

Norway and FAO scale up forest monitoring for climate action

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\$9.5 million for FAO's SEPAL to strengthen forest data and unlock climate finance



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) today announced a new investment from Norway to strengthen forest monitoring worldwide, helping countries strengthen climate action, improve transparency and unlock finance to protect and restore forests.

Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) will provide 90 million Norwegian kroner (approximately \$9.5 million) to support the third phase of FAO's [System for Earth Observation Data Access, Processing and Analysis for Land Monitoring](#) (SEPAL) through to December 2030.

Norway's support for SEPAL is aligned with the [Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Forests](#) (AIM4Forests) programme, and together they will expand technical assistance for forest monitoring.

"As artificial intelligence accelerates, open and transparent data tools are becoming even more essential for forest countries. SEPAL strengthens governments' capacity to lead their own monitoring, and to make informed decisions for their forests for the benefit of their citizens, and for all of us" said Andreas Bjelland Eriksen, Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway.

"Countries need reliable, accessible and transparent forest data to manage their forests sustainably, meet climate reporting requirements and access science-based finance," said FAO Director-General QU Dongyu. "This new funding will strengthen national forest monitoring systems and accelerate the use of innovative technologies, turning data into better decisions for the climate change and for sustainable development."

The announcement was made at the event [Forest monitoring for communities, conservation and climate](#) during [London Climate Action Week](#).

SEPAL Phase 3

First developed in 2016, SEPAL is part of FAO's [Open Foris](#) initiative, a suite of open-source digital public goods used by governments, technical institutions and practitioners worldwide to monitor forests and land use, support national reporting and inform sustainable land management.

The SEPAL platform provides instant access to Earth observation data and advanced processing tools, enabling countries to detect change, track deforestation and support restoration efforts.

Phase 3 will focus on delivering next-generation geospatial solutions, helping countries to meet climate reporting requirements while building the skills, tools and systems needed to monitor forests independently.

As of June 2026, SEPAL reported more than 30,000 active users across 205 countries and territories.

One forest monitoring ecosystem

The third phase of SEPAL is designed to work in close coordination with the AIM4Forests programme - a flagship FAO-United Kingdom partnership supporting countries to strengthen forest monitoring through technical innovation, capacity development and inclusive approaches - enabling countries to move from generating forest data to using it for policy decisions, climate transparency and greater engagement with finance.

Together, they also promote inclusive approaches to forest monitoring, supporting the participation of Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders whose knowledge and involvement are essential for sustainable forest management.