Regional Seminar for Experience Exchange in FREL/FRL and REDD+ Technical Annex Assessment for the UNFCCC and Other Initiatives

Overview and Survey Results

June 30th & July 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th 2022

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change refers to long-term temperature shifts and weather patterns (United Nations, 2023). Such modifications can be due to natural phenomena or anthropogenic activity. Climate scientists have shown that human activity has been responsible for virtually all global heating over the last 200 years (United Nations, 2023). Climate change can disrupt ecosystems, jeopardize biodiversity, and negatively impact human health, food security, and socioeconomic stability. In a series of United Nations (UN) reports, thousands of scientists and government reviewers agreed that limiting global temperature rise to no more than 1.5°C would help us avoid the worst climate impacts and maintain a livable climate. Yet policies currently in place point to a 2.8°C temperature rise by the end of the century (UNEP, 2022).

Countries must adjust current policies to face the huge challenge presented by this scenario. Many climate change solutions can deliver economic benefits while improving human lives and protecting the environment. Broad categories of potential actions are mitigation by reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, or adapting to climate impacts, while enhancing these actions through climate finance (United Nations, 2023). Of these actions, much focus has been placed on reducing GHG emissions from the biggest-emitting economic sectors in many tropical countries, this is the land sector--particularly deforestation. Following Armstrong, (2021), if tropical deforestation were a country, it would have the third largest carbon footprint in the world; considering this issue, it is urgent to reduce deforestation in tropical forests.

In this context, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), through the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) framework, encourages developing countries to contribute to mitigation actions in the forest sector by undertaking the following activities: (a) Reducing emissions from deforestation, (b) Reducing emissions from forest degradation, (c) Conservation of forest carbon stocks, (d) Sustainable management of forests, and (e) Enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Under the Paris Agreement (Article 5), the REDD+ framework is recognized as a key element that can help nations mitigate climate change, as well as maintain resilience in the face of its effects.

Developing countries need to develop a Forest Reference Emission Level and/or Forest Reference Level (FREL/FRL) to participate in REDD+. FREL/FRL provide the benchmark against which countries measure their results from implementing REDD+ activities towards receiving results-based payments through the UNFCCC REDD+ framework. These benchmarks are known as FREL/FRL for UNFCCC reports and are also known as ‘baselines’ (BL) for some result-based payment initiatives like the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (ISFL), and REDD Early Movers (REM).

In addition, developing country parties that wish to receive REDD+ results-based payments should submit their estimated calculation of GHG emissions reduction and removal enhancements related to forests to UNFCCC as an annex to the Biennial Update Report (BUR) or the Biennial Transparency Report (BTRs) as from 2024. This annex is known as Technical Annex.

The FREL/FRL and Technical Annex are subject to a technical assessment (TA) by experts nominated by Parties to the Roster of Experts. The aim of the TA is: [1] to assess the degree to which information provided by countries follow the guidelines for submissions of information on FREL/FRL, and [2] to offer a facilitative, non-intrusive, technical exchange on data used in the construction of FREL/FRL to support the capacity of the developing country for the construction and future improvements of FREL/FRL. So, one of the goals of the TA process is identifying areas for technical improvement within these reports.

The assessment and improvement of FREL/FRL are challenging for developing countries in technical, logistical, and political terms, mainly due to: [1] the need to generate inputs/outputs that are transparent, robust, accurate, to the extent possible, and consistent, [2] the development and implementation of robust methods, [3] the extensive technical capacity required , [4] alignment and consistency with other national and subnational reports such as GHG inventories for National Communications and BUR/BTR (as of 2024), and [5] the complexity to reflect the assessment of these reports adequately, especially communicating to federal governments the differences between updated and previous reports.

For instance, Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) countries are in different stages of developing and assessing FREL/FRL and their Technical Annexes. Some countries are updating FREL/FRL, some are under the TA of the submitted FREL/FRL, others are developing Technical Annex, and others are under the TA of Technical Annex. Nevertheless, independent of the stage where each LAC country is in this process, they face and address similar challenges in the assessments and improvement of the FREL/FRL and Technical Annex.

To help address these challenges, the SilvaCarbon program for Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada (SilvaCarbon LACC) and the UNFCCC convened a seminar in 2022, intending to provide a space for dialogue and exchange of experiences in the assessment of FREL/FRL and Technical Annex submitted to the UNFCCC (and other results-based payment initiatives). This document provides a summary and ongoing reflections on critical lessons learned through the seminar and two follow-up surveys conducted by the SilvaCarbon LACC team. In this sense, this document describes the steps that could be taken to overcome the challenges inherent to the assessment and improvement of FREL/FRLs and Technical Annex and the actions that could work as a guide for technical assistance programs, such as SilvaCarbon, to facilitate the exchange among countries for the improvement of future TA of new FREL/FRL and Technical Annex.

2. ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

SilvaCarbon. Technical and interagency cooperation program from the United States government that improves the technical capacities of tropical forest countries to measure, monitor and report on forest carbon. This program brings specific technical support to countries in developing and implementing national forest and landscape monitoring systems. SilvaCarbon uses cutting-edge science and technology to advance the generation and use of improved terrestrial carbon data. The United States Forest Service (USFS) Silvacarbon team for Latin America, the Caribbean & Canada has worked with 14 countries in the region.

UNFCCC. The UN agency that establishes the policy and technical basis for international climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. Parties to the Convention are encouraged to control GHG emissions through policy instruments and mitigation actions (e.g., REDD+) and the use of new economically and socially beneficial approaches.

3. SEMINAR OVERWIEW

During sessions:

- The UNFCCC, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Emergent, and the State Development Bank of the Federal Republic of Germany (KfW) gave presentations on the current state of FREL/FRL and Technical Annex, as well as general aspects of results-based payment initiatives;

- Through five panels, experts from 12 countries –Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Suriname– shared their experiences in the assessment, challenges and improvement of the FREL/FRL, Technical Annex and BL submitted to the UNFCCC and results-based payment initiatives; and

- The SilvaCarbon LACC team conducted two surveys on topics related to the seminar. The first survey was shared during the event sessions, and the second, one week after the event.

