



MINISTRY OF
ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE &
FORESTRY



REDD+
IN KENYA

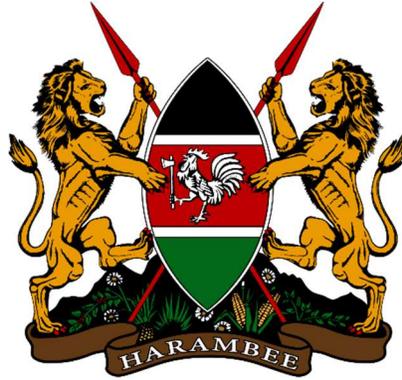
Guidelines on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks (REDD+) Nesting in Kenya.



2025



Cloud forest in Chyulu Hills.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE AND
FORESTRY



**REDD+ NESTING
GUIDELINES**



JULY, 2025

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FOREWORD



Kenya's forests and natural ecosystems are central to the country's sustainable development, water security, and resilience to climate change. As we confront the intensifying impacts of climate change including prolonged; droughts, land degradation, and biodiversity loss, the urgency to conserve and restore our landscapes has never been greater. Forests serve not only as vital carbon sinks but also as the foundation of local livelihoods and national economic progress.

In line with its bold climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, Kenya has prioritized forest conservation and landscape restoration as part of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The REDD+ mechanism - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks offers a unique opportunity to achieve measurable climate benefits while enhancing community well-being and ecosystem services.

This mechanism has emerged as a cornerstone of climate action globally, and in Kenya, it provides a robust platform for the transformation of the forest sector. The implementation of REDD+ plays a significant role in our commitment to conserve forests, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance the well-being of present and future generations. As we transition from REDD+ readiness to full-scale implementation, the adoption of REDD+ Nesting Guidelines ensures that activities at national, jurisdictional, and project levels are harmonized. This alignment is vital for maximizing the effectiveness, integrity, and inclusivity of Kenya's REDD+ initiatives.

As we embark on this new chapter, these Guidelines will empower counties, local communities, and project developers to actively participate in climate mitigation while safeguarding Kenya's rich biodiversity and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, in collaboration with the partners is committed to supporting the operationalization of these Guidelines and to continuously improving them through learning and adaptation.

Let us work together to realize the promise of Kenya's forests for our people, our climate, and our future.

Dr. Deborah M. Barasa

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry

PREFACE



Kenya has made substantial progress in its REDD+ readiness, including the establishment of a National REDD+ Strategy, Forest Reference Level (FRL), National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) and Safeguards Information System (SIS). The forest sector has taken significant steps towards mobilizing climate finance by implementing REDD+ projects that generate emission reductions and removals, thereby attracting carbon finance for forest conservation and socio-economic benefits.

economic benefits.

To advance to the implementation stage of REDD+, Kenya by adopting the nesting approach, has developed the Nesting Guidelines. The REDD+ Nesting Guidelines provide a clear framework for integrating REDD+ activities into Kenya's national REDD+ architecture. Nesting is essential to ensure consistency in carbon accounting, transparency in emissions reductions, and alignment between project-level actions and national climate goals. By harmonizing methodologies, baselines, and benefit sharing mechanisms, nesting enhances the credibility and environmental integrity of Kenya's REDD+ program. These Guidelines not only support the realization of Kenya's National REDD+ Strategy and NDC targets while meeting international standards under the UNFCCC and other global frameworks but also provide clarity and assurance to investors, development partners, and communities seeking to engage in forest-based climate solutions.

These Guidelines have been developed through a collaborative process involving government agencies, local communities, indigenous peoples, civil society, and technical experts. This inclusive approach reflects Kenya's dedication to transparency, equity, and meaningful stakeholder engagement qualities that will underpin the lasting success of REDD+ in our country. We extend our gratitude to all those who contributed to the development of these Guidelines, particularly members of the National Expert Group (NEG) for their technical input and dedication. We also appreciate the financial support from our development partners and donors, whose contributions have been vital in making this milestone a reality. Your support continues to drive Kenya's efforts in addressing climate change and advancing forest-based solutions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Mugambi', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Mr. Gitonga Mugambi, CBS

Principal Secretary, State Department for Forestry

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Act means the Forest Conservation and Management Act, CAP 385;

