



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



FAO eLearning
ACADEMY

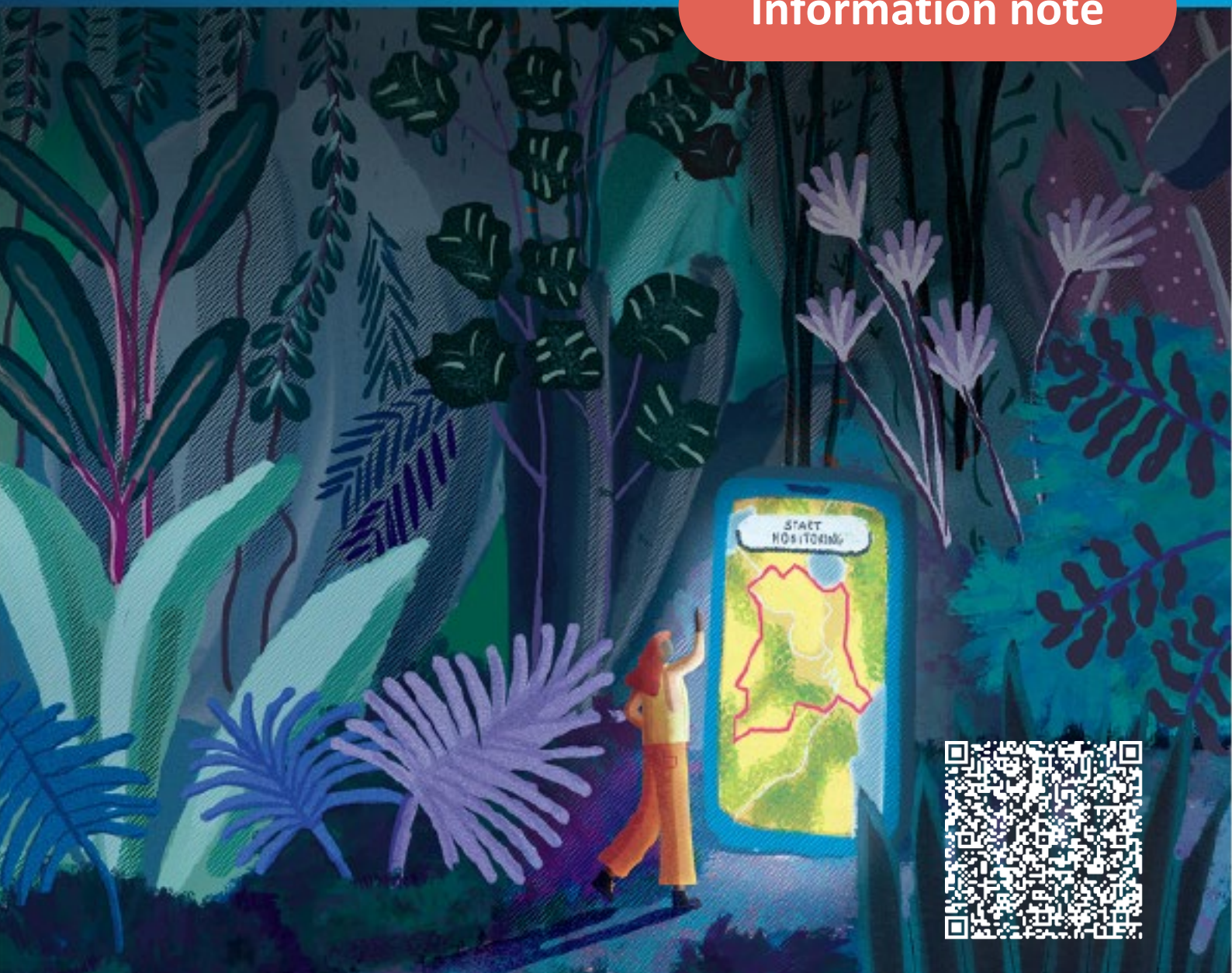


7 May – 6 June 2025

Institutionalization of forest data

Online facilitated course

Information note



Scan the QR code to register or visit the
following link: <https://bit.ly/4jLUFcV>

FAO eLearning Academy collaborative platform

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Acknowledgements

The “**Institutionalization of forest data**” online facilitated course was designed and developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the ["Building global capacity to increase transparency in the forest sector \(CBIT-Forest\)"](#) project as well as the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland through the [Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Forests](#) (AIM4Forests) programme.

