



COUNTRIES MAKE DEFORESTATION DATA AVAILABLE FOR INCREASED TRANSPARENCY OF REDD+ EFFORTS

One of the key pieces of methodological guidance for REDD+ issued to date by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) of the Parties (COP) is that countries should use the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidance and guidelines (as adopted or encouraged by the COP) to estimate 1) forest-related emissions and removals, 2) forest carbon stocks, and 3) forest area changes.

As a starting point, as countries develop methodologies for estimating forest carbon stocks – involving extensive field data collection – much focus is being placed on assessing forest area changes. Using historical satellite data, forest cover changes dating back thirty years can be assessed using freely available imagery such as from [NASA's Landsat Programme](#). In terms of methodologies for assessing changes, the IPCC sets out a range of approaches countries can follow, in addition to a number of broad principles. One of these principles is transparency – encouraging countries to be as open as possible about the methods they use as well as their findings.

In this vein, Peru's Ministry of Environment recently released their first estimates of [national deforestation covering the period 2009-2011](#) (see in Spanish) in addition to details of the methods they used for [their analysis](#) (see in Spanish). These results have so far indicated 92% accuracy against field measurements and aircraft based observations; and the government is committed to continual improvement as they refine their methods. This marks a significant step forward by the Government of Peru towards forest data openness and transparency as it develops its national forest monitoring system, one of the requirements to participate in REDD+ under the UNFCCC.

In the approach, Peru follows a relatively long history of adopting an open data policy on land use led by their large neighbour to the east, Brazil, whose [National Institute for Space Research \(INPE\)](#) have made their deforestation statistics openly available online since the 1990s, through reports as well as through their web-GIS portal under the framework of the [project Prodes](#). This interface allows the user to visualise not only annual deforestation statistics but also protected areas, indigenous reserves and infrastructure, among others.

This commitment to transparency allows a country to demonstrate the outcomes of its efforts to reduce deforestation (and other REDD+ activities). More importantly, it facilitates the collection of data on the status of its forest lands, including in remote and/or inaccessible areas. It is, at least in part, due to such a transparent approach that Brazil has secured pledges for action to tackle Amazonian deforestation through its [Amazon Fund](#) of more than US\$1 billion to date from international donors, and managed to achieve an 80% reduction in its deforestation rate from 2004-2011.

As other developing countries set out to implement national forest monitoring systems, transparency is likely to be a principle that will underpin the legitimacy and ultimate success of their efforts.

Go-REDD+ is an e-mail listserv managed by the UN-REDD Programme team in Asia-Pacific, based in Bangkok. The main objective of **Go-REDD+** is to distribute information, synopses of research results and activities related to REDD+ in Asia-Pacific, to assist countries in their **REDD+** readiness efforts. Old messages will be archived on the [Regional Activities pages](#) of the UN-REDD Programme website. [Discussion forum](#) on **Go-REDD+** is available through UN-REDD Programme's online [knowledge sharing platform](#). The **Go-REDD+** team welcomes feedback, suggestions or inquiries to goredd.th@undp.org.