PARTICIPANTS

Throughout four sessions and five panels, there were 179 participants from 28 countries.

According to the participation survey, 55% of the attendees identified themselves as male and 45% as female.

Country	People
Mexico	30
Ecuador	20
Colombia	18
Guatemala	17
Peru	11
United States	11
Dominican Republic	8
Brazil	7
Suriname	7
Costa Rica	6
Germany	6
Nicaragua	5
Chile	4
Panama	4
Argentina	3
Belize	3
Honduras	3
Paraguay	3
El Salvador	2
Indonesia	2
Italy	2
Australia	1
France	1
Guinea-Bisáu	1
Guiana	1
Madagascar	1
Switzerland	1
Uruguay	1
Total	179

Figure 1. Number of people per country who participated in any of the seminar sessions.

SESSIONS OVERVIEW

SESSION 1
PART 1

Objective: Gain knowledge on the experiences countries face in the FREL/FRL assessment, challenges, and improvement processes within the UNFCCC processes.

Presentation: State of the art in the assessment of the FREL/FRL REDD-TA in LAC.

Speaker: Dirk Nemitz (UNFCCC)

Presentation highlights:

1) Presentation about the Warsaw Framework for REDD+, which is a framework of climate action to mitigate climate change with a stepwise approach to be implemented to progress on results-based finance for REDD+.

2) The elements that need to be in place to obtain and receive result-based finance: National strategy, FREL/FRL, National forest monitoring system, and safeguard information system.

3) The results-based action should be fully measured, reported, and verified.

4) The holistic perspective of the Warsaw framework to help developing countries to develop their forest carbon accounting system that could also work for the international forest carbon accounting system.

5) The TA process.

6) The countries that have already submitted FRL.

7) The lessons learned included: building national forest monitoring systems based on what is already available in the country, acquiring good quality data is paramount, using the technology available, and enhancing the TA process for feedback and capacity-building, among others.

8) The recent challenges such as technological improvement, which has become a moving target (this means time series needs to be updated according to new inputs, methods, and tools, which sometimes is not easy to implement by countries), including REDD+ activities beyond reducing emission from deforestation and combining different initiatives, scales, and requirements for national reporting (nesting).

PANEL 1

During Panel 1, Consuela Paloeng, from Foundation for Forest Management and Production Control-Suriname, and Dáryl Medina, from Instituto de Conservación Forestal-Honduras, presented a summary of their FREL/FRL and then answered the following questions:

Questions	Key answers and ideas
What was the motivation for the development of the FREL/FRL?	• Commit to continue caring for the forest. • To accomplish the commitments under UNFCCC. • To access financial resources to implement actions to mitigate emissions from deforestation. • Obtain robust information for monitoring deforestation.
How was the FREL/FRL improved (within the framework of UNFCCC principles) through the assessment process?	• Improved the analysis and propagation of uncertainties. • Improved calculation processes. • Increased transparency and consistency in reporting. • Improved the estimation of Activity Data (AD).

Questions	Key answers and ideas
What were the challenges faced in generating data for the FREL/FRL?	• Difficulties in capacity building on data collection and analysis. • Limited financial resources to maintain human capabilities. • Dependence on satellite imagery that is not freely available. • Difficulty in appropriating new methodologies.
What are the challenges faced in the FREL/FRL assessment processes?	• Low availability of time to improve AD estimates. • Poor technical advice for developing the FRL.
What are areas for improvement in the FREL/FRL assessment processes?	• Share TA feedback with other countries. • Implement "training" assessment processes before the UNFCCC assessment processes. • Including more members of their technical teams (in charge of developing FREL/FLR) become members of the UNFCCC roster of experts. • Change the date of submission of FREL/FRL because it coincides with the end-of-year holidays.
What are the main areas for improving the evaluated FREL/FRL?	• Improving consistency between GHG inventories and FREL/FRL emissions estimates. • Use freely available satellite imagery. • Collecting forest inventories to update Emission Factors (EF). • Consolidate standardized and comprehensive calculation protocols. • Move towards automation of emission estimates with a sustainable approach.

SESSION 1
PART 2

Presentation: Reference Levels and REDD+ results: perspectives and trends in MRV systems.

Speaker: Marieke Sandker (FAO)

Presentation highlights:

1) Seventy-five FREL/FRL have been submitted to the UNFCCC by fifty-six countries, and with available data, it is known that 11. 5 million emissions were reduced.

2) Most countries participate in this mechanism to obtain results-based payment and to evaluate the performance of their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement.

3) Most reports are national in scale, but the countries agreeing to payment for results have reported subnational FRL.

4) 95% report deforestation, and 50% report degradation.

5) Countries that have applied to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have reported deforestation or degradation as a requirement.

6) While some countries reported their AD through mapped areas, the number of countries reporting AD through sampling is growing.

7) It is common for degradation to be reported through the use of timber harvest statistics.

8) Few countries reported removals on forest land tenure.

9) 68% of countries report EFs based on National Forest Inventory (NFI) data, 18% are implementing their NFI, and the remaining 14% have no NFI.

10) 95% of reduced emissions come from avoiding deforestation.

11) 86% of decreased forest emissions come from Latin American countries, 13% from Asia, and 1% from Africa.

PANEL 2

During Panel 2, Marcial Arias from Ministerio de Ambiente- Panama and Freddy Argotty from Ministerio del Ambiente- Peru presented a summary of their FREL/FRL and then answered the following questions:

Questions	Key answers and ideas
What changes were most important to implement between the 1st and 2nd FREL, and why?	General • Implementation of improvements based on: - the observations made by the UNFCCC experts on the country's first FREL/FRL technical analysis - adherence to the UNFCCC principles - the linkage between the FREL/FRL and other country reports • Harmonization of definitions of forest (e.g., minimum area and crown cover). • Inclusion of shrub formations in the forest definition. Activity Data • Improved AD using systematic sampling and change maps (to stratify), which increased the precision of the estimates. • Reporting of transitions from forest to other land uses based on systematic sampling. • Migration from Collect Earth desktop to Collect Earth Online (CEO). • Institutionalization of photo-interpretation in CEO. Emission Factors • Inclusion of other carbon pools (beyond biomass). • Validation of volume/biomass allometric equations. • Use of NFI data as the primary input to estimate EFs. • Use of random sampling with increased statistical robustness for estimation of EFs. Uncertainties • Estimation and propagation of uncertainties.

