FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS TO BUILD COHERENCE AND SUPPORT FOR FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

Final Project Report with Recommendations

July 2022

Supporting CPF Collaboration and Engagement on Forest Landscape Restoration

This report details the key achievements and experiences of the GEF-supported project, "Fostering Partnerships to Build Coherence and Support for Forest Landscape Restoration,"[1] (GEFID 9861) and provides a set of forward-looking recommendations on enhanced engagement and support of forest landscape restoration (FLR) for Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and interested partners. The project, under implementation from July 2018 through May 2022, supported the CPF-approved Joint Initiative on FLR including implementation of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, specifically Global Forest Goal 6, to "enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies on forest-related issues at all levels, including within the UN System and across CPF member organizations".

Overall, the project supported the development and dissemination of a range of FLR knowledge products and tools, as well as some baseline studies to support development of FLR projects, with the anticipated impact of strengthening support for, and implementation of, forest landscape restoration. Taken together, these contributions demonstrate that the CPF partnership can be an effective platform for convening and mobilizing stakeholders that are key to advancing FLR, as well as a means for harnessing the collective strengths of CPF member organizations in addressing barriers/gaps to advancing FLR.

Background and Project objectives

In April of 2017, CPF members approved a Joint Initiative (JI) on Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR). Through close cooperation with CPF members, the objectives of this JI were developed into a Global Environment Facility (GEF) - supported medium-sized project, "Fostering Partnership to Build Coherence and Support for Forest Landscape Restoration," approved by the GEF CEO in June 2018.

The project's objective, broadly defined and in-line with the stated objectives of the CPF-approved Joint Initiative, was to "*to enhance synergies in the global FLR process and assist countries and stakeholders to scale up and strengthen implementation of FLR at national and sub-national levels*."

Project activities were organized under three components, with a number of related outcomes and outputs shown in Table 1 below. With the exception of work to develop "bankable" FLR proposals under Component 2, the majority of project-supported interventions relied upon indirect pathways (i.e., awareness raising, influencing, knowledge generation and capacity building, etc.) to achieve high-level outcomes involving multiple actors and causal pathways.

> **Box 1.** Project profile, *Fostering Partnership to Build Coherence and Support for FLR*
>
> **Objective:** To enhance synergies in the global FLR process and assist countries and stakeholders to scale up and strengthen implementation of FLR at national and sub-national levels
> **Duration**: 2-year project launched in 2018 and subsequently extended to July 2021
> **Funding**: $625k in GEF grants; $1 million in co-funding
> **Country/Region**: Global
> **Institutional arrangements**:
> • Implementation by IUCN
> • Execution by CPF members: CIFOR, FAO, ICRAF, ITTO, IUCN, IUFRO, UN Environment, UNFF

Another defining feature of this project is the large number of executing partners – 8 CPF members – each leading a number of project-supported activities. With such a large number of executing partners and activities, funding per executing partners and activity were modest: median GEF funding per

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[1] https://www.thegef.org/project/fostering-partnerships-build-coherence-and-support-forest-landscape-restoration

executing partners was $68k, and most project-supported activities were supported by smaller amounts of GEF funding plus co-financing.

Table 1. Project results framework showing organization of project activities at component and output level with desired outcomes.