Approved Nested Baseline means an emission benchmark by the REDD+ Focal Point which is consistent with the Jurisdictional Baseline, and which is based on a formula derived from an Eligible Methodology listed in Annex I;

Cabinet Secretary means the Cabinet Secretary responsible for matters relating to forestry;

Carbon Market Regulations means the Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024

Climate Change Act means the Climate Change Act, CAP 387A;

Community Development Agreement has the meaning provided for it under regulation 2 of the Climate Change (Carbon Market) Regulations, 2024;

Designated National Authority has the meaning provided for it under section 2 of the Climate Change Act, CAP 387A;

Eligible Methodology means a relevant REDD+ methodology developed or accepted by the REDD+ Focal Point from time to time, and included in the list set out in Annex I

Forest means an area with a minimum of 15% canopy cover, minimum land area of 0.5 ha and potential to reach a minimum height of 2 meters at maturity in situ.

Forest Reference Level means the national benchmark for assessing performance of REDD+ implementation.

IPCC means the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which establishes guidelines for national Greenhouse Gas Inventories relevant to the calculation, reporting, and verification of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removals.

Jurisdictional Baseline means a national or sub-national emissions benchmark, derived from the Forest Reference Level, and determined by the REDD+ Focal Point in accordance with an Eligible Methodology listed in Annex I;

Jurisdictional REDD+ Program means REDD+ activities implemented at the sub-national or at the national level;

Letter of Approval means the Letter issued by the Designated National Authority under regulation 22 of the Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024

Letter of Authorization means the Letter issued by the Designated National Authority under regulation 23 of the Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024;

Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval means a Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval issued by the REDD+ Coordination Unit to Nested Projects;

Ministry means the ministry for the time being responsible for forestry matters.

National REDD+ Advisory Board means the National REDD+ Advisory Board proposed under chapter 5 of the National REDD+ Strategy;

Nested Project means a Site-Scale REDD+ Project fully nested within a Jurisdictional REDD+ Program, meeting all the criteria for registration and ongoing implementation within Kenya.

Nesting means the alignment of accounting for greenhouse gas emission reductions and removals from REDD+ activities across multiple scales;

Principal Secretary means the Principal Secretary responsible for forestry matters;

Project Baseline means an emissions benchmark for a Site-Scale project developed using an Eligible Methodology listed in Annex I;

REDD+ means activities that Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks

REDD+ Coordination Unit means the National REDD+ Coordination Unit proposed under chapter 5 of the National REDD+ Strategy;

REDD+ Focal Point means the National REDD+ coordinator and Focal Point appointed by the Principal Secretary;

REDD+ Project means a forest carbon project, verified using an Eligible Methodology, aimed at Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and the Role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks;

REDD+ Registry means registry established in accordance with section 8 (2) (i) of the Climate Change Act, CAP 387A.

Registrar means the National REDD+ Focal Point who is responsible for managing the Kenya REDD+ Registry.

Results-Based Payment means ex-post or conditional ex-ante payment made to a Project proponent of a Jurisdictional REDD+ Program, or a Nested Project, for achieving pre-determined results;

Service means the Kenya Forest Service established under the Act;

Site-Scale Project means a REDD+ Project operating outside of a Jurisdictional REDD+ Program and is not nested; and

UNFCCC means the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of Conservation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks is a climate change mitigation framework developed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Its primary goal is to incentivize developing countries to: Reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; conserve forest carbon stocks; promote sustainable management of forests; and enhance forest carbon stocks. Parties are expected to implement REDD+ in a phased approach, having three phases including; readiness, implementation and results-based. Kenya has been actively engaged in REDD+ since 2009 and made substantial progress in its readiness, including establishing its National REDD+ Strategy, Forest Reference Level, National Forest Monitoring System and Safeguards Information System.

