



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Forests & Transparency

Webinar: Open and transparent – forest data setting the course for green future under the Paris Agreement

15 July, 2020

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Forestry Department (FAO)



Key messages

- **Forests** play a central role in combating climate change.
- A fully functioning **multipurpose** NFMS allows countries to track progress on climate action.
- Building **partnerships** helps ensure the impact of forest monitoring support.



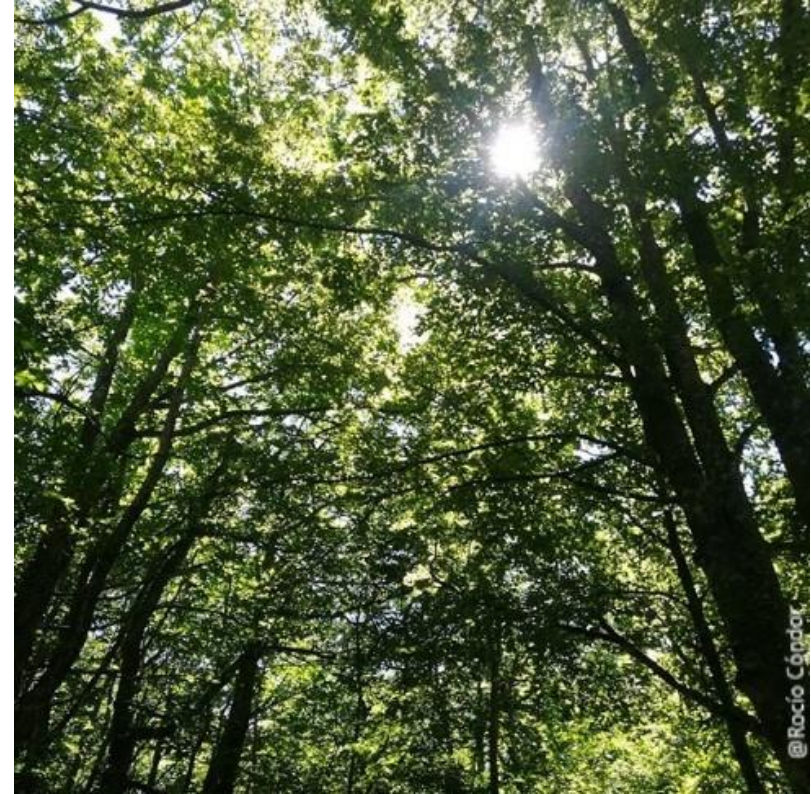
FAO/GEF CBIT-Forest project

- A two-year (2019-2021) global project to step up developing countries' ability to collect, analyse and disseminate forest-related data, to make **forest data transparent, accessible and available** in line with the ETF.
- Aims to increase institutional and technical **capacities** and to boost **knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising** about the ETF particularly in the forest sector.



How

- 26 countries targeted as well as 187 countries and territories included.
- Strengthened network of key partners such as UNFCCC, GFOI, UNEP, UNDP, etc.
- Upgraded FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) reporting and dissemination platform, to make forest data reporting easier in the future.
- Tool developed to facilitate the assessment of gaps and needs in a country's NFMS.
- Outreach and sharing of case studies and best practices on transparency in the forest sector.
- E-learning course to enable access to knowledge about the ETF and forests to anyone anywhere.



Building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector **CBIT forest**

WHAT
Building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector (CBIT Forest) is a two-year project of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) financed by the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) trust fund of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
The global project will strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of developing countries to collect, analyze and disseminate forest-related data. It will support countries in meeting the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) requirements of the Paris Agreement and contribute with information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

WHO
The FAO will implement the project, through its Global Forest Resources Assessment (FAO) and National Forest Monitoring (NFM) teams, working closely with national institutions.

HOW
By ensuring that relevant national institutions responsible for forest-related data are able to report and respond to the transparency requirements thanks to improved institutional capacity.
By enhancing technical capacity of governmental counterparts in pilot countries in reporting, accuracy and consistency of forest-related data.
By increasing knowledge sharing among transparency practitioners and experts.

IMPACT
The project will directly benefit 26 targeted countries and territories that are part of the global network of National Correspondents for the Global Forest Resources Assessment. Project activities will be linked closely with FAO's ongoing global and national forest monitoring work currently supported by the European Commission, Norway, and a number of other donors.

