Jurisdictional approaches to sustainable development hold tremendous potential for advancing holistic, durable solutions to the intertwined issues of tropical deforestation, rural livelihoods, and food security. With many jurisdictional “experiments” underway around the world, the time is ripe for a systematic assessment.

Earth Innovation Institute (EII), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the Governors’ Climate and Forests Task Force (GCF-TF) are collaborating on a comprehensive study of these experiments across the Tropics to draw on early lessons. More specifically, the study evaluates progress towards low-emission, sustainable development, including goals and commitments, monitoring and reporting systems, multi-stakeholder governance platforms, and innovative policies and initiatives that are core elements of jurisdictional sustainability. The assessment also includes an in-depth analysis of deforestation and emissions (including drivers and agents of deforestation and forest degradation) and examines the potential implications of low-emission rural development (LED-R) strategies for future emission reductions. It also explores barriers to and opportunities for fostering jurisdictional sustainability.

This study focuses on 39 primarily first-level subnational political and administrative divisions (e.g., province, state, etc.) in 12 tropical countries. In 2017-18 we compiled secondary data and conducted interviews with key stakeholders in all jurisdictions on the themes described above. In several jurisdictions, we also implemented the Sustainable Landscapes Rating Tool (SLRT) of the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance to assist in our assessment of jurisdictions’ progress towards LED-R.

The report includes analytical briefs about each jurisdiction, as well as an overall synthesis of jurisdictional sustainability across the Tropics. The full report will be published in September 2018, ahead of the Global Climate Action Summit and the Governors’ Climate & Forests Task Force Meeting in San Francisco, California.
A GLOBAL SNAPSHOT: Deforestation, Emissions & GDP

39 Sub-national jurisdictions of the world’s tropical forests
28% Of the world’s tropical forest carbon stock
33% Of the world’s tropical forests

Drivers of deforestation
Change in deforestation relative to FREL

Increase
Decrease

Increase
Decrease

Change in average annual deforestation rate (5yr trend)

% Change in average annual deforestation (5yr trend)

**KEY TRENDS**

- About half of the jurisdictions reduced deforestation below their FREL over the last five years. Brazilian states have reduced deforestation by 44% (7,893 km²) relative to their FREL.
- Annual deforestation increased over the last five years in 28 of the 39 jurisdictions by a median rate of 16 km² (0.03%) per year.
- Over the same period, GDP increased by an average of 6.33% in 34 jurisdictions. In almost all jurisdictions, economic growth (signaled by GDP) appears to be decoupled from deforestation.
- Jurisdictions could achieve deforestation carbon neutrality by 2027 if they reduce deforestation by 90% and commit to zero-net deforestation.

**Potential emissions reductions with 90% Reduction in Deforestation & Zero Net Deforestation by 2030**

Under a LED-R scenario, we estimate that together the 39 jurisdictions could avoid a total of 9.2 Gt CO₂eq between 2017 and 2030 by lowering their deforestation by 90% from historical forest reference emission levels. Additionally, under a carbon enhancement scenario (natural and human-induced regeneration of cleared and degraded forest), carbon neutrality could be achieved by 2027 with a net carbon uptake reaching 0.4 Gt CO₂eq per year by 2030 and total avoided emissions of 11.8 Gt CO₂eq.

**Methodology**

- **Observed emissions** (1990-2017) derived from annual deforestation and carbon emissions factors as defined by national FREL submitted to the UNFCCC. Included carbon pools are aboveground and belowground biomass, peat degradation, soil and litter as defined in each FREL.
- **BAU scenario** projected using the deforestation trend defined by each FREL. BAU sub-divisions represent jurisdictional contributions within a country. LED-R scenarios, projected with a reduction in deforestation of 90% by 2030 relative to the BAU baseline.
- **Carbon enhancement scenario** considers 90% reduction in deforestation plus regeneration of degraded and cleared forest areas. Regenerating forest targets rely on subnational/national reforestation pledges and zero net deforestation. The forest regenerating area reaches 9.4 Mhas in 2030. In the 14 simulated years (2017-2030) regenerating forests reach 1/5 of the projected mature carbon stocks. Carbon increases linearly from year 1 to year 14 and the total carbon stock increases as the weighted distribution of the forest age and forested area over each year.

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**Based on a decision of the German Bundestag**