



Amsterdam – December 1, 2023

Subject: Cover letter MTR “Forests for a Just Future” (ref. 400004338)

To: Kaj van de Vorstenbosch - Policy Officer Climate IGG

Cc: Yvonne de Haan, Finance Controller IGG

Dear Kaj,

It is with great pleasure that we present the midterm review (MTR) report of the **Forests for a Just Future (FfjF)** programme (ref. 400004338), commissioned by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands** as part of the grant agreement with the **Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA)**. Based on the guidance provided by the Ministry, the MTR covers the period from January 2021 to April 2023. The GLA contracted an external consultancy firm, [ACE consultants](#), to facilitate the MTR process and to develop the MTR report that this letter refers to.

The MTR has two main **objectives**: (1) Assess to what extent and how the GLA programme is making **progress towards the programme targets** as formulated in the baseline report, how this is influenced by external contextual factors impacting the programme, what this means for its **Theory of Change** and how the programme can **improve/adjust for the remainder of the funding period**; and (2) reflect and gain insights on **partnership collaboration** towards larger programme impact. For the Alliance, it was also key that the MTR process allows partners to collectively learn and share their experiences so far. The MTR was therefore based on [appreciative inquiry](#) principles, to allow us **open, safe and reflective learning and adjustment of our actions**.

Some highlights from the MTR findings

The GLA is happy and proud that many of the findings and conclusions in the MTR report show significant achievements and progress made so far. In relation to the first objective, we would like to highlight the following:

1) **The programme Theory of Change (ToC) continues to be relevant and coherent**

The MTR emphasises how well the FfjF responds to national and international priorities on forest, climate, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LCs), biodiversity, water and human rights and to the priorities and mandates of GLA Alliance members, technical partners & implementing partners.

2) **The programme is on track, with good progress being made in all pathways**

The MTR gives a consolidated overview of the progress made by the FfjF programme since it started. Although it is important to recognise that each country, landscape and local-to-global-to-local (LGL) theme and international policy dossier follows its own dynamics and paths, in general the MTR shows that almost 2.5 years into implementation the contribution and impact of the programme is very positive. To illustrate, we would like to draw attention to one highlight from the report per pathway:

Pathway A (Forest governance and management by IP&LCs): “Through the support and guidance of GLA partners, IP&LCs have acquired formal land rights, established community governance structures, and implemented sustainable land management practices. These achievements have empowered IP&LCs and contributed to their self-determination and placed them on a pathway towards sustainable governance of their resources and improved livelihoods.”

Pathway B (Drivers of deforestation): “The MTR indicates that, despite the challenging contexts of

implementation, the programme benefited from being highly embedded in its countries of intervention to drive change. Its ability to create and sustain Alliances with like-minded organisations, networks and social movements nationally, regionally, and internationally, effectively enabled the Alliance to achieve more than the sum of its individual partner contributions.”

Pathway C (Civic space): “In terms of engaging and mobilising CSOs networks to respond to (Women) Environmental Human Rights (W)EHRD emergencies and use of courts and dispute resolution authorities, each country team took action related to their various and unique contexts. These strategies primarily focus on judicial defence efforts, capacity building, communications with international human rights organisations, press coverage, and the establishment of teams of lawyers to support (W)EHRDs.”

Inclusion, gender equality and youth: “The FfJF programme explicitly aims for a gender-just or gender transformative approach which ensures that gendered actions and policies are embedded in overall planning, structures and organisational culture of the consortium and local partners. The MTR finds that this aspect of the programme is well on track. However, power structures and gender and age-related roles and behaviour are deeply ingrained in societies, families and people’s thinking and within the programme structures and partner organisations themselves. Changing this aspect at organisational levels takes reflection, learning and time.”

In relation to the second objective:

3) **Partnership and collaboration**

The MTR values positively that local ownership is inherent to the programme and how this is a leading principle for all partners and stakeholders involved. It also highlights how this approach was strengthened through the expansion of the Alliance to include an equal number of Southern¹ Alliance members. The balance of partners based both in tropical forest regions and in Europe has enhanced the diversity of approaches, networks, skill sets, knowledge, and capabilities, enriching the collective competence and resourcefulness for collaboration. Although we were familiar with the challenges which can occur while seeking to ensure equitable international collaboration, the MTR helped to provide further analysis & insights on how these may be addressed.

The report also emphasises how the Alliance implements and amplifies different bottom-up approaches to lobby and advocacy, works in different landscapes and scales, with a diversity of strategic actors, with different allies, networks and social movements, through their own specific methodologies. By sharing not only joint objectives under the FfJF programme, but also joint commitments as civil society, the different approaches used by the GLA partners are articulated, therewith complementing each other, leveraging the impact of each partner.

Overall,

4) **Suggestions for improvement and or/adjustments for the remainder of the funding period**

The MTR provides insights into aspects of the programme which can be strengthened or adjusted. It also identifies existing or potential challenges and/or opportunities, both in relation to external contextual factors and internal elements, that need to be taken into account as the programme advances. These have been brought together in the recommendations section of the report (chapter 7). The Alliance is currently developing a management response to answer these recommendations

¹ This cover letter and the MTR report use the terms global South and global North, as linked to terminology used by MoFA within the framework of the SCS subsidy framework. However, within the GLA programme we try to avoid these terms as numerous CSOs have expressed that they consider them simplistic, conducive to binary positioning and they do not feel it is representative of their regions. Given the nature of our work, when it is necessary to differentiate between organisations based in the so-called South and North, we will respectively refer to these as ‘based in tropical regions’ & ‘based in Europe’.

and integrating them into the 2024 work and beyond. Once the response is finalised and uploaded in December 2023, you will be able to access it directly via this link: [GLA MTR management response](#).

