

Modalities and Guidelines for REDD+ Reference Levels

Prepared for
The Government of Norway



Meridian Institute

Connecting People to Solve Problems

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Goals – Inform SBSTA and COP-17

Stage I

- Assess issues that UNFCCC negotiators need to address to develop modalities for REDD+ Reference Levels and Reference Emissions Levels (RLs)

Stage II

- Propose guidelines for RLs for REDD+ for developing countries as part of UNFCCC modalities.

A REDD+ Reference Level is a benchmark for monitoring progress in reducing emissions

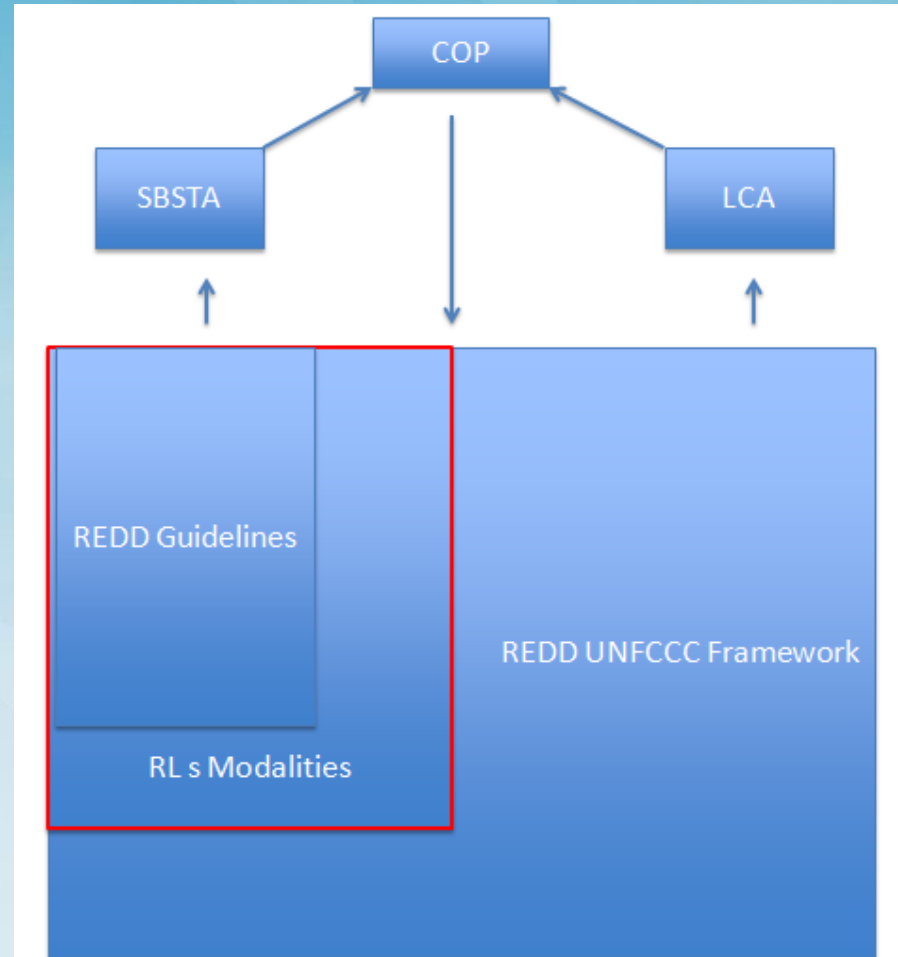
- Reference (Emission) Levels (RLs/REs) are business-as-usual (BAU) baselines against which actual emissions are compared.
- Emission reductions are estimated as the difference between RLs and actual emissions within an established period.

