

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 5195

To establish a verifiable international terrestrial ecosystem services conservation program and provide international technical assistance for the development of markets, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

Mr. CARDIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## A BILL

To establish a verifiable international terrestrial ecosystem services conservation program and provide international technical assistance for the development of markets, and for other purposes.

1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2        *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3        **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Combatting Global De-  
5        forestation Act of 2024”.

6        **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Forests are a vital to the ecological health  
2 of the Earth, biodiversity, the protection of water  
3 and soil quality, the prevention of erosion and dan-  
4 gerous landslides, the production of oxygen, the reg-  
5 ulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and the  
6 regulation of the global system.

7           (2) Forests are a critical natural resource that,  
8 when appropriately managed and conserved, provide  
9 significant economic, cultural, health, and commu-  
10 nity benefits to humanity.

11           (3) Since the start of the 20th century, an esti-  
12 mated 3,900,000 square miles of forest have been  
13 lost due to human activities, including land conver-  
14 sions for agricultural production, cattle ranching,  
15 logging, land development, and extractive industrial  
16 activities such as mining and fossil fuel extraction.

17           (4) Since 2000, 23 percent of global tree cov-  
18 erage loss has been the result of deforestation in-  
19 cluding—

20                   (A) 48 percent in Brazil;

21                   (B) 50 percent in Argentina;

22                   (C) 89 percent in the Philippines; and

23                   (D) 96 percent in Indonesia.

24           (5) Deforestation disproportionately affects—

1 (A) critical habitats and ecosystems for  
2 critically endangered species such as Sumatran  
3 Elephants and Orangutans in Indonesia;

4 (B) the health and quality of water re-  
5 sources through the alteration of critical eco-  
6 system services to hydrological systems, includ-  
7 ing slowing stormwater runoff into surface  
8 waters and providing natural filtration for fall-  
9 en precipitation that infiltrates groundwater re-  
10 sources; and

11 (C) approximately 370,000,000 people in  
12 indigenous communities that rely on naturally  
13 forested lands that are historically and cul-  
14 turally significant and provide community and  
15 economic opportunities, sustenance, medicinal  
16 resources and spiritual connection;

17 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

18 In this Act:

19 (1) **ADDITIONALITY.**—The term “additionality”  
20 means emissions reductions or other terrestrial eco-  
21 system services in developing countries that would  
22 not have occurred but for activities to reduce green-  
23 house gas emissions in partner developing countries  
24 funded and made possible by funding provided pur-  
25 suant to section 5.

1           (2) APPROPRIATE LOCAL PARTNER.—The term  
2           “appropriate local partner” means any relevant sub-  
3           national government, local authority, indigenous  
4           community, non-governmental entity, or private  
5           landowner in a partner developing country com-  
6           mitted to and capable of achieving the goals de-  
7           scribed in section 4(b).

8           (3) COUNTRY OF CONCERN.—The term “coun-  
9           try of concern” means the government or ruling  
10          party of any of the following countries:

11                   (A) The Russian Federation.

12                   (B) The People’s Republic of China.

13                   (C) The Democratic People’s Republic of  
14          Korea.

15                   (D) The Islamic Republic of Iran.

16                   (E) The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

17                   (F) The Republic of Cuba.

18          (4) DEFORESTATION.—The term “deforest-  
19          ation” means a change in land use, including forest  
20          fragmentation and forest degradation, from a forest  
21          to any other land use.

22          (5) ELIGIBLE PROJECT.—The term “eligible  
23          project” means a verifiable and measurable national  
24          or subnational activity developed or executed by the  
25          central government, subnational government, local

1 authority, indigenous community, non-governmental  
2 entity, private landowner, or any group of such per-  
3 sons in a partner developing country that supports  
4 enhancing terrestrial ecosystem services.

5 (6) EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS.—The term “emis-  
6 sions reductions” means greenhouse gas emissions  
7 reductions and increased sequestration achieved  
8 from—

9 (A) reduced, or avoided deforestation;

10 (B) reforestation;

11 (C) preservation of terrestrial ecosystems;

12 or

13 (D) enhancements to terrestrial ecosystems

14 that will result in the increased sequestration of  
15 greenhouse gas emissions.

