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## Expert Consultation Event: FREL/FRL development in Asia/Pacific

UN-REDD  
PROGRAMME



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# Introduction to Forest Reference (Emission) Levels (FRELs) for REDD+

# Outline

- FAO programmatic approach to FREL/FRL
- What are Forest Reference (Emission) Levels (FRELs)?
- UNFCCC Methodological Guidance for FRELs
- FREL considerations;
  - 1) Forest definition
  - 2) Scope
  - 3) Scale
  - 4) Data and Methodologies
- FRELs and National Circumstances



# UNREDD (FAO) approach to FREL

- Build country capacity in technical and policy aspects of FREL development, to allow a country to make informed decisions on FREL development
- Support countries in the development of FREL that adhere to UNFCCC guidance, while meeting domestic needs
- Support countries if they wish to submit a FREL to the UNFCCC. The decision to submit a FREL is voluntary, but a FREL is a requirement for participation in REDD+ under the UNFCCC
- FAO has the mandate (through UNREDD) to provide technical support to countries on FREL



## The 4 Elements of REDD+; Cancun Agreement



# REDD+ “Forest Reference Emission Level and Forest Reference Levels” – what does it mean?

- REDD+ has defined FREL/FRLs as “benchmarks for assessing each country’s performance in implementing REDD+ activities”
- UNFCCC has never defined the two concepts... The UN-REDD interpretation;

## Forest Reference Emission Level (FREL)

### Gross emissions from deforestation or degradation

Solely for activities that **“reduce emissions”**

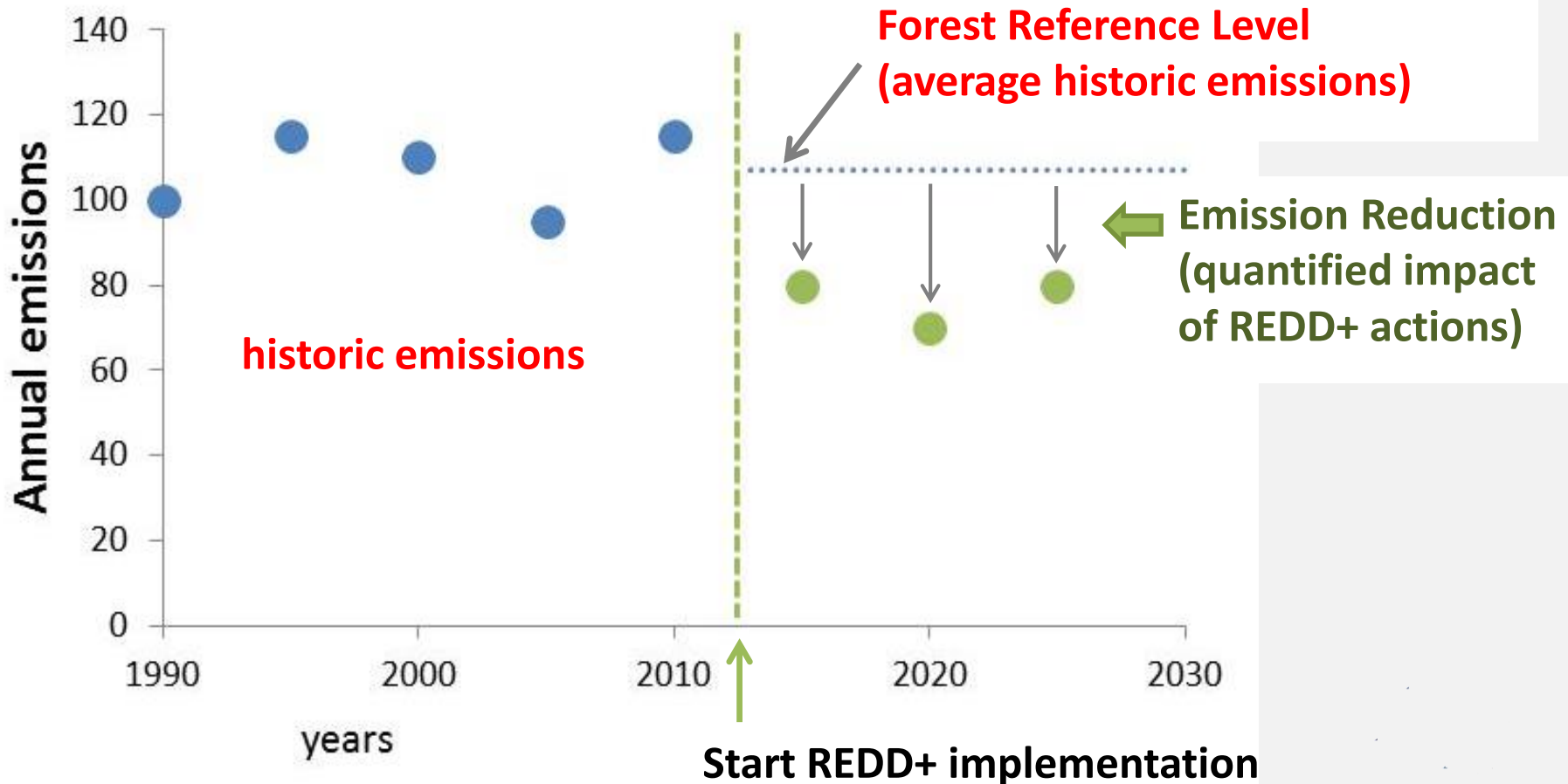
- Reducing emissions from deforestation
- Reducing emissions from forest degradation