FUNDING
USD 1.9 million by the GEF.

COLLABORATION
The project will ensure ongoing coordination and collaboration with United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNEP DTU, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), among others.

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7424en/ca7424en.pdf> (EN)

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7424fr/ca7424fr.pdf> (FR)

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7424es/ca7424es.pdf> (ES)

Boosting transparency of forest data for climate action

Forests play a central role in combating climate change by absorbing and storing carbon from the atmosphere in their vegetation and soils

Better forest information is needed to make policies and decisions to protect and sustainably manage forest resources



Many countries methodically collect, analyse and disseminate forest-related data to establish a robust national forest monitoring system (NFMS)

FAO has supported the efforts of over 50 countries to strengthen their NFMS



To promote transparency and mutual trust, the Paris Agreement encourages countries to follow the enhanced transparency framework (ETF), building on the transparency arrangements under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

A fully functioning multipurpose NFMS allows countries to respond to their own forest data needs and effectively report on climate emissions and removals and track progress on climate action

Transparency, accuracy, completeness, consistency, comparability are the guiding principles of forest monitoring and the ETF



<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9905en/ca9905en.pdf> (EN)

Case study **Costa Rica**

Costa Rica's progress in developing a national land use, land cover and ecosystems monitoring system

Strengthening national capacities to monitor natural, agricultural and biodiversity resources to support decision-making and increase the ambition and effectiveness of climate actions



Objectives

- Provide high-quality, consistent data on the status quo and any changes in land use, land cover and ecosystems at national scale.
- Facilitate data management and distribution of knowledge and information associated with land use, land cover and ecosystems.
- Strengthen national capacities for informed decision-making on sustainable land management and maintain the quality and integrity of ecosystems and the environment for future generations.
- Harmonize and align methodologies, protocols, classification systems, indicators, metrics and other tools related to land use, land cover and ecosystems.

Context
The Republic of Costa Rica is a Central American country largely covered by tropical forest that exhibits high biodiversity. The country has made many efforts to conserve its forests and biodiversity, although in most cases forest and agricultural resources have been independently assessed. Nevertheless, the interdependence of forest, biodiversity and agricultural resources has highlighted the need to develop a monitoring system that would allow consistent, integrated and comprehensive monitoring of all of these resources.

Since 2015, following a Ministerial Directive (DM-417-2015), the Government of Costa Rica has been developing a national system for monitoring land cover, land use and ecosystems (SIMOCLUTE: Sistema Nacional de Monitoreo de la Cobertura y Uso de la Tierra y Ecosistemas) consisting of several integrated subsystems. SIMOCLUTE constitutes the official platform for the integration and management of environmental data and information at national scale.

Actors and Stakeholders
The Costa Rican Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock are supporting the development of SIMOCLUTE. The platform has developed through a participatory and institutional process led by the National Center for Geoenvironmental Information (CENIGA, Centro Nacional de Información Geoespacial). The overall process is supported by 40 institutions from government, academia and the private sector. The National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC, Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación) is in charge of developing the national forest inventory and the national ecological monitoring programme, which aims to generate and disseminate reliable scientific information on the state and trends of the country's biodiversity and conservation efforts.

SIMOCLUTE is technologically and financially supported by 10 international organizations and is accessible at <https://simoclute.go.cr/>.

Impact

- Facilitating better access to data and mutual understanding of information related to forests, agriculture and ecosystems, encouraging transparency on emission reduction results and informed decision-making.
- Establishing six technical working groups to develop methods and protocols related to land classification, national forest inventory, agricultural land inventory, land use and land cover change (including ecosystems), mapping and registries.
- Strengthening national capacities in data collection and analysis in a cost-effective way through 26 training sessions in 2019. Developing protocols and oriented documents and adopting some technological applications to monitor land use/land cover with user participation.

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8618en/ca8618en.pdf> (EN)

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8618fr/ca8618fr.pdf> (FR)

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8618es/ca8618es.pdf> (ES)

Information note

Strengthening national forest monitoring systems through a comprehensive capacity needs assessment

"A needs and gaps assessment aims to enhance forest monitoring and allows different stakeholders to get a full picture of the status of their national forest monitoring systems."

