Nigeria
Striving to protect forest wildlife

Nigeria is one of ten African countries nestled in the Sahel belt — one of the world’s most vulnerable areas to climate change. Exacerbated by the desertification characteristic to this region, deforestation and forest degradation present some of the most gripping problems in Nigeria. Commercial and subsistence agriculture and unsustainable forestry activities account for major drivers, and together with fuel wood collection account for 87% of Nigeria’s total carbon emissions.

In 2007, former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo rallied the African Union to launch the Great Green Wall (GGW) Initiative: a collective effort to restore 100 million hectares of Sahelian land through sustainable practices such as farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR) and mass tree-planting. Supporting community-driven cultivation of drought-resistant tree seedlings and climate-resilient infrastructure for its farmers, Nigeria has reclaimed over 5 million hectares of its territory and created 20,000 green jobs through the GGW. Holding the presidency of the GGW initiative from 2021 to 2023, Nigeria is leading efforts to mobilize the US$14.3 billion recently pledged to it.

Beyond these land restoration endeavors, Nigeria is also highly focused on preserving its rich biodiversity. The country recently developed its first National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime (NSCFW; 2022-2026) to more holistically curb poaching and illegal trading in its remaining forests. Strengthened training and research capacity building are cornerstones of this strategy, aiming to upskill prosecutors and the judiciary on national laws related to wildlife crime; feed national research on key flora and fauna into wildlife crime strategies/law enforcement operations; and use community mapping to analyze key actors along the wildlife crime supply chain. With these and other comprehensive climate policies — alongside robust international support — Nigeria can reverse its historically high deforestation rate (400,000ha annually) and fulfill its plans to increase forest cover to a quarter of its landmass by 2050.

The sustenance of the nation’s biodiversity is a core priority of the Federal Government. [The Ministry] will support every effort at conservation and wildlife protection as we look forward to COP27, making sure that Africa presents a strong voice as we continue to work with other Ministers of Environment from Africa.

Chief Sharon Ikeazor
Nigeria’s Minister of State for Environment

**GOALS BY 2030**

- **Unconditional:** 20% reduction in GHG emissions
- **Conditional:** 45% reduction in GHG emissions
- **150.76MtCO₂** emissions reduction and enhanced removal targets
- **6.5MtCO₂e/year** forest sector contribution to NDCs
- **4M hectares** of land restored

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

A financing mechanism to facilitate the nation in meeting its NDC target, the federal government’s sovereign green bond project has funded the reforestation of over 6 million hectares since its inception in 2017. Nigeria has issued two green bonds to date (in 2017 and 2019), amounting to over $68 million, with strong sub-national and private sector participation.
LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Although Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa, multiple studies have confirmed the acute dependence of over 90% of the rural population on forests for their livelihoods. With 70% of rural Nigerian households meeting domestic and commercial energy needs through fuelwood consumption alone (most often for cooking), the government in 2021 established a committee to develop a national policy ensuring far greater access to cleaner cooking technologies and fuels such as liquefied petroleum gas.

A WEALTH OF BIODIVERSITY

A global biodiversity hotspot, Nigeria is endowed with a variety of ecological habitats ranging from coastal swamps, mangroves to montane and lowland forests in the south, to savannas and deserts in the north.

SPOTLIGHT: OMO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

One of the first biosphere reserves in Africa, Omo is home to the richest variety of butterflies on the continent as well as 100 of the country’s forest elephants. Given that it contains the largest remaining tract of primary forest in the country — as well as vital water for city dwellers nearby — green economy enterprises (i.e., snail, fish and grasscutter rearing), are underway to curb the encroachment of poachers into this ecologically vital territory.

In addition to the more recent NSCF, Nigeria’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2016-2020) also prioritized the adaptation of a national ecosystem-based spatial planning process, conducting trainings on data management and spatial analysis. This and other ongoing mechanisms could better preserve Nigeria’s endangered wildlife such as its yellow-casqued hornbills, elephants, chimpanzees, red-capped mangabeys and grey parrots.