16 (7) FOREST DEGRADATION.—The term “forest  
17 degradation” means any reduction in forest stocks  
18 due to the effects of human land-use activities, in-  
19 cluding land-use changes driven by human activity.

20 (8) NATURE-BASED SOLUTION.—The term “na-  
21 ture-based solution” means an activity within a part-  
22 ner developing country to conserve, restore, or better  
23 manage forests and terrestrial ecosystems to improve  
24 terrestrial ecosystem services.

1           (9) OUTCOME-ORIENTED ASSISTANCE.—The  
2 term “outcome-oriented assistance” means a mecha-  
3 nism for the provision of United States assistance in  
4 which—

5           (A) a partner developing country, or ap-  
6 propriate local partner in a developing country,  
7 assumes responsibility and must demonstrate  
8 the achievement of measurable results, or  
9 progress towards the achievement of conserva-  
10 tion goals, that improve terrestrial ecosystem  
11 services associated with activities of an eligible  
12 project;

13           (B) such measurable results are defined  
14 and agreed upon in a multi-year agreement,  
15 and described in section 4(d) of this Act, in ad-  
16 vance of the provision of assistance by the  
17 United States for the eligible project; and

18           (C) such assistance is expended to such de-  
19 veloping country or appropriate local partner  
20 only upon independent verification of such pre-  
21 defined results.

22           (10) PARTNER DEVELOPING COUNTRY.—The  
23 term “partner developing country” means—

24           (A) a country eligible to receive official de-  
25 velopment assistance according to the income

1 guidelines of the Development Assistance Com-  
2 mittee of the Organisation for Economic Co-op-  
3 eration and Development; or

4 (B) any other country identified by the  
5 Secretary with globally significant forests or  
6 terrestrial ecosystems the loss of which is, or  
7 has the potential to, significantly contribute to  
8 the loss of terrestrial ecosystem services.

9 (11) PROGRAM.—The term “Program” means  
10 the program established pursuant to section 4(a).

11 (12) TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “terrestrial  
13 ecosystems” means naturally occurring grass-  
14 lands, forests, tropical rainforests, mangroves,  
15 peatlands, or wetlands comprised of native spe-  
16 cies generated and maintained primarily  
17 through natural ecological and evolutionary  
18 processes.

19 (B) EXCLUSION.—The term “terrestrial  
20 ecosystems” does not include tree plantations,  
21 such as crops of trees planted by humans pri-  
22 marily for the purposes of harvesting.

23 (13) TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES.—  
24 The term “terrestrial ecosystems services” means

1 the direct and indirect benefits that terrestrial eco-  
2 systems provide to humans, including—

3 (A) material or energy outputs from an  
4 ecosystem, including food, forage, fiber, fresh  
5 water, and other resources;

6 (B) benefits obtained through moderation  
7 or control of ecosystem processes, including reg-  
8 ulation of local climate, air quality, water qual-  
9 ity, soil quality, emission reductions, natural  
10 carbon sequestration, flood control, erosion con-  
11 trol, disease control, and pollination;

12 (C) maintenance of fundamental ecosystem  
13 processes, such as habitat for plants and wild-  
14 life, or the maintenance of genetic and biologi-  
15 cal diversity; and

16 (D) non-material benefits provided to  
17 human societies and culture, including opportu-  
18 nities for recreation, tourism, aesthetic or artis-  
19 tic appreciation, and spirituality.

20 (14) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”  
21 means the Secretary of State.



1 **SEC. 4. VERIFIED INTERNATIONAL FOREST ECOSYSTEM**  
2 **SERVICES CONSERVATION PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a  
4 program, to be known as the “Verified International For-  
5 est Ecosystem Services Conservation Program”.

6 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Program shall  
7 be—

8 (1) to enhance efforts to halt terrestrial eco-  
9 system degradation and loss, and increase terrestrial  
10 restoration at scale;

11 (2) to provide contingent outcome-oriented as-  
12 sistance for the achievement of eligible projects in  
13 partner developing countries through incentives and  
14 assistance to halt terrestrial ecosystem loss; and

15 (3) to enhance restoration of terrestrial eco-  
16 systems.