Julian Fox, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO



Significance of the new tool

Summary
A lack of institutional and individual capacity often undermines the long-term impact of otherwise technically sound programmes. To support efforts towards sound and impactful forest monitoring, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed a national forest monitoring system (NFMS) assessment tool to help countries identify capacity gaps and weaknesses in order to address their real needs in a targeted manner.

Context
The enhanced transparency framework (ETF) is a key element of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Under the ETF, robust data collection, analysis and dissemination of forest-related data are the basis for reporting on emissions and removals and tracking the progress of nationally determined contributions. Given the significant climate change mitigation potential of forests, improving the transparency of forest-related data and information within the ETF is timely, indeed urgent, in order to translate this potential into action.

Why support a capacity assessment?
A capacity assessment is a structured approach to analysing capacity across three dimensions: individuals, organizations and the enabling environment. In the context of forest monitoring, a capacity assessment aims to provide a broad picture of an NFMS, in terms of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Building an NFMS is a complex national-scale effort that must consider multiple institutional, technical and financial aspects. The system should increase transparency, reliability of the information produced and ensure a long-term perspective, through participatory processes that include multiple stakeholders with different skills, who must be identified and informed throughout. The stakeholders draw on their breadth of knowledge to identify needs and gaps in order to achieve a robust and sustainable NFMS that captures and delivers continuous information on a country's forests.

FAO's new NFMS assessment tool facilitates the identification of needs and gaps in order to establish or strengthen a country's forest monitoring. The tool is based on FAO's Voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring (VGNFM) reinforced with the REDD+compass resources of the Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI). It also incorporates 50 years of FAO experience gained in the field, working together with countries around the globe. The assessment tool, which provides an easy way to use and implement the VGNFM, is free, Excel-based and available in English, French and Spanish. The tool supports the strengthening of an existing NFMS, including capacity assessment of the system and facilitation of dialogue with key national stakeholders, helping to pool their first-hand knowledge of a problem or development challenge and identify possible solutions. It also helps to identify the institutional dynamics, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement of an NFMS. A useful complementary series of guidance, good practices and practical tools based on local circumstances when running a capacity assessment, is available on FAO's Capacity Development website: www.fao.org/capacity-development.

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca9903en/ca9903en.pdf> (EN)

E-learning course: “Forests and transparency under the Paris Agreement”

Learn about:

- the role and importance of forests in tackling climate change.
- how the ETF under the Paris Agreement can be addressed in the forest sector.
- how the national forest monitoring systems can help countries to meet the requirements of the ETF.

How long does it take? 3 modules, 1 hour 30 minutes



Forests and transparency under the Paris Agreement

 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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CBIT forest

Access the course online or download (English version):
<https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=587>

LESSON 1

The Enhanced Transparency Framework and forests

Lesson 1 explains how the Paris Agreement charts a new course in global efforts against climate change, and illustrates the requirements under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), showing how they build on the Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) framework.

The lesson also reviews the fundamental role of forests in absorbing and storing carbon from the atmosphere and highlights interrelations between the collection and analysis of forest-related data and the requirements foreseen under the ETF.



30 minutes

How are forests related to the Enhanced Transparency Framework?

Forests relate to several aspects of the ETF.



are related to forests because...

Forest emissions and removals should be reported and reviewed in a GHG Inventory.

Parties may choose to include forests in their **NDCs**, and they are required to report mitigation actions across all sectors, including agriculture and forestry.

Parties report on financial, technical and capacity-building provided or received related to forest projects/activities.

Forests provide a key role in adaptation and can help to build resilience.

Forest-related information is subject to review and facilitative multilateral consideration of progress.



Who will be involved in a TER?