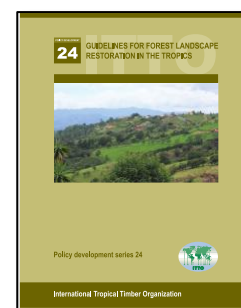| Component	Outcome	Output
1. Mainstream FLR into national, regional and international policy frameworks and facilitate creation of a coherent in-country enabling environment for FLR	1.1. Strengthened support for FLR within and among key existing international policy frameworks	1.1.1. Global report on potential contribution of FLR to UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD, UNFF, SDGs 1.1.2. Awareness raising and knowledge sharing and learning events in collaboration with the GLF, Convention COPs, and other relevant fora
	1.2. Support stimulated for accelerated progress in achieving restoration goals through promotion of greater policy coherence at the regional, national, and sub-national levels	1.2.1. Series of thematic reports and learning events at the regional and national levels identifying high-value opportunities for reform of normative, fiscal and other financial policies and incentives 1.2.2. Outreach campaign to support mainstreaming of FLR into national policy frameworks
2. Increased effectiveness and efficiency of resource mobilization for FLR	2.1. Increased public- and private-sector funding for FLR	2.1.1. Support to the development of bankable project proposals in collaboration with the GFFFN, with facilitated smallholder/private-sector engagement
	2.2. Enhanced synergies and partnership among cross-national programs on FLR from the GEF, GCF, LDN Fund, BIOFIN and others, leading to enhanced impacts and cost savings	2.2.1. Identified opportunities for enhanced synergies and partnership among emerging cross-national programs on FLR from the GEF, GCF, LDN Fund, BIOFIN and others
3. Identify, prioritize and implement opportunities for generating enhanced synergies among CPF member FLR programs, including forming partnerships and developing technical capacities on FLR-related science, technology and innovation	3.1. Enhanced generation of synergies across national programs on FLR from CPF members and other stakeholders	3.1.1. Regular communication amongst the CPF-FLR Steering Committee of contributing organizations and convening of all participating CPF members to reinforce coherence and capture of synergies among CPF member FLR programs 3.1.2. Analysis of CPF member programs on FLR and identified opportunities for capturing synergies 3.1.3. Identified actions by which members of the CPF could provide useful support to countries to foster forest landscape restoration, including developing technical and scientific capacities and forming partnerships on science, technology and innovation 3.1.4. Links and interoperability between open data platforms to facilitate the sharing and synthesis of information on FLR.

Key project achievements

The project was under implementation from July 2018 through July 2021, including a 1-year no-cost extension to adapt to Covid-linked delays that affected a number of project activities. Key project achievements include the following:

- Presentation of a digital Global Landscapes Forum, *Nature Based Solutions, How Restoration Can Support a Healthy Climate, Economy and Planet*[2], to help increase understanding on how restoration can contribute to addressing 3 key global challenges: climate change, job creation, and reducing threats to biodiversity. This April 2021 event, produced by CIFOR in partnership with several CPF partners, featured a number of prominent leaders and practitioners including Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary for German Environmental Ministry (BMU), Manish Bapna, Acting President and CEO of WRI, Burno Oberle, Director General of IUCN, and Musonda Mumba, Chair of the GPFLR. Viewers from over 100 countries tuned in to the live-streamed and recorded forum that reached an additional 2.2 million people through social media.

- 2020 publication of *Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics*[3] to serve as "an international reference document for the development and improvement of national and subnational guidelines on FLR in the tropics. The Guidelines, developed by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), provide guidance at the policy and operational levels for restoring degraded (production and protection) forests and formerly forested landscapes in tropical forest biomes.

- Development and dissemination of the FAO guide "*Developing bankable business plans: a learning guide for forest producers and their organizations*"[4]. The 10-module guide was developed to improve the capacity of small producers, their organizations and small and medium-sized enterprises, to access private investment and finance for sustainable forest-based businesses. It offers a framework to think through, organize and develop a convincing investment proposal. The 10 modules are being piloted with a tree grower association in Kenya (Nyandarua), the Zambia National Forest Commodity Association (ZNFCA) and the Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ).

- FAO and CIFOR, together with support for the CBD Secretariat, supported implementation of the study, *The Economics of Ecosystem Restoration (TEER)*[5] with the development of a template for data collection on the benefits of ecosystem restoration initiatives and piloting of data collection on benefits in the Sahel and other regions as applicable.
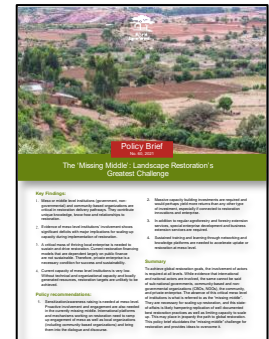
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[2] https://events.globallandscapesforum.org/digital-forum-on-forest-landscape-restoration/
[3] ITTO 2020. Guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics. ITTO Policy Development Series No. 24. International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Yokohama, Japan. Available online at: https://www.itto.int/guidelines/
[4] https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4520en/
[5] https://www.fao.org/in-action/forest-landscape-restoration-mechanism/our-work/gl/teer/en/

- ICRAF presented the workshop **Enhancing Knowledge and Collaboration for Restoration** in Kenya, in Kisumu Kenya July 30-31, 2019. The workshop, which brought together **stakeholders from 18 government and leading NGO institutions**, served to enhance collaboration and sharing of knowledge and experiences on restoration in Kenya.

- ICRAF developed and published the policy brief, *The 'Missing Middle': Restoration's Greatest Challenge[6],* that identifies an absence of sub-national government, non-governmental, community and private enterprise engagement in restoration efforts as a critical challenge for restoration and presents ideas for how to address this absence.

