



Coalition for Rainforest Nations

ANNUAL IMPACT STATEMENT 2023

Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.



Coalition for Rainforest Nations

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501(c)(3) Nonprofit

The Coalition of Rainforest Nations is a 501(c)(3)
Nonprofit organization in USA. (EIN: 26-322-1530)
In the Netherlands, it is registered with PBO-
organizations RSIN: 8261.87.316.
Donations are tax-deductible in Canada,
The Netherlands, and USA.

Participating Countries

Africa

-  Benin
-  Botswana
-  Cameroon
-  Central African Republic
-  Democratic Republic of Congo
-  Equatorial Guinea
-  Eswatini
-  Gabon
-  Ghana
-  Kenya
-  Lesotho
-  Liberia
-  Madagascar
-  Malawi
-  Mali
-  Mozambique
-  Namibia
-  Nigeria
-  Republic of Congo
-  Senegal
-  Sierra Leone
-  South Africa
-  Sudan
-  Uganda
-  Zambia

South America

-  Argentina
-  Bolivia
-  Ecuador
-  Guyana
-  Paraguay
-  Suriname
-  Uruguay

Asia

-  Bangladesh
-  Cambodia
-  China
-  India
-  Lao PDR
-  Malaysia
-  Pakistan
-  Singapore
-  Thailand
-  Vietnam

Caribbean

-  Dominica
-  Dominican Republic
-  Jamaica
-  Saint Lucia

Central America

-  Belize
-  Costa Rica
-  Guatemala
-  Honduras
-  Nicaragua

Oceania

-  Fiji
-  Papua New Guinea
-  Samoa
-  Solomon Islands
-  Vanuatu

A Message from the Executive Director

This year shattered all previous climate records.

We witnessed the highest sea surface temperatures and sea level rise, record low Antarctic Sea ice, and severe weather causing devastation across the globe. During May and June, Canada witnessed exceptionally bad fire-weather conditions, leading to extensive wildfires that burned over 13 million hectares. New York and many other North American cities were left without visibility as a result.

Despite these events, there are glimmers of hope. Global emissions from fossil fuels rose by only 1.1%, according to the *Global Carbon Budget*. And emission levels in the USA and Europe fell. Although emissions have bounced back from covid pandemic levels, we are beginning to bend the curve. But there is still much to do. If current CO2 emissions levels persist, the remaining carbon budget to limit warming to 1.5°C could be exceeded by 2030.

Thankfully, the world is now making an unstoppable shift towards renewable energy. In a *new report*, the International Energy Agency forecasts that renewables will provide half of the world's electricity by 2030. But it also warned that emissions are still too high to prevent temperatures rising above 1.5°C. All this news reiterates the importance of the Paris Agreement and mandated government action.

At COP28 in Dubai, 190 governments met and agreed to transition away from fossil fuels. This is the first time that the Paris Agreement has included strong language on fossil fuels. Being present in the room during those final negotiations, I got a real sense that countries are willing to do what is necessary. In 2025, nations will set more ambitious national climate pledges under the Paris Agreement. Then, we shall see.

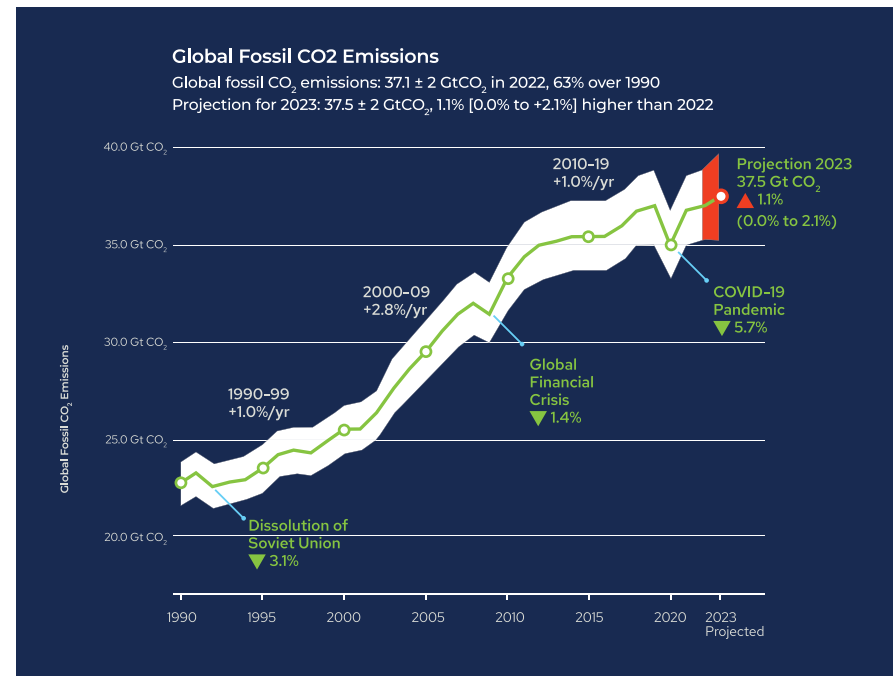
2023 was a great year for many of our countries. Honduras, Belize, and Suriname successfully slowed deforestation, and twenty-nine rainforest countries, including those within the second largest rainforest – the Congo and Papua New Guinea became net-carbon removers. These countries are now actively removing more carbon from the atmosphere than they release. And their impact goes beyond their borders. These nations absorb nearly one billion tons or a gigaton of greenhouse gas emissions per year for us. That is the same amount of carbon emitted by Japan every year.