LESSON 2

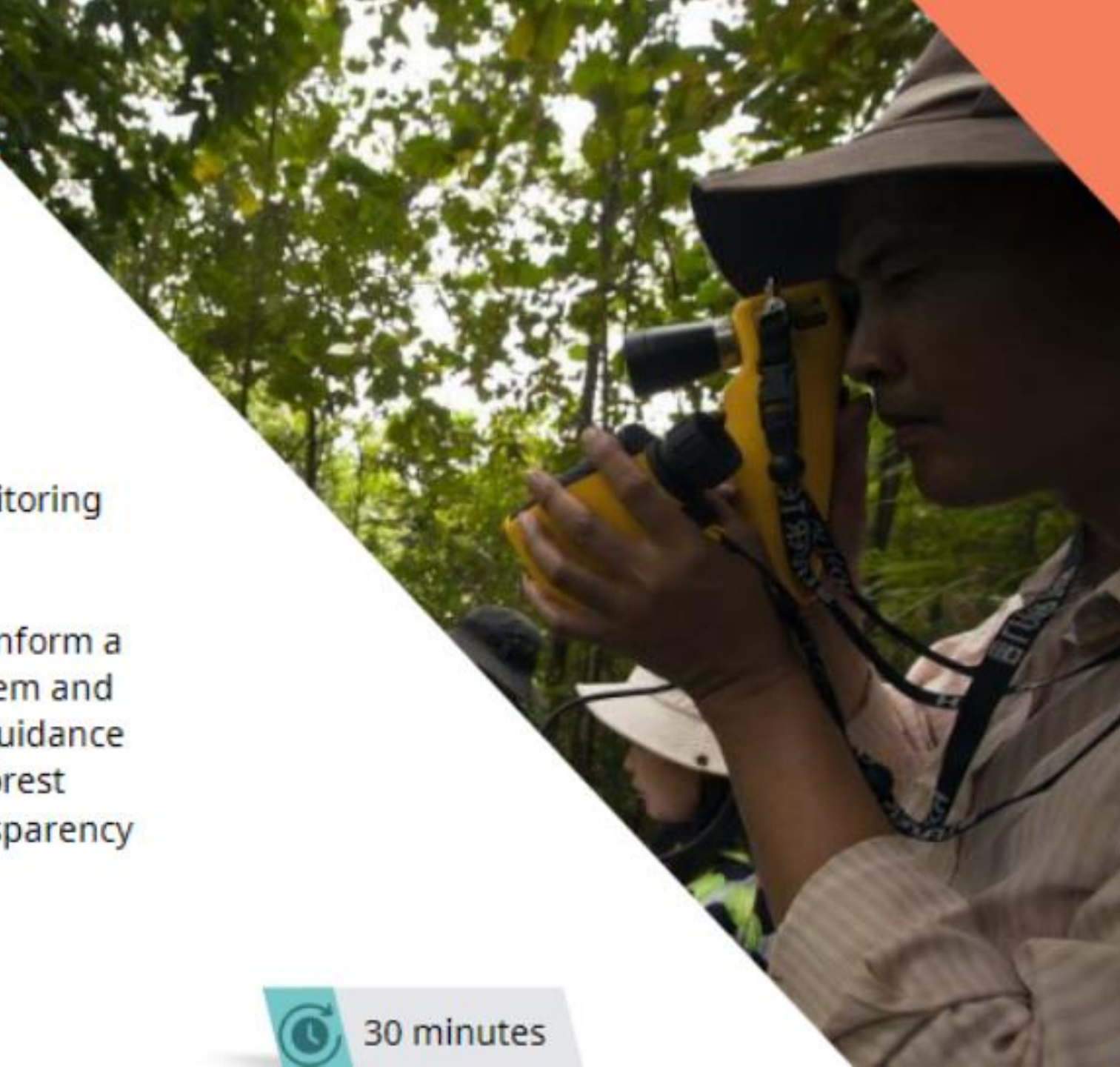
The National Forest Monitoring System

This lesson reviews the National Forest Monitoring System, its goals and scope.

It also illustrates the principles that should inform a sustainable National Forest Monitoring System and describes, through real examples, the key guidance elements required to strengthen national forest monitoring capacities, increasing their transparency and long-term reliability.