- IUCN developed the working paper, *Conservation and Forest Landscape Restoration: Perfect partners in healthy and productive landscapes*, building on the outcomes of an earlier workshop, consultations with additional experts and on deliberations in the CBD. The report examines opportunities for integrating protected areas and FLR initiatives and provides key recommendations to apply for their successful integration at multiple levels, from landscape to global, to capture potential synergies and achieve greater environmental and social outcomes.

- IUCN developed the publication *Forest Landscape Restoration pathways to achieving the SDGs[7],* on FLR contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The publication was promoted at the UNFF14 event, and a [web story][8] was also produced.

- IUCN, FAO and the Thai Royal Forest Department held a *Private Sector FLR Roundtable, Restoring Landscapes Together* on February 18, 2020, in Bangkok, Thailand, with participation of several large private sector organizations active in Thailand, to raise awareness and understanding on FLR investment opportunities and related ongoing initiatives. A workshop summary report with recommendations was produced and disseminated through IUCN and partner websites[9].

- IUFRO and ITTO jointly developed and published four *FLR learning modules[10],* based in part on ITTO's Guidelines for FLR in the Tropics. The FLR Learning Modules consist of four PowerPoint presentations, together with narrator notes for teachers and students. Each presentation covers a number of topics, with case-study videos, small group questions and student assignments.

- IUFRO presented the international knowledge sharing workshop **Best Practices for Implementing FLR in South Asia**, in Sri Lanka, August 15-17, 2018, which fed into the Second Ministerial Roundtable on the Bonn Challenge in Asia in January 2019 in which several CPF members

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[6] https://www.worldagroforestry.org/publication/missing-middle-landscape-restorations-greatest-challenge
[7] https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/forest_landscape_restoration_pathways_to_achieving_the_sdgs.pdf
[8] https://www.iucn.org/news/forests/201905/helplessness-hope-through-restoration
[9] https://www.iucn.org/news/asia/202004/private-sector-role-sustainable-management-and-restoration-thailands-forests
[10] https://www.iufro.org/science/special/spdc/netw/flr/lmflr/

participated. Results, workshop report and presentations are available [online](#)[11], including recommendations for implementation of FLR in the region.

- IUFRO presented an **online course on FLR** for 30 young professionals from Latin American countries selected from within the organizations IFSA and ALECIF. The course was coordinated by CATIE, and held over 12 sessions, from May 31 to June 25, 2021. The course covered fundamental aspects of FLR including design, planning, implementation, monitoring and communication.

- UNEP developed a framework and report providing **methodological guidelines for designing and deploying private land-use finance**. The methodology is presented as an extension of the popular Land Use Finance Tool (Developed by the EU REDD Facility) and is planned to be pilot tested with a subset of countries participating in the GEF-funded programme the Restoration Initiative (TRI). The report is scheduled to be formally launched during an event at COP26 co-led by UNEP and the EU Commission.

- UNFF supported the **Government of Thailand** in developing and adopting a **national forest financing strategy** for financing more sustainable management of Thailand's forests, and similar efforts are underway with the **Government of Guinea Bissau**

- UNFF supported **Governments of Thailand and Guinea Bissau** in developing **2 GCF project proposals focused on FLR**: "*Enhancing Carbon Stock, Building Climate Resilience, and Increasing Economic and Livelihood Opportunities in Thailand's Forest Sector through Integrated Forest Landscape Restoration"; and "Strengthening the governance of forest resources, restoration of forest landscapes for increased resilience of populations to the effects of climate change in Guinee Bissau*"

Evaluating the overall effectiveness and impact of the Project

The project was evaluated annually for each full year of implementation, from 2019-2021, in accordance with GEF and IUCN policies, and with ratings and commentary captured in a Project Implementation Report (PIR)[12]. For the first two years of implementation, the project received a "Moderately Successful" rating for the Overall Development Outcome and Overall Implementation ratings. In 2021, these ratings increased to "Satisfactory" for both[13].

One area where the project excelled was in providing a means for direct collaboration among CPF members in the creation of FLR-linked knowledge products and events that likely would not have arisen to the degree that it did in the absence of this GEF project. Key project-supported outputs, including the digital Global Landscapes Forum, private sector roundtables, TEER study, FLR learning modules and more, were joint efforts involving 2 or more CPF members, and this cross-collaboration likely has had positive spill over effects including capturing a broader range of expertise, reducing duplication of effort, and fostering additional collaboration on FLR.