Implementation of REDD+ is done at three levels, which are jurisdictional, project level and Nested. Jurisdictional approach could be at National or subnational level only, which acts as a point of reference in terms of crediting Emission Reductions/ Removals (ERRs) and benefits guidelines, while project approach is at the specific carbon projects and uses project policies and guidelines (ERs crediting and Benefit sharing) while implementing REDD+. The Nested approach integrates the two aforementioned approaches to facilitate coordination and a harmonized way of implementing REDD+. A nested system of REDD+ refers to site or subnational-scale REDD+ activities that are incorporated into, reported on and formally recognized under a national REDD+ program, allowing for benefits to flow at all scales. The benefits of REDD+ Nesting approach include;

- i. Access to multiple sources of climate and carbon finance
- ii. Enable private sector Investment
- iii. Decentralize forest management
- iv. Align REDD+ with Paris Agreement
- v. Create broad support for REDD+

Nesting approaches can be categorized into two types: centralized and decentralized. In a centralized-nested approach with national crediting, the government oversees all ERRs activities, managing outcomes and distributing incentives. Projects are integrated into national REDD+ efforts through performance-based rewards and a structured benefit-sharing system. In a decentralized-nested approach with multi-scale crediting, the national government leads the nesting process by setting the framework that allows various actors, such as subnational governments and individual projects, to generate and claim ERRs independently. The government establishes and enforces national standards for Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) and safeguards, which may go beyond the requirements of the crediting programs under which individual projects are registered

Kenya has adopted a decentralized approach to nesting whereby both site-scale REDD+ activities and the jurisdiction have direct access to the market. As a general principle, any nested REDD+ activities must be consistent with Kenya's jurisdictional REDD+ approach. It is in this effect that Kenya has come up with REDD+ Nesting Guidelines to provide a clear, consistent framework for integrating Green House Gas (GHG) emission reductions/removals from REDD+ activities across multiple scales within Kenya's REDD+ architecture.

OBJECTIVES

1. The overall objective of these Guidelines is to provide a clear, consistent framework for integrating GHG emission reductions/removals from REDD+ activities across multiple scales within Kenya's REDD+ architecture.
2. Specifically, these guidelines aim to;
 - a) align project and jurisdictional baselines, accounting methodologies, monitoring, reporting and verification;
 - b) Promote transparency, accuracy, consistency, completeness and comparability in GHG emissions reductions/removals accounting.

SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

3. These guidelines apply to REDD+ Site-Scale Projects, Nested Projects, and Jurisdictional REDD+ Programs in Kenya.
4. The following terms apply in these Guidelines:
 - (a) “Should” is used to indicate that among several possibilities, one course of action is recommended as particularly suitable;
 - (b) “May” is used to indicate what is permitted.

PRINCIPLES

5. These guidelines adhere to the following principles:
 - a) respect for environmental safeguards and integrity;
 - b) enhanced transparency of reporting to avoid double counting and double payment;
 - c) respect for social safeguards including human rights, public participation, inclusivity and the free, prior, informed consent of minorities and marginalized groups, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities in REDD+ initiatives;
 - d) respect for the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and good governance;
 - e) application of international best practices in the management and conservation of forests and promotion of sustainable management and conservation of forests in accordance with the Act.

PROCEDURE FOR NESTING REDD+ PROJECTS

NESTING APPROACH

6. Kenya is implementing REDD+ through decentralized nested approach where crediting and monetizing of emission reductions and removals may occur at the national, sub-national and site-scale levels; and

7. The nesting approach is operated in ways that are consistent with the IPCC guidelines and which uphold IPCC good practice.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

8. The REDD+ Projects approved and implemented under these guidelines should meet the following general eligibility requirements: -
 - a) Obtain letter of Approval in accordance with the Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024;
 - b) contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation, reducing emissions from forest degradation, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, or enhancement of forest carbon stocks;
 - c) abide by the national and international laws and frameworks;
 - d) use highly reliable data and methods of calculation for estimating greenhouse gas emissions/removals from internationally or nationally recognized sources;
 - e) use an Eligible Methodology;
 - f) clearly identify all its relevant stakeholders at the project design phase with their roles and responsibilities;
 - g) be able to analyze, identify and mitigate environmental, social, and economic impacts caused by implementing the project;
 - h) obtain free prior and informed consent of the community to develop the initiative on their land;
 - i) undergo a REDD+ safeguard standards assessment in accordance with the section 23D (2) of the Climate Change Act, CAP 387A.

NESTING APPLICATION PROCESS

9. Project proponents of all REDD+ Projects should submit a project nesting application to the REDD+ Coordination Unit in the prescribed project nesting application form under Annex II accompanied by the documentation set out in the form.