Additional insights from the Alliance upon reading the report

It is important to note that the MTR became a learning process in itself. The consultants facilitated a positive process and we are pleased with the overall findings and conclusions of the report. However, there are a number of caveats to which we would like to draw the attention of the Ministry:

a) The core of our programme are the territorial processes led by IP&LCs and how these inform policies at different levels. Yet this is not captured enough in the report.

The Alliance feels the report does not offer a comprehensive picture of the achievements carried out by IP&LCs hand-in-hand with CSOs. We miss a deeper analysis of the changes that took place at this level and their relevance for wider discussions and approaches on tropical forest and their importance for planetary wellbeing, as well as how the programme contributed to these.

Upon discussion with the consultants, they indicated that this was partly because this information was not easily found in country or global reports, nor in the outcomes harvested. In some countries partners carried out focus group discussions with IP&LCs, and selected countries carried out in-depth sampling capturing concrete stories of change (DRC, Indonesia and Colombia), yet there is limited reference to these in the report. This means that available internal and external evidence of IP&LC achievements and increased agency is not sufficiently presented throughout the report. This was further highlighted in the MTR recommendation 9 that advises that we strengthen consultation of IP&LCs and ensure their voices are represented in programme reporting. As an Alliance, we recognize that we need to find ways to ensure that our reports highlight better the work and views of IP&LCs within the programme and will look for ways to improve on this in the remaining programme time. This will include making better use of the richness of information collected through outcome harvesting and stories of change.

b) IOB criteria, data triangulation and adequate usage of external sources of data

DSO guidance on the MTR, including the request to take IOB evaluation criteria into account, was received on October 10, 2022. This was late in our process as we had almost completed our terms of reference (ToR) building on consultations with stakeholders at different levels of the programme, and we had limited capacity to adapt them at that stage. Some adjustments were made, though, and we were grateful for the follow-up communication from DSO that no knock-out criteria would be used.

The consultants made use of primary and secondary data for validation of outcomes. They were also asked to substantiate findings using diverse sources of data and checking alternative explanations for claims, mainly through external referencing sources (IOB criterion 17), triangulation of data (criterion 18) and avoidance of bias (criterion 19). However, upon reading the report, although it is visible in the referencing of external resources and external KIIs, this aspect of the report could have been stronger. It is an area that we will ensure to give greater emphasis to in future reviews and evaluations.

c) MTR recommendations

The report lists 16 recommendations (MTR report section 7). Fourteen of them are addressed to the Alliance and cover different aspects of programme implementation: programmatic (4), inclusion, gender equality and youth (1), learning, monitoring and evaluation (3), reporting (2), coordination & collaboration (2), budget (1) and sustainability (1). The other two are for MFA & the Dutch embassies. We are grateful to the consultants for their analysis and consider that most of the recommendations are relevant (some with caveats).

(i) Recommendations linked to collaboration

The assumption of the positive value of fruitful collective action is maintained throughout the report

and the Alliance is commended for its diversity whilst still working towards joint goals. This is aligned with our own view, as expressed in our Vision on Collaboration and Equity (VoCE), developed for the FfJF programme following our experiences from the previous project cycle (2016-2020).

However, we do not agree with the consultants' view that there should be more international policy spaces where all Alliance members and/or partners should all work together, as the GLA is based on the premise that civil society represents diverse and complementary views and capacities, and because collaboration should never become an objective by itself. As GLA partners, we believe in the strength of synergies shaped by multi-actor and multi-scale advocacy strategies in all countries, which are southern-led, context-based and complementary at the global level, as described above.

(ii) Recommendations are largely internal looking, managerial in nature and not very conducive to achieving greater impact, enhancing local ownership and/or Southern leadership

We perceive that the recommendations are largely oriented towards the Alliance level (i.e. towards the six Alliance members and technical partners) rather than the programme as a whole, and particularly to the higher-level governance bodies. This seems to be based on a top-down evaluation approach that comes into contradiction with the way of working of the GLA, presented in our VoCE.

Whilst we would like to be able to address this in future reviews/evaluations, we are also aware that most evaluators are used to reporting in this way as most subsidy and grants systems tend to push for recommendations to be made at the top Alliance level. Given the interest shown by MFA in the Strengthening Civil Society partnership framework to further increase local ownership and Southern leadership through its frameworks, we would be interested in sharing experiences with other Alliances and exploring if their MTRs have been able to address this differently, and to reflect with MFA on how consultants might be encouraged to explore other ways to evaluate programmes.