17 (c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall develop  
18 the criteria, guidelines, and processes necessary to imple-  
19 ment the Program.

20 (d) GOALS.—In carrying out the program established  
21 pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary shall work with  
22 the governments of partner developing countries and ap-  
23 propriate local partners to identify, develop, and imple-  
24 ment eligible projects that will or have the potential—

25 (1) to help partner developing countries meet  
26 their forest conservation and restoration goals, in-

1 including efforts to achieve emissions reductions and  
2 enhance net natural sequestration capacity associ-  
3 ated with deforestation;

4 (2) to enhance terrestrial ecosystem services;

5 (3) to improve natural habitat for species;

6 (4) to preserve culturally and ecologically  
7 unique forested lands, including forests containing  
8 rare, threatened, or endangered plant species;

9 (5) to contribute to cooperative efforts to con-  
10 serve and restore natural forests and other terres-  
11 trial ecosystems that provide local, regional, and  
12 global environmental and health benefits;

13 (6) to provide a counterbalance to investments  
14 from any country of concern in activities that utilize  
15 destructive industrial practices that degrade or de-  
16 stroy natural forests and other terrestrial ecosystems  
17 in partner developing countries; and

18 (7) to reduce illegal deforestation.

19 (e) OUTCOME-ORIENTED ASSISTANCE.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible project shall  
21 qualify for outcome-oriented assistance under the  
22 Program if—

23 (A) in the determination of the Secretary,  
24 the partner developing country or appropriate  
25 local partner will be able to fulfill its obligations

1 under a multi-year agreement described in sub-  
2 section (d) in support of an eligible project  
3 through the Program, including (as applicable)  
4 with respect to—

5 (i) standards of governance and re-  
6 spect for rule of law in the partner devel-  
7 oping country;

8 (ii) environmental and social safe-  
9 guards; and

10 (iii) safeguarding against the potential  
11 for corruption or misuse of assistance pro-  
12 vided under this section;

13 (B) the eligible project is appropriately de-  
14 signed to use outcome-oriented assistance;

15 (C) the partner developing country or ap-  
16 propriate local partner, as applicable, agrees—

17 (i) to abide by transparency require-  
18 ments with respect to the use of funds re-  
19 ceived under the program established pur-  
20 suant to subsection (a);

21 (ii) to fulfill measuring, reporting, and  
22 verification requirements, including inde-  
23 pendent third-party verification, necessary  
24 to provide outcome-oriented assistance;

1 (iii) to report publicly any data with  
2 respect to deforestation associated emis-  
3 sions reductions achieved under such pro-  
4 gram, in accordance with reporting re-  
5 quirements of or commitments of a partner  
6 developing country under relevant inter-  
7 national agreements;

8 (iv) to ensure that women, indigenous  
9 communities, and other local stakeholders,  
10 as applicable, are empowered and enabled  
11 to meaningfully participate in the develop-  
12 ment, implementation, and potential bene-  
13 fits of the eligible project; and

14 (v) to disclose any debt the applicant  
15 may owe to any entity known to be owned  
16 or controlled by a country of concern, in-  
17 cluding loan amounts, duration, rates, and  
18 contractual provisions;

19 (D) the eligible project enhances terrestrial  
20 ecosystems in a manner that can be verified  
21 and realizes outcomes that may contribute to  
22 meeting the relevant international commitments  
23 of the partner developing country; and

24 (E) with respect to subparagraph (C)(v),  
25 the partner developing country or appropriate

1 local partner agrees that the assistance pro-  
2 vided under this section may not be used to am-  
3 ortize any loan principal owed to any entity  
4 known to be owned or controlled by the country  
5 of concern.

6 (2) IMPACT OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.—

7 The presence of indigenous communities subsisting,  
8 and engaging in sustainable economic activities, on  
9 the lands of an eligible project shall not—

10 (A) be infringed by activities conducted in  
11 association with an eligible project; or

12 (B) impact the qualification of an eligible  
13 project.