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[11] https://www.iufro.org/science/special/spdc/netw/flr/ks-ws/kshw-sri-lanka/
[12] https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/9861
[13] See GEF Monitoring Report 2021 for a description of the methodology and meaning of PIR ratings: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/EN_GEF.C.61.03_The_GEF_Monitoring_Report_2021.pdf

One weakness of the project that limits the degree to which project effectiveness can be robustly assessed is the project's results framework and indicators. For the majority of project activities, links between project-supported work and desired outcomes are indirect and these outcomes involve multiple actors and causal pathways. As such, while the project was successful in supporting development of a large number of potentially significant (in terms of their scope and impact) FLR knowledge products, events, and other work – and in line with the project workplan – whether these activities constitute an impactful and effective strategy in advancing FLR is unknown.

In terms of operational efficiency, one challenge noted in the PIRs was the large number of executing agreements needed to implement a project with this many partners, and the challenges encountered in harmonizing the legal requirements of the different CPF member institutions. These challenges led to some delays in Year 1 of the Project, and these were compounded by COVID-linked delays beginning in 2020.

Overall development and implementation rating: Satisfactory
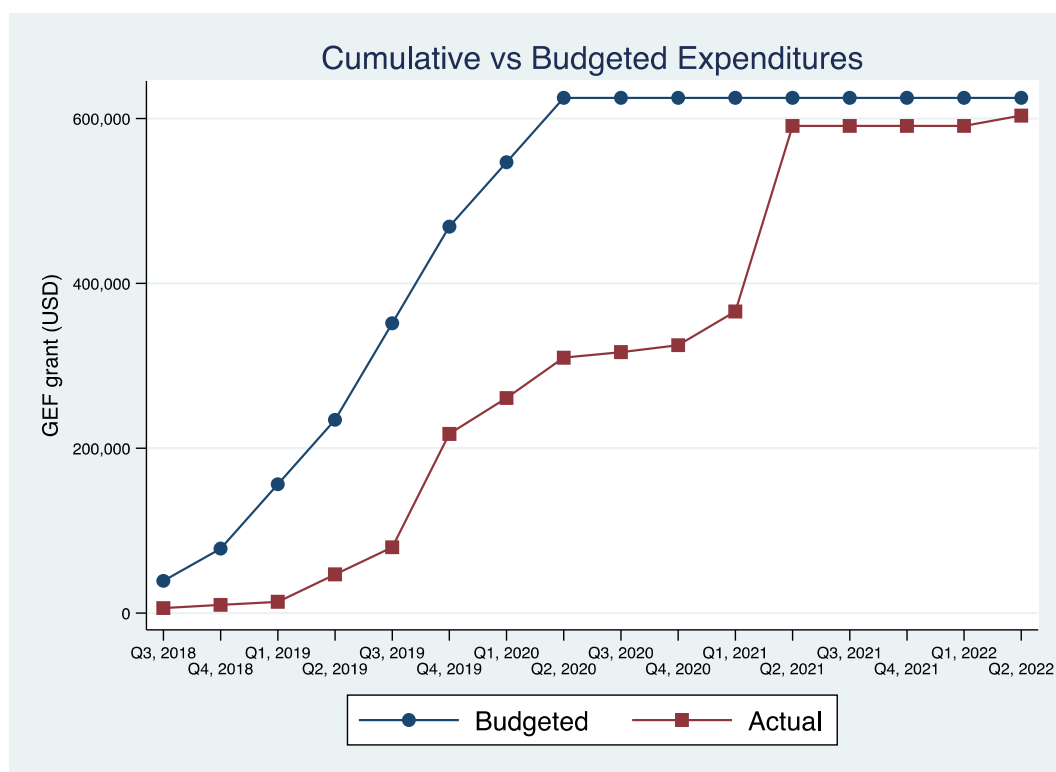
Recommendations

Considering the project experiences, achievements and challenges, the following recommendations for CPF members are proposed:

- A follow-on GEF-supported project, further supporting the CPF-approved Joint Initiative on FLR and that builds upon the lessons learned through this project should be developed for the GEF-8 cycle
- A follow-on GEF supported project should seek to further support collaboration among CPF members on FLR with a more targeted set of project activities that focus on bringing CPF members and partner countries together around hot topics and key challenges in ways that would not easily occur in absence of a project
- A streamlined modality for contracting executing partners should be sought