10. The REDD+ Coordination Unit, upon receipt of a project nesting application, reviews and assesses the application according to the eligibility requirements and considers whether the REDD+ Project qualifies for nesting.
11. Upon reviewing the application, the REDD+ Coordination Unit may request the project proponent to provide additional information within fourteen (14) days.
12. The REDD+ Coordination Unit, within thirty (14) days, either;
 - a) accepts the application; or
 - b) rejects the application and provides reasons for such rejection to the project proponent.
13. An application may be rejected where: -
 - a) the project does not qualify as a REDD+ Project;
 - b) particulars provided by a project proponent are incomplete; or
 - c) appropriate safeguards for environmental protection have not been provided.
14. Where the REDD+ Coordination Unit rejects a project's nesting application, the project proponent of the REDD+ Project may address the reasons for rejection and re-submit the application within sixty (60) days of receipt of the rejection.
15. Project Proponents who fail to re-submit the application within sixty (60) days after rejection, have to make their project nesting application afresh.
16. Where the REDD+ Coordination Unit accepts the project nesting application, the REDD+ Coordination Unit issues the project proponent of the REDD+ Project with a Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval in the prescribed form under Annex III within fourteen (14) days of its decision.
17. The REDD+ Project nesting application process should be done through the Kenya REDD+ Registry.

CANCELLATION OF APPROVAL OF NESTED REDD+ PROJECT.

18. A Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval issued to a Site-Scale REDD+ Project may be cancelled for the following reasons:

- a) non-compliance of the Nested REDD+ Project with the operation requirements prescribed in these guidelines;
- b) where the Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval was obtained through fraud or misrepresentation;
- c) where the continued operation of the Nested REDD+ Project activity is or is likely to be injurious to the environment or human health;
- d) where the Nested REDD+ Project's activities are overridden by other public interest, as may be determined by the Environment and Land Court of Kenya; and
- e) where the Nested REDD+ Project ceases operations.

19. A proponent of a REDD+ Project should not transfer a Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval issued under these guidelines unless-

- a) a transfer is required upon change of control or full transfer of ownership of the project proponent of the REDD+ Project; and
- b) the proposed new project proponent of the REDD+ Project meets the requirements under these guidelines

OPERATIONALIZATION OF NESTED PROJECTS

OPERATIONALIZING KENYA'S NESTED PROJECTS AND JURISDICTIONAL PROGRAM

20. A project proponent whose Site-Scale Project is issued with a Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval under these guidelines should;

- (a) operate on the basis of an Approved Nested Baseline;
- (b) implement the Nested Project in accordance with the conditions under the Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval, where applicable;
- (c) report outcomes in line with the Jurisdictional REDD+ timelines and process;
- (d) earn carbon credits in line with an Eligible Methodology and Jurisdictional REDD+ process; and
- (e) distribute benefits in accordance with the benefit sharing requirements set out in the Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024.

TRADING OF EMISSION REDUCTIONS AND REMOVALS

21. Project Proponents of Jurisdictional REDD+ Programs and Nested Projects are eligible to receive results-based payments or generate and trade carbon credits for the emissions reductions and removals by their respective activities.

22. To prevent double counting, a project proponent of a Jurisdictional REDD+ program should not receive results-based payment or trade carbon credits in the voluntary or compliance markets for emissions reductions and removals generated by a Nested Project.

23. A project proponent of a Jurisdictional REDD+ program may claim emission reductions and removals for its Nationally Determined Contribution, from projects that have not been issued with a Letter of Authorization, or from projects issued with a Letter of Authorization which requires a portion of emission reductions or removals to be allocated to the Nationally Determined Contribution.

24. Emissions reductions and removals by Nested Projects and Jurisdictional REDD+ are subject to verification under an Eligible Methodology.

MONITORING, REPORTING AND VERIFICATION

JURISDICTIONAL BASELINE

25. The Jurisdictional Baseline should be used as a baseline to monitor and evaluate Jurisdictional REDD+ and Nested Projects.

MONITORING

26. Monitoring of REDD+ Projects should be aligned with the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), Safeguards Information System (SIS), and integrated with other relevant national data systems.

27. Jurisdictional and Nested projects should use the latest versions of the adopted national protocols, Standard Operating Procedures, and manuals in the estimation of emission factors and activity data.

28. Nested projects should adhere to the use of consistent/standardized forest inventory and remote sensing methodologies and tools adopted at the Jurisdictional level.

VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION

29. Emissions reductions and removals from Nested Projects and Jurisdictional REDD+ Projects should be validated and verified by an accredited Third Party Entity.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

30. All Nested Projects and Jurisdictional REDD+ Projects should report on their projects' performance in accordance with the reporting requirements set out in the Climate Change Act and Regulations thereunder, and as guided by the REDD+ Coordination Unit.

REDD+ PROJECT NESTING TRANSITION

31. Site-Scale projects should transition to nested projects, including transitioning from their project baseline to the Approved Nested Baseline within one year from approval of these guidelines.

ANNEX I: LIST OF ELIGIBLE METHODOLOGIES

1. Verra's Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ (JNR) programme;
2. The REDD+ Environmental Excellence Standard (TREES);
3. Any other relevant REDD+ methodology approved and included in the list of recognized carbon standards maintained by the Designated National Authority pursuant to regulation 7(i) of the Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024, or recommended by the REDD+ Focal Point;

ANNEX II: PROJECT NESTING APPLICATION FORM

1. General Information	
a. Title of the Project	
b. Project approval Reference Number (As indicated in the letter of Approval from the DNA)	
c. Date of Application	
d. Type of Project	
2. Project Details	
a. Project Description (<i>include details of Eligible Methodology, REDD+ Activities, Greenhouse gases, Carbon pools, emissions factors and activity data used</i>)	
b. Project Objectives	
c. Geographical Location	
d. County	
e. Sub County (<i>Where applicable</i>)	
f. Ward (<i>Where applicable</i>)	
g. Site (Precise GPS Coordinates)	
h. Size	
i. Is the project located in a gazetted forest?	

<p>Yes:</p> <p>No:</p> <p><i>(If yes, attach the forest concession agreement, contract, license, or joint management agreement with the Service.)</i></p>	
3. Project Stakeholders	
Names and Types of Stakeholders	
4. Details of Project Proponent	
<p>a. Is the project proponent the proprietor? Yes or No (attach applicable approval documents)</p> <p>b. Name of the Project Proponent</p>	
c. Address of the Project Proponent	
d. Contact (provide email and telephone contacts)	
<p>e. Organizational category (choose one or more of the below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Government (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) ● County Government ● Private (individual, company) ● Civil Society Organization 	
<p>f. Other function(s) of the project proponent in the project. (Pick any of the below that applies.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sponsor ● Intermediary ● Technical Advisor 	

5. Experience

Provide a summary of the relevant experience.

.....

6. Project sponsor(s) or upfront buyer financing the project (List and provide the following information for all project sponsors)

- i. Name
- ii. Address
- iii. Contact Person
- iv. Email and Web Address
- v. Telephone
- vi. Organizational category

7. Project management and governance structure

Provide details on the project's management and governance structure.

.....

8. Time frame

a. Start Date

b. Base year of the first expected carbon credits delivery

c. Project lifetime

9.

Make a description of the current status if the emission removal or reduction activities are not implemented.

.....
.....

Make a description of the Eligible Methodology used for the project.

.....
.....

Demonstrate project's additionality, management of reversal risk and leakage mitigation

.....
.....

10. Expected carbon credits/ Verified Carbon Reduction and Removals

.....
.....

11. Expected Environment and socio-economic benefits

.....
.....

12. Project Costs

A. Project Costs	
B. Preparation Costs	
C. Establishment Costs	
D. Other Costs (explain)	
E. Total project costs	

13. Projected Proceeds

What are the project's projected proceeds?

.....
.....

14. Benefit Sharing (attach a benefit sharing agreement between the project proponent and community, provided that where a Site-Scale Project is implemented on public or community land, details of the benefit sharing as set out in the Community Development Agreement.

Describe benefit sharing arrangements

.....
...

15. Social Safeguards (attach project's Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Safeguards Standards Assessment Report)

Describe social safeguards

.....

16. Environmental Safeguards (attach project's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Report)

Describe environmental safeguards

.....

For Official Use:

Registration Number

ANNEX III: LETTER OF NESTED REDD+ PROJECT APPROVAL

Date:

Our Ref:

Address of the proponent(s)

.....