Questions	Key answers and ideas
What were the political, institutional, technical, and methodological challenges of proposing a second FREL/FRL?	Human capacities/capabilities or institutional challenges • Difficulty in consolidating institutional arrangements for monitoring AD and NFI data collection. • FREL/FRL submission timelines must be in sync with the availability of country technical staff (temporary contracts). • Poor institutionalization of technical capacities. Technical challenges • Complexity in conveying to expert reviewers the feasibility of the sampling approach to monitoring AD in tropical forests. • Limited access to high-resolution spatial inputs. • Difficulty assimilating new methodologies, incorporating more REDD+ activities and gasses, and migrating from sub-national to national scope. • Slow adoption of uncertainty quantification approaches and options to reduce uncertainties.

SESSION 2

Objective: Gain knowledge on the experiences and challenges countries face in the REDD+ Technical Annexes improvement and assessment process within the UNFCCC processes.

PANEL 3

In panel 3, Luis Panichelli, from Ministerio de Ambiente- Argentina, and Georgina Trujillo, from Corporación Nacional Forestal-Chile, first presented a summary of their Technical Annex and then addressed the following questions:

Questions	Key answers and ideas
What best practices were implemented to demonstrate technical consistency between REDD+ technical annex and FREL/FRL?	• Demonstrate harmonization of the different time windows of the inputs used to report REDD+ activities. • Standardize land use change estimation methodologies used in the FREL and Technical Annex. • Elaboration of the FREL/FRL and Technical Annex, based on information from pre-existing forest monitoring systems. • Institutionalization of technical capacities to strengthen the specialized memory. • Systematization of information (country protocols developed from simplifying and interpreting the IPCC guidelines, local data, default factors, processes, systematized templates, etc.). • Robust institutional arrangements, everything is centralized and within the same area. • Design of the FREL/FRL and Technical Annex to access payment by results. • Employment of a simple but consistent approach to developing the FREL and Technical Annex. That means do not include uncertain information or consider REDD+ activities with weak details, for example. • Construction of the Technical Annex in parallel with the technical assessment of the FREL/FRL. • Alignment between reports (National Communications, BUR, FREL/FRL, etc.). • Implementation of quality controls. • Reduction of uncertainty levels.
What were the main causes/actions that led to the reduced emissions reported in the REDD+ technical annex?	• Entry into force of law for native forest management. • Consolidation of an area specialized in detecting changes in land use. • Development of a strategy to prevent and combat forest fires. • Implementation of reforestation actions and recovery of degraded forest areas. • Implementation of on-site monitoring systems. • Zoning of forest areas. • Distribution of responsibilities for forest protection among the different levels of government.

SESSION 3

Objective: Gain knowledge on the experiences and challenges countries face in assessing and improving the baseline for the World Bank within the framework of FCPF and ISFL.

Presentation: Forest Carbon Partnership Facility.

Speaker: Oswaldo Carrillo (SilvaCarbon)

Presentation highlights:

1) Presentation of the objective of the FCPF, which seeks to assist developing countries in reducing deforestation or forest degradation emissions. This initiative has a methodological framework for carbon accounting, criteria, and indicators to achieve emission reductions and an emission reduction agreement (ERPA).

2) The ISFL promotes and rewards GHG emission reductions and increased sequestration through improved land management; four pillars drive this initiative: working at scale (working across entire jurisdictions and with multiple sectors), leveraging partnerships (between public and private sectors), incentivizing results (provides results-based climate finance), and leveraging lessons learned (e.g., from the FCPF host countries and donors).

PANEL 4

During Panel 4, Pradeepa Bholanath from the Ministry of Natural Resources- Guyana,Juan David Turriago from the Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales – Colombia, and Rafael Mayorga from Comisión Nacional Forestal- México, presented a summary of the baselines for the FCPF or ISFL and then answered the following questions:

Questions	Key answers and ideas
What were the challenges in developing and assessing the baselines for FCPF/ISFL for the FOLU sector?	• To have remotely sensed data for continuous time series for multiple reporting periods. • Measure the local scale impact (spatially explicit) of anthropogenic activities that promote degradation. • Institutionalize technical mapping capabilities.

Questions	Key answers and ideas
	• Analyze all the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sectors in an integrated manner. • Migrate from focusing on forest cover dynamics to analyzing the dynamics of other land uses. • Nesting of reduced emissions accounting approaches between national reporting to UNFCCC and sub-national reporting to FCPF/ISFL, etc. • Transparent and detailed disclosure of all procedures and methodologies used to develop baselines and ensure replicability.
What were the challenges in complying with the different reporting requirements to the UNFCCC and FCPF/ISFL-FOLU?	• The forest definition used in the National Communication needed to be aligned with the definition used in the FREL/FRL. • Integrate everything that was done in the country on one platform. • Communicate all methodological elements used in the measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) system to develop reports to the UNFCCC and other initiatives. • Convey in detail all the processes used in complex and automated estimation systems. • Understanding the impact that actions in the FOLU categories will have on the agriculture category since the program's implementation is at the jurisdictional level requires a solid inter-institutional linkage. • Explaining the particularities of the decisions for each methodological framework is complex, particularly given the institutional memory problems due to the high turnover of technical staff. • Transparent display of the differences between reports with different objectives, scales, and scarcely standardized or automated information. • Nesting and articulating the accounts of different national and local results-based payment initiatives.

SESSION 4

Objective: Discuss the challenges countries face in participating in results-based payments.

Presentation 1: LEAF Coalition Overview.

Speaker 1: Paz Lozano (Emergent- LEAF Coalition).

Presentation highlights:

1) The LEAF initiative was launched in 2021 to halt deforestation and catalyze jurisdictional REDD+ markets.

2) It is an initiative financed by Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

3) There are currently 24 jurisdictional projects that have submitted proposals; fourteen are in Latin America, seven in Africa, and three in Asia; two letters of intent signed by Costa Rica and Ecuador.

