



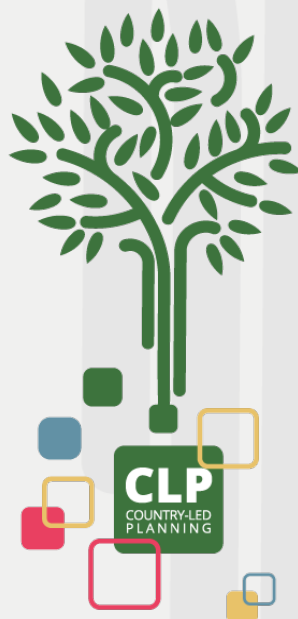
Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

**GF**  Global Forest  
Observations Initiative

# Mapping the CLP process:

## Strategic approaches for national leadership

2025



## Introduction: GFOI and the CLP

**The Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI)** is a partnership helping tropical nations strengthen National Forest Monitoring Systems (NFMS) for sustainable forest management, climate action, and reporting.

Within this framework, the **Country-Led Planning (CLP)** initiative supports countries in moving to nationally owned, sustainable forest monitoring systems. CLP is a participatory and flexible process through which governments identify gaps, build roadmaps, and coordinate across key institutions to ensure ownership and alignment of their NFMS with national priorities.

## Why countries should consider CLP

A CLP process enables governments to:

- Take ownership of their NFMS and establish more balanced relationships with donors and partners.
- Integrate fragmented data systems into unified platforms for multipurpose reporting.
- Build trust through coordination and clear, shared priorities.
- Link forest monitoring to broader national agendas such as planning, biodiversity, disaster management, and carbon markets.
- Deliver early, visible results that reinforce political will while laying the foundations for long-term institutional sustainability.

## Best practices for advancing a CLP process

### **1. Secure political will early**

Political will fuels CLP. Without high-level support, NFMS risk remaining as fragmented, short-term projects. Leading institutions should:

- Demonstrate NFMS' domestic benefits—for policy, planning, law enforcement, and economic opportunities.
- Link NFMS to national development priorities.
- Identify and empower champions who sustain visibility across political cycles.

### **2. Build effective coordination mechanisms**

Coordination is a systemic enabler, not a side activity. It transforms monitoring from a fragmented effort into a cohesive, policy-relevant, and nationally owned system. Governments should:

- Create multi-sectoral spaces linking environment, planning, finance, and land agencies.
- Ensure coordination bodies are properly mandated and resourced.
- Foster informal collaboration and trust to strengthen alignment.

### 3. Clarify roles through legal and institutional anchors

Legal frameworks anchor systems in permanence, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and ownership. Institutions should:

- Establish coordination bodies or mechanisms early in the process.
- Develop or update legal instruments clarifying mandates and data-sharing obligations.
- Combine formal rules with informal trust-building among agencies.

### 4. Focus on sustainable financing

NFMS must be treated as long-term public functions, not temporary projects. Financial sustainability depends on strategic budgeting and multiple funding sources. Agencies should:

- Embed NFMS within national budget cycles and distribute costs across relevant institutions—not only the environmental sector.
- Align NFMS with REDD+, NDC, and SDG frameworks to unlock budget lines.
- Leverage spatial-planning budgets, as these often overlap with forest monitoring objectives.
- Link NFMS to performance-based financing or climate instruments such as the GCF.
- Prioritize predictable funding to maintain staff and institutional capacity.

### 5. Strengthen data governance and methodological coherence

Interoperability is not merely technical—it is institutional and political. To ensure strong data governance, governments should:

- Agree on common definitions, standards, and metadata.
- Develop clear protocols for secure data storage, validation, and sharing.
- Promote open data while protecting sensitive information.
- Ensure outputs serve both national decision-making and international reporting.

### 6. Invest in people and knowledge, not just technology

An NFMS is a living institutional capability that depends on people, not only tools. Governments should:

- Go beyond training by ensuring job stability, recognition, and links with academia for professional growth.
- Maintain living manuals, shared protocols, and mentoring programs.
- Build communities of practice and regional learning networks to preserve and renew knowledge.
- Promote South–South collaboration. Peer exchange accelerates progress and helps countries co-create solutions by sharing both successes and setbacks.

### 7. Engage stakeholders from the start

Legitimacy comes from participation. Early and meaningful engagement ensures that NFMS are relevant, trusted, and used. Governments should:

- Involve Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector, academia, civil society, and subnational governments.

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- Tailor communication so all audiences understand and can apply NFMS data.
- Present NFMS as a shared national asset rather than a technical project.

### First activities offered by the CLP Programme of Support

When a country expresses interest, the **CLP Programme of Support (PoS)** provides an initial package to launch the process and build momentum:

1. **Stakeholder mapping and stocktaking** – Identify actors and ongoing initiatives to ensure integration and avoid duplication.
2. **Multi-stakeholder engagement workshop** – Co-create a shared vision of an embedded NFMS, build trust, and set priorities.
3. **Functional Gap Assessment (FGA)** – Diagnose governance, coordination, and financing gaps to form the basis of a national roadmap.

**Expected outcome:** a co-created starting point that anchors CLP in national leadership and sets the foundation for embedding NFMS into broader governance frameworks.

### Conclusion

The CLP pathway is not just about improving monitoring systems—it is about reshaping governance. Though challenging, it offers lasting rewards: stronger institutions, greater sovereignty, and monitoring systems that meet both national and international needs.

By securing political leadership, embedding NFMS legally and financially, fostering coordination, and engaging stakeholders, countries can turn NFMS into engines of resilience and sustainable development. Experience from early adopters shows that when countries lead, NFMS evolve from reporting tools into national assets central to planning and policy.

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