EXPERIENCED IN REDD+

- In 2012, Nigeria received a $3.8 million grant from UNREDD after demonstrating REDD+ readiness in Cross River State (which contains 50% of Nigeria’s remaining tropical forests). Additional funding of $8.74 million from the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partner Facility (FCPF) readiness fund continued to scale up readiness activities to six additional states.

- As preliminary sites to implement the REDD+ program, these selected 7 states account for over 70% of Nigeria’s remaining forests. The REDD+ architecture aims to contribute at least 25% to achieving the country’s NDC targets by 2030.

SAFEGUARDED BY LEAF

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SUMMARY

GGW Stewardship

After initiating this initiative among fellow Sahelian countries, Nigeria will for two years lead this effort to address desertification and land degradation.

Biodiversity Conservation

Strengthening training and research capacity building are essential to Nigeria’s efforts to halt biodiversity loss.

Addressing Energy Poverty

The government has developed the first regional Energy Transition Plan in order to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.
Burkina Faso
Combating desertification through forestry

In this semi-arid country of Sahelian West Africa, savanna forests host irreplaceable wildlife and offer significant carbon sequestration potential. Within the context of effective forest and land governance, there is potential to reduce national emissions by up to 19 MtCO₂e per year if deforestation drivers such as poor farming practices, overexploitation of non-timber forest products, and a lack of financial resources are substantively mitigated.

In 2010, Burkina Faso was adopted as a pilot country in the Forest Investment Program (FIP) thanks to its high potential to significantly reduce emissions from deforestation; to conserve or enhance carbon stocks; and to incorporate climate finance into policy frameworks and development activities. Using FIP funds of up to $30 million, the country aspired to shift communities away from traditional forest exploitation — such as wood cutting for charcoal and towards small-scale and demonstrably successful climate-smart agricultural methods which involved making pits with compost to create pockets of fertility, stone bunds to slow rainwater runoff and erosion, and gardens of baobab trees whose leaves enrich diets. With the country having lost 47.5% of its forest cover between 1992 and 2014, Burkina Faso’s REDD+ process is expected to in the long-term contribute to better management of national forests and support all efforts to face climate change in the forestry sector.

On the UN’s list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), a large part of Burkina Faso’s population is recognized as vulnerable among the international community, particularly given its limited soil nutrients, low water-holding capacity, and Sahelian climate. In response, the country’s local communities have actively pursued forest and landscape restoration endeavors. Many private plantations are well-versed in Non-Timber Forest Products cultivation (NTFP) and collectively produced an estimated 9,525,000 seedlings annually — the majority of which were sold to the general population or the state — from 2002-2016.

Despite its difficult climatic context, Burkina Faso has been able to show, through the promotion of innovative and adapted solutions, that the fight against climate change is above all a question of determination and commitment of actors from all social strata.

Dr. Maminata TRAORE/COULIBALY
Minister of Environment, Energy, Water and Sanitation

“Despite its difficult climatic context, Burkina Faso has been able to show, through the promotion of innovative and adapted solutions, that the fight against climate change is above all a question of determination and commitment of actors from all social strata.”

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Burkina Faso is partly nestled in the Sahel belt — the buffer zone between the northern Sahara and southern tropical savannas. To combat the desertification and droughts that characterize this region, the country joined the Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel (GGWSS): a collective effort to restore 100 million hectares of land across the Sahel through sustainable land management practices. To date, Burkina Faso has produced 16.6 million plants and seedlings, 20,000 hectares of reforested lands, and over 45,000 jobs on behalf of the GGWSS.

1st semi-arid country to have a REDD+ program
1st Sahelian country to benefit from the FIP
16.6M plants and seedlings cultivated on behalf of the GGWSS

NDCs BY 2030
- 5M hectares of degraded land restored
- 29% reduction in emissions
- 10% reduction of forest areas burned by wildfires
LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Approximately 3.5 million Burkinabé people are periodically food-insecure. Trees and non-timber forest products are therefore a crucial part of the diet and nutritional balance of more than 43.4% households and are especially imperative for vulnerable farmers as food safety nets between harvests. Providing greater support to the latter, a collaborative initiative between the World Bank and the Government of Burkina Faso — the national Climate Smart Agriculture Investment Plan (CSAIP) — is currently under development.