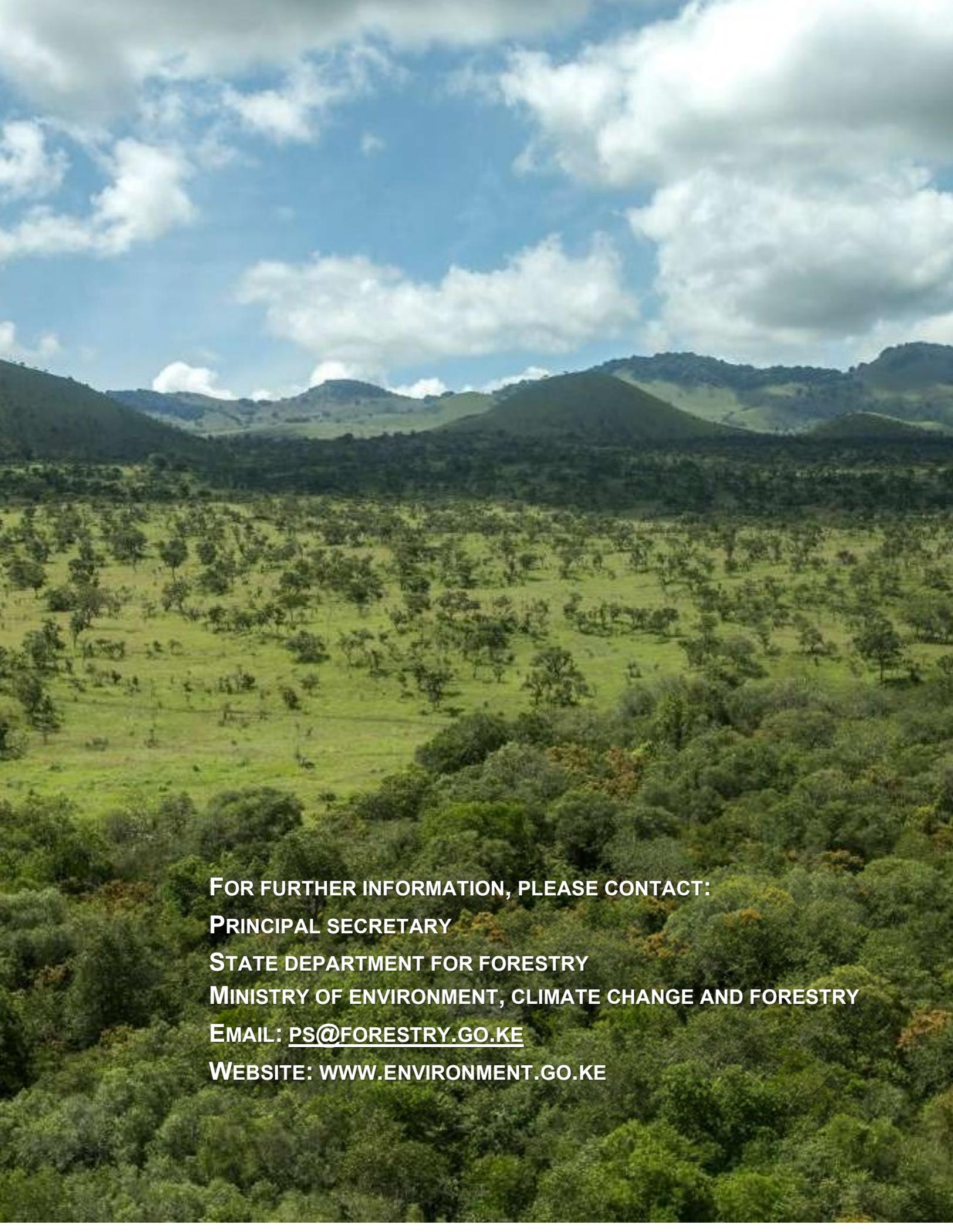
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RE: Letter of Nested REDD+ Project Approval for project titled

Reference is made to the above captioned subject and your Project approval Reference Number

1. The National REDD+ Coordination Unit received and considered your Project Nesting Application.
2. This is to inform you that the National REDD+ Coordination Unit hereby approves the project to be Nested as per the Project Nesting Application.
3. Further, the project's allocated approved nested baseline is
4. This approval is granted on the basis of your adherence to the required standards and methodologies and ensuring the project's consistency with the Jurisdictional Baseline.

Dated 20



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR FORESTRY
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTRY
EMAIL: PS@FORESTRY.GO.KE
WEBSITE: WWW.ENVIRONMENT.GO.KE**