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A note of gratitude and remembrance

It is with profound respect and heavy hearts that we honor the life and precious contributions of David Morales-Hidalgo, Forestry Officer at FAO. David was the driving force behind the Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring, which continues to guide countries in building robust, transparent and effective forest monitoring systems. His passion for this cause was evident in every aspect of his work. He envisioned a future where reliable forest data would empower nations to make informed decisions, combat climate change and safeguard our planet's natural resources for generations to come.

Overview

Hosted by the FAO elearning Academy, the “**Institutionalization of forest data**” online facilitated course establishes a clear path towards a more efficient and effective use of forest data by underscoring the significance of institutionalizing robust and sustainable national forest monitoring system (NFMS). Additionally, it emphasizes transparency, sustainability and data sharing as critical pillars of successfully implementing a national forest monitoring (NFM) strategy.

This online facilitated course is based on the self-paced e-learning course “[Institutionalization of forest data](#),” hosted on the FAO elearning Academy website. Its curriculum has the potential to be enriched with a multitude of extra resources and activities, including live sessions, discussion forums, videos and quizzes. The course is delivered in English, French and Spanish; participants can choose their preferred language in advance through the registration form.

FAO’s Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring

FAO’s contribution to countries in establishing an NFMS is based on the [Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring \(VGNFM\)](#). The VGNFM aims to:

1. **support decision-making** by providing accurate and consistent information for evidence-based policies and sustainable forest management;
2. **promote best practices** by encouraging the adoption of good practices and methodologies for forest monitoring and quality assurance, thus ensuring systems are cost-effective, scientifically sound and adaptable to local contexts;
3. **enhance transparency** by fostering trust and credibility through the emphasis of transparent data collecting, sharing and reporting processes;
4. **build capacity** by strengthening technical and institutional capacities to manage NFMSs, thus ensuring long-term sustainability and the ability to meet reporting obligations (e.g. climate change reporting under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change);
5. **facilitate international reporting** by assisting countries in fulfilling international commitments, such as the REDD+ requirements, Sustainable Development Goals and biodiversity conventions;
6. **encourage stakeholder collaboration** by promoting coordination among government agencies, research institutions and other stakeholders involved in forest monitoring; and
7. **adapt to national needs** by providing flexibility to align NFMSs with country-specific priorities, legal frameworks and socioeconomic conditions.

In essence, these guidelines aim to support countries with generating and using high-quality forest data for improved resource management, environmental conservation and policy development.

Target audience

The target audience of this course includes anyone interested in the subject, yet it is specifically relevant to:

- decision-makers (including public and private institutions);
- forest owners;
- forest-based enterprise owners;
- field-level practitioners;
- Indigenous Peoples;
- academics and researchers;
- decentralized governmental and provincial entities (managing forest data fostering coordination among different scales); and
- non-governmental organizations.

Overall goal

This online facilitated course highlights the significance of institutionalizing a robust and sustainable national forest monitoring system by establishing a legal basis, financial commitment and a permanent institutional framework to ensure efficient implementation and operation.

Course structure and activities

The course opens with an introductory section: the **course overview** familiarizes participants with the structure and method of the course, while the **pre-course activities** provide guidance to participants on navigating the platform. Participants are then required to proceed through the following modules in sequential order:

- **Module 1.** NFMS: An overview
- **Module 2.** NFMS: Institutionalization
- **Module 3.** NFMS: Approach and strategy

The learning activities in the three **modules** include:

- videos, transcripts and presentations;
- discussion forums on predetermined topics;
- reading materials;
- assignments;
- self-assessment quizzes; and
- webinar recordings.

Two **live sessions** take place near the end of the course to serve as additional training activities on unique topics, during which participants can interact with experts and have their questions directly addressed.

Most of the material can be downloaded in PDF format, proving advantageous for printing and studying offline. The live sessions are designed to enrich the learning experience by covering the course highlights

and allowing for country participation through questions and answers. As a bonus resource, live sessions are recorded and shared on the platform.

The modules open in sequential order once per week and remain accessible until the permanent closure. Participants can complete the modules at their own pace within the timeframe of the course, with the additional opportunity to attend live sessions on the established dates. Although the modules are kept open until the permanent closure of the course, interactive facilitation by the course instructors will be available only during the established duration (see timeline).

Learning objectives

The objectives of each module are organized below (see Table 1), along with the unique job competencies that participants acquire after completing the entire course.