A WEALTH OF BIODIVERSITY

Irrigated by three tributaries and two river systems, Burkina Faso is nevertheless prone to droughts and water shortages. In response to the climatic threats to its wildlife, the country in 2021 established the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group for the Integration of Biodiversity into Economic Development (GTMBE), adopting a three-year action plan to halt the decline of biological diversity in the agricultural (cotton and livestock) and mining (gold) sectors. This strategy aims to train political decision-makers and community leaders on good practices for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and develop monitoring and evaluation tools for commitments.

SPOTLIGHT: ARLY NATIONAL PARK

This area covers a variety of habitats ranging from savannah and riparian forests to sandstone hills. Its seasonal rivers and floodplains host the largest national concentration of wildlife, featuring over 4,800 elephants, 5,200 buffaloes, 100 lions, and many green monkeys and roan antelopes.

EXPERIENCED IN REDD+ FINANCE

Since 2014, four REDD+ pilot projects have been implemented in Burkina Faso, leading to:

- the creation of 109 conservation areas of approximately 48,463 hectares
- the sustainable management of 12 protected forests totaling 284,000 hectares
- the reforestation of 3,027 hectares in government forests and 15,522 hectares in other forests

In 2021, Burkina Faso mobilized $125 million from the World Bank to scale up its REDD+ activities. Those funds are projected to launch a six year project (beginning January 2023) targeting the reduction of 14 MtCO₂e. This makes Burkina Faso among the first Sahelian country in Africa to test REDD+ at scale.

SAFEGUARDED BY LEAF

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SUMMARY

Poverty alleviation

Here REDD+ could catalyze poverty reduction in some of the most vulnerable communities, particularly for girls and women on the frontlines of desertification and forest degradation.

Tree Planting

With support from the World Bank and African Development Bank, farmers in this region have embarked on a large-scale effort of afforestation to infuse new life into their land.

REDD+ Pilots

Burkina Faso’s Sahelian climate enables an innovative REDD+ approach focused on dry forests and can be a model for other countries with similar ecosystems.
Nepal

Forest management from the bottom up

The proverb “hariyo ban Nepalko dhan,” roughly translating to “healthy green forests are the wealth of Nepal,” has for generations remained popular throughout this highly biodiverse and mountainous region.

Through its 1993 Forest Act, Nepal legally authorized locals to manage large swaths of the country’s forest resources, making it one of the first developing countries to have adopted community forest management (CFM). Approximately 45% of Nepali households are members of Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) and have limited agricultural production, logging and extraction through CFM methods such as forest watchers, fencing and rotational grazing. Their efforts contributed to one of Nepal’s greatest success stories: the expansion of its forest cover from 26% in 1992 to 45% in 2016.

Still, fuelwood consumption, forest fires, overgrazing, and mining threaten to undermine this upward restoration trend. Tackling the poverty that often engenders these obstacles, Nepal’s Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Program (MSFP) provided funding and livelihood strategy assistance to the most disadvantaged and climate-vulnerable populations. Expanding their governance on a local level, alongside forest management leadership training for women in particular, were also MSFP’s key goals.

The government’s Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) agenda aims to address wealth inequalities by scaling up financial support for ecotourism, renewable energy and cleaner transport, while providing Nepalis skills training for the nation’s evolving green economy. GRID is backed by powerful development partners such as the World Bank which has allocated $24 million through its Forests for Prosperity Project (FP) to improving Nepal’s sustainable forestry and enabling its private sector to reduce its dependence on timber imports.

