDD+ (see Table 6.3 on page 139 of the FAO Forest Futures report; FAO 2019). All of the following have completed or are developing a national REDD+ strategy and a national forest monitoring system: Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Lao PDR; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Vanuatu and Viet Nam. All except the Philippines and Vanuatu has prepare forest reference levels / forest reference emissions levels. All except Bangladesh, India, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vanuatu have a REDD+ safeguards information system.

Paris Agreement on Climate Change
Many of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region have included in their Nationally-Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement either agriculture (85%) or land use, land use change and forestry (90%). See FAO's 2019 (forthcoming) *Regional Analysis of the Nationally Determined Contributions of Asia*.

Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)
The EITI is the global standard to promote open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources. It has made limited progress in the region (see here for EITI countries) but is showing clear potential to support efforts not only to address drivers of deforestation from extractive industries, but also to strengthen transparency around illegal logging.

Community Forestry
National community forestry programmes are being implemented across South East Asia, with one of the key objectives being to eradicate rural poverty. Many ASEAN Member States are also placing further emphasis on small and medium enterprises. Community forestry — also known as social forestry, village forestry, community-based forestry and community based forest management — has developed significantly in nearly all the ASEAN Member States in terms of area (see Table), objectives and impacts. The legal foundations for community forestry have improved across the region. A key change is the move towards supporting livelihood and enterprise development through communities having tenure to their forests:

- Cambodia: Cambodia is amending its Forestry and Protected Area Laws, providing space for advocacy for the role of community forestry in forest governance. The new Production Forest Strategic Plan (2018-32) aims to strengthen community forestry and support production of timber and non-timber forest products. Community forests will therefore become a major legal source of timber and other products. The government is also developing the Environment and Natural Resources Code, which will strengthen the legal foundations for community-based natural resource management, including community forestry.

- Indonesia: Social forestry has developed in recent years, including through Decree 180 on the Indicative Map of Forest Land Allocation for TORA (agrarian reform). The Map presents 4.8 million hectares of the State Forest Estate that could be reallocated for TORA. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry Regulation (83/2016) on Social Forestry is also significant as it aims to make more efficient the procedures for communities to get tenure.

- Lao PDR: The National Assembly revised the regulatory framework for community forestry (Village Forestry) in June 2019 by passing the Forest Law and the Land Law. The revised Forest Strategy 2020 (2030) sets a new target for the number of villages with a Village Forestry Management Plan. Village Forestry is also embedded in the National FLEGT-VPA and REDD+ Strategy.

- Myanmar: The Forest Law (2018) helped to embed community forestry in various national programs. This has its foundations in the Land Use Policy (2016), which was a key step in the recognition of customary land use practices. Community forestry has moved from meeting subsistence and forest protection needs (Community Forestry Instructions (CFI) 1995), to supporting livelihoods and

enterprise development (CFI revisions in 2016, 2019). The government has formalised this not only in law, but also in strategies and other initiatives (e.g. Community Forestry Strategy (2018-2020); the Myanmar Climate Change Master Plan (2018–2030); Myanmar Reforestation and Rehabilitation Program (2017-2027), and the ongoing revision of Forest Rules). There is now a national target of 919,000 hectares of community forestry by 2030, up from 249,035 hectares currently.

- Thailand: The Community Forestry Bill passed the National Legislative Assembly in February 2019. It allows people living in forests outside of conservation areas to use and manage these forests.

- Viet Nam: The revised Forest Law (2017) acknowledges the full rights of households and communities as forest owners over their planted production on forests. It expands the scope of the Forest Law beyond forest management, protection, development and use, to include forest product processing and commerce. The importance of community forestry for strengthening forest governance includes the devolution of decision making to local communities for the management of their forests.

Progress towards target 5.2

(b) Since 2015, has your entity supported Member States in promoting or participating in National/Regional/Sub-Regional initiatives to prevent and reduce illegal international trafficking in forest products, wildlife and other biological resources?

