



2022

**PLANTING SUSTAINABLE FORESTS
FOR THE FUTURE**

OECD FOREST SEED AND PLANT SCHEME

 **OECD**
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Introduction to

OECD'S AGRICULTURAL CODES AND SCHEMES

The OECD is known for its evidence-based advice and standards, as well as for being a forum where national experts from different areas can meet and jointly develop common standards and procedures. The OECD's Agricultural Codes and Schemes facilitate international trade through the harmonisation, simplification and implementation of international certification standards.

The overarching objectives of the Codes & Schemes are to increase transparency, reduce technical barriers to trade, increase market confidence through enforcement of quality control and inspection procedures and facilitate traceability.

The Agricultural Codes and Schemes focus on four key agricultural inputs and products:

- **The Seed Schemes** certify seed varietal identity and purity, encouraging the production, trade and use of seeds that are true to their name and are of consistently high quality.
- **The Forest Seed and Plant Scheme** certifies the source and genetic composition of forest reproductive material to guarantee consistently high quality.
- **The Tractor Codes** enable an importing country to accept, with confidence, the results of safety and performance tests carried out in another country.
- **The Fruit and Vegetables Scheme** promotes the use of uniform classification and quality control procedures for fresh and dried fruit and vegetable products.

The Agricultural Codes and Schemes are open to any OECD or non-OECD country that is a member of the United Nations or of the World Trade Organisation. Currently 66 countries participate in at least one of the Codes & Schemes. This includes the 38 OECD countries and 30 non OECD Economies, as well as some of the major players in world trade (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Argentina and Ukraine).



The OECD's Codes and Schemes reduce technical barriers to trade and enable traceability. As such, they facilitate trade and build trust at the same time.

Marion Jansen,
Director,
OECD's Trade and Agriculture Directorate.



Guaranteeing the quality or safety of key agricultural products is critical for stakeholders along the length of the agricultural supply chain, from producers to consumers.

Lee Ann Jackson,
Head of Agro-food Trade and Markets Division,
OECD's Trade and Agriculture Directorate.

THE OECD FOREST SEED AND PLANT SCHEME

The OECD Scheme for the Certification of Forest Reproductive Material seeks to encourage the production and use of forest tree seeds or plants that have been collected, processed, raised, labelled and distributed in a manner that ensures their trueness to name.

Certified Forest Reproductive Material (FRM) is intended for use in a variety of forestry and agroforestry functions, including timber and other goods (e.g. fruit, gum, resin, cork) production, soil protection, biodiversity, climate change mitigation and environmental restoration. The Scheme reflects the wish for governments to have FRMs correctly identified, with a view to minimising uncertainty in achieving successful afforestation and reforestation. To date, 30 participating countries implement the Scheme, including countries that are developing their certification and trade of forest seeds and plants for agroforestry and reforestation purposes.

Forest seeds and plants are produced and officially controlled according to harmonised procedures. The OECD Forest Scheme defines four broad categories of forest reproductive material that are recognised for certification:

1. **Source-identified** material is collected from a forest area within a delineated region of provenance.
2. Material from **selected stands** is collected from a delineated population of trees possessing sufficient uniformity.
3. **Qualified material** is from untested seed orchards.
4. **Tested material** from tested seed orchards or stands, which have been proven to produce seed of improved quality.

The rules are regularly updated through a consensus based process to better reflect national practices in traditional FRM production and certification and the growing commercial importance of new types of material derived from breeding programmes, including new forestry production and tree improvement techniques.

On a day-to-day basis the management and implementation of the Seed Schemes is overseen by two key bodies:

- **The Secretariat** – is based at the OECD headquarter in Paris, the Secretariat is made up of a small team that coordinates and supports technical work streams, manages partnerships organises meetings and conducts evaluation missions.
- **The Bureau** - is made up of the Officers of the Annual Meeting. Its task is to assist the Secretariat in preparation of the Technical Working Group and Annual Meetings, including matters relating to the admission of new countries and to propose solutions, when necessary, to urgent problems that may arise during the implementation of the Scheme.



Tree planting ceremony at OECD, 2014



The OECD Forest seed and Plant Scheme is developed and regularly updated in collaboration with governments, relevant international organisations and representatives from the forestry industry. This multi-stakeholder approach is the real strength of the OECD forest seed and plant scheme, creating a benchmark in the forestry sector.

