

Implications of climate policy on opportunities for wood-based climate solutions

9 June 2023

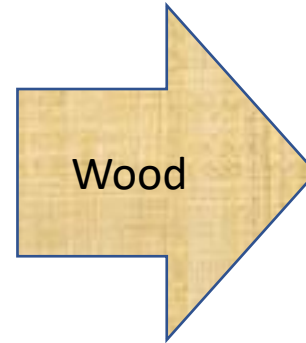
Peter Holmgren

Forestry is:

All **contributions** to Sustainable Development
made possible through Forests and Trees.



Foundation:
Forest management
that is
Climate positive
Nature positive (**Yes!**)



Opportunities:
Products and services
in all other sectors
- Not least for climate action!

*This is where
we need to
focus!*

What are the questions?

- Are we conceiving forest-climate policy the right way?
 - **I say No.**
- Are we hindered by deep wheel-tracks and sector silos?
 - **I say Yes.**
- What can we do about it?
 - **Recognize, Report and Act on climate contributions of wood-based products!**

A dark, misty forest with tall, thin trees and a mossy forest floor. The text is overlaid in the center.

Forest and Climate policy often fails to
see outside the forest for all the trees.

Why is that?

Topics > [Land Use](#) > Workstreams > Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULU...

 Content 

Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF).



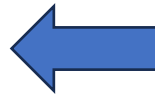
Key documents related to LULUCF 

Past considerations of issues relating to LULUCF 

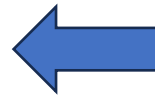
Climate convention basics from 1992

Two climate change mitigation goals.

1. Control, reduce and prevent fossil/process emissions.



2. Conservation and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs.



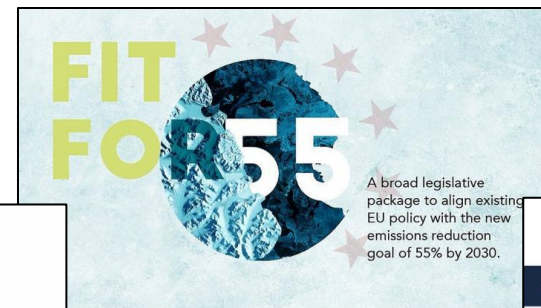
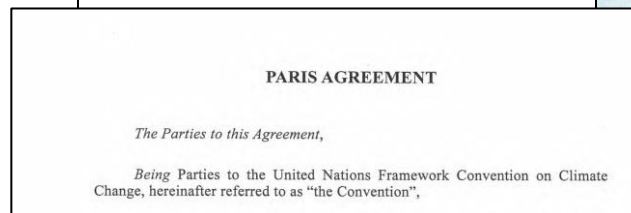
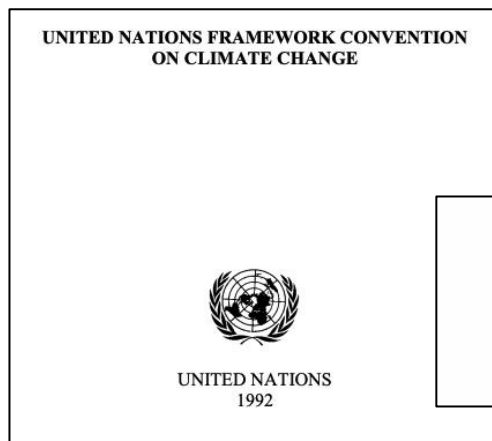
From Article 4.1 in the UNFCCC text:

(c) Promote and cooperate in the development, application and diffusion, including transfer, of technologies, practices and processes that control, reduce or prevent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol in all relevant sectors, including the energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management sectors;

(d) Promote sustainable management, and promote and cooperate in the conservation and enhancement, as appropriate, of sinks and reservoirs of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, including biomass, forests and oceans as well as other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems;

Climate change mitigation policies follow this structure along separate tracks!

- Two goals (UNFCCC 1992 Article 4.1):
 - 1. Control, reduce, prevent emissions**
 - 2. Conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs**
- Structure flows through Paris, EU Green Deal, national goals, corporations
 - Has given us "Net Zero" and "Carbon neutrality"



1996 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories
(remains as basic structure in climate reporting)