Forests for a Just Future 2024-25

Following the MTR, the Alliance enters the second half of the programme. We plan to build on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the MTR, continuing to leverage on those aspects where the Alliance is considered strongest. This includes the combined and complimentary technical expertise of the implementing CSO partners, Alliance members and technical partners on issues related to tropical forests. And also, the possibilities that working in the GLA offers. Mainly, an Alliance with a balanced representation of global South-North partners, working from principles of local ownership, inclusivity and equality and combining approaches of dialogue and dissent towards a common goal: *ensuring tropical forests and forest landscapes are sustainably and inclusively governed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, fulfil human rights and safeguard local livelihoods.*

In conclusion, we are proud to share this report with you and hope that you enjoy reading it. It contains countless examples of the impactful work of GLA partners in the different countries and landscapes and highlights the vital importance of this programme in meeting not only the Netherland's but global climate & biodiversity goals.

Do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or require further information.

Kind regards,



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADSDPP	Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan
AI	Appreciative inquiry
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNE	Community Based NTFP Enterprise
CC	Country coordinator
CED	Centre for Environment and Development
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFM	Community forest management
CFR	Community forest reserve
CLDMC	Community Land Development Management Committee
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRDD	Community rights and deforestation drivers
CREMA	Community resource management area
CRMA	Critical Raw Materials Act
CSO	Civil society organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EACOP	East African Crude Oil Pipeline
EC	European Commission
ECA	Export Credit Agency
ED	Executive director
(W)EHRD	(Women) Environmental Human Rights Defender
EKN	Dutch Embassy
EU	European Union
EUDR	European Union Deforestation Regulation
FBE	Forest based enterprise
FfJF	Forests for a Just Future
FGD	Focus group discussion
FoE	Friends of the Earth
FPAR	Feminist participatory action research
FPIC	Free prior and Informed consent
GFC	Global Forest Coalition
GLA	Green Livelihoods Alliance
GTP	Gender technical partner
ICCA	Indigenous peoples' and local community conserved areas and territories
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOB	Policy and operations evaluation department

IP&LC	Indigenous peoples and local communities
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JET	Just Energy Transition
LGU	Local government unit
LPMC	Local project management committee
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MD	Milieudefensie
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFA	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
mHRDD	Mandatory human rights due diligence
MTR	Mid-term review
NDC	Nationally determined contributions
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGAP	Organisational gender action plan
OH	Outcome harvesting
OP	Oil palm
PAP	Project affected persons
PCG	Program coordination group
PEZA	Philippine Economic Zone Authority
PMEL	Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning
PND	National development plan
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
SB	Supervisory board
SDI	Sustainable Development Institute
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEAH	Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
T4F	Together4Forests
TBI	Tropenbos International
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WECF	Women Engage for a Common Future

Executive Summary

The Forests for a Just Future (FfJF) programme of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) aims to ensure that tropical forest landscapes are sustainably and inclusively governed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, fulfil human rights and safeguard local livelihoods by addressing a range of complex and interrelated challenges in 11 countries in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

This midterm review (MTR) is the result of an external and participatory review process. It draws from information from the first half of the programme (January 2021-April 2023) and aims to help the Alliance learn from experiences, as well as provide guidance for the planning and implementation of the remainder of the programme. The MTR focused on four of the six OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria: (i) coherence, (ii) effectiveness, (iii) (potential) impact and (iv) sustainability. This summary follows that structure.

Coherence

The programme's Theory of Change (ToC) continues to be highly relevant. The approaches used by the Alliance partners are coherent with the global challenges that the programme seeks to address and broad enough to encompass their complexity at the different levels. The FfJF programme responds to, and is coherent with, national and international priorities on forests, climate, Indigenous peoples and local communities (IP&LCs), biodiversity, water and human rights.

Effectiveness and impact

The MTR showed that the programme is on track, with good progress being made in all pathways.

Pathway A: Strengthening IP&LC governance over increased areas of forest and ensuring IP&LC practices/structures are more inclusive/sustainable

The MTR found that **Pathway A is well on track** based on the quantitative assessment of indicator targets as set in the baseline, plus the wealth of qualitative evidence demonstrating real progress towards the outcomes. One of the key takeaways is how the programme leverages the transformative potential of collective action. By bringing together various stakeholders, the programme has demonstrated the power of a unified voice in driving policy change and achieving sustainable outcomes.

Some top-level achievements highlighted within the report are:

- Significant progress has been made in strengthening IP&LC governance of their territories and on sustainable green livelihoods. Furthermore, the GLA has facilitated an active partnership between IP&LCs and CSOs in monitoring and documentation of deforestation and infringements on IP&LC rights. This serves as a means of reporting to public authorities and as evidence in grievance mechanisms.
- The number of hectares under sustainable forest management and/or under the governance of IP&LCs and with some form of protective measure against deforestation in the areas where the GLA works increased from approximately 29 hectares to 34 million (end target 42.9 million).
- The GLA engaged more than 192,000 IP&LC members in the various landscapes and countries.

In terms of challenges, the MTR found that progress towards the gender transformative approach is stronger in some countries than others due to underlying power imbalances and structural inequalities - sometimes rooted in strong cultural contexts. Although some targeted interventions and strategies are already being successfully implemented to pursue equal and meaningful participation of women, youth and other under-represented groups, there is a need to focus our efforts on proven approaches and analyse what is further needed.