4) There is an ambitious portfolio of projects: Over 500 million tCO2eq of self-reported ambition to generate emissions reductions, potentially preventing up to 1 million hectares of deforestation by 2022-2026.

Presentation 2: REDD Early Movers (REM) Programme

Speaker 2: Klaus Köhnlein (KfW- REM Program).

Presentation highlights:

1) Between GIZ and KFW implemented, the REDD+ Early Movers (REM) program.

2) This program is present in three Latin American countries; started in 2012 and 2017 in Acre and Mato Grosso, Brazil, respectively; 2014 in Ecuador; 2015 in Colombia.

3) It was the first program that managed to pay for GHG emissions reductions.

4) It has a new phase to pay for political milestones and not only for reduced emissions.

5) REM has a robust design in benefit distributions.

PANEL 5

The participants in Panel 5, Alexandre Santos Avelino, from Ministério do Meio Ambiente- Brazil; German Obando, from Ministerio del Ambiente y Energía- Costa Rica, and Ximena Herrera, from Ministerio del Ambiente, Agua y Transición Ecológica- Ecuador, presented a summary of the Technical Annex and then addressed the following questions:

Questions	Key answers and ideas
What were the challenges in obtaining payment for results in the past (e.g., UNFCCC, EMR, GCF) and lessons learned for compliance with new initiatives (e.g., LEAF)?	• Low price to launch emission reduction programs. The country offered US$60, and the FCPF only offered US$18 per tCO2eq in some cases. • The new initiatives call for the transfer of ownership of reduced emissions. • Consultation processes and benefit-sharing plans are complex and time-consuming. • The mechanisms for transferring funds from donors to host countries are complex, and there are cost overruns from financial intermediaries that bring additional safeguards to those of Cancun; there is a lot of oversight expense. • Validation and verification costs are high. • In new initiatives, the country has to finance all the preparation and monitoring; therefore, if the program is unsuccessful, the government has to bear all these costs. • Difficulty in ensuring a correct understanding of the REDD+ mechanism among the different actors involved. • A high technical effort to comply with UNFCCC requirements. • Difficulty in performing uncertainty analysis. • Lack of inputs of the required quality and temporal coverage • The complexity of land use and management • Technical difficulties in measuring change • Misplaced expectations of funding for carbon storage rather than emission reduction activities. • Difficulties in socializing the scope of emission reduction programs. • Communication problems about how climate finance mechanisms work.

Questions	Key answers and ideas
	• Need for technical strengthening of MRV systems. • Support in preparing for the implementation of new methodological frameworks.
What recommendation would you give to other countries that intend to apply for a results-based payment initiative?	• Seek to access the most straightforward results-based payment window, the GCF, because other options are more complex to apply. • Generate the enabling conditions that allow reducing emissions through the implementation of public policies, financial strategies, technical developments, etc. • Analyze the implications of the requirements and agreements to access an emissions reduction program to avoid problems in implementing, reporting, and nesting REDD+ projects. • Identifying preparation activities (access to resources, shared understanding of the REDD+ financial instrument, and guarantee mechanisms to reduce deforestation through implementing policies and the system of safeguards).

CLOSING REMARKS

At the end of the panel, Jenny Wong from the UNFCCC Secretariat shared a closing message of the seminar, highlighting the importance of this event, the main results achieved, and the need to continue with a constant dialogue between countries to share experiences and lessons learned that will help the consolidation of FREL/FRL and REDD+ TA.

RECORDINGS & PRESENTATIONS

Session 1/1 (June 30th)	Spanish	https://youtu.be/W2xmUIzdkBs	English	https://youtu.be/JcY8mEvNI8k
Session 1/2 (July 7th)		https://youtu.be/WptEx77NP7I		https://youtu.be/glaXsHYLD8s
Session 2 (July 14th)		https://youtu.be/buAAzNL0a6k		https://youtu.be/shhfY0hgqc4
Session 3 (July 21st)		https://youtu.be/PkcCyaP81ZY		https://youtu.be/ZtzzB2PdLFI
Session 4 (July 28th)		https://youtu.be/6zcJ38j1Qvk		https://youtu.be/Gktiw2H_fEA Portuguese: https://youtu.be/CKUfcUyCd6o
Presentations: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-cpXiLAyvJd8MDkZlTXDHW4agrCc9iZR?usp=share_link				

4. SURVEYS

SURVEY 1

To trigger dialogue with the region's countries and better understand and capture their experiences in the technical assessment processes of the FREL/FRL under the UNFCCC, the SilvaCarbon LACC team asked four questions during the seminar, the results of which are below.

Question 1. Indicate the order of priority from highest to lowest the motivations for the elaboration and submission of the FREL/FRL for the UNFCCC.

The participants who answered this question believed that the primary motivations for preparing and submitting the FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC were compliance with commitments to the UNFCCC and access to results-based payment from GCF.

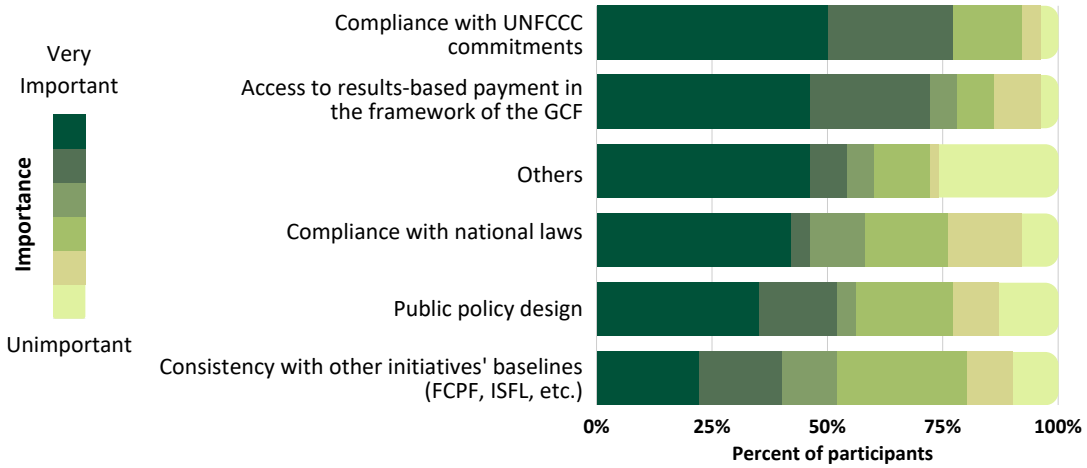

Figure 2. Main motivations for the preparation and submission of the FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC (from highest to lowest importance).