## Forest Reference Level (FRL)

### Net emissions and removals

Also includes activities from the “+” that can **“enhance forest carbon stocks”**

# FREL/FRL graphical example





# FRL consideration 1: Forest Definition

Forest Reference (Emission) Levels (FRLs) for REDD+



# Forest definition: UNFCCC Guidance

- When submitting a FREL/FRL to the UNFCCC, a country must provide a definition of forest used in its construction
- If there is a difference with the definition used in the national GHG inventory or in reporting to other international organizations, an explanation of why and how the definition was chosen is required





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# **FRL consideration: scope**

- which REDD+ activities are included**
- which pools are included**

Forest Reference (Emission) Levels (FRLs) for REDD+

# Which activities to include in the FRL?

The UNFCCC has defined 5 activities for REDD+:

- Reducing emissions from **deforestation**
- Reducing emissions from **forest degradation** (e.g. timber harvesting, fuelwood collection, etc.)
- **Sustainable management of forests**
- **Enhancement of forest carbon stocks** (e.g. reforestation)
- **Conservation** of forest carbon stocks (in this case, a country would likely need to demonstrate and quantify increasing pressures on forests and therefore emissions)



# Which activities to include in the FRL?

The UNFCCC does not say which activities a country should choose, but does say that:

- Significant pools and/or activities should not be excluded
- Reasons for omitting a pool and/or activity must be provided

What does significant mean?





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## FRL consideration 3: scale

Forest Reference (Emission) Levels (FRLs) for REDD+

# UNFCCC Guidance

- The objective for all countries is to develop a national level FREL/FRL.
- Subnational FREL/FRLs are acceptable as an interim measure.



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# FRL consideration 4: data and methodology

Forest Reference (Emission) Levels (FRLs) for REDD+

# UNFCCC Guidance

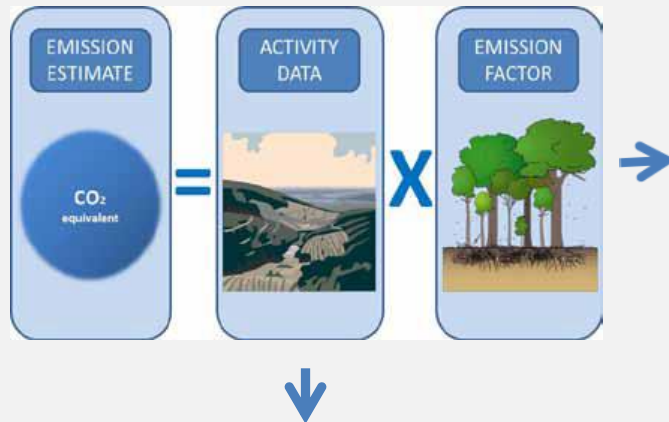
take into account **historic data** ... (Dec 4/CP.15)

maintain consistency between MRV and  
FREL/FRL (Dec 14/CP.19)