Pathway B: Governments and agro-commodity, extractives, energy and infrastructure sectors no longer drive deforestation and address citizens' concerns to protect forests and human rights

The MTR found that **Pathway B** had made significant progress and is **well on track** to achieve its outcomes by 2025. Despite the challenging contexts of implementation, the programme benefited from being highly embedded in its countries of intervention. Its ability to create and sustain alliances with like-minded organisations, networks and social movements nationally, regionally and internationally, enabled the Alliance to achieve more than the sum of its individual partner contributions.

Notable examples of work within this Pathway are:

- In DRC, Ghana, Indonesia, the Philippines, Liberia and Uganda, actions led to suspensions, withdrawals of illegal permits and projects on mining and oil palm concessions and the dismantling of criminal networks of timber and wildlife traffickers. The application of strategic litigation, community mobilisation and private sector engagement proved to be highly successful.
- The GLA successfully contributed to the passage of the landmark European Union Deforestation Regulation. In the Netherlands, partner actions exposed weaknesses in the efforts of Dutch companies to address deforestation in their value chains and the potential impacts on ecosystem conversion and biodiversity decline. Interventions also targeted the financial sector, export credit agencies and insurers, leading to suspension of funding for agro-industrial, fossil fuel and mining projects in Asia and Africa.
- Significant efforts were also committed to promoting a gender just energy transition including successful generation of evidence to inform national and international policy processes, national energy policies and the Dutch Raw Materials Strategy.

As a core challenge to working on the drivers of deforestation, the report highlighted the risks linked to working in a context where economic interests and powers often underpin environmental challenges. The risks of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) is also high for CSOs working to ensure that governments and key sectors like agro-commodity, extractives, energy and infrastructure no longer contribute to deforestation and human rights violations.

Pathway C: Citizens enjoy human rights and safely participate in social movements

The MTR found that the FfJF programme had made good progress on Pathway C and is well on track to achieve its outcomes by 2025. Some highlights from the report include:

- Development of a civic space report with input from partners in all GLA countries. This was finalised in April 2023 and had yet to be put into practice at the time of the MTR.
- In terms of engaging and mobilising CSO networks to respond to (women) environmental human rights defenders [(W)EHRD] emergencies and the use of courts and dispute resolution authorities, partners employed strategies including: judicial defence efforts, emergency funds, capacity building, communication with international human rights organisations and press coverage.
- In relation to the programme's contributions to improve and implement binding human and women's rights in climate, biodiversity and business agreements, FfJF supported the development of EU and Dutch mandatory human rights due diligence (mHRDD) legislation and the UN Binding Treaty on business and human rights.

The MTR pointed to the increasingly restricted civic spaces in GLA countries and globally as challenging. The rise of misinformation/disinformation, political turmoil and conflicts and the rise of authoritarian and right-wing regimes, meant that the achievements in this pathway have been slower and more fragile to secure. This re-emphasises the relevance of the programme and the goals of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs Power of Voices Programme more generally.

Inclusion, gender equality and youth

The FfJF programme explicitly commits to a gender transformative approach which ensures that gendered actions and policies are embedded in overall planning, structures and organisational culture of the consortium and local partners. The MTR found that this aspect of the programme is **largely on track**. Some analysis is made within the report on how gender and age-related roles and behaviour are deeply ingrained in societies, families and within the programme structures and partner organisations themselves. Changing this takes reflection, learning and time, as well as willingness and awareness on the part of all partners and staff to be proactive, make changes and prioritise resources to address gender and power inequalities. The MTR found that some countries have moved further along this journey than others.

Partnerships and collaboration

The MTR concluded that the balance of six Alliance members (three from the tropical regions and three Europeans), each with their own networks of partner CSOs, had enhanced the diversity of approaches, skill sets, knowledge and capabilities, enriching the collective competence and resourcefulness for collaboration. The specific expertise of the two technical partners has been a valuable addition to the programme. The relationship among different organisations creates a conducive environment for mutual professional growth and an atmosphere which enhances knowledge sharing, practical learning and joint problem solving.

Challenges included the distance between the Alliance's global coordination and governance levels within the programme and the country partners. While highly successful in delivering interventions on the ground and internationally, opportunities for learning and exchange and for the identification of possible joint advocacy can be further strengthened.

Sustainability

The achievements reported demonstrated social, economic, institutional and environmental sustainability. However, this sustainability may be affected by financial, political, institutional and environmental risks.

The MTR noted that the programme has been implemented in a highly complex environment including Covid-19, rising global conflicts, inflation and shrinking civic space. The achievements have been made possible by its partners who are deeply embedded in target landscapes, their wide expertise and experience and their ability to leverage partnerships and alliances. As much as the programme appears to be on track, limited financial resources may limit its ability to fully deliver on all of its ambitions, partly linked to the global economic context predicted for 2024-25 such as inflation.

Conclusion and recommendations

The MTR found that the FfJF programme has yielded valuable insights and lessons categorised into six main themes: (i) the power of collective action, (ii) the importance of diverse partnerships, (iii) the need for multi-level engagement, (iv) the significance of long-term solutions, (v) the need to further improve gender and social equality in forest-dependent communities, and (vi) the need for well-funded and strategic approach to legal advocacy. Finally, the MTR presents a list of 16 insightful and relevant recommendations. Fourteen were for the Alliance, one for the ministry and one for the Dutch embassies. These can be found in the final section (7) of the report.