Coalition of Rainforest Nations

CfRN was actively involved in the UN negotiating process throughout the year. This culminated with a breakthrough at COP28. Together with the European Union, the Africa Group, and others, we successfully negotiated *the need to reverse global deforestation by 2030* into the *United Arab Emirates (UAE) Consensus Agreement*. Thanks to CfRN's dedicated



▲ During May and June 2023 Canada witnessed exceptionally extreme fire-weather conditions, leading to extensive wildfires that burned over 13 million hectares, and left many North American cities without visibility



biodiversity. Today, every form of life – from the smallest insect to the largest mammal – is under threat due to habitat destruction and climate change. While we can't put a monetary value on biodiversity, we still need to change the paradigm from destroying it for economic gain to protecting it. Rainforests are the lifeblood for over 50% of all life on the planet! Dive deeper, and you'll find that they're home to two-thirds of the world's plant species and countless unique creatures found nowhere else. The UNFCCC REDD+ framework protects habitats at national level.

negotiators, the agreement also recommends the use of Article 5.2 (UN REDD+ framework¹) as the method to reverse deforestation with Article 6 (UN carbon markets) as the tool to finance this action.

This decision provides our rainforest nations with the right signal, and hopefully the opportunity to receive climate finance. But like most things, *the devil is in the details*. The implementation rules in Article 6 are still not finalized, so we will continue to fight to make sure that rainforest conservation is compensated within the Paris Agreement.

CfRN also continued to provide vital technical training for countries to measure and report their rainforest cover and emissions reductions to the UN. This year we supported Belize, Bhutan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominica, Eswatini, Gabon, Honduras, Saint Lucia, Senegal, and Suriname with both in-person and virtual training. We scaled up our technical team to meet this need, and plan to expand training to more countries next year.

Biodiversity

As well as climate, CfRN and its countries are fully committed to protecting endangered species and

I have had the honor of working with many countries over two decades. Gabon, for instance, despite its political challenges this year, reported an incredible success story. Their work on habitat conservation through the UNFCCC REDD+ framework has allowed its iconic forest elephant to increase from 60,000 – 95,000 animals, while across Africa their numbers have declined sharply. This isn't an isolated success. From Panama to Papua New Guinea, the UNFCCC REDD+ framework is working, helping to protect important rainforest habitats of endangered species and biodiversity.

Help us strengthen the voice of rainforest countries under the Paris Agreement and secure climate funding to stop deforestation.

Support Us, Support Climate Justice.
 Thank you



Kevin Conrad,
 Executive Director
 Coalition for Rainforest Nations

¹ While the term REDD+ is enshrined in Article 5.2 of the Paris Agreement, it was never patented by UNFCCC. That means that any forestry carbon project can use the name REDD+ without any methodological or legal connection to the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC.



Federica Bietta, MD of CfRN, speaking at the opening plenary of the Bonn Climate Summit, September.