Annex 1. Key project information

Key Project Dates	
PIF Approval Date	July 14, 2017
CEO Endorsement Date	June 12, 2018
Project Document Signature Date (Project start date)	July 3, 2018, IUCN internal approval
Date of Inception workshop (Project launch)	September 17, 2018
Expected date of mid-term review	No midterm review (MSP)
Actual date of mid-term review	-
Expected date of Final Evaluation	October 2021
Original planned closing date	July 2, 2020
Actual closing date	May 1, 2022

Annex 2. Cumulative vs budgeted expenditures

Cumulative Disbursements	
Cumulative general ledger delivery against total approved amount (in Project Document) - %	97% of total GEF grant (expenditures)
Cumulative general ledger delivery against expected delivery as of this year - %	97% of GEF grant (expenditures)
Cumulative disbursement as of 31 July, 2022	**$603,464 USD**

Key Financing Amounts	

PPG Amount	$30,000 USD
GEF Grant Amount	$625,000
Co-Financing planned	$981,850 USD
Co-Financing materialized	$931,850 USD (95%)

Annex 3. Progress as assessed by Project results framework

Outcome 1.1: Strengthened support for FLR within and among key existing international policy frameworks				
Outcome Indicators	**Baseline**	**Final Results**	**Project Target**	**Description**
Number and type FLR-related information being produced and shared through this JI; number and types of decision-makers operationalizing new FLR-related knowledge	Support for strengthening the contribution of FLR within and among key existing international policy frameworks has been identified as a gap by the CPF	Several reports spanning regions and ecosystems (including FAO; ICRAF and ITTO work below) produced. Several joint events organized by CPF members including high-level digital GLF with participation of several CPF project partners, and other regional and national events co-organized by partners. While only the lead agencies are noted below, all reports and events involved and benefitted from a closer collaboration among CPF members. These include: • **CIFOR** presented on April 29, 2021, a high-level digital Global Landscapes Forum, *Nature Based Solutions, How Restoration Can Support a Healthy Climate, Economy and Planet*[14], to help increase understanding on 3 key contributions from restoration: climate mitigation and adaptation, job creations, and reducing threats to biodiversity. **FAO** developed the guide "***Developing bankable business plans: a learning guide for forest producers and their organizations***"[15]. • **ICRAF** presented the workshop *Enhancing Knowledge and Collaboration for Restoration in Kenya*, in Kisumu Kenya July 30-31, 2019. • **ICRAF** produced the policy brief, *The 'Missing Middle': Restoration's Greatest Challenge,* that identifies an absence of sub-national government, non-governmental, community and private enterprise engagement in restoration efforts as a critical challenge for restoration and presents ideas for how to address this absence. • **ITTO** developed the *Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics*[16] to serve as "an international reference document for the development and improvement of national and subnational guidelines on FLR in the tropics. • **IUCN** developed the working paper, *Tackling global challenges by integrating Protected areas and Forest Landscape Restoration approaches*, building on the outcomes of an earlier workshop and on deliberations in the CBD. • **IUCN** developed publication on FLR-SDG links, "*Forest Landscape Restoration pathways to achieving the SDGs*", produced, available online. Publication promoted at UNFF14 event (see A1.1.2.2_IUCN below). A web story about the publication and event was also produced. • IUFOR presented international knowledge sharing workshop, "Best Practices for Implementing FLR in South Asia," in Sri Lanka, August 15-17, 2018 • **IUFRO and ITTO** jointly produced four *FLR learning modules,* based in part on ITTO's Guidelines for FLR in the Tropics.	1 global report; at least 3 new joint events co-organized by several CPF members and FLR partners	**Completed** –These many collaborative reports and events provided new knowledge to reinforce the position of FLR in international policy frameworks and to more generally build understanding and support for expanded restoration efforts,
Outcome 1.2: Support stimulated for accelerated progress in achieving restoration goals through promotion of greater policy coherence at the regional, national, and sub-national levels.				