30 minutes

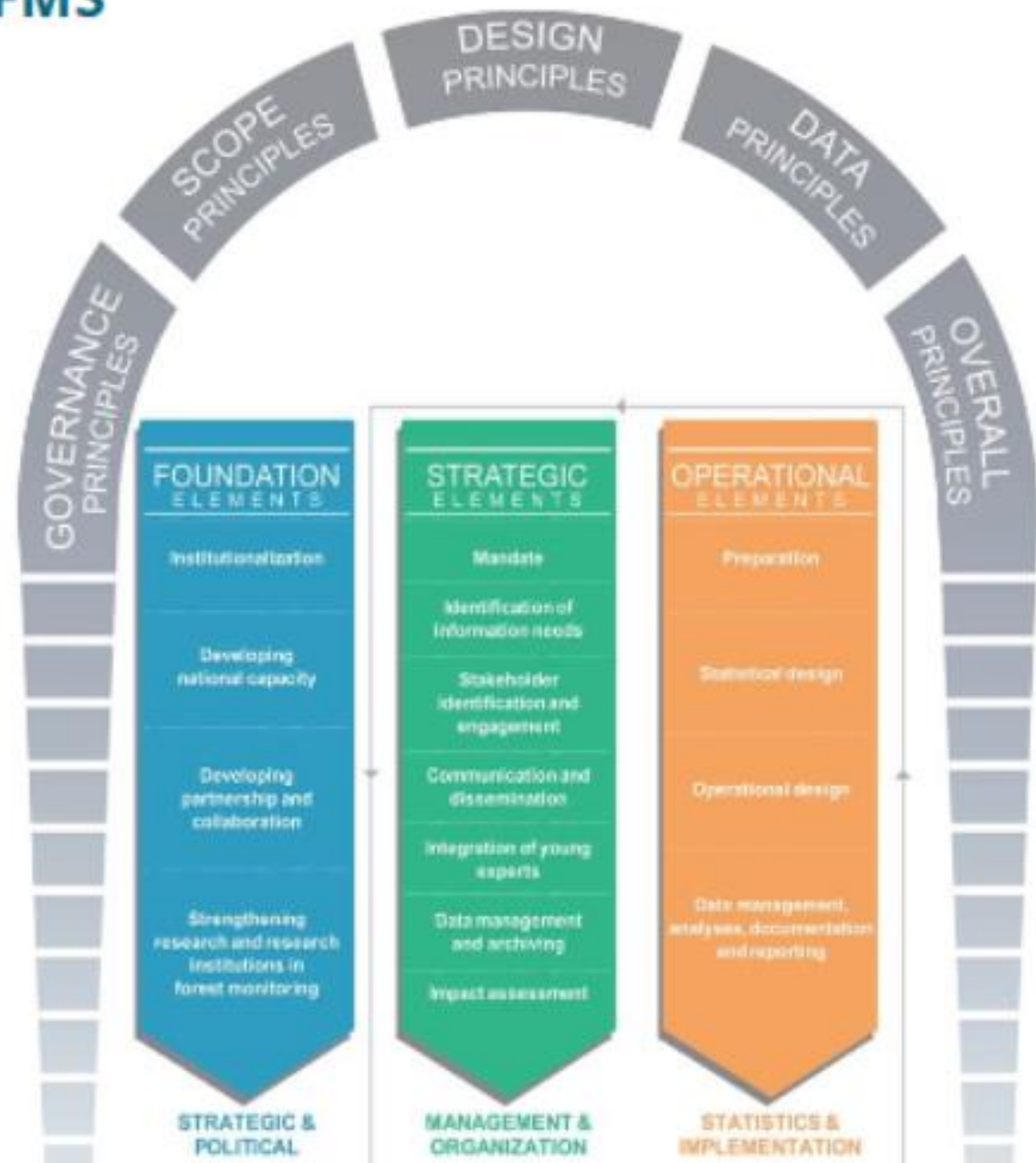


Principles and elements of a sustainable NFMS

Typically, an NFMS requires a long-term vision and interdisciplinary collaboration, and should inform the principles and include the elements reviewed in this lesson.

These are schematically presented in this diagram.

They refer to a variety of planning issues, some of which are technical in nature, while others are organizational or strategic.



The overall aim is to provide detailed and comprehensive guidance for establishing a sustainable NFMS.



[The NFMS assessment tool](#)

Zoom

LESSON 3

Forest data for the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement

This lesson discusses how a National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) that is informed by principles of transparency, accuracy, consistency, completeness and comparability enables countries to produce **reliable** and **transparent data**, and thus to meet the reporting requirements under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF).



30 minutes



Case study - Costa Rica



Costa Rica

Costa Rica has developed a National Land-Use, Land Cover and Ecosystem Monitoring System known as SIMOCUTE.

Ownership of **SIMOCUTE*** comes under the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.

SIMOCUTE is a decentralized system where different institutions and entities share their data and information, according to their mandates and roles, and on the basis of established requirements and standards.

This provides more consistent, accurate, comparable, complete and transparent information on the land-use sector at national scale.



The success factors of this project

Thanks for your attention!

<http://www.fao.org/in-action/boosting-transparency-forest-data/en/>

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