Policy



CfRN negotiating Article 6 at COP28 with other coalition countries

What We Do

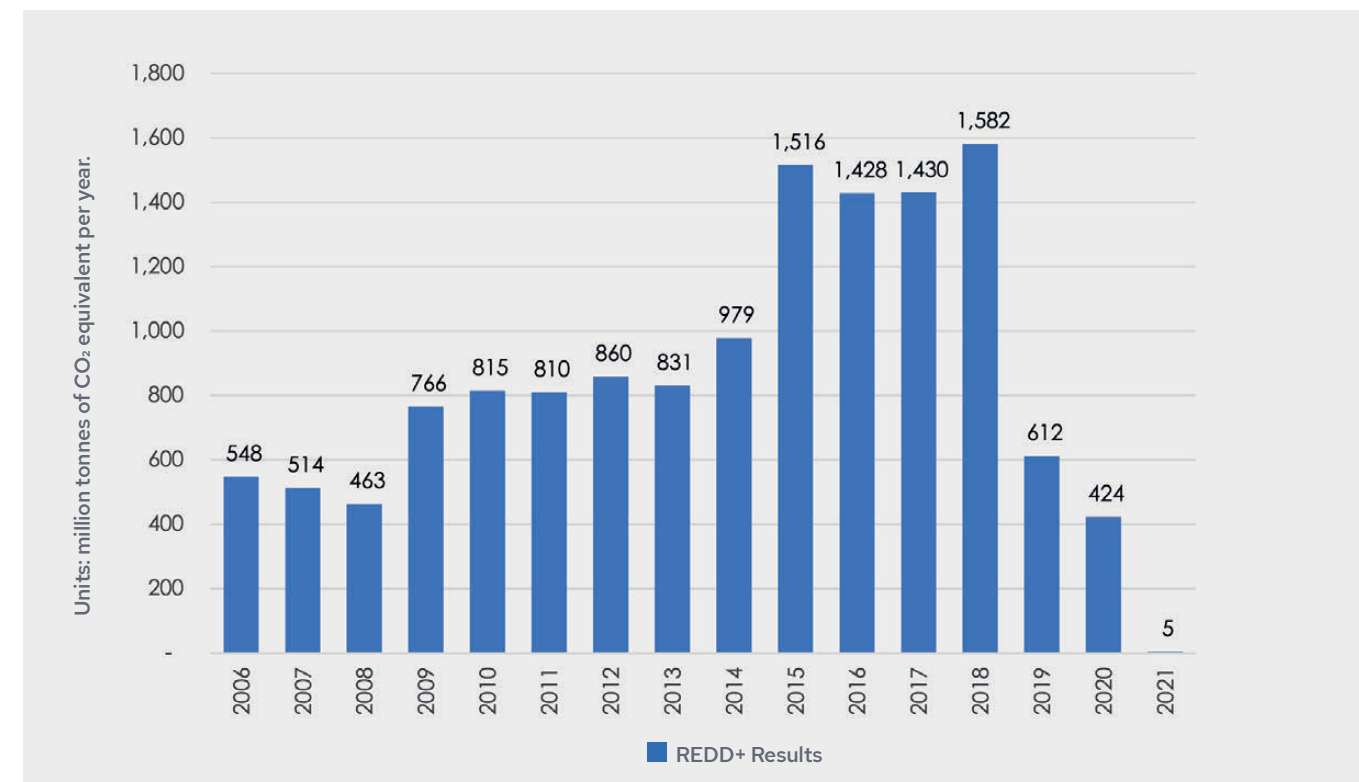
CfRN strives to advance the cause of rainforests under the *Paris Agreement* and other UN treaties. Our goal is to ensure that climate finance reaches rainforest nations for their conservation efforts. Today, rainforest nations slow deforestation based on goodwill and with little financial support. This year, rainforest nations have achieved 13.5 gigatons of greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions and CO₂ removals! They have observed dramatic decreases in forest-related emissions, leading to a more sustainable CO₂ atmospheric concentration for all humankind to enjoy. However, since 2006 they have only received finance for 4% of the emissions reductions that they have reduced by forgoing deforestation.

While CfRN was successful in mandating the UN's *Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation* framework as Article 5 of the Paris Agreement in 2015, countries are still negotiating the implementation rules to receive adequate climate finance.

The Conference of the Parties (COP28), Dubai, December 2023

This year's climate summit in Dubai was a huge victory for the Coalition for Rainforest Nations and the Paris Agreement. For two weeks CfRN stood side by side with developing countries and many others, fighting to strengthen rainforest conservation and protect the environmental integrity of the *Paris Agreement*. It garnered the

Figure 1: REDD+ emission reductions and removals achieved by developing countries under the UNFCCC.