Table 1. Learning objectives and competencies

Module	Participants will be able to...	Competency acquired
NFMS: An overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the foundational and strategic elements to strengthening institutional arrangements for the efficient planning and defining of an NFMS; explain the good practices of the foundation and strategic elements; understand how to implement multipurpose NFMSs tailored to national needs and aligned with international standards; 	The participants will develop a comprehensive understanding and capability to effectively establish, institutionalize and manage an NFMS by strengthening institutional arrangements, applying good practices, addressing data-sharing and transparency issues, and leveraging legal and strategic tools.
NFMS: Institutionalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the importance of institutionalizing an NFMS to streamline the use of information generated in the forest sector and tackle challenges; identify the actors and responsibilities involved in operationalizing the NFMS; recognize the issues pertaining to data-sharing, accessibility and lack of transparency that can lead to unreliable and unsustainable results; 	
NFMS: Approach and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the stepwise approach to adopting an NFMS legal instrument; apply the NFMS legal assessment matrix and the checklist tool to identify national good practices with adopting successful legal provisions; and describe the NFMS assessment tool and set the scene for an NFM strategy. 	

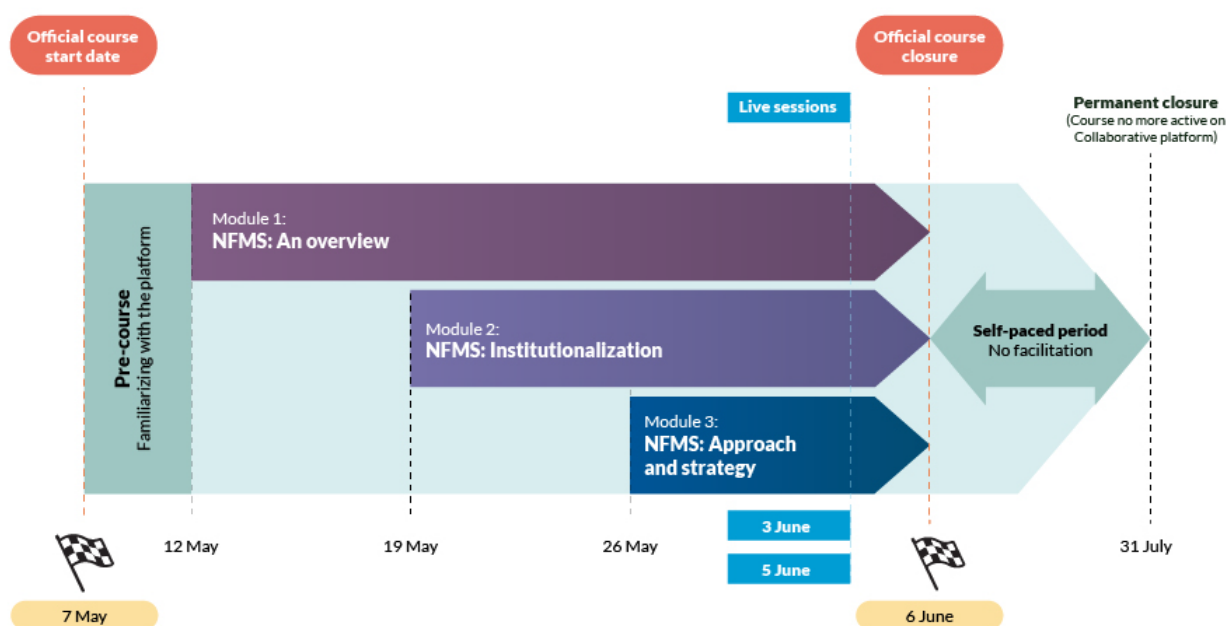
Certification

The online facilitated course has a competency-based final test, which, if passed, enables participants to obtain a [digital badge](#) (in JPEG/Metadata format) that attests the acquisition of the related competencies. An FAO digital badge offers learners a visible, verifiable and sharable recognition of their certification. Digital badges can be displayed on social media, personal websites, e-mail signatures, e-portfolios and even on resumes to showcase the skills the participant has acquired to boost opportunities for employment and recognition.

A certificate of participation (downloadable in PDF format) will also be issued to attest to the participant's attendance in the course.

Timeline

The official timeframe of the course is from 7 May to 6 June 2025. To allow participants maximum flexibility, extra time is allocated after the official closure date to complete the course and earn the digital badge. During this period and beyond the official end date, interactive facilitation by the instructors will no longer be available. After a transfer period, the course will be accessible solely in a self-paced mode on the FAO elearning Academy website within the [E-learning curriculum: Forest monitoring for climate action](#).



Near to the date of permanent closure, 31 July 2025, participants will be alerted that the course will be migrated to the [FAO elearning Academy website](#), where it will be available in a self-paced mode after a transfer period in the second half 2025.