*Terai, typically in the foothills of the Himalayas, stretches along Nepal’s southern border with India. Grasslands, savannah, and sal forests primarily characterize this lowland region. Due to local poverty and high population levels, pressure on Nepal forests has historically been highest in Terai, thanks to consistent efforts to narrow this trend in the region, however, forest area thus increased from 1.28 million hectares in 2001 to 1.35 million hectares in 2016 (net forest gain of 46,900 hectares)*

The community-based forest management system has played an important role not only in expanding the forested areas, but also in preserving biodiversity and wildlife in forests managed by community forestry user groups.

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- 35% of total forest cover converted to community forests
- 19% increase in forest cover between 1992 and 2016
- 5th country in Asia-Pacific to sign REDD with the FCPF

**NDC TARGETS BY 2030**

- 45% of national area maintained under forest cover
- 50% of Terai forests managed sustainably*
- 28% decrease in fossil fuel dependency

Bharati Kumari Pathak
Chairperson of the Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal
In an effort to regenerate degraded areas, 40,000 hectares of forest lands have been granted to the poorest Nepali households, enabling them to cultivate multi-purpose plants and sell non-timber forest products. Multiple impact studies have confirmed that as a result of this LF approach, the majority of unproductive grasslands were converted to sparse forests and thereby sequestered more carbon, enhanced plant diversity and improved the overall livelihoods of a significant number of rural participants.

**SPOTLIGHT: CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK**

Chitwan, once a royal hunting reserve, became Nepal’s first national park in 1973 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. 70% of its area is blanketed by sal trees, whose leaves are often used in local festivals and religious offerings. Chitwan has earned global acclaim for sheltering the world’s second largest population of the highly endangered one-horned rhino and royal Bengal tiger. Golden-monitor lizards, elephants and gaur also roam the park. Anti-poaching enforcement such as patrols, CCTV cameras and community-based anti-poaching units form a cornerstone of the park’s and nation’s conservation efforts.

Programs at the community level have continued to decrease locals’ reliance on firewood from protected areas and promote tiger tourism, boosting community development. This has driven Nepal’s ongoing success in nearly meeting its 2022 pledge to double its wild tiger population from a 2010 baseline.

**EXPERIENCED IN REDD+ FINANCE**

- Signed an agreement with the World Bank’s Forest Conservation Partnership Facility (FCPF), unlocking up to $45 million in results-based payments from 2020-2025 for verified emissions reductions.
- This contract with the FPCF aims to reduce 9.16MtCO₂ and protect 2.4 million hectares of forest in the Terai Arc landscape by promoting private sector forests, reducing forest conversion for infrastructure and improving management practices in community-based forests.
- Nepal prepared a REDD+ strategy in 2018 and has submitted the national Forest Reference Level to the UNFCC.

**THE LEAF COALITION**

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**SUMMARY**

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<td>Nepal’s CFM has been successful in providing dual benefits: forest conservation and socio-economic development.</td>
<td>Nepal’s leasehold forestry approach and Multi-Stakeholder Forestry Program generate green income for marginalized households.</td>
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Democratic Republic of Congo
An irreplaceable forest titan

Four times the size of California, the Democratic Republic of Congo’s forest cover is second only to that of the Amazon in size and total forest carbon stock. It comprises over half of the Congo Basin, which absorbs 4% of global emissions annually and remains one of the last remaining regions in the world to capture more carbon than it emits.

Though historically a High Forest, Low Deforestation (HFLD) country, the DRC is confronting rising rates of deforestation due to small-scale charcoal production, slash-and-burn agriculture, and expansion of commercial logging and mining industries. The country aims to protect its estimated 85 billion tons of forest carbon from further encroachment with the support of multilateral donor partnerships like the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), which recently signed an ambitious, $500 million dollar agreement (2021-2031) with the DRC to limit and ultimately reverse forest cover loss. This will enable the DRC to grant at least 5 million hectares of local forest concessions to local communities, to direct industrial agricultural concessions away from high-value forests and peatlands, to map more sustainable agricultural production techniques for cash crops, and to amplify key reforms in the agriculture, energy, and land use planning sectors.

