



# DEVELOPING A REDD+ FOREST REFERENCE LEVEL AND NATIONAL FOREST MONITORING SYSTEM IN BHUTAN

Bhutan formally initiated a national Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+) programme under the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in 2010. The country's commitment to conserving forests for posterity, backed by forward-looking policies and approaches, is consistent with the objectives of the REDD+ mechanism, and places Bhutan as a strong candidate to be recognized for its past and present actions, and financially supported to continue the conservation of its forest resources. Therefore, it was relevant for Bhutan to work on an international reporting product, such as the Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL)/Forest Reference Level (FRL), which could take stock of emissions and removals from the forest sector, and set a benchmark to measure future performance of forest management. The concept of a national FREL/FRL was new to Bhutan, therefore the project would provide the required technical assistance for its development.



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## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

A core of skilled technical expertise was established at the Watershed Management Division (WMD) and Forest Resources Management Division (FRMD) of the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS). These institutions developed the capacity required to produce the national FREL/FRL document, enabling them to contribute to further development of Bhutan's National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) for revalidating national forest cover, measuring forests carbon stocks and the future performance of forest management. The processes underlying FREL/FRL development were institutionalized within DoFPS, and the local staff are now capable of carrying through the activities of implementing Measurement, Reporting and Verification of Greenhouse Gas emissions from the forest and land use sector, beyond the project and for future submissions. Bhutan's FREL/FRL was constructed using historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances, taking into consideration the future increasing pressure on forests.

## IMPACT

The project contributed to enhancing sustainable management of land, water and genetic resources, and to improving responses to global environmental challenges affecting food and agriculture.

## KEY FACTS

### Contribution

USD 260 500

### Duration

March 2017 – June 2018

### Resource Partner

Government of Bhutan

### Partner

Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

### Beneficiaries

Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS); forest-dependent people in Bhutan, particularly those involved in community forestry

## ACTIVITIES

- Technical staff of WMD and FRMD trained on FREL/FRL development-National Forest Inventory data analysis and support, Activity Data and Emission Factor data generation/analysis, and FREL/FRL construction.
- Five Project Implementation Team meetings held to coordinate the implementation of project activities, as per the work plan.
- National FREL/FRL development institutionalized within the Government, forming a part of the responsibilities for NFMS at FRMD, within DoFPS.
- Four-day training workshops conducted for six staff members from FRMD and WMD on tools developed by FAO Forestry Department under the Open Foris initiative and the SEPAL Platform to generate Activity Data suitable for FREL/FRL.
- Training event on Open Foris Calc (tool for data analysis and results calculation) organized to generate Emission Factor data and train government personnel on data analysis for coarse woody debris, regeneration, saplings, soils, tree volume increment and diversity.
- Workshop held to train government personnel on the generation of Emission Factor data and drafting of the related FREL/FRL text.
- FREL/FRL document drafted, and reviewed and amended during series of meetings and consultations held with government and technical teams. The final revision was made by the government technical team, and the document was validated as Bhutan's FREL/FRL.
- FREL/FRL brief prepared, which included a summary of the FREL/FRL and its policy implications, and will support the finalization of the National REDD+ Strategy.



### Project Code

FAO: UTF/BHU/012/BHU

### Project Title

Development of a REDD+ Forest Reference Level (FRL) and National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS)

### Contact

FAO Representation in Bhutan

[FAO-BT@fao.org](mailto:FAO-BT@fao.org)