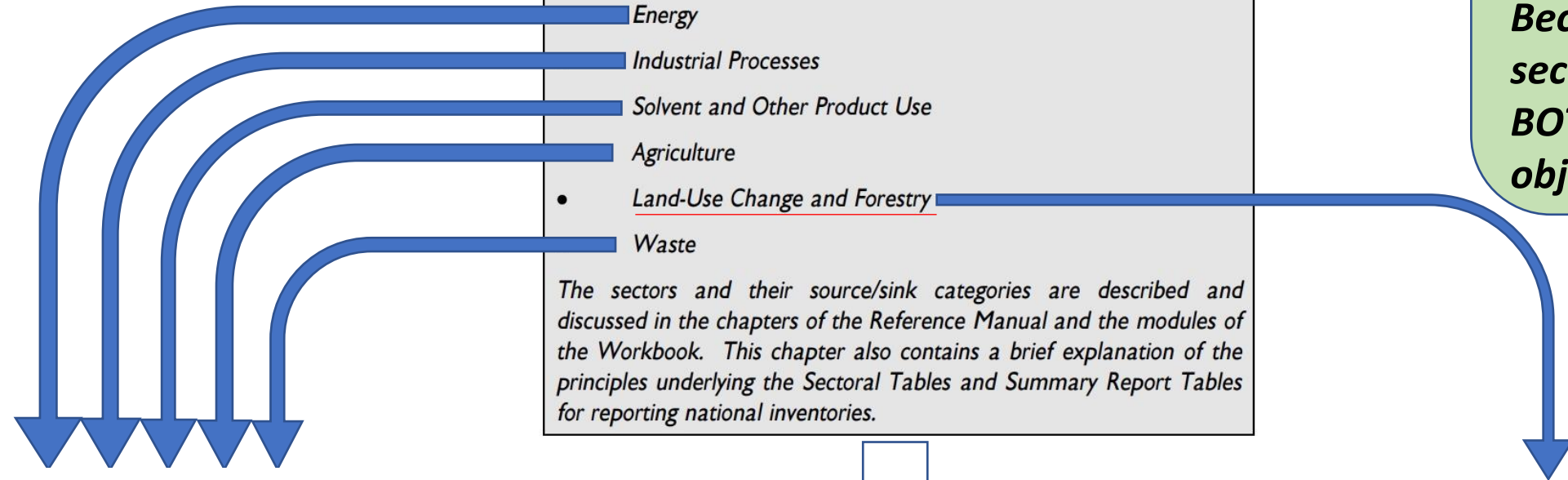
**UNDERSTANDING THE COMMON
REPORTING FRAMEWORK**

This chapter contains a listing, with definitions, of the categories you should use when reporting emissions and removals. The source/sink categories have been grouped into sectors as follows:

- Energy
- Industrial Processes
- Solvent and Other Product Use
- Agriculture
- Land-Use Change and Forestry
- Waste

The sectors and their source/sink categories are described and discussed in the chapters of the Reference Manual and the modules of the Workbook. This chapter also contains a brief explanation of the principles underlying the Sectoral Tables and Summary Report Tables for reporting national inventories.

***This division is
problematic!
It leads to isolated,
suboptimal policy &
legislation.
Such as LULUCF.
Because forest-based
sector contributes to
BOTH mitigation
objectives!***



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**Responding to 1992
UNFCCC Climate Change
Mitigation objectives**

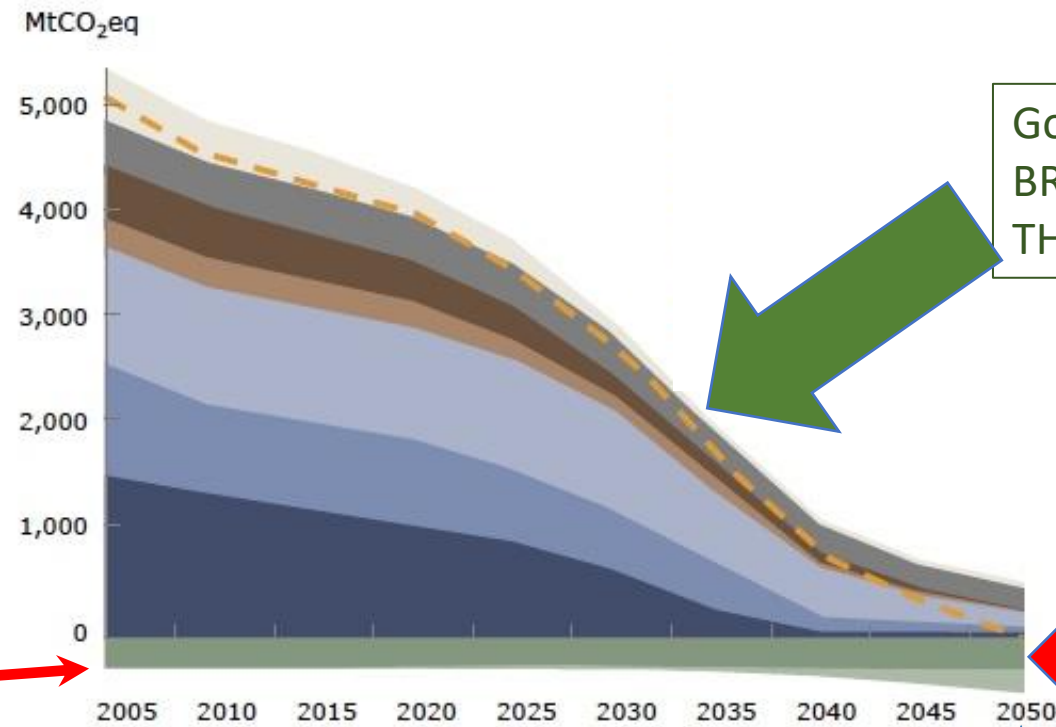
1. Reduce emissions

2. Enhance sinks & reservoirs

Example: EU Green Deal

EU Green Deal scenario
for “net-zero”