Question 2. What changes were included in the modified FREL/FRL resulting from the UNFCCC assessment? (Choose 3)

The participants who answered this question believed the main changes included in the modified FREL/FRL in the context of the UNFCCC technical assessment processes are methodological. They are related to improving EF/reporting additional carbon pools, AD, and uncertainty analysis.

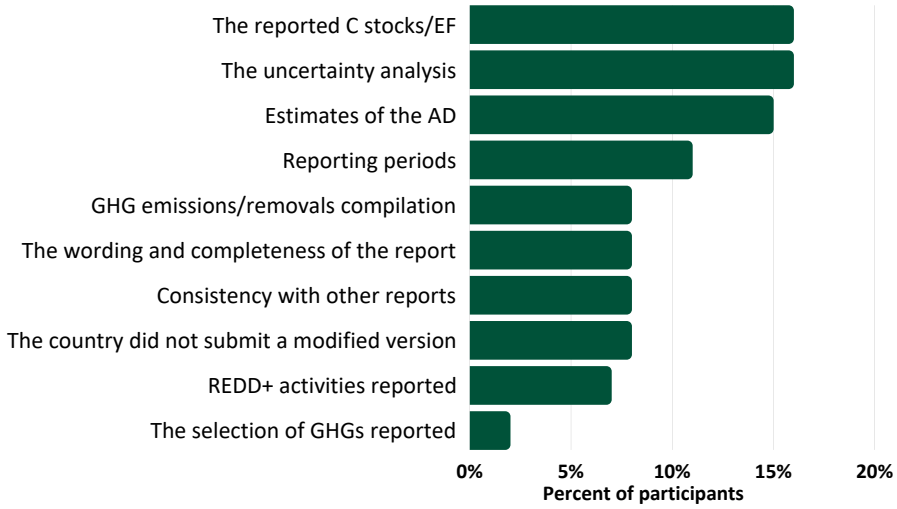

Figure 3. Main changes included in the modified FREL-FRL in the framework of the UNFCCC assessment processes.

Question 3. What are the most critical areas for improvement in the UNFCCC evaluation process of the FREL/FRL? (Choose 3).

The most important areas for improvement of the UNFCCC assessment process for FREL/FRL are [1] the strengthening of country experts' capacities in the technical assessment processes and [2] the increase in the number of national experts nominated in the UNFCCC Roster of Experts to participate as review experts.

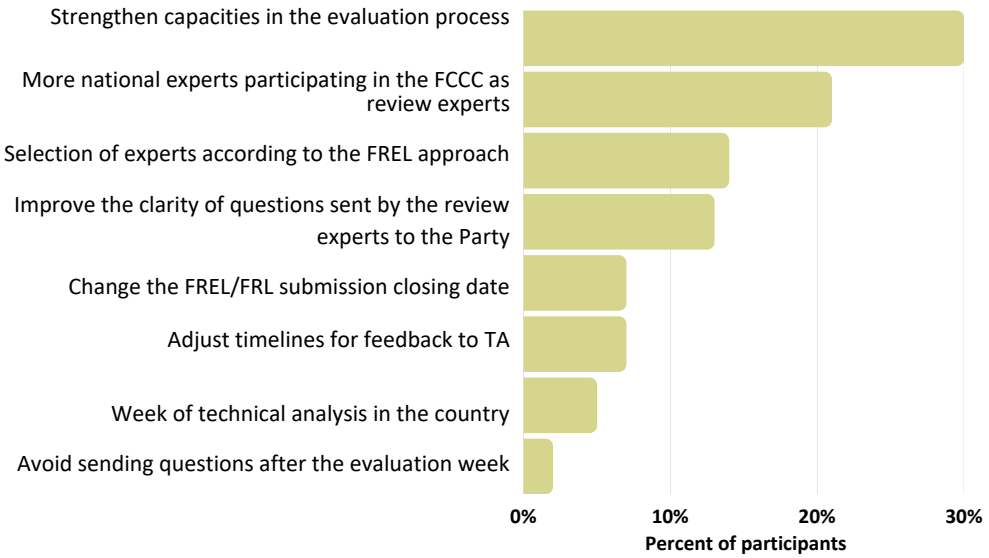

Figure 4. Main areas for improvement of the UNFCCC assessment process for FREL/FRL.

Question 4. What were the main challenges faced in implementing the improvements of the modified FREL/FRLs? (Choose 3).

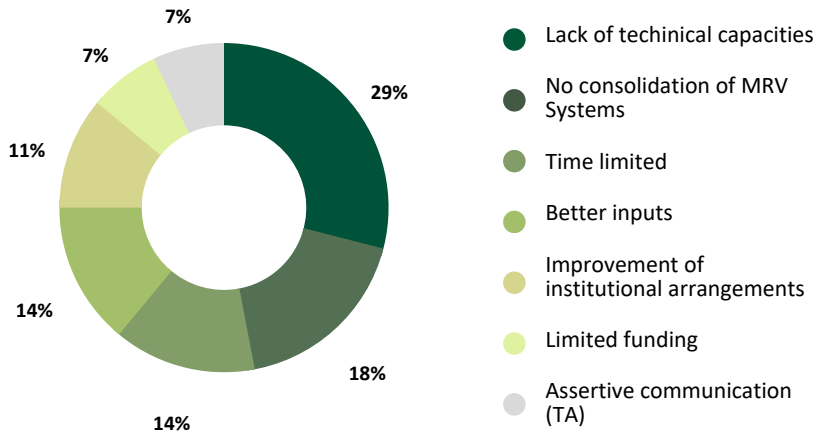

Figure 5. Main challenges faced to implement the improvements in the modified FREL/FRL.

