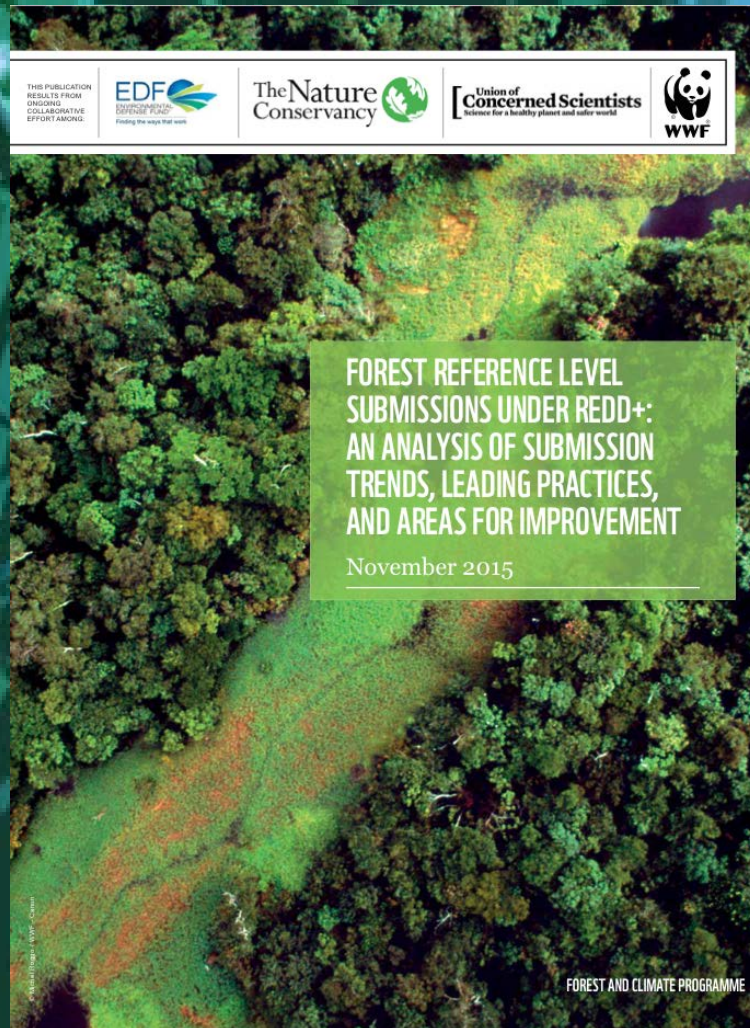


Lessons learned from creating and assessing Forest Reference Levels for UNFCCC

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Creating and Assessing Reference Levels



- **15** countries have submitted reference levels to the UNFCCC. **6** reference levels have gone through technical assessment.
- Countries offered lessons about reference level interpretation and showed feasibility of reference level construction.
- This is a “learning-by-doing” effort, so understandably, there are areas for improvement.

Workshop in Bonn, Germany in May, 2016



- Workshop brought together reference levels creators and assessors as a group for the first time.
- Participants agreed that other countries could benefit from sharing information about challenges and lessons learned.

Lessons: Transparency and Accuracy

- Since transparency underpins the credibility of reference levels and REDD+ itself, REDD+ countries should be acknowledged for efforts to provide full access to all relevant information.
- Donors and REDD+ countries should work together on harmonized approaches to deal with high uncertainties, as with FCPF conservativeness factors.
- Efforts to remove bias in estimates are potentially more important than efforts to reduce uncertainties.
- A well-designed stratification approach may be an important tool in efficiently developing unbiased estimates.

Lessons: Consistency and completeness

- Though not required, REDD+ countries may benefit by maintaining consistency between national inventories, MRV systems, and reference levels. This may require careful planning in advance.
- Existing techniques to identify the most significant sources/sinks may help REDD+ countries develop robust and complete reference levels.
- REDD+ countries can use default values and country specific activity data to fill in data gaps for significant sources/sinks, such as degradation.
- Due to the high potential for leakage, countries should provide as much information as possible about emissions in areas or activities not included in the reference level.

Lessons: Comparability and the assessment process

- Though comparability is not assessed, donors may have an interest in understanding the relative scope and quality of reference levels across countries.
- Donors should financially support REDD+ countries to collect and improve data, especially where gaps exist.
- To accelerate the learning-by-doing process, REDD+ countries could include additional information about new activities or areas in supplemental annexes and request comments on the annex from technical assessors.
- Additional resources may be needed in order to maintain and expand the pool of qualified technical assessors.
- REDD+ countries may need assistance in building capacity and ownership, to avoid an overreliance on consultants.

Key takeaways

- In addition to supporting results, donors may need to provide **finance to** help REDD+ countries **collect and improve data**, especially **for gaps** such as degradation.
- Donors and REDD+ countries need to find a **balance** in accepting current levels of **uncertainty**, while making progress toward **improving data quality, completeness** of coverage, and **cost-effectiveness** of MRV.
- The contributions from REDD+ activities, as measured against the assessed reference levels, may be **key pieces** of information **for measuring global progress toward the goals of the Paris Agreement**.

Thank you



Dedicated to Dr. Jim Penman, who passed away on September 9, after more than 20 years of contributions to climate science and policy.

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