EU GHG EMISSIONS TRAJECTORY IN A 1.5°C SCENARIO



Goal 1:
BRING EMISSIONS DOWN
THIS IS THE BIG ONE!

GOAL 2:
CONSERVE AND ENHANCE
RESERVOIRS

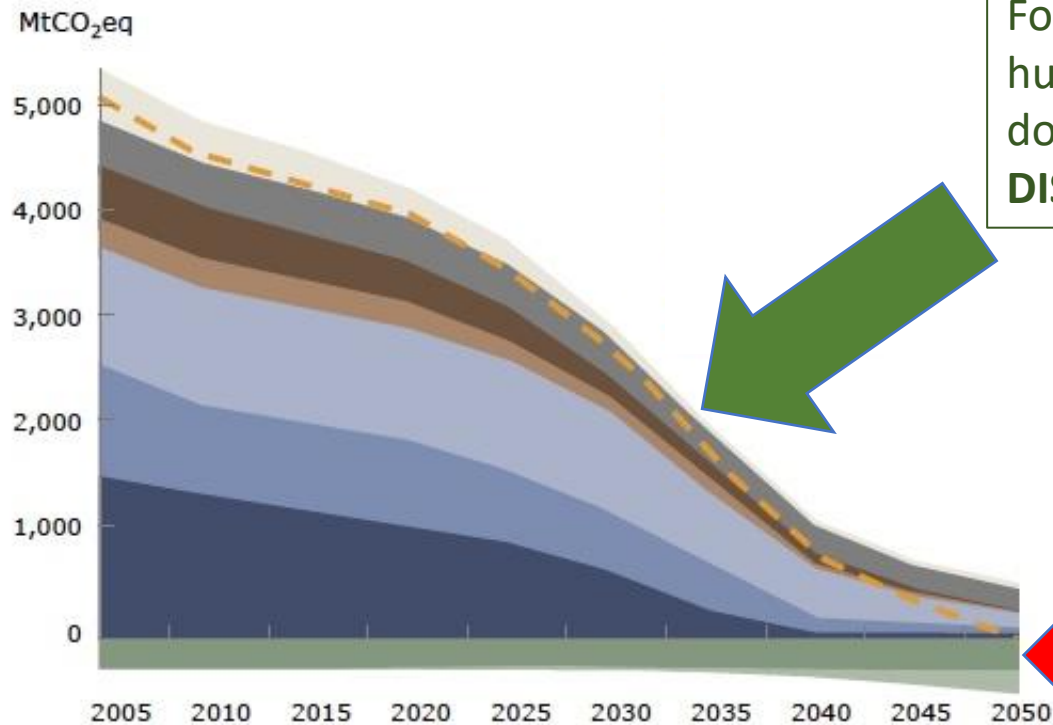
“Net-zero”

Our problem: The forest gets stuck in the forest.
Contributions to reducing emissions are hidden from policy.
Our job is to make displacement visible.

EU Green Deal scenario
for “net-zero”