Functions of RLs

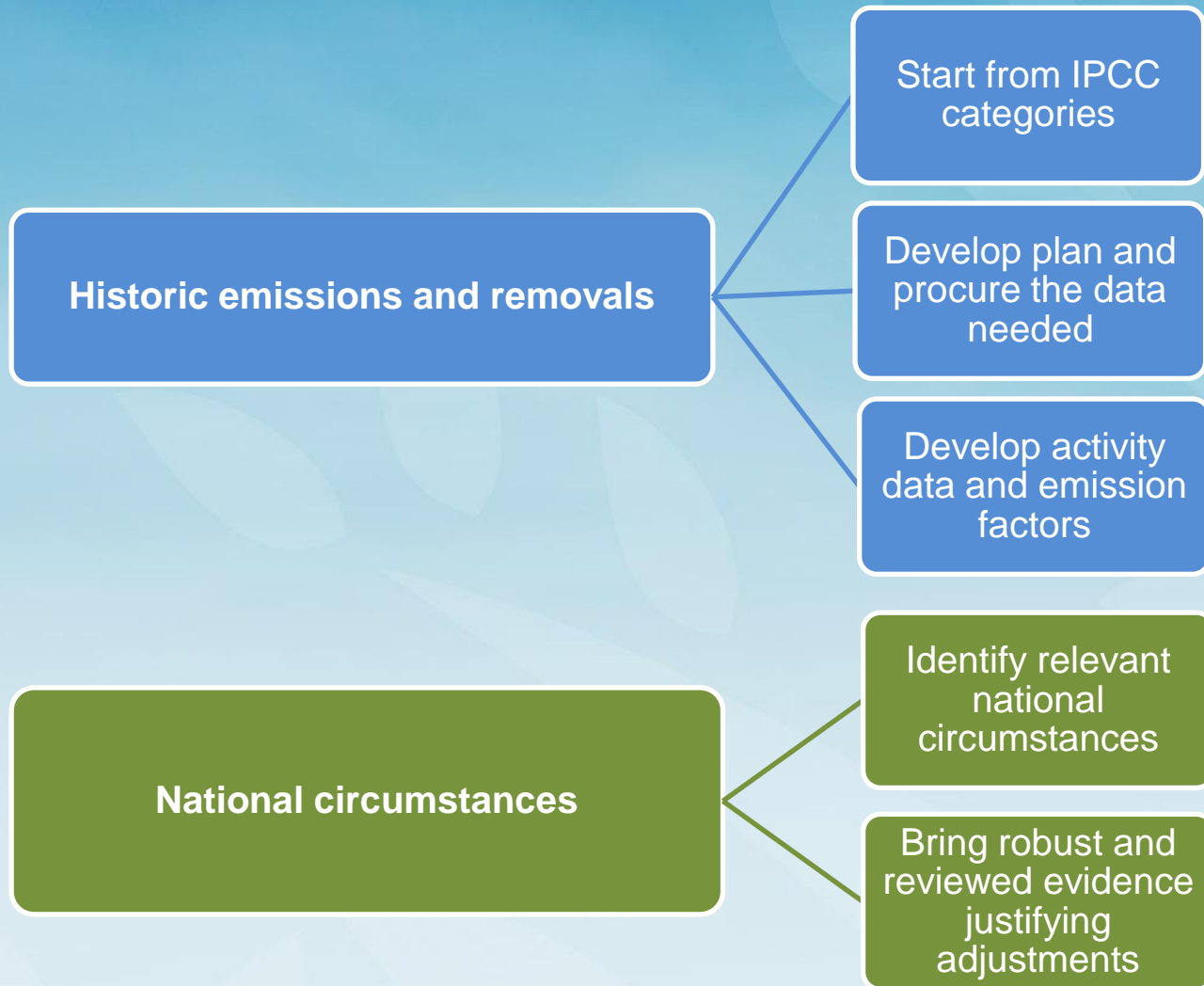
- Inform on the effectiveness of REDD+ interventions.
- RLs underpin the credibility of REDD+.
- The process of establishing RLs can inform development and implementation of (sub)national REDD+ policies.
- RLs can inform the determination of results-based payments for REDD+.

Modalities and Guidelines for RLs

- Modalities: a set of binding requirements included in a COP decision formulating rules and standards
- Guidelines: a set of principles, criteria and steps included in a COP decision that assist countries in preparing a submission or meet an objective formulated by the COP