From 2009-2014 the DRC, with the support of UN-REDD and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), embarked on an ambitious REDD+ preparation process that created a National REDD+ Fund, adopted a National REDD+ Strategic Framework, and initiated more than 10 REDD+ pilot projects with demonstrable impacts on biodiversity conservation, emission reduction, and carbon sequestration. The Strategic Framework aims to stabilize and maintain the forest cover of 63.5% of the national territory from 2050 on. This would reduce projected forest emissions by 56% over the period 2015-2030 while increasing the DRC’s gross domestic product.

Climate change is one of the macroeconomic challenges facing the global economy in the coming years. Our country has the important assets to provide appropriate solutions thanks to its tropical peatland and tropical forest. These two assets put the country at the forefront of carbon sequestration services and make it the first ecosystem that stores more carbon than it emits.

**KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In 2016, the first DRC-CAFI partnership enabled the launch of 18 sectoral and integrated projects for major reforms in key sectors of aquaculture, energy, spatial planning, and land use, as well as for measured and verified emission reductions and poverty reduction.

**NDC GOALS**

- 8 million hectares of degraded land and forests regenerated
- 5 million hectares of community forests
- 21% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030

**Nicolas KAZADI**

Minister of Finance

“...”
The Pygmies of Africa, believed to be Africa's oldest human population, were among the first communities to settle in the Congo Basin. Representing an estimated 920,000 people — the majority of whom reside in and comprise the main indigenous peoples of the DRC — these forest communities have historically been greatly threatened by deforestation engendered by logging, land clearance and subsequent evictions. However, landmark pieces of legislation in the past decade have sought to reverse this trend.

**A Wealth of Biodiversity**

Given that the DRC alone contains over half of Africa's rainforests, it's little wonder that it boasts the highest recorded level of biodiversity on the continent. With at least 15,000 plant and animal species, the country has ambitiously committed 30% of its territory to be under some form of protection status by 2030 — more than doubling its 13% baseline in 2020. This milestone would more comprehensively preserve the vast tracts of primary forest which have spared from extinction the nation's vulnerable and endangered wildlife, including the kapi, Grauer's gorilla, Congo peacock, and bonobo monkey.

**Spotlight: Salonga National Park**

Nestled in the heart of the Congo River Basin, this park — the largest tropical rainforest reserve in Africa and second largest globally — was created in 1970 to protect endemic species such as the Congo peacock and the bonobo monkey, one of humankind's closest living relatives. Salonga remains critical because it is home to 40% (15,000) of the world's bonobo population, a threatened species.

**Experienced in REDD+ Finance**

- In 2018, the DRC became the first country in Africa to sign an Emission Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) with the FCPF for the the Mai-Ndombe ER program, paving the way for up to $55 million in results-based payments toward the reduction of 11 MtCO₂ over 5 years.
- More than 50,000 Congolese villagers will receive direct benefits from the project in the form of jobs, schools, health clinics, improved food security, and the redevelopment of native fish stocks.

**Safeguarded by LEAF**

In 2016 the DRC, through Ministerial Decree No. 025, granted local community forest concessions for up to 50,000 hectares of land — ten times the maximum amount authorized in any other country in the region. In 2022, the country adopted its first National Land Rights Policy as well as a law on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Indigenous Pygmy Peoples, both of which aim to improve recognition of Indigenous peoples' land rights, access to basic social services, and protection of their right to the natural resources they own and occupy.

**SUMMARY**

- **Landmark IPLC Protection**
  In June 2022, a law to promote and protect the rights and land tenure of indigenous Pygmy peoples was adopted by the senate.

- **REDD+ Readiness**
  The DRC was the first country in Africa to complete the REDD+ readiness phase and sign a jurisdictional REDD+ agreement with the World Bank.

- **An irreplaceable carbon sink**
  Massive old-growth tropical forests and peatlands of the Congo Basin are the lungs of the continent and unrecoverable if lost.

The LEAF Coalition

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Vietnam
Monetizing the importance of forests

Between 1943 and 1991, forest cover in Vietnam decreased from 67% to 29% of its total area. In the last two decades the country has rapidly reversed this downward trend by fostering tree plantations. Today, two-fifths of the nation has been forested once more.