EU GHG EMISSIONS TRAJECTORY IN A 1.5°C SCENARIO



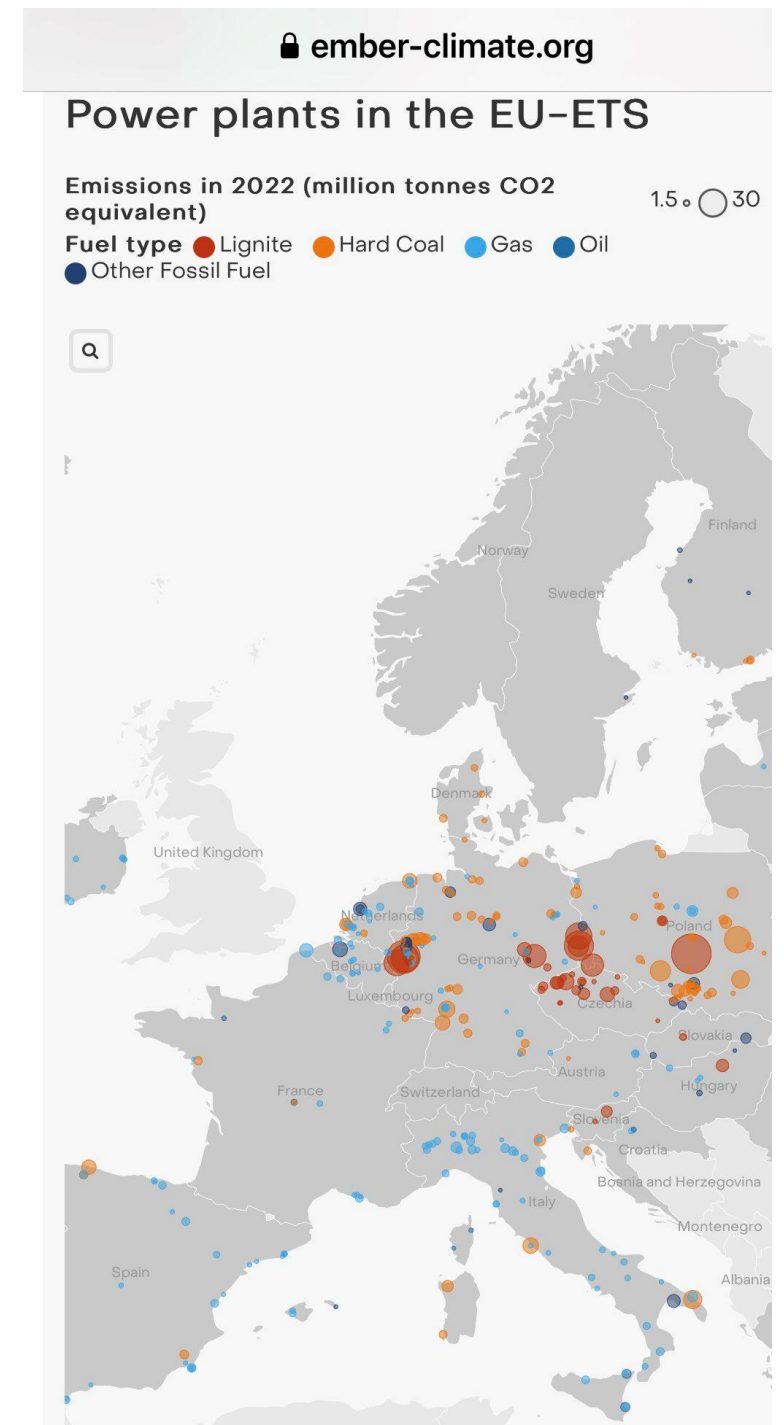
Forest-based sector has huge role in bringing down emissions through **DISPLACEMENT**.

BUT focus is on storing carbon in the forest.
Which is counterproductive

Fossil emissions from powerplants in ETS.

EU forests are currently expropriated to compensate some of these emissions by storing more carbon -> “net zero” Lose-lose.

Another policy could be to have active forestry and wood-based products & energy displace some of these emissions. Win-win.



So.

EU climate policy aims to add carbon to the forest
to compensate for fossil emissions.