Opening plenary session at COP28, Dubai

support of the European Union, the Africa Group, and other regions, and successfully negotiated the need to reverse global deforestation by 2030 through the Paris Agreement into the **United Arab Emirates (UAE) Consensus Agreement**.

Equally important, CfRN negotiated the use of the UN REDD+ framework in Article 5.2 as the method to reverse deforestation with Article 6 (UN carbon markets) as the tool to finance conservation efforts. The final *UAE Consensus Agreement*, paragraph 34, read:

... the need for enhanced support and investment, including through financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, for efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and

forest degradation by 2030 in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, in accordance with Article 5 of the Paris Agreement, including through results-based payments for policy approaches and positive incentives for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries;

This tremendous result now paves the way for developing countries to receive climate finance for efforts to *slow, stop and reverse deforestation* at national level, which is critical to all our efforts to slow the climate emergency.

Our Value Add

CfRN is a party-grouping recognized under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, which allows it to fully support countries in international climate negotiations throughout the year. Negotiations take place regularly at the **Conference of the Parties (COPs)**, the **Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)**, and other meetings.

CfRN helps countries make the *best decisions* for their forests, communities, and the planet. The Paris Agreement is complex and continues to evolve. Our staff includes ex-environment ministers and climate negotiators. They offer governments over twenty years of expertise and insight on climate treaties, providing year-round guidance for all rainforest nations, free of charge. This crucial *institutional knowledge* on the Paris Agreement is passed on through daily country briefings and in-the-room negotiations.

CfRN also finances travel expenses so that country climate negotiators can attend UN summits. Without this financial support, many rainforest nations would simply not have a voice on the Paris Agreement.



▲ In 2023, Honduras became the country chair of the CfRN and co-led UN policy negotiation efforts with us. Learn how CfRN supports Honduras and other countries in this video.

To support our growing policy work this year, we expanded our policy team, hiring directors for Central America, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific regions.

At COP28, CfRN also provided a pavilion and offices for countries to host meetings and present their work. This included a rainforest conference, called *No Net Zero without Nature*, comprising two weeks of panel events featuring presidents and ministers from Honduras, Suriname, Paraguay, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Belize as well as climate experts from Exeter University and corporate representation from Deloitte, Deutsche Bank, Duke Energy, IBM, and others.



◀ Our first country briefing session with new country chair Honduras led by Honduras environment minister, Lucky Medina and vice-minister, Malcolm Stufkens alongside CfRN's Kevin Conrad & Federica Bietta. The session brought together countries from the Caribbean, Central and South America, Africa, and South-East Asia.

Domestic Policy

This year, CfRN helped developing countries devise enabling legislation to comply with the requirements of the Paris Agreement. Domestic climate legislation was passed in Honduras, Suriname, and Belize. In addition, CfRN provided support in building national emissions registries required under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and training governments to use them.

Country Highlights

In September, Suriname announced its intention to sell the world's first UN carbon credits under the Paris Agreement, Article 6. The carbon credits, called *Internationally Transferable Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs)*, will help developed countries who fail to hit their climate pledges to meet their targets and in return provide climate finance to rainforest nations who have gone beyond their ambitions. ITMOs will also be available for companies to purchase to hit net-zero targets. Suriname had 4.1 million emissions reductions in 2020 and a further 4.8 million in 2021 verified by the UNFCCC. Its 2021 results will be eligible for sale as ITMOs. Marciano Dasai, Suriname's minister of spatial planning and environment, said the country hoped to sell the credits for \$30/tCO₂e.



▲ Xiomara Castro, President of Honduras, speaking at CfRN's pavilion at COP28.

Three other forest-rich countries are also following Suriname's lead offering up tens of millions of sovereign REDD+ units under the Paris Agreement. **Honduras, Belize, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** are to issue post-2020 forestry units under the UNFCCC REDD+ framework.

Honduras announced 10 million REDD+ vintage 2021 and 2022 credits by April 2024. Lucky Medina, the country's environment and natural resources minister



◀ In September, during the United Nations General Assembly, New York, CfRN held in-person and virtual training focused on how to manage and use national greenhouse gas registries. Delegates from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Suriname, Honduras, Belize, and Papua New Guinea attended the sessions at our office and virtually.
 ◀ Minister of Spatial Planning & Environment, Marciano Dasai, Suriname speaking at CfRN dinner



restated the current ban on voluntary carbon projects, confusingly called REDD+. He said that the ban will remain, and that the country had chosen to prioritize UN efforts. Honduras is committed to saving its rainforests. The new administration intends to spend \$33 million per year to protect its forest, involving 10% of the army, according to the minister.