The main challenges faced in implementing the modified FREL/FRL improvements are related to the lack of technical capabilities and the fact that MRV systems have yet to be consolidated.

SURVEY 2

At the end of the seminar, the SilvaCarbon LACC team shared a survey with the participants, which was intended to delve into the challenges faced by the countries in the assessment processes and improvement of the FREL/FRL and identify options to meet these challenges. Another objective was to learn about technical collaboration opportunities: a) between countries within the framework of South-South cooperation and b) with the Silvacarbon program. This survey was answered by 37 people (33 Spanish-speaking and 4 English-speaking) from 16 countries (see Figure 6), 57% of participants identified as female, and 43% as male. In addition, 73% mentioned being part of public institutions, 16% of international organizations, 8% of 'other,' and 3% reported themselves as independent consultants.

Of the total number of participants in this survey, 43% participated in all five seminar sessions, 27% in four sessions, 19% in three, and 11% in two or one. The people who answered the survey considered that this seminar was helpful in multiple ways: 56% responded that it helped them increase their knowledge, 21% promoted the exchange of multicultural experiences, 15% helped them strengthen their network of contacts, and 8% for being able to access high-level speakers. Finally, in the following sections, other relevant results are presented according to different topics addressed in the survey questions.

Country	People
Mexico	11
Peru	5
Guatemala	4
Ecuador	3
Colombia	2
Nicaragua	2
Argentina	1
Brazil	1
Chile	1
Costa Rica	1
El Salvador	1
Guiana	1
Honduras	1
Switzerland	1
Suriname	1
Other	1
Total	37

Figure 6. Number of people by country who answered the survey 2.

Scope of the seminar

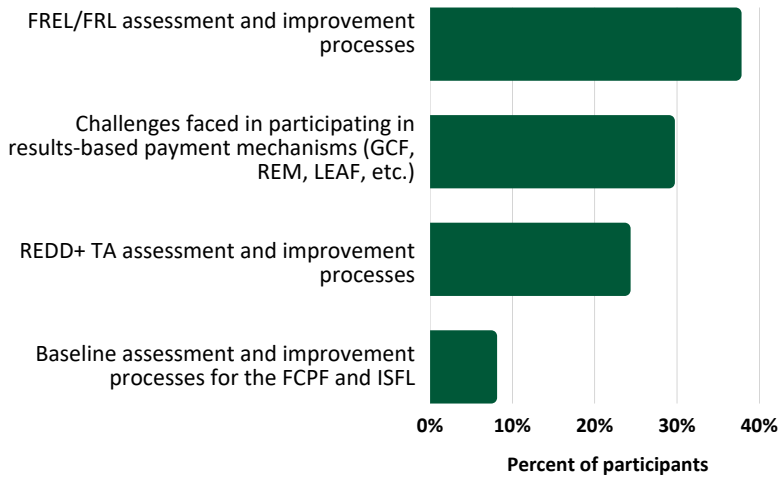

Figure 7. Most important issues addressed in the seminar.

What topics do you consider the most important?

According to the opinion of the survey participants, the most important topics addressed in the seminar were the assessment processes and improvement of the FREL/FRL and the challenges faced to participate in mechanisms to access results-based payments.

What topic should the next event be about? Select from most to least important.

The main issues to be addressed as the following steps are [1] the challenges in nesting the accounting of GHG emissions in the land sector under different results-based payment initiatives and [2] the state of the art of the routes of implementation of the NDCs in the land sector and its relationship with FREL/FRL/Technical Annex.

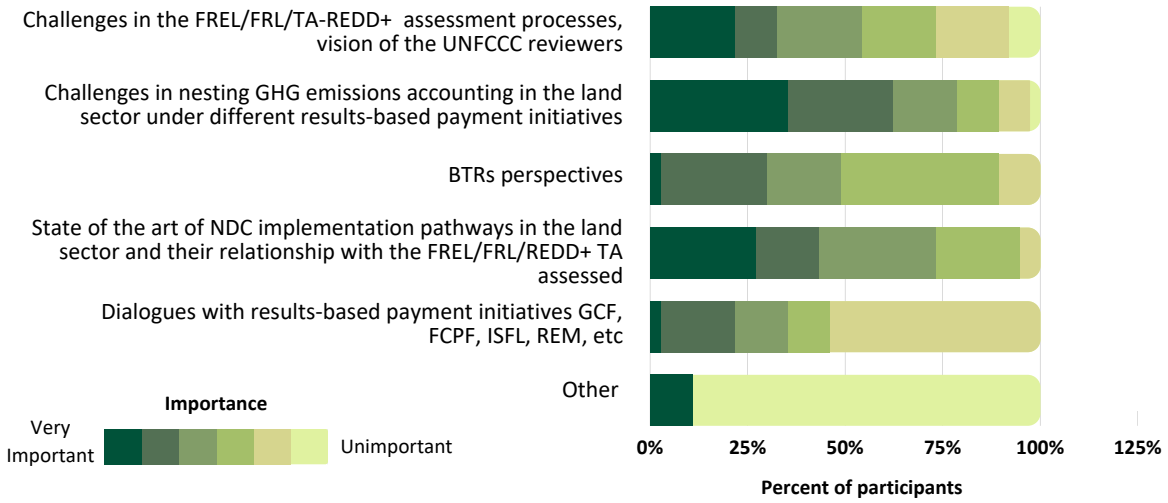

Figure 8. Topics of most significant interest to be addressed in future events.

What challenges are of greatest interest to your country to address?

All the participants in the second survey were interested in collaborating with other countries to address the issues faced in doing FREL/FRL and results, particularly in methodological improvements, strengthening of MRV systems, and capacity building.