14 (3) ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.—Any ad-  
15 ditional economic activity pursued on the lands of an  
16 eligible project may be permissible if such activities  
17 are carried out in accordance with the goals de-  
18 scribed in subsection (d).

19 (4) ADDITIONAL FORMS OF QUALIFICATION FOR  
20 OUTCOME-ORIENTED ASSISTANCE.—Notwithstanding  
21 paragraph (1), an eligible project may qualify for  
22 outcome-oriented assistance under this subsection  
23 if—

24 (A) the eligible project includes a combina-  
25 tion or aggregation of existing activities that

1 align with the goals described in subsection (d)  
2 such that the total of such projects contributes  
3 to the full national or, on an interim basis, sub-  
4 national territory in the partner developing  
5 country; or

6 (B) the eligible project is nested into the  
7 accounting and reporting of an existing national  
8 or sub-national program or activity in the part-  
9 ner developing country, including with regard to  
10 safeguard requirements and any transfer of  
11 verifiable environmental credits that qualify for  
12 use or transfer under internationally recognized  
13 systems that may meet the international envi-  
14 ronmental commitments of the partner devel-  
15 oping country, without regard to whether the el-  
16 igible project is below the subnational level or  
17 scale.

18 (5) PRIVATE OR PARTNER COUNTRY CONTRIBU-  
19 TION SUPPORT REQUIREMENT.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—Outcome-oriented as-  
21 sistance shall only be granted to eligible  
22 projects that secure additional funding from  
23 sources other than the United States Govern-  
24 ment in an amount that is not less than the 10  
25 percent of the amount determined to be pro-

1           vided out of the fund established under sub-  
2           section (h) for the eligible project based on the  
3           terms of the multi-year agreement of such eligi-  
4           ble project

5                   (B) PRIVATE PARTNERS.—The Secretary  
6           is encouraged—

7                           (i) to include private sector partners  
8                           as supporters of eligible projects; and

9                           (ii) to facilitate the security of finan-  
10                          cial commitments from private contribu-  
11                          tions, which shall be counted toward the  
12                          requirement under subparagraph (A) for  
13                          an eligible project.

14                   (6) PARTNERSHIPS WITH MULTILATERAL PRO-  
15           GRAMS.—The Secretary may partner with multilat-  
16           eral or multi-donor programs to jointly support an  
17           eligible project under this subsection.

18                   (7) DOUBLE COUNTING OF ASSISTANCE.—The  
19           Secretary shall take such steps as may be nec-  
20           essary—

21                           (A) to prevent the double counting of, or  
22                           double payment for, results from eligible  
23                           projects that also may receive funds from other  
24                           sources, including in accordance with relevant  
25                           international guidelines and rules; and

1 (B) to ensure that the assistance provided  
2 under this section and eligible projects are  
3 interoperable and do not supplant or compete  
4 with the achievement of country-level commit-  
5 ments under international agreements.

6 (f) MULTI-YEAR AGREEMENTS GOVERNING THE  
7 PROVISION OF OUTCOME-ORIENTED ASSISTANCE.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Upon determining that an  
9 eligible project qualifies for outcome-oriented assist-  
10 ance, the Secretary is authorized to enter into a  
11 multi-year agreement with a partner developing  
12 country, or appropriate local partners in the partner  
13 developing country, to determine the terms and con-  
14 ditions for which the provision of outcome-oriented  
15 assistance, in the form of grants from the fund es-  
16 tablished in subsection (h), may be administered to  
17 support an eligible project.

18 (2) PRIORITIZATION.—The Secretary is encour-  
19 aged to prioritize consideration of entering multi-  
20 year agreements for eligible projects that would di-  
21 rectly or indirectly combat illegal deforestation or  
22 counter malicious influence from a country of con-  
23 cern in a partner developing country.

24 (3) THIRD-PARTY LEVERAGE OF FUNDS.—The  
25 Secretary is encouraged to prioritize entering multi-



1 year agreements for eligible projects that include  
2 terms that leverage funding from non-profits, busi-  
3 nesses, other developed countries, and multilateral  
4 financing and development agencies.