Belize also expects to issue at least 10 million units of 2021-23 vintages, vice-minister for climate Kenrick Williams confirmed at New York Climate Week in September. The country had already carried out internal assessments based on recent conservation efforts and planned to submit data to the UNFCCC in December. Belize saw results of around 5.6 million emissions reductions for the 2016-18 period, then 11 million for 2019-20. Williams said Belize expected to go to market with the ITMOs in mid-2024 once the certification process is finished.

The Bonn Climate Summit, June 2023

CfRN attended the *Bonn Climate Change Conference* to support countries in the ongoing Paris Agreement negotiations around Article 6. The article covers the new UN carbon markets and how countries can draw climate finance from the sale of sovereign carbon credits. CfRN also provided travel finance and accommodation for negotiators from many rainforest nations to attend the summit.

The purpose of the mid-year negotiations was to help countries advance decisions made at the previous COP27, Sharm-El Sheikh, and set the work agenda for the remainder of the year. The conference also identified how close countries were to reaching key decisions for COP28, Dubai.



◀ The Cfrn team and country negotiators at the Bonn Climate Summit, June, 2023

**The
Guardian
Science
Bloomberg**

For Cfrn and its countries, the key focus was Article 6 and climate finance. Negotiations revolved around Articles 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement. Article 6 aims to lay out the rules for the new carbon markets and determine how a country's surplus emissions reductions or *Internationally Transferable (Climate) Mitigation Outcomes (ITMO)* could be traded between countries and between countries and corporations. For rainforest nations, these trades are critical to providing climate finance to help forest conservation and transition to sustainable economies.

The Bonn conference was supposed to advance the missing elements of the rules for Article 6 that would allow ITMOs to trade. By the end of the summit, there was a clear willingness by all parties to make good progress in operationalizing Article 6. So, countries agreed to request the UNFCCC secretariat to hold a hybrid workshop to discuss the rules and procedures for the carbon market mechanism.

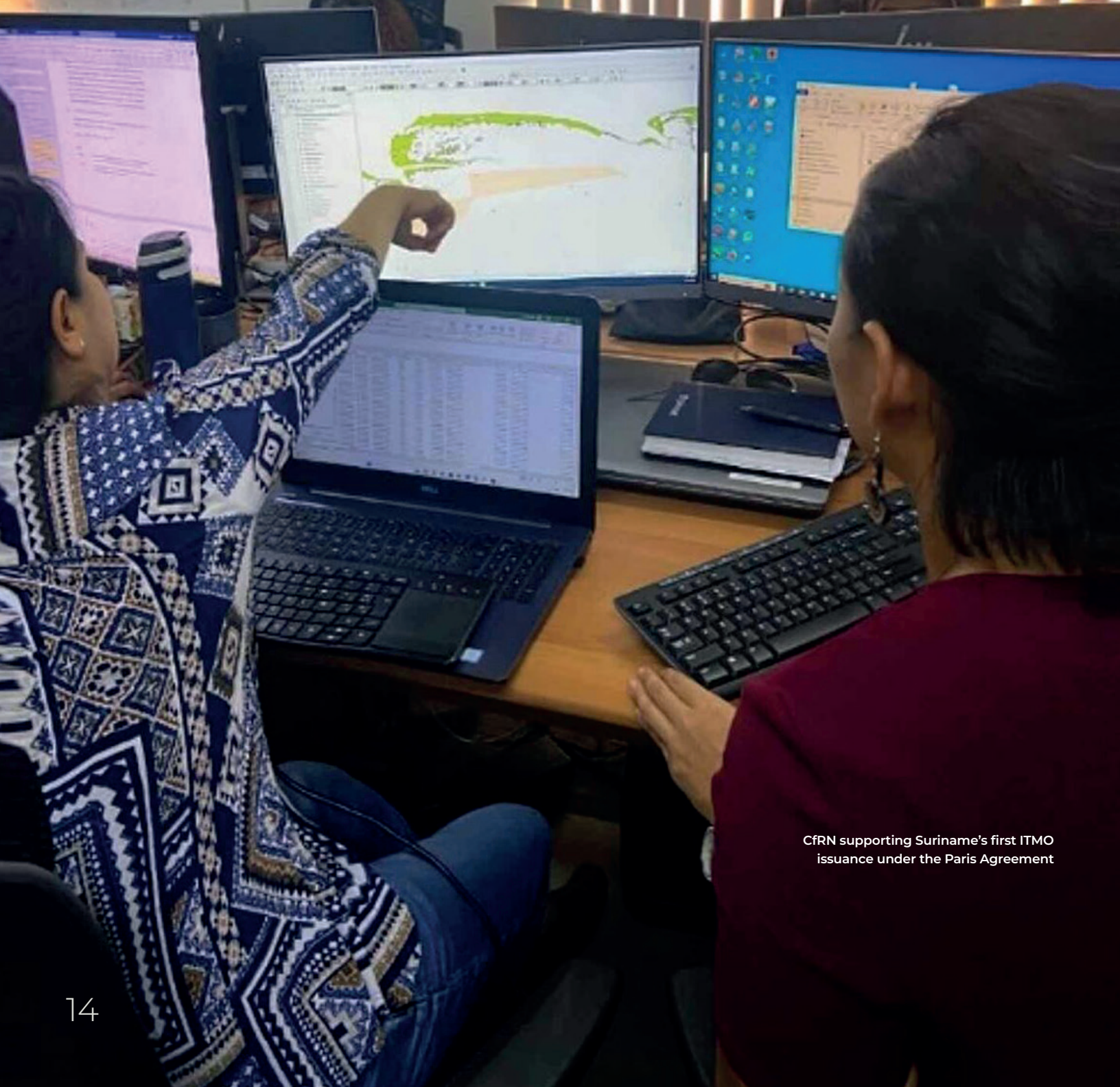
Why was REDD+ in the news so much this year?