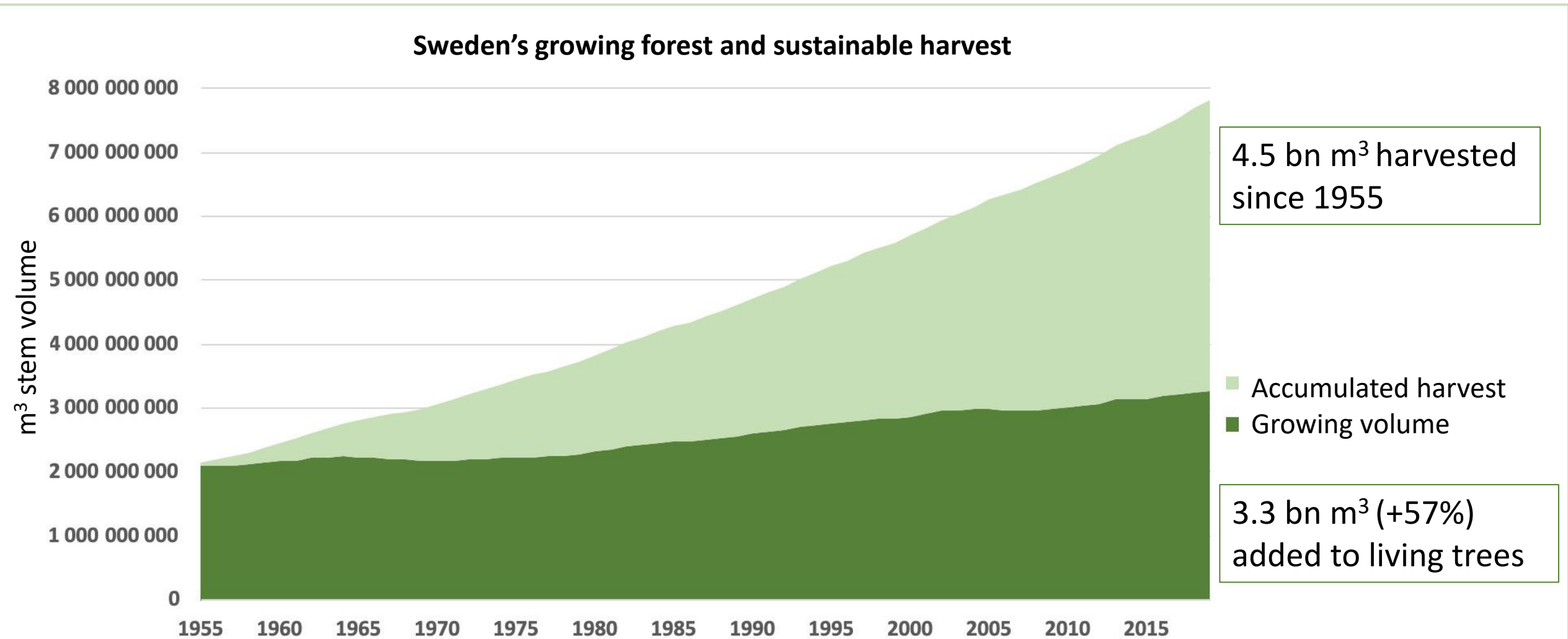
But in reality

Forestry and wood-based products contribute to
BOTH climate change mitigation goals
(in addition to all other benefits to society)

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing a vast, dense forest of evergreen trees. In the middle ground, a calm lake reflects the surrounding greenery. The background features rolling hills and mountains under a hazy sky. A semi-transparent dark green rectangular box is centered over the middle of the image, containing the text "A reality check." in a white, italicized serif font.

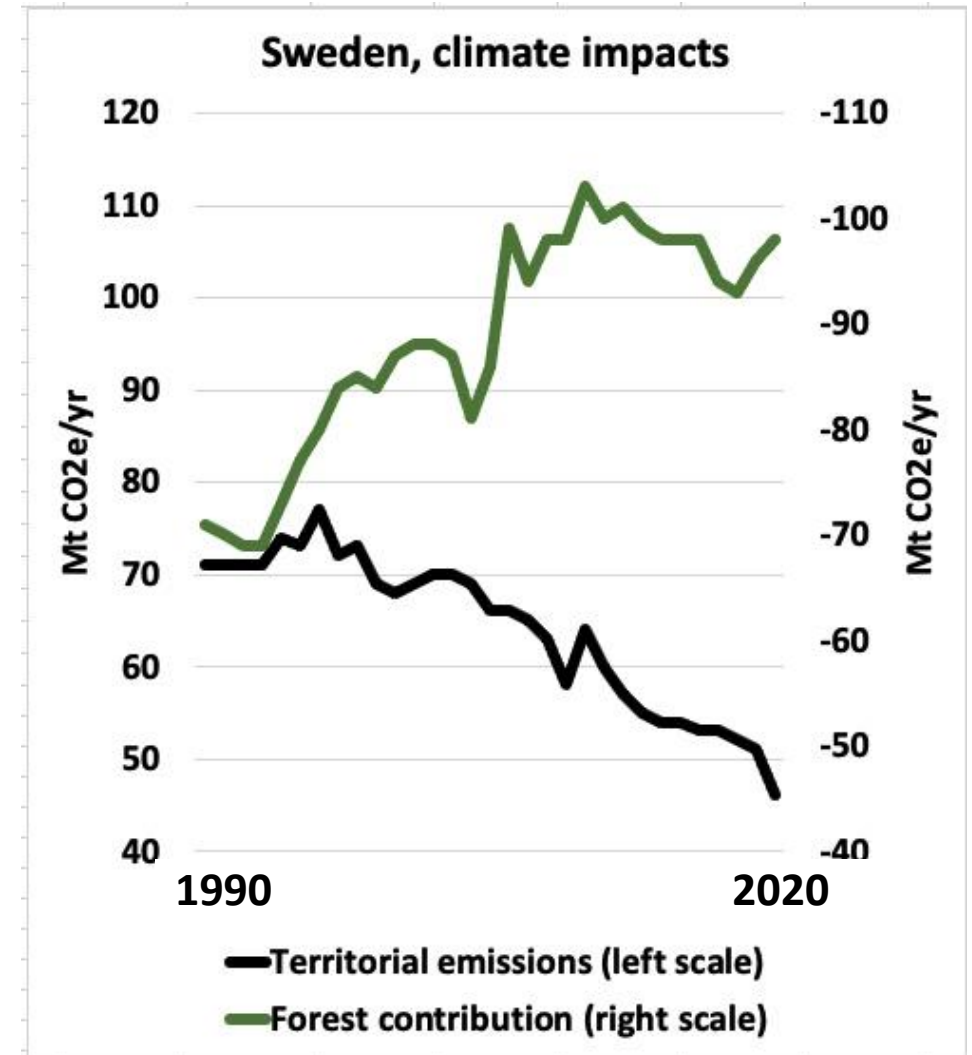
A reality check.