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Forests for a Just Future (FfJF) programme of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) aims to ensure that forest landscapes are sustainably and inclusively governed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, fulfil human rights and safeguard local livelihoods. The programme does this by addressing a range of complex and interrelated challenges in tropical forest landscapes in 11 countries plus regional networks in Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. The programme recognises the interconnectedness of the challenges facing these landscapes and consequently seeks to address the intersections between forests, climate, water, biodiversity, livelihoods and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LC) rights, especially the rights of women and youth. It focuses on increased participation by IP&LCs, with a strong emphasis on women and young people in policy and decision making on land rights and forest

governance and on increased civic space for citizens to be able to safely participate in social movements. It therefore seeks to strengthen inclusive and sustainable forest governance of tropical forests by IP&LCs, alongside participation in decision making. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen lobbying and advocacy to hold to account governments, institutions such as the European Union (EU) and agro-commodity, extractives, energy and infrastructure industries accountable for deforestation and human rights violations. Ultimately, the programme should contribute to safeguarding healthy tropical forests and to reduced deforestation and thereby mitigate climate change effects, improve social inclusion, reduce environmental human rights violations and improve IP&LC control and access to benefits from their forests.

The programme's theory of change (ToC) takes an intersectional and gender transformative approach and revolves around three mutually reinforcing pathways of change:

- Pathway A: strengthening IP&LC governance over increased areas of forest and ensuring IP&LC practices/structures are more inclusive and sustainable;
- Pathway B: government and agro-commodities, extractives, energy and infrastructure sectors no longer drive deforestation; and
- Pathway C: citizens enjoy human and women's rights and safely participate in social movements.

The programme began in January 2021 and has a duration of five years. It builds on and extends the Forested Landscapes for Equity programme, which ran from 2016 until 2020. FfJF's goal of increasing the participation of IP&LCs in policy and decision-making regarding their land rights and forest governance aligns with:

- the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which states that Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination and to participate in decision-making in matters that affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures as well as the right to be consulted and to participate in the management of their lands, territories and resources.
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- the Strengthening Civil Society policy framework, Power of Voices programme and discourse of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The programme's aim is also consistent with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which recognises that reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation and sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, in developing countries is a crucial strategy to address climate change. The Glasgow UNFCCC COP26 Declaration on Forests and Land Use further emphasized the critical role forests play in carbon sequestration and the need for sustainable land use practices to combat climate change. The FfJF programme also aligns with the Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the CBD COP 15 in 2022, marking a major step in global efforts to address biodiversity loss, ensure sustainable use of biological resources and enable equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

1.2 Programme implementation structure

FfJF is implemented by six Alliance members, Milieudefensie (MD) as Alliance lead, Gaia Amazonas, the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands (IUCN NL), the Non-Timber Forest Products-Exchange Programme Asia (NTFP-EP Asia), the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) and Tropenbos International (TBI). The Alliance works closely with 70 civil society organisation (CSO) partners and through them, with numerous other CSOs, community based organisations (CBOs) and Indigenous organisations in the forest landscapes and regional/international networks. There are also two technical partners – Fern and Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) – working closely with its strategic partner the Global Forest Coalition (GFC). The gender technical role at country level/in the country teams is primarily carried out by WECF-GFC network partners who are (grassroots) women's organisations rooted in their local context, or gender consultants funded by WECF/GFC. Each partner brings specific expertise, networks and added-value to the programme, has strong roots at the landscape level and provides advocacy capacity at local, national and global levels. Three Alliance partners are also implementing country partners and contribute to programme coordination and steering groups by informing the programme orientation from local perspectives, and ensuring decisions and approaches are relevant and adequate for regions where implementation takes place.

1.3 Country and thematic programme teams

The programme operates with in-country partners that implement portfolios of projects that contribute to the achievement of the programme aims. Representatives of each partner meet at regular intervals to reflect on progress and for planning purposes.

At the country level, a country coordinator (CC) ensures there is general coordination between alliance members and their CSO partners in-country and is also tasked with coordinating (annual) planning and reporting. The thematic programmes, Just Energy Transition (JET) and Community Rights and Deforestation Drivers (CRDD), have a thematic programme (TP) coordinator who serves as general coordination between the partners working on that theme in different countries.

It is important to note that the country/thematic programme coordinators are not expected to take an active role in managing or monitoring the activities of the other CSOs present their country or TP. Rather, for individual plans and reports, CSOs will coordinate directly with the alliance member with whom they have a contractual relationship. For example, Censat Agua Viva in Colombia will coordinate directly with their contracting alliance member Milieudefensie about their contractual commitments, and participate in the Colombia country meetings convened by the CC.

1.4 Evaluation purpose and audience

1.4.1 Terms of reference and scope

This mid-term review (MTR) is an external and participative review process that will be used for monitoring, learning, accountability and internal communication purposes. It is intended to provide the FfJF and the donor with an overview of the progress of the FfJF programme to date. It aims to help the Alliance learn from experiences gained in the first half of the five-year grant agreement period and provide guidance for the planning and implementation for the remainder of the programme.

The MTR has two main objectives:

1. Assess to what extent and how the FfJF programme is making progress towards the programme targets as formulated in the baseline report; how this is influenced by external

contextual factors impacting on the programme; what this means for its ToC; and how the programme can improve/adjust for the remainder of the funding period.