Csaba Gaspar,
Programme Manager,
OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme

Forests provide essential environmental services and are an important sink for CO₂.

So afforestation and reforestation programmes are increasingly being seen as a climate change mitigation strategy.



But in order to ensure that planted forests act as a long-term carbon sink, they themselves must thrive.

Choosing high-quality Forest Reproductive Material that is adapted to current and future climates is critical to their survival.

TACKLING THE CHALLENGES FACING FORESTS

Policy makers, regulators and industry are facing new opportunities and challenges. Whether it is adapting certification processes to include new reproductive techniques and materials or improving traceability to address concerns with fraud, the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme is working with participating countries to adapt to changes.

In addition, Forests will play an important role in both climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. FRM can have a considerable impact on a forests health and productivity, but also their ability to adapt and survive shocks such as changes in climate or pests and disease. The Scheme is taking into account the newest scientific information and reviewing the use of "regions of provenance" to ensure that reproductive materials are best adapted to the changing environmental conditions.

In 2018, the OECD Forest Scheme developed its Vision, Mission and a Strategic Plan to guide their adaptation to new challenges and further strengthen the relevance and values of the Scheme.

Mission

The OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme facilitates the international trade of forest reproductive material through harmonised standards certifying its provenance, identity, quality and traceability, thus contributing to the sustainable use of valuable forest genetic resources.

Vision

Global certification system for forest reproductive material supporting the development of a productive, sustainable and resilient forest sector.

INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE VALUES OF THE FOREST SEED AND PLANT SCHEME

Increase awareness of the values of the Forest Seed and Plant Scheme

- Enhance the exchange and sharing of experiences and information on the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme at Annual Meetings, FRM-related seminars and webinars as well as through other relevant regional/international events and conferences.
- Develop a communication strategy for the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme including promotional tools and material to (I) help stakeholders including National Designated Authorities to explain the value of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme and raise awareness domestically; and (II) assist potential new participating countries.
- Translate OECD FRM Rules and Regulations and related documents into other languages of interest for participating countries.
- Cooperate with other forest-related organisations to improve global FRM trade.
- Strive to ensure that the role of the FRM certification is recognised in key areas of policy (e.g., climate change, biodiversity conservation).
- Inform policy makers of the key role of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme in the FRM supply chain and their contribution to the development of a productive, sustainable and resilient forest sector.

Facilitate participation in the Schemes

- Provide a straightforward application process to participate in the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme (e.g., through clear guidelines, with clear expectations).
- Provide the opportunity for a potential candidate member country to participate as an observer for a limited period.

- Support specific capacity building initiatives.
- Enhance collaboration with international and regional organisations involved in the FRM supply chain.

Maintain state-of-the-art standards

- Proactively consider new developments in the forestry sector and other related areas and identify their impact on the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme as well as the potential need for these changes to be reflected in updated Rules and Regulations of the Forest Scheme and related documents.
- Ensure that the standards and procedures are responsive to changing market conditions in world forest reproductive material trade.
- Regularly review the scope of coverage of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme.

Ensuring the integrity of the scheme

- Support effective, harmonised and sustainable implementation of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme in participating countries.
- Monitor the implementation of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme in participating countries by undertaking regular reviews.
- Make better use of FRM trade and basic material data for improving the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme
- Develop guidelines on FRM certification and trade to ensure the harmonised application of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme in participating countries
- Encourage and support capacity building so that participating countries are more able to ensure the integrity of the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme domestically.
- Support FRM certification as a tool to facilitate traceability and to prevent fraud along the supply chain.

HOW DOES THE FOREST SCHEME OPERATE?

The OECD Forest Scheme ensures the implementation of a set of procedures, methods and standards which verify the origin and quality of FRM.

The application of the OECD Guidelines on the Production of Forest Reproductive Materials is not obligatory but provides helpful guidance on the implementation of procedures. They are particularly useful for new Member countries, or countries in the process of developing a national certification system for forest reproductive materials.