5 (4) ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WITHIN  
6 AN ELIGIBLE PROJECT.—Multi-year agreements  
7 shall—

8 (A) permit economic activities within the  
9 area of an eligible project; and

10 (B) seek assurances that the conduct of  
11 such economic activities does not degrade the  
12 effectiveness of an eligible project in accordance  
13 with the goals described in subsection (d).

14 (5) TERMS.—In negotiating multi-year agree-  
15 ments under this subsection, the Secretary shall do  
16 the following:

17 (A) RECIPROCAL COMMITMENT.—The Sec-  
18 retary shall take steps to ensure that the part-  
19 ner developing country or appropriate local  
20 partners in the partner developing country, as  
21 applicable, reciprocate the commitments to  
22 achieving the goals described in subsection (d).

23 (B) DURATION OF AGREEMENT.—The Sec-  
24 retary—

1 (i) shall negotiate and reach a mutu-  
2 ally agreed upon term-length for each  
3 multi-year agreement;

4 (ii) may renegotiate and re-enter a  
5 multi-year agreement prior to or after the  
6 terms and dates of the multi-year agree-  
7 ment expire; and

8 (iii) shall seek assurances that the  
9 agreed upon goals and objectives for en-  
10 hancing terrestrial ecosystem services  
11 achieved through the relevant eligible  
12 project will last in perpetuity.

13 (C) RIGHT TO TITLE.—The Secretary may  
14 negotiate for the United States to own and con-  
15 trol title to the greenhouse gas emission reduc-  
16 tions associated with the activities of an eligible  
17 project for the purposes of counting such reduc-  
18 tions toward the international emission reduc-  
19 tion commitments of the United States.

20 (6) TERMINATION.—An agreement under this  
21 subsection may be unilaterally terminated by the  
22 Secretary if—

23 (A) the Secretary determines that the part-  
24 ner developing country or a appropriate local  
25 partner is failing or has failed to uphold the

1 terms and conditions established for the eligible  
2 project; or

3 (B) the Secretary—

4 (i) determines that the eligible project  
5 is not in the national interest of the United  
6 States; and

7 (ii) submits to Congress a notification  
8 of such determination.

9 (g) REVIEWS AND REPORTS.—

10 (1) PERIODIC REVIEWS.—The Secretary shall  
11 periodically review and evaluate the progress of eligi-  
12 ble projects—

13 (A) to ensure that eligible projects are pro-  
14 ceeding successfully and appropriately main-  
15 tained;

16 (B) to account for and adapt to  
17 externalities that could prevent an eligible  
18 project from meeting its objectives; and

19 (C) to advise proponents of an eligible  
20 projects in planning and executing the eligible  
21 project in accordance with this Act.

22 (2) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary shall—

23 (A) make publicly available a list of funds  
24 made available under the Program; and

1           (B) update on an annual basis the  
2 progress or any lack of progress in the imple-  
3 mentation of the eligible projects corresponding  
4 to such funds and the achievement of the goals  
5 described in subsection (d).

6           (3) PUBLISHED CERTIFICATION OF PARTNER-  
7 SHIP.—The Secretary shall annually publish and  
8 provide certificates of contribution to private donors  
9 that contribute funds that support eligible projects  
10 detailed in multi-year agreements that include—

11           (A) the amount of funds the private donor  
12 contributed to the eligible project for each cal-  
13 endar year that funds were provided;

14           (B) the location of the eligible project in-  
15 cluding country and region;

16           (C) the partner developing country or ap-  
17 propriate local partner that is signatory to the  
18 multi-year agreement for which the private  
19 donor is contributing funds for work on an eli-  
20 gible project; and

21           (D) a summary of the environmental im-  
22 pact of the eligible project including—

23           (i) the size in acres of terrestrial eco-  
24 systems that are being protected or re-  
25 stored;

1 (ii) the significance of such protected  
2 or restored terrestrial ecosystems; and

3 (iii) the verified amount of carbon se-  
4 questered by the supported project.