Sweden has 300 m³ growing trees per capita



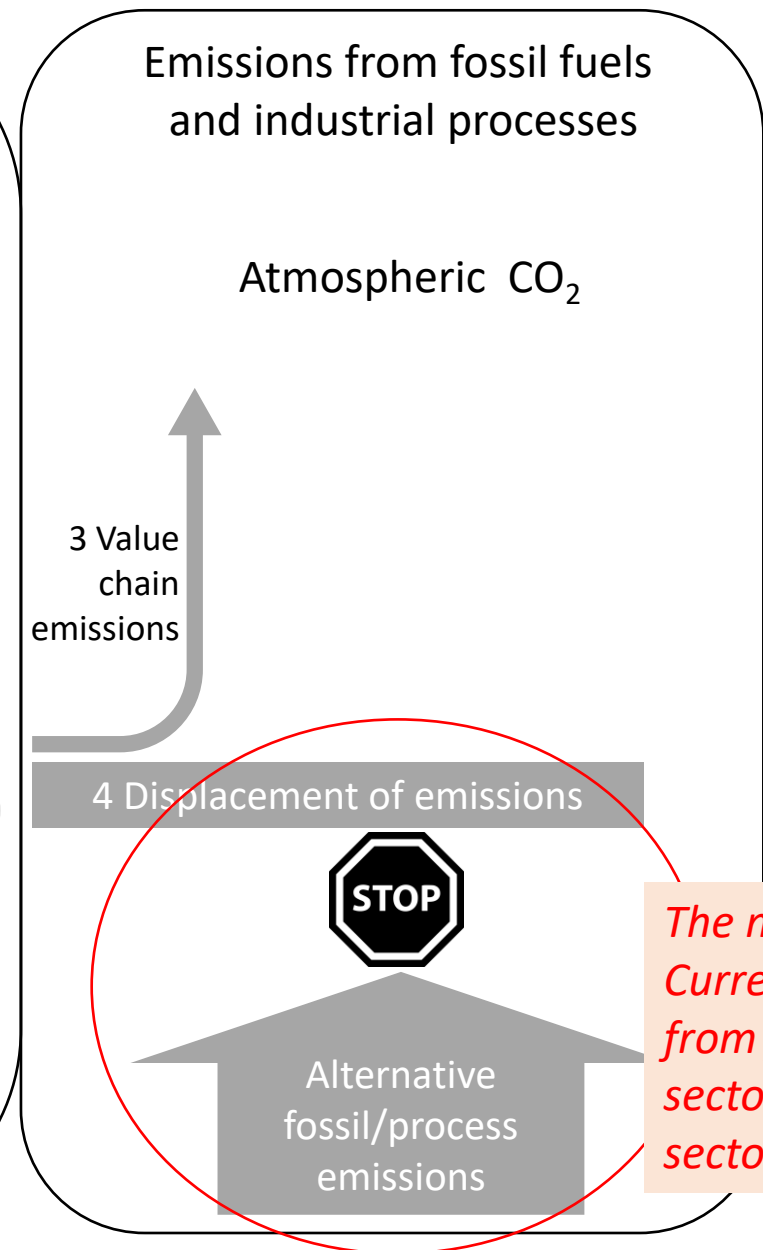