KEY STEPS IN THE FOREST SEED CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Step
1

Planning and preparing for FRM collection

The collection of seed must take place in seed sources, stands and seed orchards that have been registered in individual member states. While the initial selection of the stand or the individual tree is made by a private organisation, the National Designated Authority (NDA) must carry out an inspection before its approval. 424 species of trees are currently eligible for certification under the Scheme.

Step
2

Overseeing FRM collection

To comply with OECD Rules, harvest can take place only from approved basic material, which is Source Identified, Selected, Qualified, or Tested. The NDA must - at a minimum - carry out random controls of seed collection and harvesting.

FRM transported from the collection point to the seed processing centre should be accompanied by all required documentation and under conditions that protect FRM from damage.

Step
3

Oversight of processing and storage

The accepted material is given a code and registered in the processing plant records. At this stage, the material should be stored in such a way as to preserve its quality.

The NDA must - at a minimum - carry out random controls of seed processing and storage.

Step
4

Sealing and Labelling

Certified forest seed can be marketed only in sealed and labelled containers.

The containers cannot be reopened without destroying the sealing device or leaving traces showing that it has been possible to alter or change the content of the container.

Different OECD labels are used according to the four categories for forest reproductive materials. The labelled product is then recognised internationally as a guarantee of quality and as a certificate of origin.

WORKING IN NEW REGIONS: THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF FOREST SEED AND PLANT CERTIFICATION IN TROPICAL REGIONS

There is increasing awareness of the potential benefits of the OECD Forest Scheme in the context of harmonising regulations and facilitating international trade in tropical areas.

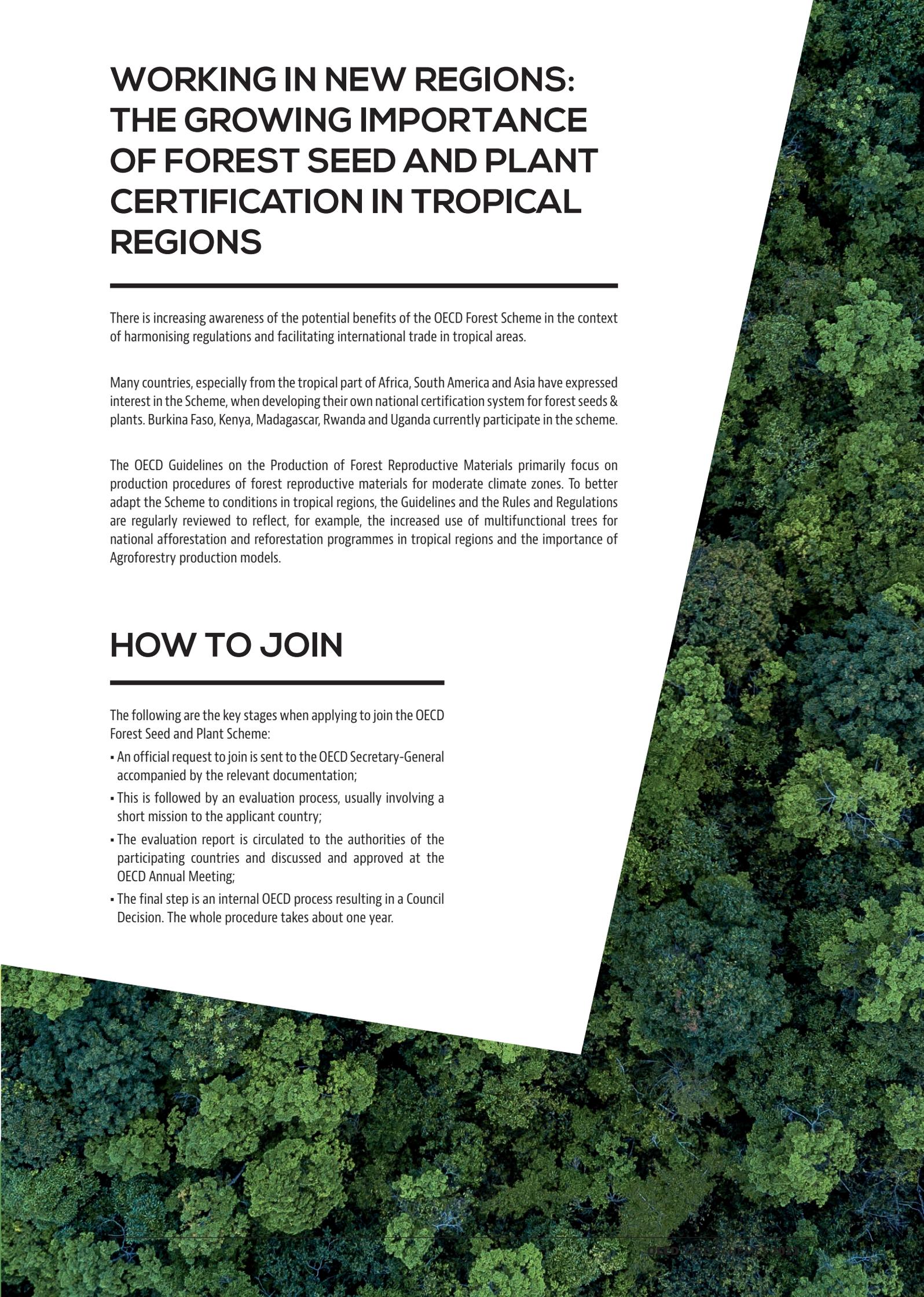
Many countries, especially from the tropical part of Africa, South America and Asia have expressed interest in the Scheme, when developing their own national certification system for forest seeds & plants. Burkina Faso, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda and Uganda currently participate in the scheme.