5 (h) DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS.—In carrying out the  
6 program under this section, the Secretary shall consult as  
7 appropriate with the Administrator of the United States  
8 Agency for International Development to avoid duplicative  
9 foreign aid efforts, particularly for conservation funds.

10 (i) TRUST FUND.—There is established in the Treas-  
11 ury of the United States a fund to be known as the  
12 “Verified International Terrestrial Ecosystem Services  
13 Conservation Fund”, which shall consist of—

14 (1) amounts appropriated pursuant to the au-  
15 thorization in subsection (j)(1) to carry out this sec-  
16 tion; and

17 (2) such gifts, bequests, or devises of property  
18 for the benefit of, or in connection with carrying out  
19 this section as the Secretary may accept in the form  
20 of donations by individuals or entities, including pri-  
21 vate entities, non-profit entities, other developed  
22 countries, and multinational entities.

23 (j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

24 (1) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized to  
25 be appropriated to carry out this section—

- 1 (A) \$875,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;  
2 (B) \$875,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;  
3 (C) \$875,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and  
4 (D) \$875,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.

5 (2) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated to  
6 carry out this section are authorized to remain avail-  
7 able until expended and shall be used solely for the  
8 purposes of this section.

9 (3) SALARIES AND EXPENSES.—Of the amounts  
10 made available for any fiscal year pursuant to the  
11 authorization under paragraph (1), not more than  
12 \$4,000,000 is authorized to be made available for  
13 the salaries and expenses to carry out this section.

14 (k) NATURAL FOREST REFERENCE BASELINE FOR  
15 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—

16 (1) PROPOSALS FOR NATURAL FOREST REF-  
17ERENCE BASELINE.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—To receive outcome-ori-  
19 ented assistance under this section for an eligi-  
20 ble project qualified to receive outcome-oriented  
21 assistance pursuant to subsection (e), a partner  
22 developing country or appropriate local partner  
23 shall submit to the Secretary a proposal for a  
24 forest reference level baseline that is credible,  
25 transparent, accurate, and conservatively evalu-

1           ates and establishes a forest reference level  
2           baseline of an eligible project in accordance  
3           with the criteria established by the Secretary  
4           under paragraph (2).

5           (B) DETERMINATION BY SECRETARY.—

6           (i) IN GENERAL.—After receipt of a  
7           proposal under subparagraph (A), the Sec-  
8           retary shall determine whether the forest  
9           reference level baseline meets the criteria  
10          under paragraph (2).

11          (ii) PROVISION OF OUTCOME-ORI-  
12          ENTED ASSISTANCE APPROVED FOREST  
13          REFERENCE LEVEL BASELINE.—If the  
14          Secretary determines under clause (i) that  
15          the proposed forest reference level baseline  
16          meets the criteria under paragraph (2), the  
17          Secretary may provide outcome-oriented  
18          assistance for such eligible project to the  
19          developing country or appropriate local  
20          partner in accordance with this section.

21          (iii) FAILURE TO MEET CRITERIA.—

22          (I) IN GENERAL.—If the Sec-  
23          retary determines under clause (i)  
24          that the proposed forest reference  
25          level baseline does not meet the cri-

1           teria under paragraph (2), the Sec-  
2           retary may negotiate with the partner  
3           developing country or appropriate  
4           local partner to reach an agreement  
5           on a forest reference level baseline for  
6           the eligible project in accordance with  
7           paragraph (2).

8                   (II) PROVISION OF OUTCOME-  
9                   ORIENTED ASSISTANCE FOR AGREED  
10                  FOREST REFERENCE LEVEL BASE-  
11                  LINE.—Once an agreement has been  
12                  reached under subclause (I), the Sec-  
13                  retary may provide outcome-oriented  
14                  assistance for the eligible project to  
15                  the developing country or appropriate  
16                  local partner in accordance with this  
17                  section.