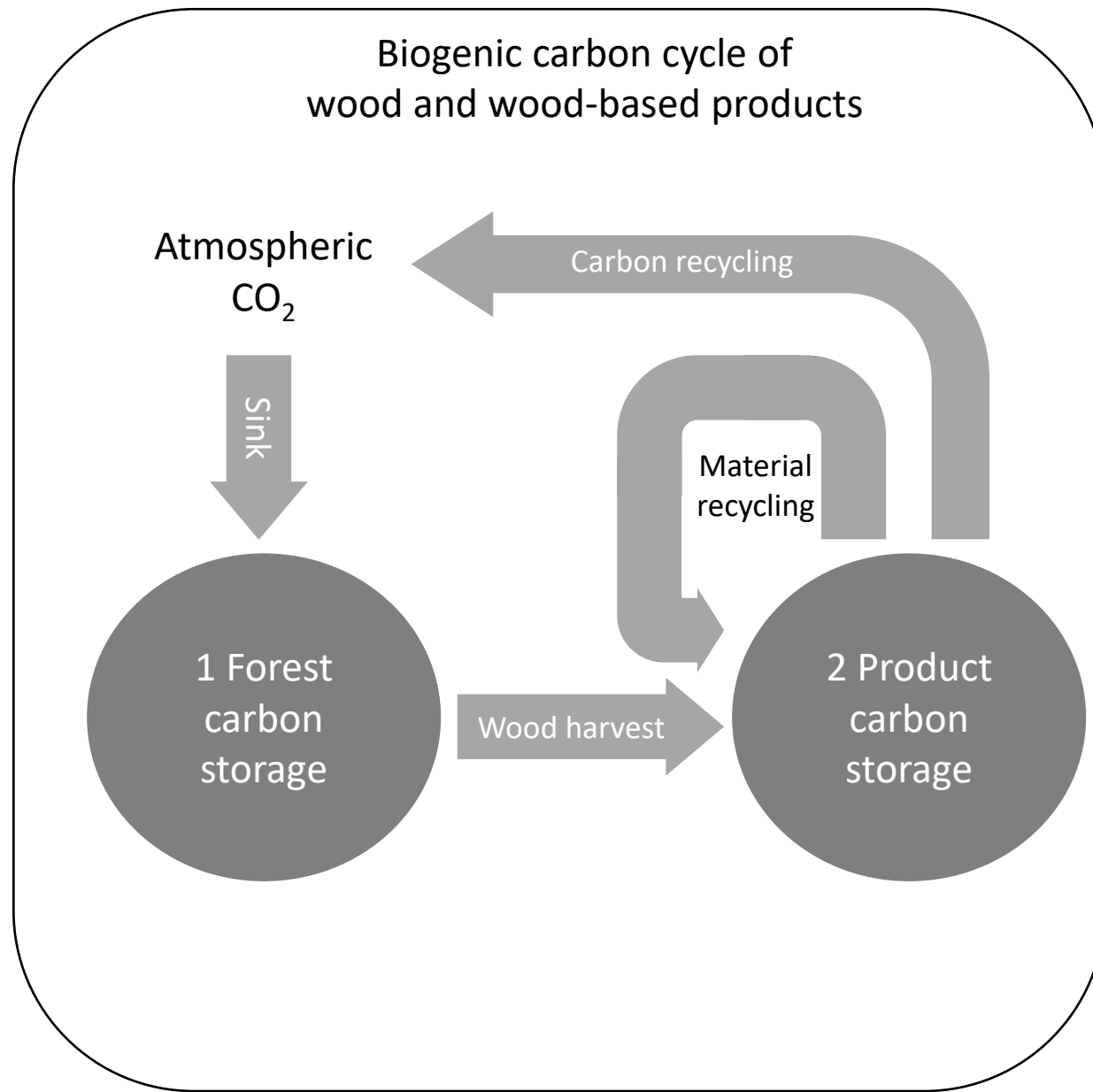
What does this mean for the climate?