✓ Yes

Comments if needed:

Using Cambodia as an example, RECOFTC works on reforming forest policy and associated land use laws. Cambodia's Draft Environment and Natural Resources Code will focus on collaborative management as a mechanism for land and natural resources management and local livelihood development. The Code will allow national and sub-national authorities and local communities to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the sustainable use, management, and protection of natural resources and biodiversity.

RECOFTC supports networks of civil society organisations (CSOs) focused on the EU's FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) initiative to address illegal logging and associated trade. The FLEGT CSO Networks in Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam are important because of the formal role that CSOs play in FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement processes. CSOs can use these processes — including through the FLEGT CSO Networks — to ensure, for example, that the VPA definition of legal timber includes compliance with laws relating to issues such as workers' rights, biodiversity conservation, benefit-sharing with communities and land rights. They can also use the process to highlight areas where laws and their enforcement are inadequate.

RECOFTC is investing a great deal to ensure that CSOs have the capacities (knowledge, skills and attitudes) to contribute to FLEGT/VPA processes. One key project is the EU-funded Voices for Mekong Forests (V4MF) project. The overall objective of the five-year (2017-2021) project is that by 2021, empowered and networked non-state actors in the countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion can assess, monitor and respond appropriately to strengthen forest governance, particularly in FLEGT-VPA and REDD+, and effectively engage in policy processes.

RECOFTC, working with various international (e.g. WWF, NEPCon, East West Management Institute) and national CSOs, conducted an assessment of forest governance in the Greater Mekong Subregion (findings here and linked policy brief here). Based on this the project team designed a capacity development programme to strengthen the voices of non-state actors in forest governance.

Global forest goal 6 and associated targets[8]

Enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the United Nations system and across member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, as well as across sectors and relevant stakeholders

Note: targets 6.1 and 6.2 are not included in this section of the reporting format as they address actions taken by the international community, and not those taken at the national level

Associated targets

6.3 Cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation to promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation and forest degradation are significantly enhanced at all levels

6.4 A greater common understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management is achieved and an associated set of indicators is identified

6.5 The input and involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic plan and in the work of the Forum, including intersessional work, is strengthened

Questions on goal 6

(a) Please describe major actions taken in your region to move towards goal 6 and its associated targets. More detailed information on actions for each target may be supplied below.

ASEAN

- Strategic Plan of Action for ASEAN cooperation on Forestry (2016-2025).
- ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry Towards Food Security.
- ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme (2018).
- See here for more information for ASEAN level cooperation.

Other

- Five-Year Plan of Action on Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (2018-2022) — this includes China as well as Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, and includes collaboration on forestry.

Progress towards target 6.3 (cross-sectorial coordination and cooperation)

(b) Please describe major actions taken in your region to regarding cross-sectorial coordination and cooperation to promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation and forest degradation.

The ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) supports the ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry (AWG-SF), which is an intergovernmental network endorsed by ASEAN Senior Officials in Forestry (ASOF). Through consultation with Member States, the ASFCC partnership works with multiple sectors to integrate social forestry approaches into ASEAN and Member State strategies and increase the socio-economic benefits derived from social forestry.

[8] Goal 6 and its targets support and contribute to the achievement of, among other things, target 17.14 of the Sustainable Development Goals and are supported by paragraphs 6 (b), (c), (g), (m) and (w) and 7 (r) and (s) of the United Nations forest instrument.

Progress towards target 6.4 (criteria and indicators)

(c) Are there criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management used by your entity?

✓ Yes

If yes, please specify which sets are used:

RECOFTC has been working with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the International Tropical Timber Organization and academic institutions to review the impact of the criteria and indicators (C&I) for monitoring, reporting and assessing sustainable forest management. Part of this research is examining the different understandings of sustainable forest management at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. Outputs include:

- 25 Years of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: How Intergovernmental C&I Processes Have Made a Difference (here).
- 25 Years of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: Why Some Intergovernmental C&I Processes Flourished While Others Faded (here).