# Data

- FREL/FRL methodology should be guided by the most recent IPCC guidelines



**3 tiers and 2 methods for Emission Factors**  
 1) Stock-change  
 2) Gain-Loss

**3 approaches for Activity Data**

**Activity based reporting (IPCC 1996)**  
**Land based reporting (IPCC 2003/2006)**





# Methodology

## How to construct the FREL/FRL



# UNFCCC Guidance

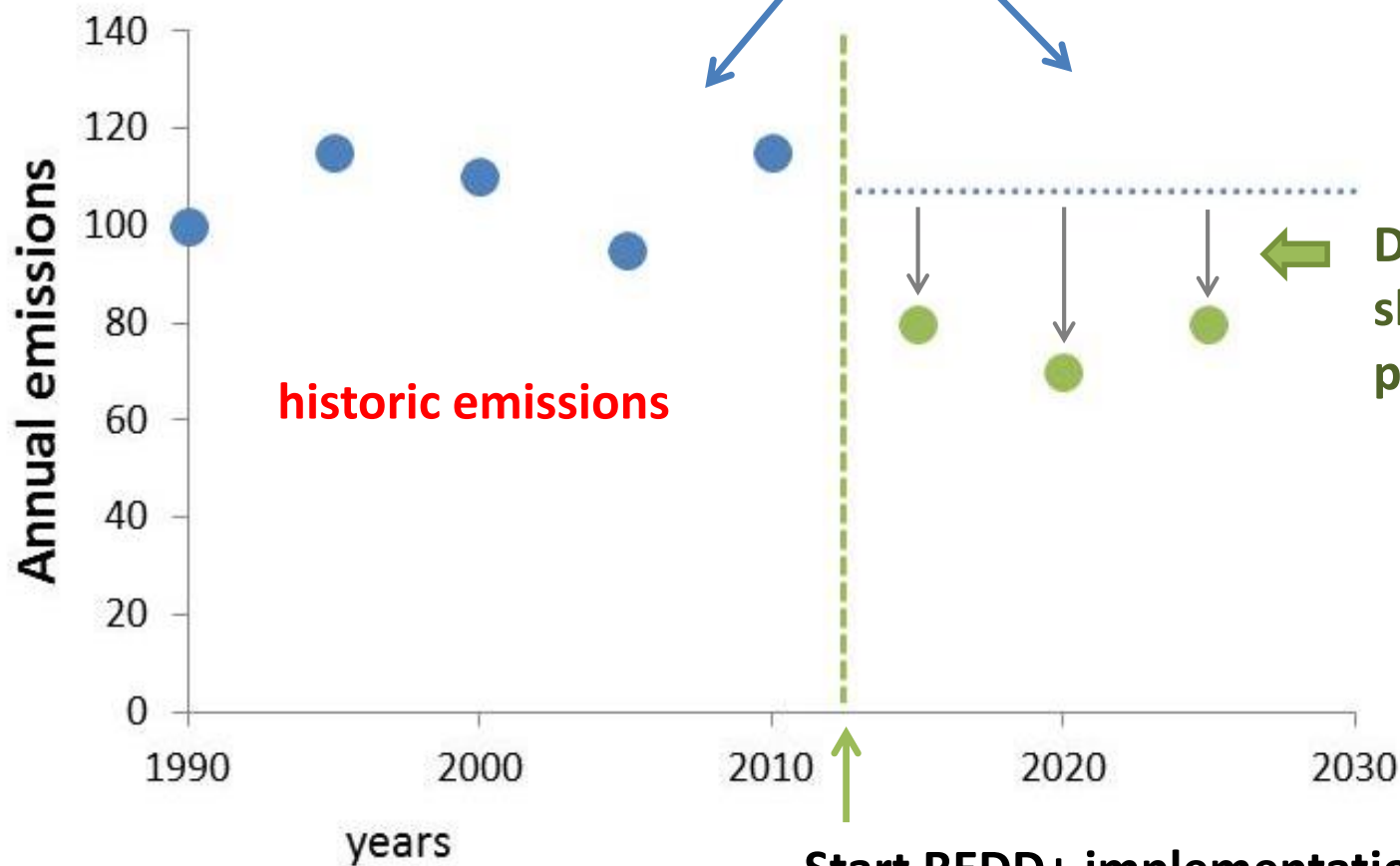
take into account **historic data**, and adjust for **national circumstances** (Dec 4/CP.15)

description of data sets, approaches, models, if applicable and assumptions used (Dec 12/CP.17)

descriptions of relevant policies/plans (Dec 12/CP.17)



## MRV: consistency in methodologies, definitions and comprehensiveness over time



# Summary – Bringing it all together

- To participate in REDD+ countries are required to develop and define a FREL/FRL as a benchmark to assessing performance in implementing REDD+ activities
- UNFCCC provides a framework for the construction of FREL/FRLs for REDD+
- Some methodological elements are clearly defined, while other elements remain undefined to allow flexibility at a country implementation level
- Clear guidelines and procedures for submission and technical assessment of FREL/FRL have been provided by the UNFCCC