- Sweden 1990-2020
 - Forest net storage: 1.4 Gt CO₂e
 - Displacement of fossil emissions: 1.3 Gt CO₂e
 - By comparison: Sweden's territorial emissions: 1.9 Gt CO₂e
- Territorial emissions go down.
- Forest contributions go up!
 - A lot of these are exported



A wide-angle photograph of a lush, green forest covering rolling hills. The forest is dense with various types of trees, including tall evergreens and shorter deciduous trees. In the background, more hills are visible under a hazy, overcast sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

*Is there a better way
for conceiving forest-climate policy?*



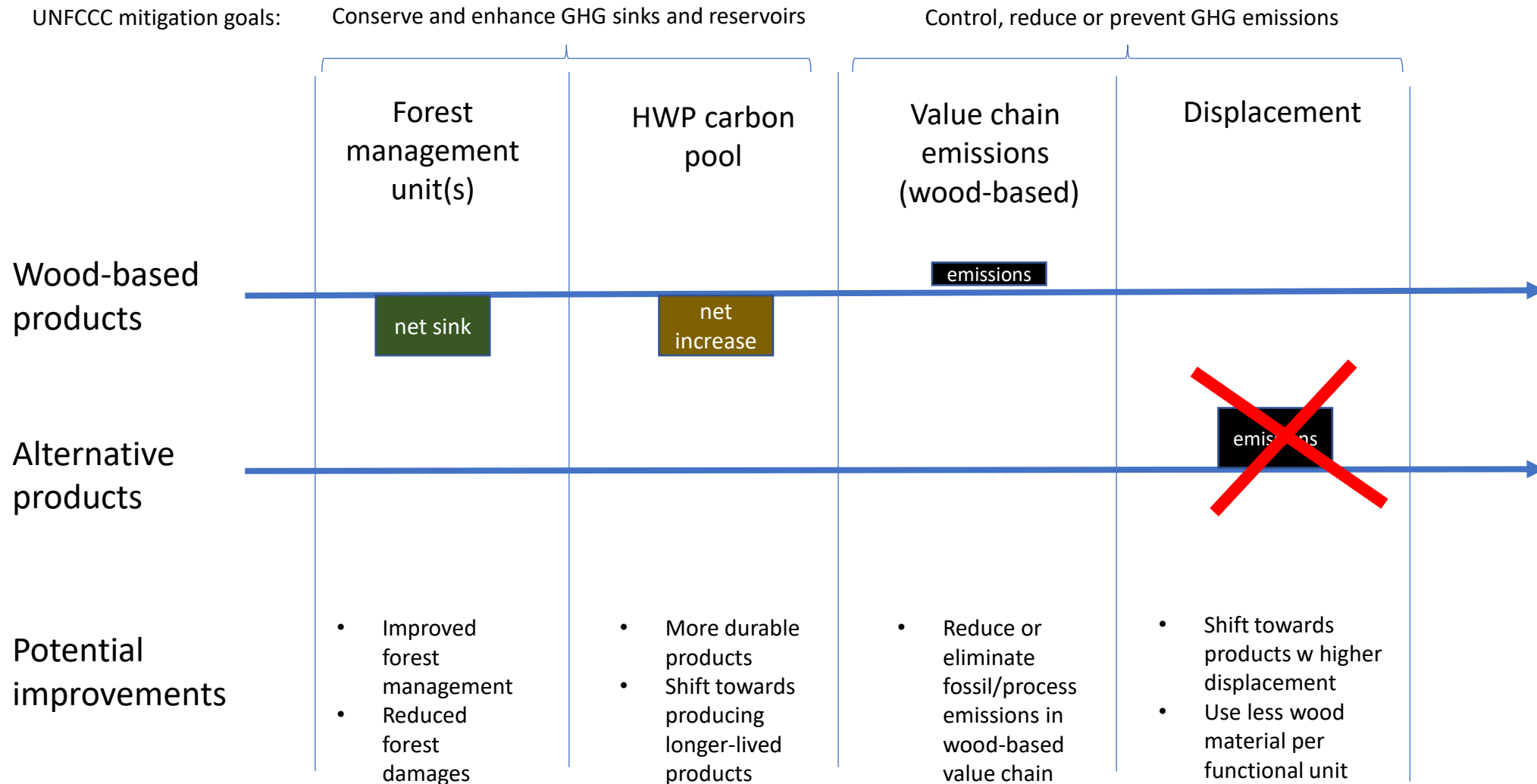
*The missing part.
Currently a gift
from forest-based
sector to all other
sectors.*

**UNFCCC mitigation
Goals, Article 4.1:**

**2. Conservation and enhancement
of sinks and reservoirs**

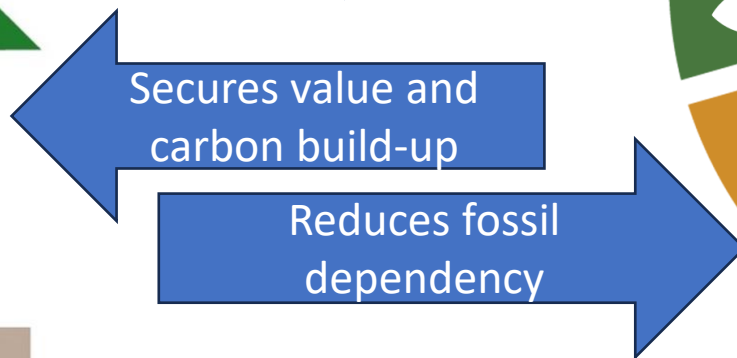
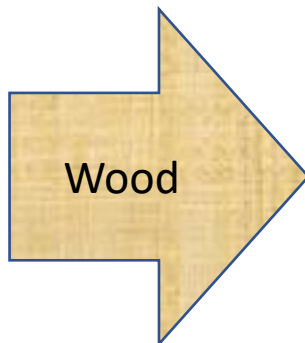
**1. Reduce/control/prevent
fossil/process emissions**

4 components provide a focus on climate performance and potential improvements of wood-based products





Foundation:
Forest management
that is
Climate positive
Nature positive (Yes!)




Harvested Wood
is what carries
the climate value!



Opportunities:
Products and services
in all other sectors
- Not least for climate action!

Conclusions

- Forest-climate policy is rooted in old structures of UNFCCC and IPCC
- Therefore, climate policy misses out on opportunities from the forest-based sector
- Displacement of fossil/process emissions is a major omitted factor
- A focus only on carbon storage in forests is counter-productive policy in multiple ways
- Long term enhancement of carbon storage can be combined with long-term increase of renewable wood supply.
- Harvested wood is the carrier of climate value from the forest as:
 - It gives value to the forest → investments for its sustainable management
 - It gives opportunities to reduce fossil dependency in other sectors.



**A well harvested tree is not a loss.
It is a gain in renewable materials and
sustainable landscapes**