2. Reflect and gain insights on partnership collaboration towards larger programme impact.

The MTR includes a review of country programmes (11) and the local-global-local (LGL) thematic programmes (2) and key international policy dossiers (4). As a component of objective one, the MTR assessed progress against indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 of the revised results framework (approved by MoFA on March 6, 2023)¹.

Taking into account the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) criterion², the MTR also focuses on four of the six OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria; effectiveness, impact, sustainability and coherence. It also considers the cross-cutting subjects of climate change, gender and inclusiveness and sustainability.

1.4.2 Audience

Based on the terms of reference (ToR), the participants and end users of the MTR include:

- All partners, stakeholders/actors involved in the implementation and management of the programme, plus development and implementation of the future plans including the working groups and governance personnel;
- The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Dutch Embassies (EKN) in FfJF countries where available; and
- External stakeholders with power to influence or interest (for example, government institutions) in the programme.



¹ See Annex 2a Part II of the report

² See <https://english.iob-evaluatie.nl/publications/guidelines/2022/04/22/evaluation-quality-criteria>



EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Approach to the assignment

In response to the ToR and the baseline report, the five key considerations to approaching this mid-term evaluation were as follows:

- To work in a participatory partnership with the programme team at all levels;
- To reduce the burden on country teams yet still capture robust qualitative and quantitative data for assessing progress;
- To take an appreciative, user-centred approach;
- To ensure that gender and intersectionality are properly mainstreamed throughout the review process; and
- To include more qualitative data and participant voices from which lessons may be learned and greater insights developed that will do justice to all actors in the process.

2.1.1 Participatory partnerships

The consultants who undertook the MTR worked closely with the programme monitoring, evaluation and learning (PMEL) team in agreeing all stages of the review and methodologies as well as the analysis of results. Country coordinators and representatives from all key governance and technical bodies were involved in the design and implementation.

2.1.2 Reduced burden on country teams

While the review was conducted in as participatory a way as possible, it was balanced by a need to reduce the burden on the country teams as much as possible. For example:

- Country facilitators were engaged to lead and coordinate the collection of data from each country, in partnership with a regional representative from the consultancy team;

- A limited number of tools were used and as much information as possible was collected from existing data, for example:
 - the raw data from the annual reports and country reports and outcomes harvested and indicator data from Project Connect. Country teams had until mid 2023 to assess and submit additional data for indicators 1 and 2, and outcome harvesting and indicator data.
 - additional data collection was restricted to a short online questionnaire for all partners
 - qualitative data was sought from three-day workshops in each country facilitated by a country facilitator to which all partners were invited
 - key informant interviews were conducted by the consultants with a sample of international and national staff
 - further interviews were implemented by two other external consultants to assess the performance of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) thematic topic and the CRDD policy dossier
 - local partners led the collection of a small amount of data at the forest landscapes to ensure that the voices of IP&LCs and women's leaders were represented in the review
 - case studies were documented in Colombia by the country's external consultant
- Additional data and deeper information as sought from Indonesia, DRC and Colombia representing each region of the programme's implementation.

2.1.3 Appreciative-user centred

Wherever possible appreciative inquiry principles and cycles were followed. This entailed focusing on the positive results of the programme to date and helping participants to explore how gains could be scaled up or utilised to solidify the progress that has been made. Challenges were also explored but focused on how they could be addressed and what could be learned for the future of the programme. Moreover, in line with the appreciative inquiry principles, the consultants conducted the review

with an awareness that they were part of the change process and that, by conducting the MTR, they were intervening – in the programme, the work and the lives of participants.

The review methodology built on the underlying principles by following the appreciative inquiry cycle³ as outlined in table 1.

Table 1: Appreciative inquiry cycle

Stage in the Cycle	Description	Implication for the MTR
Definition	Focus of the inquiry	The focus of the review was set out in the TOR but was further discussed and negotiated at inception, with key Alliance representatives, especially PMEL working group members and in-country partners.
Discovery	What worked well – best practice	The review particularly focused on identifying and analysing successes. Progress against baseline indicators was assessed and findings were enriched with qualitative data.
Dream	What might be	Having identified successes, programme actors were asked to envisage how the programme might work in future.
Design	How to make it happen	Participants were then asked to explore how to build on successes to date; where relevant, how to scale up; and what could be learned from the success of others (other partners or country programmes).
Delivery	How to learn and sustain	Partners were asked to reflect on the whole programme structures, the MTR learning process and explore how gains achieved might be sustained.

The research focused on involving and seeking the views of those with the greatest stake in the programme: participants and those on whom it impacts. While the Alliance members and in-country partners were well-represented in the baseline, the voices of different IP&LC members were not. As the programme is now underway, the consultants felt it was now imperative to include the voices of IP&LCs, especially women and youth, in the MTR review as they are the primary stakeholders and the programme outcome is dependent their increased participation in decision-making, the protection of forests and the development and maintenance of sustainable agricultural practices. Because the budget was limited, it was not possible to interview a wide range of primary stakeholders but, wherever possible, partners conducted a limited number of focus group discussions with groups of women, young women and young men.

³ Acosta, A. and Donthwaite, B. (2005) Appreciative Inquiry: An approach for learning and change based on our own best practices. CGIAR.