In 2010, Vietnam institutionalized its Payment for Forest Environmental Services (PFES) mechanism — becoming one of the few countries to have made ecosystem payments a national policy. In the decade since, participating rural communities received compensation for a variety of conservation efforts including soil and watershed protection, forest carbon sequestration, and biodiversity preservation. With the vast majority of PFES funding paid for by forest service users such as hydropower plants and water supply companies, the program has provided a consistent environmental incentive for Vietnam’s forest owners as well as revenue for at least one fifth of the nation’s protected areas.

Beyond its voluntary environmental programs, the Vietnamese government has experimented with the enforcement of environmental regulations such as the widespread ban on logging in its natural forests (with some exceptions made for local community harvesting). However, given that Vietnam is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, demand for its timber and attempts to flout the ban have concurrently increased. As a result, a partnership agreement between Vietnam and the EU — under the latter’s Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan — was signed in 2018 to improve forest governance and collaboratively ensure that only Vietnamese timber originating from legal logging could be exported to the EU market.

On its part, despite being a developing country that started industrialization only over three decades ago, Vietnam will capitalize on its advantage in renewable energy and take stronger measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

According to Vietnam’s first national ecosystem assessment (2018), PFES has distributed over $500 million to rural households across the country since 2011. This revenue has been used to protect over 6.5 million hectares of forests while providing income to over 250,000 households, creating jobs and supporting ethnic minority communities and poor families in particular.

GOALS BY 2030

- 9% reduction in GHG emissions
- 1M hectares of forest certified for sustainable forest management
- 10% quality upgrade of natural forests (i.e., protections, biodiversity conservation)

Pham Minh Chinh
Prime Minister of Vietnam

“...”
As part of its National REDD+ program, each of Vietnam’s forested provinces was tasked with formulating a Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (PRAP). A number of consultations were organized, targeting different stakeholders at district, commune and village levels, in order to facilitate intervention packages and budget planning. Ultimately, PRAP implementation hopes to affect subsequent provincial planning cycles, transforming how forest landscapes are managed in Vietnam.

A WEALTH OF BIODIVERSITY

With over 15,900 species of flora — 10% of which are endemic — it’s little wonder that Vietnam is ranked the 16th most biodiverse country in the world.

SPOTLIGHT: CUC PHUONG

Lush evergreen forests crown the 22,000 hectares of the nation’s oldest national park. Beyond the 2,000 species of vascular plants that it shelters, Cuc Phuong is home to a number of fauna-focused conservation projects such as the Endangered Primate Rescue Center (EPRC), which manages crucial research and breeding programs for at least four species of nearly extinct langurs. The center’s rescue and rehabilitation efforts remain a buffer between the park’s threatened primates and illegal wildlife trade.

Vietnam’s prime minister recently issued a directive banning imports of live wild animals and enforcing stricter prohibitions on illegal hunting and trading. These efforts aim to protect the nation’s seriously threatened species such as the douc langur, yellow-cheeked gibbons, gaur and Indochinese green peafowl.

EXPERIENCED IN REDD+ FINANCE

- An early adopter of REDD+, Vietnam was selected as one of the program’s nine pilot countries in 2009.
- Vietnam signed an agreement with the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCP) for up to $51.5 million in results-based payments from 2020 to 2025.
- The ERPA with FCPF covers 5.1 million hectares (16% of Vietnam’s total land area) across six North Central Region provinces and is expected to reduce 10.3 million tons of CO2eq.
- Vietnam is stands out among FCPF countries for its net increase in forest cover in recent decades.

SAFEGUARDED BY LEAF

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SUMMARY

PFES Payments
The Vietnamese government emphasizes that PFES payments both reduce deforestation and have a positive socioeconomic impact on households.

International Collaboration
Vietnam’s FLEG agreement with the EU can serve as an important model for forest governance reforms and the legal timber trade.

Stakeholder Engagement
More direct involvement of local stakeholders has taken place through Vietnam’s Provincial REDD+ Action Plan processes.

The LEAF Coalition
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