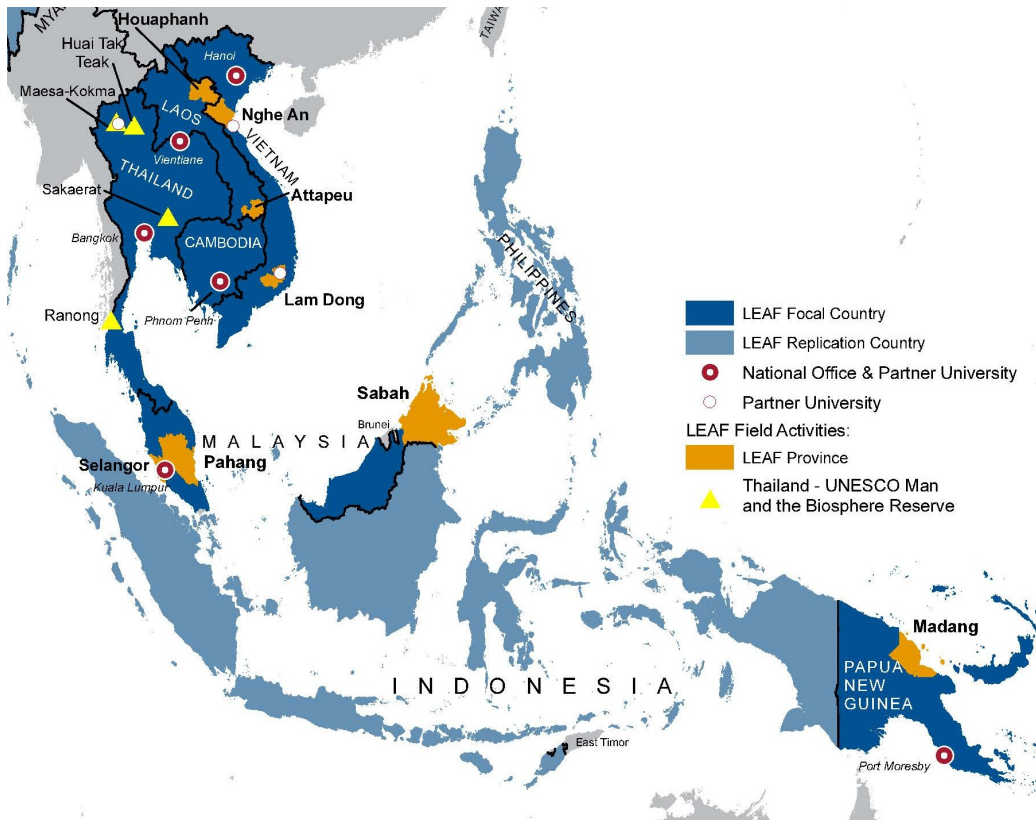




# Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF)

**Background:** Forested areas cover approximately 26% of the Asia-Pacific region, providing a wide array of socio-economic and environmental benefits to local, regional, and global communities, including carbon storage, biodiversity conservation, watershed protection, and livelihood support. Forests are, however, disappearing rapidly due to agricultural expansion, unsustainable logging, urbanization and other pressures. Deforestation and forest degradation have been identified as major sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Southeast Asia, and are significant contributors to global climate change.

**Overview:** The USAID-funded Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF) Program aims to *strengthen capacities of developing countries in Asia to produce meaningful and sustainable reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the forest-land use sector.*



**Objectives:** Program activities are designed to meet four primary objectives:

- Replicating and scaling up innovation through regional platforms and partnerships;
- Improving policies and establishing market incentives for GHG reductions;
- Building and institutionalizing technical capacity for economic valuation of forest ecosystem services and monitoring changes in forest carbon stocks; and
- Demonstrating innovation in sustainable land management.



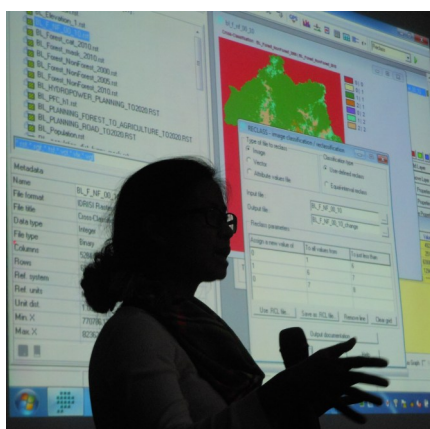
**Regional Approach:** LEAF employs a regional approach to meet its goal, working in six countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Malaysia. LEAF also shares lessons learned and best practices in other Asian countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines.

**Overall, LEAF's activities center on regional information exchange and learning through three main processes:**

- Applying international technical expertise to inform regional dialogue on developing REDD+ procedures and processes.
- Supporting regional platforms and partners which themselves support information exchange and standardization across the region.
- Functioning as a regional hub of expertise and facilitating country-country knowledge sharing and harmonization in relation to *seven key regional themes*:
  - 1) Drivers of Deforestation and Degradation;
  - 2) Reference Level (RL) Development, Forest Carbon Measurement and Monitoring;
  - 3) Low Emission Land Use Planning;
  - 4) REDD+ Legal and Policy Review and Accounting Framework Development;
  - 5) REDD+ Financing and Carbon Market Development;
  - 6) Gender Equity in Climate Change and REDD+; and
  - 7) Social and Environmental Safeguards.



**Highlighted activities include:** Supporting the development of provincial-level REDD+ action planning processes and sustainable forest management practices in Vietnam; landscape participatory land use planning and benefit distribution systems in Papua New Guinea; national forestry policy reform and forest-based livelihoods development in Lao PDR; a national REDD+ Readiness Plan, fire management and carbon accounting for mangrove forests in Thailand; and climate change curriculum development and gender mainstreaming across all six LEAF focal countries.



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