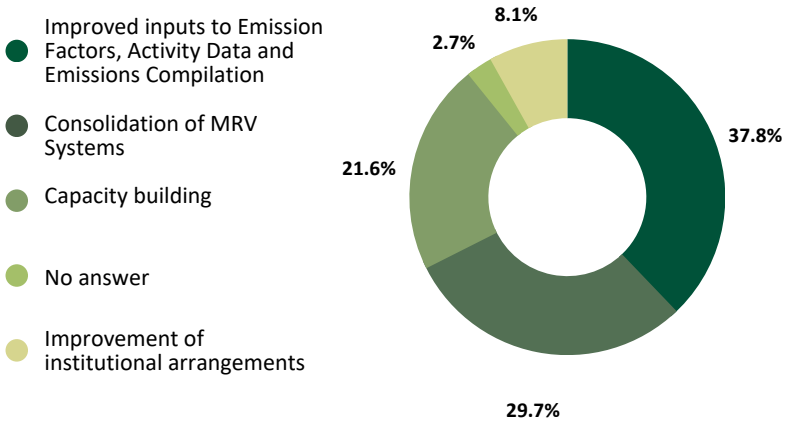

Figure 9. Challenges of most significant interest to address in possible collaborations.

As a community, what can we do to address these challenges?

To face the challenges and help the countries make progress in the consolidation of their FREL/FRL/Technical Annex, it seems that there is a similar interest among the actions to choose from, where the following stands out [1] the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean network of FREL/FRL/Technical Annex and [2] the frequently carry out of events to promote dialogue at a regional level.

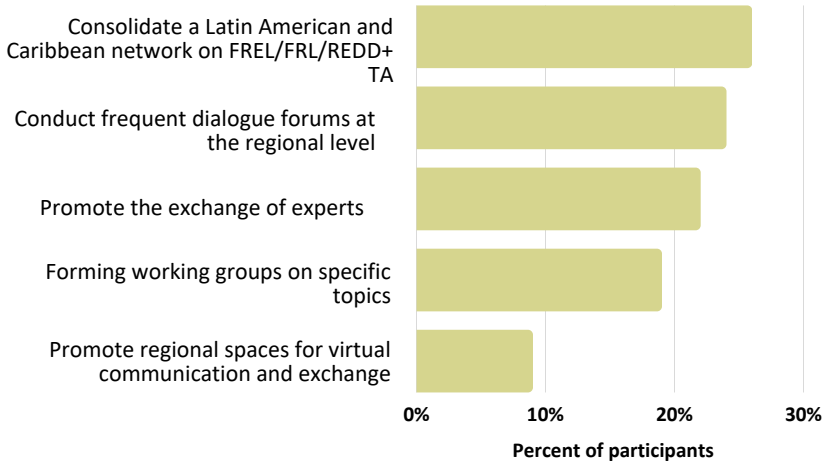

Figure 10. Proposed actions to face the challenges in the framework of possible collaborations.

What means do you consider the most appropriate to strengthen regional collaboration?

The most appropriate resources to strengthen regional collaboration are courses, information exchange platforms, and virtual events.

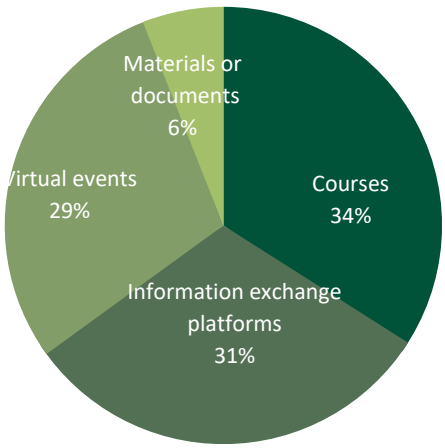

Figure 11. Sources considered most appropriate to strengthen regional collaboration.

South-South Cooperation

Within the framework of South-South cooperation, 81% of those surveyed mentioned their interest in consolidating exchanges with other countries and the following results are particularly highlighted.

Is there any type of exchange that is of interest to you? On what topic?

The topics of interest for technical exchange with other countries are issues related to monitoring forest disturbances through remote sensing, monitoring forest carbon, and estimating and reporting GHG fluxes.

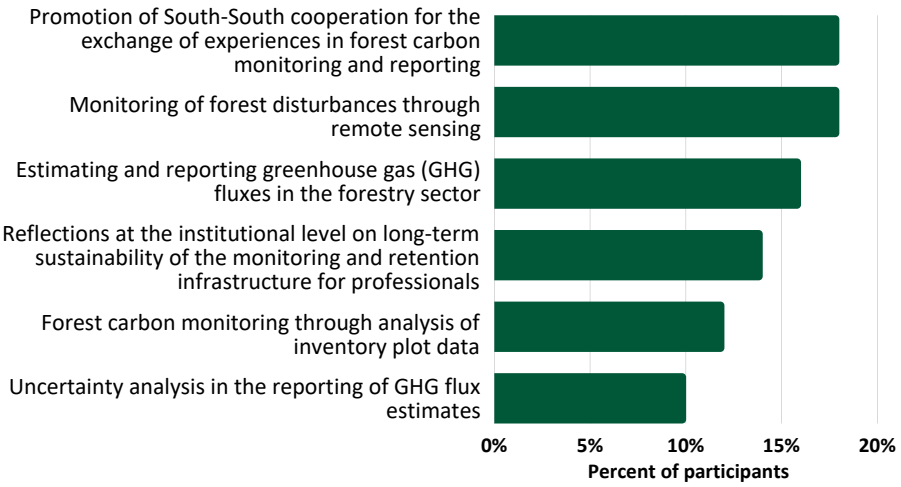

Figure 12. Topics of interest for exchanges with other countries.

Which country are you most interested in exchanging with?

The respondents of Survey 2 have more interest in doing technical exchanges with Brazil, Colombia, Chile, the United States, and Mexico.