Developing a RL



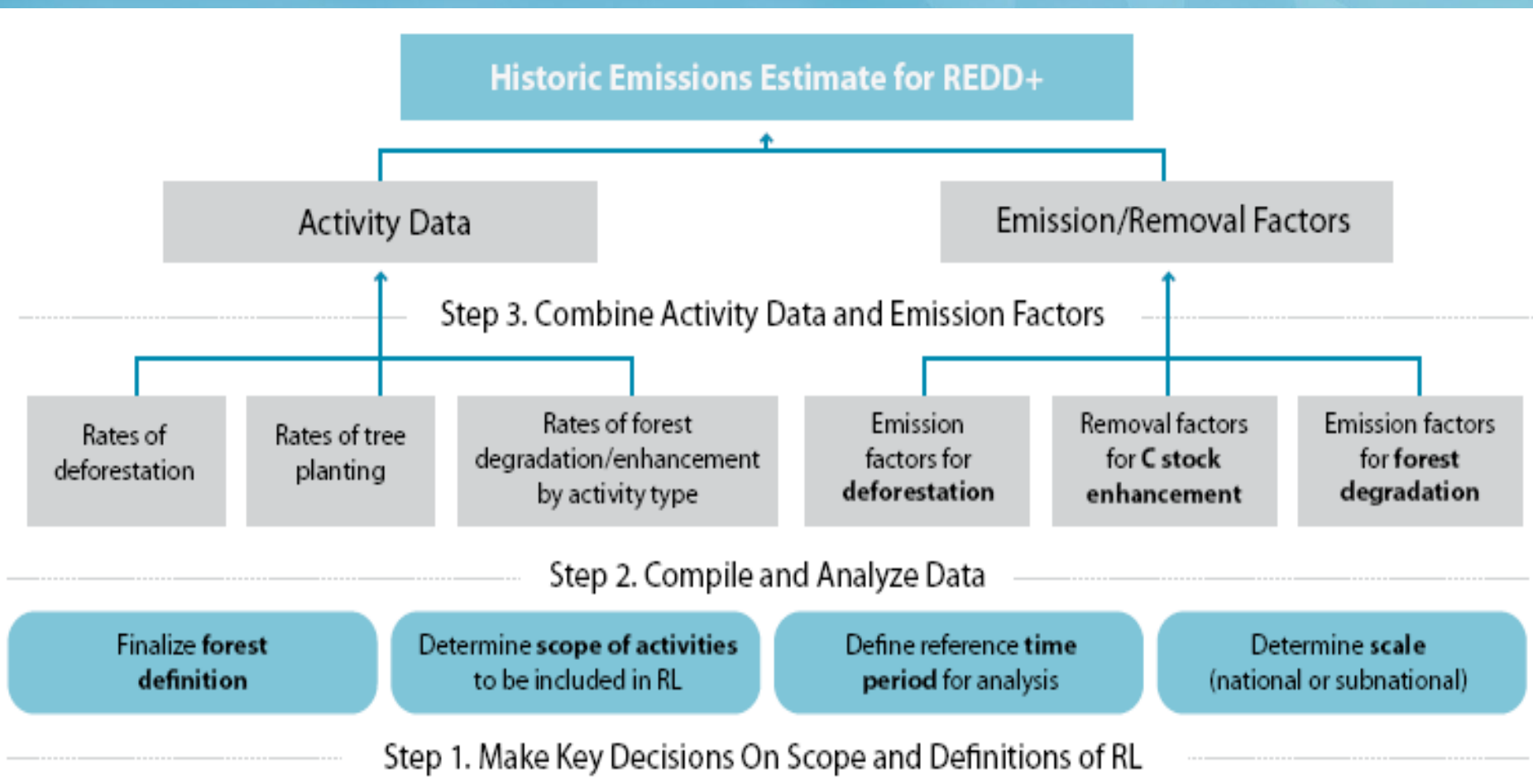
IPCC Reporting Principles

- **Transparency**
 - Clear and fully described assumptions and methods
- **Completeness**
 - Relevant pools and activities included
- **Consistency**
 - Accepted standards of carbon accounting followed
- **Comparability**
 - Comparisons among countries should be straight-forward
- **Accuracy**
 - Avoid bias, reduce uncertainty.

Scope of REDD+ RLs

- Forests converted to other lands
 - Deforestation
- Forests remaining as forests
 - Forest degradation
 - Conservation of forest carbon stocks
 - Sustainable management of forests
 - Enhancement of forest carbon stocks in existing forests
- Other lands converted to forests
 - Enhancement of carbon stocks through A/R