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[14] https://events.globallandscapesforum.org/digital-forum-on-forest-landscape-restoration/

[15] http://www.fao.org/tenure/resources/results/card/en/c/CB4520EN

[16] ITTO 2020. Guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics. ITTO Policy Development Series No. 24. International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Yokohama, Japan. Available online at: https://www.itto.int/guidelines/

Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Final Results	Project Target	Description
Identified geographies engaged with CPF members working together to support best practice FLR mainstreaming	Weak policy coherence for FLR at the regional, national and sub-national levels preventing FLR from being mainstreamed	• **UNFF** supported **Government of Thailand** in developing and adopting a **national forest financing strategy** for financing more sustainable management of Thailand's forests, and similar efforts are underway with the **Government of Guinea Bissau**, with anticipated completion in November 2021. • Several project-supported outputs including ITTO's Tropical forest restoration guidelines; FAO, CBD and CIFOR supported study *The Economics of Ecosystem Restoration (TEER)*; IUCN's paper on *Integrating Protected Areas and Landscape level FLR*; IUFRO's international knowledge sharing workshop, "Best Practices for Implementing FLR in South Asia, and more, contain policy recommendations for enhancing enabling environment for FLR.	A minimum 2 geographies engaged with CPF members and working together to support FLR mainstreaming	**Largely complete**, though work financed through co-financing in Guinea Bissau is continuing beyond project closure with co-financing from UNFF

Outcome 2.1: Increased public-and private-sector funding for FLR

Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Final Results	Project Target	Description
Number of opportunities and partnerships identified	The public- and private-sectors have not been fully engaged in discussing FLR financing	• **FAO** developed the guide "***Developing bankable business plans: a learning guide for forest producers and their organizations***"[17]. The guide is structured in 10 modules meant to assist associations/small producers in turning an idea into a business plan. The 10 modules are being piloted with a tree grower association in Kenya (Nyandarua), the Zambia National Forest Commodity Association (ZNFCA) and the Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ). Guide was officially launched at CIFOR digital GLF developed under this project (see above). Guide also being disseminated and shared with project partners participating in The Restoration Initiative (TRI) GEF program implemented by IUCN, FAO, and UNEP, to assist program-support work on mobilization of finance for FLR. • GCF proposals incorporating FLR under developed in Thailand and Guinea Bissau, building on support from UNFF in developing stakeholder-approved concepts and baseline studies. • A peer-reviewed article on the TEER was published on the journal Restoration Ecology: Bodin, B., Garavaglia, V., Pingault, N., Ding, H., Wilson, S., Meybeck, A., Gitz, V., d'Andrea, S. and Besacier, C. (2021), A standard framework for assessing the costs and benefits of restoration: introducing The Economics of Ecosystem Restoration (TEER). Restor Ecol. Accepted Author Manuscript e13515. https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.13515	1 private sector roundtable; 1 report	**Complete** – direct impacts from project on mobilizing additional resources for FLR are not readily measurable, though many project outputs, including financing strategy in Thailand, GCF FLR-based proposals in Thailand and Guinea Bissau, and other knowledge products and workshops increasing awareness on benefits from FLR, including how restoration can be source of jobs and Covid recovery, likely supporting overall rise in funding for FLR over time.

Outcome 2.2: Enhanced synergies and partnership among cross-national programs on FLR from the GEF, GCF, LDN Fund, BIOFIN and others, leading to enhanced impacts and cost savings

Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Final Results	Project Target	Description

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[17] http://www.fao.org/tenure/resources/results/card/en/c/CB4520EN

Number of new opportunities and partnerships	Missed opportunities for enhanced synergies and partnership among emerging cross-national programs on FLR from the GEF, GCF, LDN Fund, BIOFIN, etc.	Activities dropped under this Outcome	1 report	**Activities dropped** under this Outcome due in part to lack of funding and time

Outcome 3.1: Enhanced generation of synergies across national programs on FLR from CPF members and other stakeholders

Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Final Results	Project Target	Description
Opportunities for generating enhanced synergies among CPF member FLR programs and other stakeholders are identified	Gaps exist in the CPF's collective responses to foster partnerships to build coherence and support for FLR	ITTO report on CPF member FLR programs, including summary of definitions, principles, and approaches used, and overview of major ongoing FLR programmes with focus on the tropics, and summary of existing FLR guidelines and tools. Report identified benefits from consolidating existing FLR guidelines. Report served, among other functions, as input to development of ITTO FLR guidelines on tropical forest restoration. FAO study in 10 African countries of CPF member FLR programs and opportunities for capture of synergies.	1 report identifying and capturing opportunities for synergies; enhanced and collaborative support to CPF members working in 2 selected countries is provided through a pilot project	Project generated recommendations, to be included in Project Final Report, for enhanced partnership among CPF members on FLR, including in ecosystems including tropical forests, regions, including 10 African countries, and on financing and through information platforms.