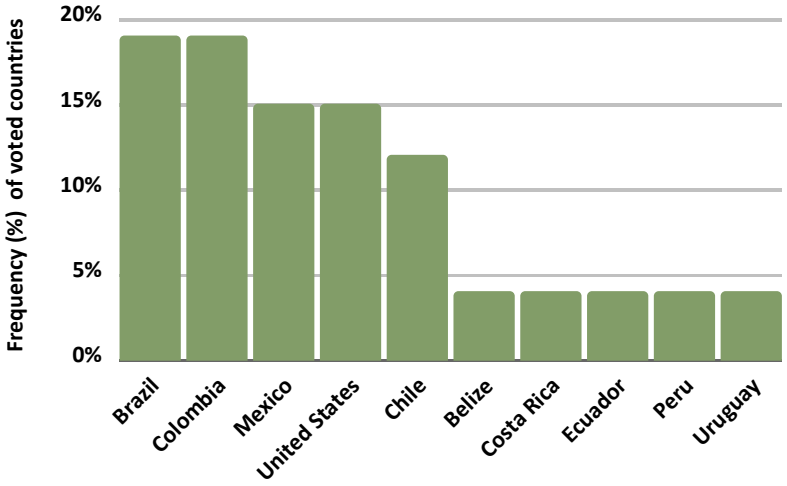

Figure 13. Countries of interest for exchanges.

Topics of collaboration with technical assistance programs

Is consolidating collaboration schemes between your country and technical assistance programs like SilvaCarbon worthwhile? Which topic(s) do you believe is beneficial to strengthen the collaboration between your country and SilvaCarbon? Select from most to least important.

76% of the participants in this survey expressed their interest in strengthening collaborations with technical assistance programs like SilvaCarbon (the remaining 24% did not answer the question) on issues related to the monitoring of forest disturbances through remote sensing, the monitoring of forest carbon through analysis of plots of inventories and the estimation and reporting of GHG fluxes.

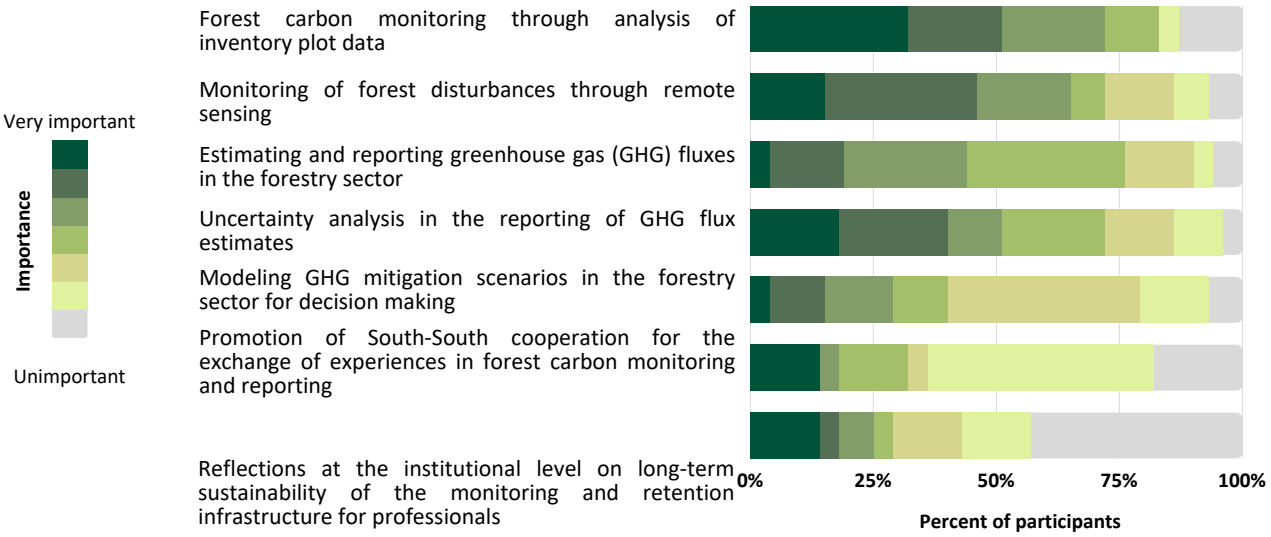

Figure 14. Topics of interest for collaboration with technical assistance programs like SilvaCarbon.

Selected comments from open ended survey questions

"This seminar was a favorable space to exchange experiences between experts from different countries and a first step to consolidate a regional collaboration platform in the future, which I believe is the next big step to follow."

"I am grateful for the initiative, I look forward to other similar spaces, where the technical capacities of those of us who are linked to forest conservation and REDD+ implementation can be increased."

"Opening spaces for technical exchange between countries and experts will help solve common problems."

"I consider that the event was a very good opportunity to listen to the challenges faced by the countries of the region."

"The seminar was a very useful and necessary initiative to update knowledge and exchange experiences with experts from the region, which was very necessary based on the progress and results of the different payment-for-results initiatives for REDD+."

5. REFLECTIONS

Based on the results of the surveys, the primary motivations for the preparation and submission of the FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC are compliance with the commitments to the UNFCCC and access to the results-based payment of the GCF. Within the FREL/FRL assessment processes framework, the main improvements the countries implemented in the modified FREL/FRL are related to methodological aspects (i.e., mainly estimates of EF, AD, and uncertainty analysis). To implement the improvements, the participants mentioned they need more technical capabilities, mainly due to budget cuts, staff with insufficiently developed skills, or political situations. This situation coincides with the main areas for improvement in the assessment processes of the UNFCCC identified by the participants, which are the strengthening of capacities and the increase in the number of national experts in the assessment processes of the FREL/FRL of the UNFCCC.

It is also observed that there is great interest in systematically continuing this type of event that promotes exchanges between experts and capacity building in the region. For this reason, it is identified as an area of opportunity to consolidate a network on this topic that periodically promotes events that facilitate dialogue at the regional level and the strengthening/building of capacities through courses, platforms, and virtual events on methodological issues for improvement of the estimates of the AD, EF, and compilation of emissions; which also helps to consolidate the national MRV systems due to the problems of staff turnover and loss of capacities that the countries face.

In addition, it is recognized that there is a lot of interest in strengthening cooperation between countries, particularly on issues related to exchanging experiences on technical aspects of MRV. Therefore, strengthening south-south cooperation is a potential area of collaboration.

Finally, it is highlighted that, according to answers provided by most of the surveyed, the countries are interested in strengthening collaborations with technical assistance programs like SilvaCarbon to continue building capacities on issues related to data analysis of forest inventories, monitoring through remote sensing, and uncertainty analysis.

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