RECOFTC also supports the ASEAN Secretariat's efforts to harmonise C&I for sustainable forest management across Southeast Asia. The latest (2017) ASEAN C&I for SFM are here.

For which of the following purposes are they used? (Multiple answers possible)

- ✓ To generate information for national reports on forest conditions and management
- ✓ To monitor and assess forest conditions and management
- ✓ To review and develop national forest policies and tools for sustainable forest management
- ✓ To communicate with society and carry out dialogue with stakeholders
- ✓ To report on forests to regional and international organizations (please specify):

Progress towards target 6.4 (communication and awareness)

(d) Since 2015, have actions been taken by your entity to communicate and promote a greater understanding and awareness of sustainable forest management?

✓ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify in a maximum of 250 words:

ASEAN

- Strategic Plan of Action for ASEAN cooperation on Forestry (2016-2025).
- ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry Towards Food Security.
- ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme (2018).
- See here for more information for ASEAN level cooperation.

Other

- Five-Year Plan of Action on Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (2018-2022) — this includes China as well as Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, and includes collaboration on forestry.

Progress towards target 6.5

(e) Have actions been taken by your entity to involve major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030?

✓ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify in a maximum of 250 words:

Please see above

Other questions

(a) Since 2015, has your entity taken action to support Member States in promoting gender equality in the forest sector?

✓ Yes

If yes, please indicate action taken regarding the following:

× Women's effective access to the control and use of forest resources
✓ Women's effective participation in decision-making at the household and community levels
✓ Women's effective participation and representation in forest management institutions
✓ Other

Please provide a brief description:

RECOFTC's WAVES (Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality) programme is strengthening the capacities of over 30 gender leaders in seven Asian countries who are leading efforts to make forest policies and practice gender-inclusive.

(b) What action has been taken by your entity in observance of the International Day of Forests?

× Cultural activities (for example, art, music, film and theatre)
✓ Educational activities (for example, workshops and symposiums)
× Media activities (for example, newspapers, magazines, television and radio)
× Social media activities
× Other

Please provide two to three examples and, if possible, a weblink or weblinks to relevant documentation:

1) Women in Sharlahi unite to protect their community 2) WAVES leaders pursue gender equality in Asia's forest landscapes 3) Youth discuss the future of the planet and what needs to be done

Success stories

Does your entity have any success stories relating to the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017– 2030? If so, please provide a brief description, with references (such as weblinks, publications and articles), showing how the action contributed to achieving the goals and targets and specifying which goals and targets are relevant. Please provide a maximum of three success stories.

Success story 1

Action taken:

RECOFTC connected teak smallholders with government and private sector to secure tenure rights, improve their livelihoods and sustainably manage their forests in Bokeo, Lao PDR.

Goals and targets addressed:

Goals 2 and 3

Outcome and results achieved:

Local communities were provided with teak certificates that secured their right to sustainably manage their forests. The action also improved the livelihoods of community members by providing them with the tools to use small-diameter teak.

For more information, watch the following video: https://www.recoftc.org/en/lao-pdr/projects/raft3-lao-pdr/stories/securing-our-future-story-teak-lao-pdr

Success story 2

Action taken:

RECOFTC hosted a regional training course to develop the capacities of non-governmental organizations and government staff to initiate tenure reform in their countries. This course is one of many RECOFTC training course that build the capacities of key stakeholders in community forestry across the Asia-Pacific region.

Goals and targets addressed:

Goals 5

Outcome and results achieved:
Participants from across Southeast Asia were better equipped to instigate tenure reform in their targeted countries and developed road maps for doing so.

For more information, read the following story: https://www.recoftc.org/news/government-and-ngo-staff-learn-how-tenure-rights-are-foundation-good-forest-governance