The OECD Guidelines on the Production of Forest Reproductive Materials primarily focus on production procedures of forest reproductive materials for moderate climate zones. To better adapt the Scheme to conditions in tropical regions, the Guidelines and the Rules and Regulations are regularly reviewed to reflect, for example, the increased use of multifunctional trees for national afforestation and reforestation programmes in tropical regions and the importance of Agroforestry production models.

HOW TO JOIN

The following are the key stages when applying to join the OECD Forest Seed and Plant Scheme:

- An official request to join is sent to the OECD Secretary-General accompanied by the relevant documentation;
- This is followed by an evaluation process, usually involving a short mission to the applicant country;
- The evaluation report is circulated to the authorities of the participating countries and discussed and approved at the OECD Annual Meeting;
- The final step is an internal OECD process resulting in a Council Decision. The whole procedure takes about one year.



GREENING THE OECD

The OECD has chosen to support the Gola Rainforest Project in Sierra Leone with the purchase of carbon credits to offset our corporate emissions.

The Gola Rainforest National Park in south-east Sierra Leone is one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots. The Gola REDD project is working with local communities and other key stakeholders to manage the park's forests sustainably through a focus on land use planning, agroforestry, education, health and sustainable agriculture – helping rebuild lives following over a decade of war and the worst ever Ebola outbreak.