Historic Emissions and Removals

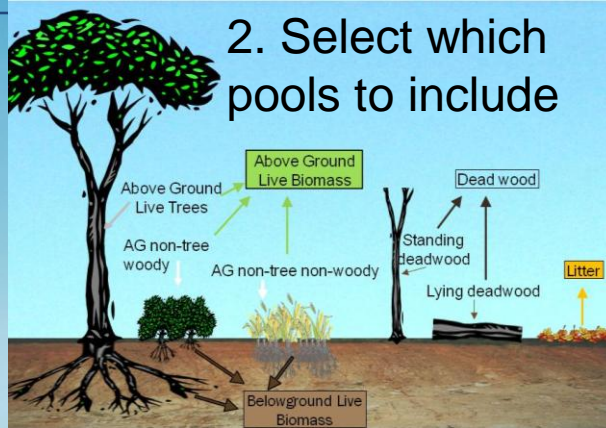


Data collection examples

1. Definition of Forest- determines which lands to include

15% cover

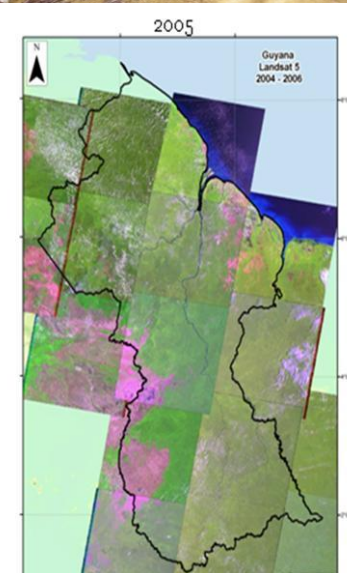
30% cover



4. Identify drivers of forest cover change



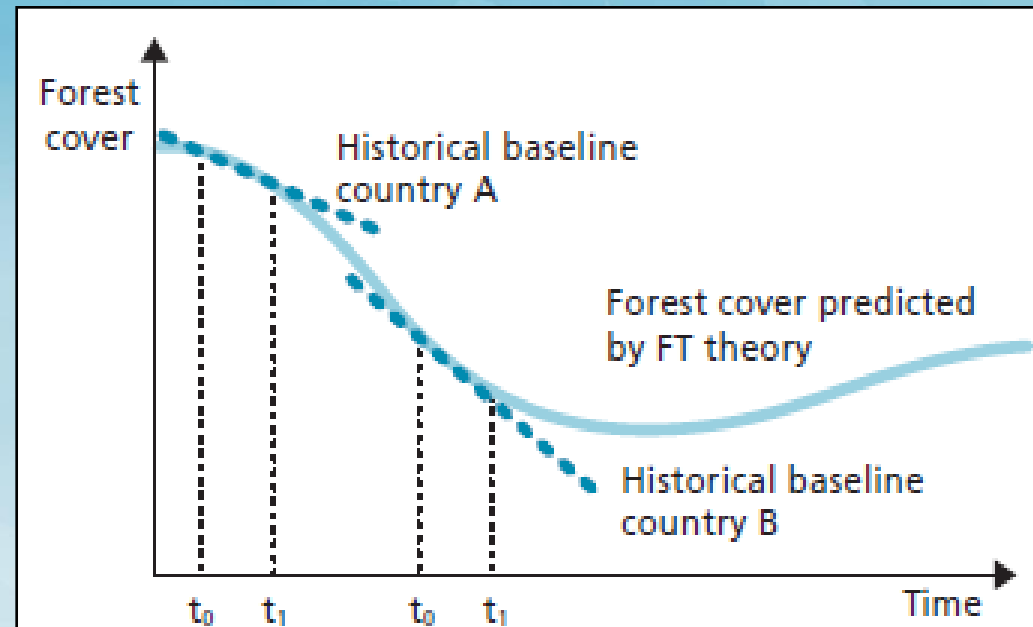
3. Measures of C stocks



5. Interpret remote sensing imagery

National Circumstances: General adjustments considered

- Forest Transition Stage (forest cover, GDP)
- Drivers (e.g. agricultural commodity prices)



National Circumstances: Conclusions

- To date there is insufficient empirical evidence support generalized adjustments to RLs from historic emissions and removals
- Case-by-case adjustments should be supported by robust and verifiable empirical data, e.g.
 - evidence of implementation of national policies that have major impacts on future forest use
- Equity-based adjustments (e.g. forest cover, GDP) to influence REDD+ financing should be considered separately from adjustments to RLs.

Subnational RLs

- Parties can develop subnational RLs that constitute a step toward adopting national RLs.
- Subnational RLs should follow the same principles and steps laid out here for national ones.
- Subnational RLs should follow a common set of criteria that facilitate the subsequent reconciliation of RLs on the national level.

UNFCCC adoption of RLs

- RLs could be adopted through one of several alternative procedural approaches, including:
 - A single-undertaking top-down process
 - A country-driven sequential process
 - Hybrid process: political decision at the international level and consolidation with country submissions

Temporal Validity of RLs

- RLs may be:
 - Re-negotiated within a specific timeframe
 - Re-submitted for review and adjustment
 - Automatically revised
 - Reviewed every X number of years e.g. in the context of national communications

Potential Outline for REDD+ RL Modalities: A Suggestion for SBSTA

- Principles
- Guidelines on RL Development
- Data Submission
- Notification of Preliminary RLs
- International Adoption of Final RLs
- Data Administration

REDD+ Reference Level
reports are available online:

www.redd-oar.org



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