2.1.4 Gender and intersectionality

FfJF aims for gender-just and inclusive governance of forested landscapes, based on the assumption that gender justice and social inclusion is not only a human right but a prerequisite to achieving truly sustainable forest governance⁴. To assess programme progress in improving gender equality and social inclusion, the MTR took a twin-track approach. The first was ensuring that questions related to gender and intersectionality were mainstreamed through the research. Specific questions were also asked relating to action taken to address gender inequality and transform gender relations at all levels of the programme, with a specific focus on the IP&LC level, where possible centred on the voices of individuals most marginalised and/or most forest-dependent, especially women and youth.

2.1.5 Qualitative data and participant voices

The baseline findings and results were strongly focused on quantitative data but this provides only a partial picture of the impact of the programme. For example, the number of policies is important but the impact of those policies on the forested landscapes and the lives of the people who live and work there tell us more about the programme and enrich and deepen understanding of future actions required. For the same reason, the MTR sought out the voices of the various stakeholders and the effect of the programme on their work and their lives. IP&LCs, especially women and youth in the forested landscapes, are the primary stakeholders of this programme and the outcome is dependent on their changed behaviours and practices including their increased participation in decision making and the protection of forests and developing and maintaining sustainable agricultural practices. Although not present in the baseline, and without additional resources, the country teams and consultants sought ways in which their voices could be included in the MTR.

2.2 Methodology

As outlined above, a mixed method approach was used in order to balance the quantitative approach with qualitative information to deepen understanding, generate insights, enrich data and locate the review in the realities of the various stakeholders. At the same time, care was taken to not overburden in-country and international staff yet maintaining a partnership approach.

Data was collected to measure progress against the programme indicators, defined during baseline, but also to respond to additional evaluation questions including: changes to the various country contexts; progress in each of the three pathways; an assessment of whether the country ToCs are still valid including the assumptions and risks; the extent to which gender, youth and intersectionality have been mainstreamed into all aspects of the programme; the challenges; lessons learned; recommendations; and sustainability. Further questions focused on partnership collaboration and its contribution to the programme including: the effectiveness of the partnerships: how to enhance them and their sustainability; collaboration with other partners outside the alliance; the added value of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and the extent to which 'leading from the south' has been successful.