18                  (2) BASELINE CRITERIA.—The Secretary shall  
19                  establish criteria for each forest reference level base-  
20                  line proposed, which shall include requirements that  
21                  the forest reference level baseline—

22                          (A) is used to account for the net size of  
23                          forested lands or significant naturally vegetated  
24                          lands achieved from the eligible project;



1 (B) is national, or subnational on an in-  
2 terim basis, in scope;

3 (C) is consistent with the environmental  
4 stewardship commitments, targets, or actions  
5 that are appropriate for the partner developing  
6 country with respect to combatting deforest-  
7 ation or loss of terrestrial ecosystem services—

8 (i) taking into consideration the aver-  
9 age annual historical emissions and remov-  
10 als associated with the forests, and other  
11 terrestrial ecosystems, as applicable, of the  
12 partner developing country during a period  
13 of at least 5 years; and

14 (ii) if appropriate, using the relevant  
15 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Green-  
16 house Gas Inventories published by the  
17 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate  
18 Change to determine applicable drivers of  
19 deforestation and land use conversion;

20 (D) establishes a trajectory that would re-  
21 sult in zero net deforestation by not later than  
22 10 years after the date on which the baseline is  
23 established;

1 (E) is updated not less frequently than  
2 once every 5 years to account for changing cir-  
3 cumstances in the developing country;

4 (F) accounts for the size of forested areas  
5 based on—

6 (i) remaining natural forest land;

7 (ii) conversions of other lands to or  
8 from natural forest land; and

9 (iii) any other land-use category esti-  
10 mated to contribute at least 10 percent of  
11 agriculture, forestry, and other land use  
12 emissions in the project area; and

13 (G) takes into consideration existing or  
14 planned terrestrial ecosystem services or forest  
15 conservation or restoration projects as described  
16 in subsection (e) in a partner developing coun-  
17 try and the effect those projects might have in  
18 determining protection or restoration activities  
19 with respect to terrestrial ecosystem services  
20 and establishing a forest reference level baseline  
21 for eligible projects funded under this Act.

22 **SEC. 5. NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the United  
24 States Agency for International Development, in consulta-  
25 tion with the Secretary, shall conduct a program to pro-

1 vide technical assistance to build the capacities of partner  
2 developing countries and appropriate local partners to im-  
3 prove conservation, natural forest management, and res-  
4 toration of natural forests and other terrestrial ecosystems  
5 for the purposes of—

6           (1) enhancing the terrestrial ecosystem services  
7           and sustainable economic value of such natural re-  
8           sources; and

9           (2) facilitating the preparation of eligible  
10          projects in accordance with section 4.

11          (b) **ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.**—In conducting the pro-  
12          gram described in subsection (a), the Administrator of the  
13          United States Agency for International Development may  
14          provide technical support to partner developing countries  
15          and appropriate local partners for the following activities:

16               (1) Reducing deforestation related emissions,  
17               forest fragmentation, and forest degradation of sig-  
18               nificant forests within a partner developing country.

19               (2) Enhancing the natural carbon sequestration  
20               ability of the natural forests and the terrestrial eco-  
21               system services of a potential eligible project within  
22               a partner developing country, and building resilience.

23               (3) Monitoring, reporting, and verification of  
24               the environmental, social, and financial quality and

1 integrity of the project as an important component  
2 of the work.

3 (4) Assisting governments, willing, legitimate  
4 landowners, or willing customary use rights holders  
5 in developing projects to engage in conservation  
6 credit markets through—

7 (A) the implementation of science-based  
8 metrics for determining that conservation ac-  
9 tivities have generated verifiable environmental  
10 credits that may be sold to buyers on existing  
11 conservation compliance markets; or

12 (B) projects providing outcome-oriented as-  
13 sistance.

14 (5) Developing domestic infrastructure and ca-  
15 pacity building for creating and tracking conserva-  
16 tion credits, such as registries or projects eligible for  
17 outcome-oriented assistance, and preparing countries  
18 to implement nature-based solution initiatives.

19 (6) Ensuring that women, Indigenous Commu-  
20 nities, and other local stakeholders are empowered  
21 and enabled to meaningfully participate and share in  
22 the potential benefits of activities funded under this  
23 section.

1           (7) Ensuring the additionality of projects, pro-  
2           grams, and other activities made possible by funding  
3           provided pursuant to this section.

4           (c) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized to be ap-  
5           propriated \$10,000,000 to carry out this section.

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