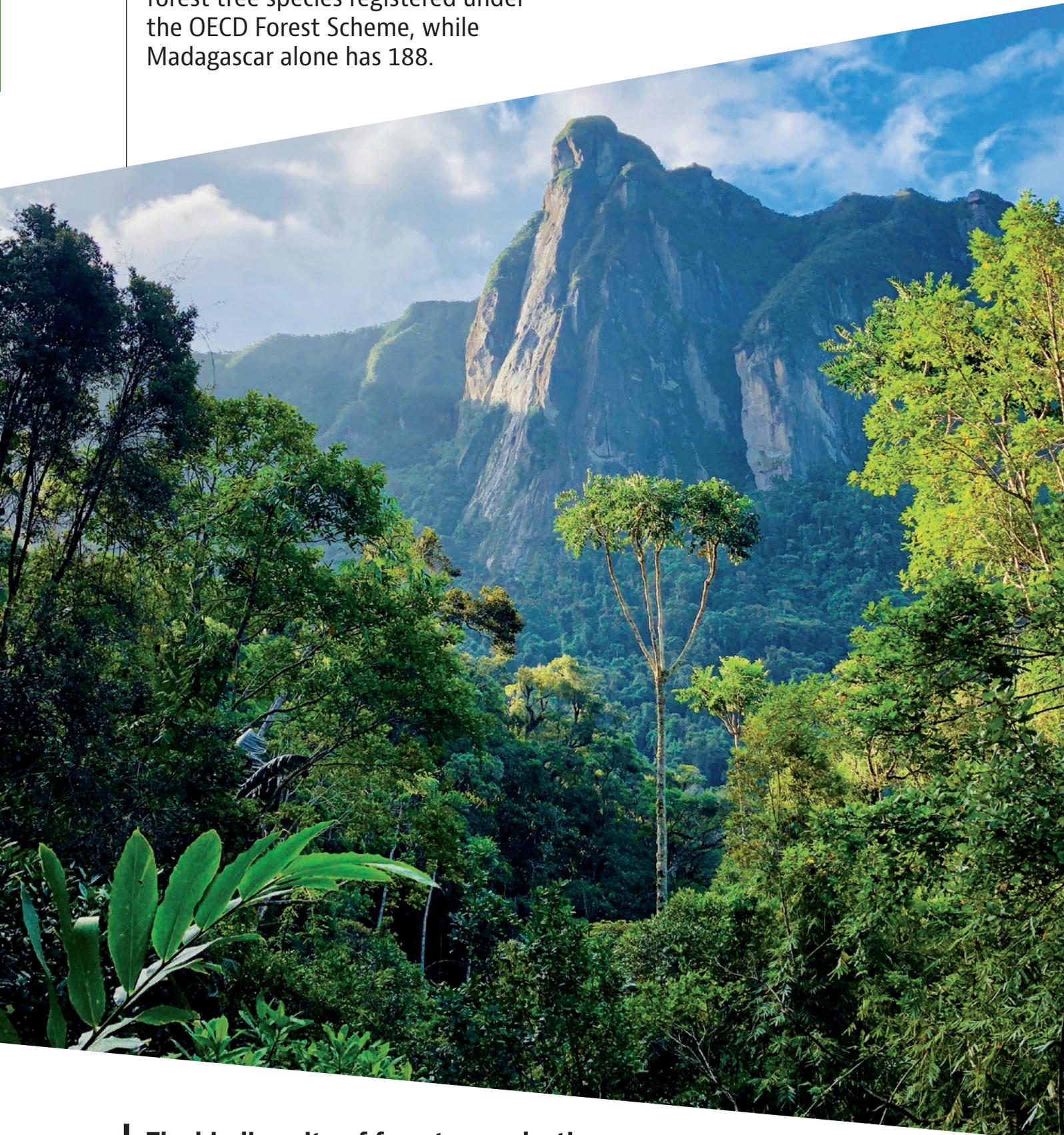
Training and support in sustainable cocoa production has opened up routes to the Western markets. To date 168 staff are employed and 122 communities supported. 140,000 hectares are being managed (70,000 hectares of the park itself and a 70,000-hectare buffer zone). Protecting habitat for 327 bird species, 650 endemic plant species, and 49 species of larger mammals, including the elusive Pygmy Hippo and the Western Chimpanzee. The project will reduce 5m tonnes of CO₂ emissions by 2021.

ClimateCare has partnered with Gola Rainforest Conservation LG (an equal partnership between the Government of Sierra Leone, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Gola Communities). They are working together to help keep Gola's trees standing – for its wildlife, the rural communities that depend on it, and the planet.



Tropical forests are high in biodiversity.

The whole of Europe has fewer than 50 key forest tree species registered under the OECD Forest Scheme, while Madagascar alone has 188.



The biodiversity of forest reproductive material in tropical regions presents new challenges and opportunities for the governance of FRM trade.

A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER, COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The success of international certification depends upon close co-operation between nurseries, foresters and the national designated authority (appointed by the government) in each participating country. The Rules governing the Codes and Schemes are regularly updated to reflect changes in trade, forestry, environment and health and safety standards in member countries. The OECD Forest Scheme's objectives are achieved through ongoing dialogue and debate with the designated authorities of participating Countries, observers and other stakeholders, including industry and trade. This comprehensive and inclusive process ensures that the standards are reliable, efficient and fit for purpose.

Frequent meetings allow stakeholders to exchange information, discuss case studies, revise rules and update the Schemes. A wide range of international and non-governmental organisations as well as industry participate actively in the Scheme's meetings.





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The following OECD web pages can be consulted for additional information (latest publications, news and events, list of participating countries).

- **Agriculture (general):** www.oecd.org/agriculture
www.oecd.org/tad
- **Forest Scheme:** <https://www.oecd.org/agriculture/forest/>

Join the OECD Forest seed and plant scheme!