The purpose of REDD+, which Cfrn originated in 2005, was to support national efforts to slow, stop, and reverse tropical deforestation under the UNFCCC. While the term REDD+ is enshrined in Article 5.2 of the Paris Agreement, it was never patented by UNFCCC. So, voluntary forestry carbon projects can use the name REDD+ without any methodological or legal connection to the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC REDD+ framework. In 2023, the voluntary carbon markets (VCM) were exposed internationally for lack of environmental integrity and financial irregularities. Multiple studies and media articles covered the sector, including *The Guardian*, *Science Journal*, and *Bloomberg*. Voluntary carbon projects cover small areas of a rainforest and are mostly hot air. They are private sector projects often operating in rainforest nations without oversight and approval from host governments. These scandals are in no way connected to the work of our countries and UNFCCC REDD+ framework.



Final plenary session at the Bonn Climate Summit, June 2023

Knowledge & Training



CfRN supporting Suriname's first ITMO issuance under the Paris Agreement

A challenge for many governments is to show the international community that they are slowing deforestation and reducing emissions. CfRN continued to provide vital training for countries to help them measure and report to the UNFCCC. Our team delivers country-centered training, providing precisely what they need. No country is too small to matter, every country counts.

This year we supported Gabon, Guinea, Honduras, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Liberia, Saint Lucia, Solomon Islands and Suriname with the preparation of their greenhouse gas inventories. In addition, we helped six countries with their forest emissions baselines, called forest emissions reference levels (FRELs), which they measure their efforts to slow deforestation against. Eswatini, Suriname, Dominica, Belize, Saint Lucia, and Honduras submitted their FRELs in January 2024. We supported Honduras to file its results on slowing deforestation, and Benin, Bhutan, and Senegal all signed up for CfRN training for next year. All 2023 training sessions will be made available in full on CfRN website in March 2024.

All our training is carried out in-person, using regional country missions, or with virtual training. To meet the growing need, we scaled up our technical team by four experts from Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Panama, and plan to expand training to more countries next year.

CfRN and representatives from Benin at COP28, Dubai



▲ Federica Bietta, Managing Director, CfRN speaking on mission to Suriname

▲ Our dedicated technical team at CfRN collaborating closely with Senegal. Our combined efforts are honed on enhancing land use monitoring, and ensuring precise reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).





Coalition for Rainforest Nations

Help Protect Rainforests and Endangered Species

Support our mission to save
the world's most important
natural resource.

Donate to CfRN.

**Click here
and donate
now**