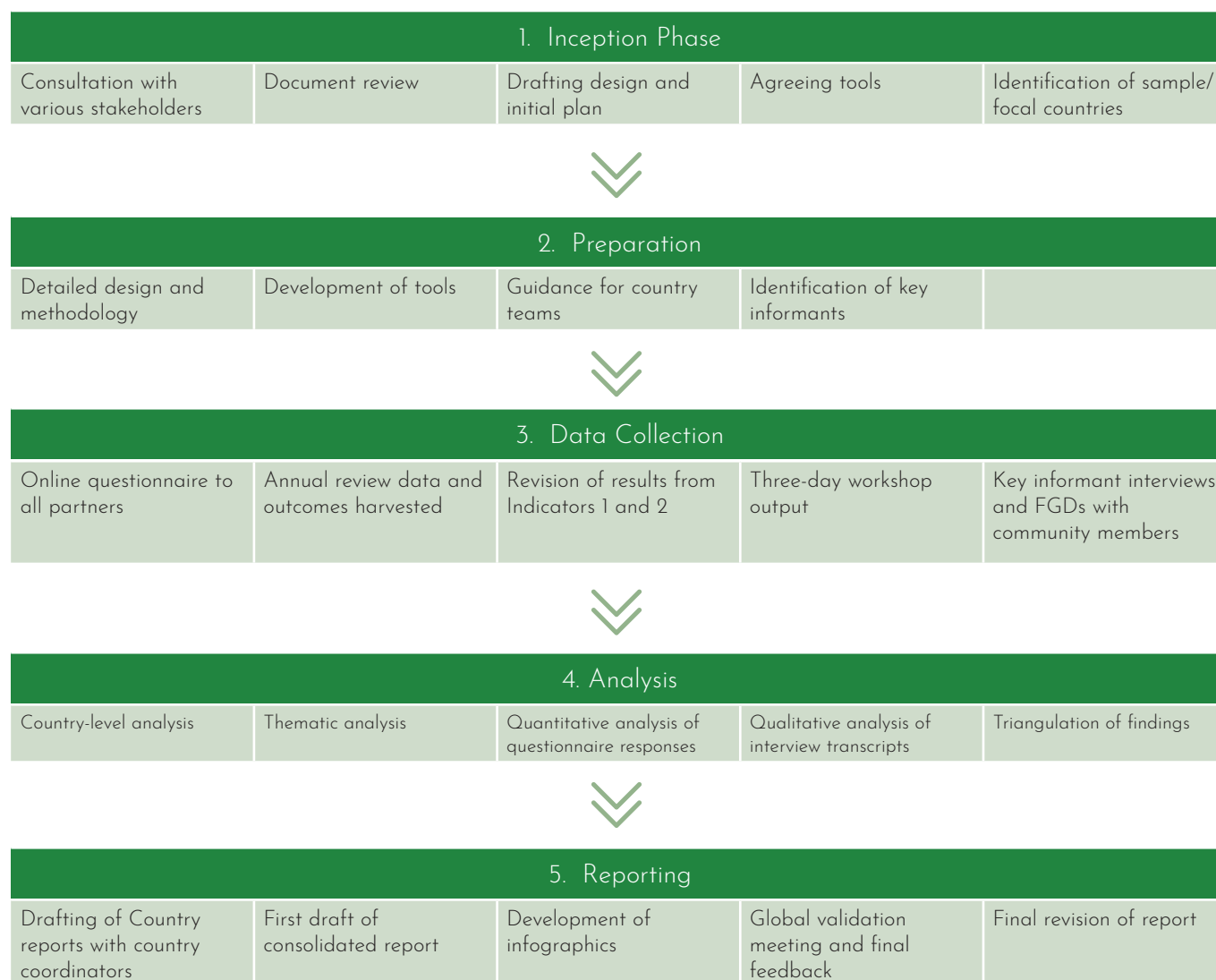


⁴ Agarwal, B. (2010) *Gender and Green Governance: The Political Economy of Women's Presence Within and Beyond Community Forestry* Oxford: Oxford University Press;

Jhaveri, N. J. (2020) *Forest Tenure Pathways to Gender Equality: A practitioner's guide* Bogor, Indonesia: CIFOR https://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/Books/Gender_Equality.pdf ;

Kristjanson, P. et al. (2019) *Taking Action on Gender Gaps in Forest Landscapes: A working paper*, PROFOR.

Table 2: The five stages of the MTR



Stage 1: Inception

Meetings were held between the consultants and the programme coordination and supervisory teams and working groups, especially the PMEL, to discuss and agree the proposed approach and methodology. Two online meetings were also held with CCs and with representatives of all the working groups to explore lessons learned from the baseline process, their priorities for the MTR and what would be most useful in terms of programme implementation in the next two years. Existing programme documentation was reviewed and potential data sources were identified. The three in-depth sample countries were agreed (Colombia, DRC and Indonesia) and data collection tools identified. The criteria used for selection of the sample countries included information needs and gaps; regional perspective; countries working on multiple pathways; budget spend/efficiency; and a mix of old and new GLA members.

At this stage, the evaluation questions were incorporated into an evaluation matrix in Excel, which set out the questions, any sub-questions generating from them, potential areas for investigation and data collection and identified the primary and secondary location of data and the process of analysis and reporting.

Stage 2: Preparation

During the preparation stage, the design, methodology, evaluation matrix and research tools were agreed and finalised with the PMEL. Guidance documents were developed for CCs and CFs. A detailed manual and guidance document for the three-day workshop was developed for facilitators and a familiarisation workshop held.

Stage 3: Data collection

All partners were sent an online questionnaire by the programme secretary. Of the 120 responses returned, 47% were from implementing partners, while 41% identified as alliance members. Twelve percent of the responses were from the technical partners, as shown in Figure 1.

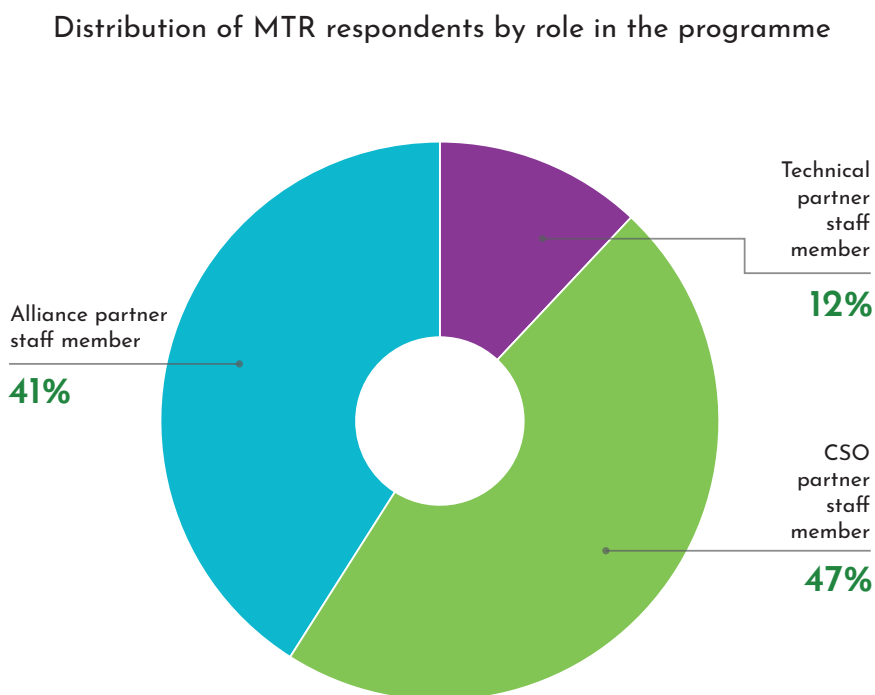


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents - MTR survey

Consultants and CFs interviewed key informants in each country, especially the CCs and gender technical advisers. The consultants interviewed a selection of Alliance coordination and working group members. With support from the CCs, the CFs conducted a three-day workshop and uploaded to a safe space the outputs, which included detailed notes from each session and copies of the flipcharts. Additional data collection and case studies were conducted in Colombia, DRC and Indonesia. Additional analysis of the performance of the EUDR and JET thematic programmes were also conducted. Final feedback, clarifications, enrichment and a small amount of additional data was collected at the global reflection meeting/workshop held in Manila from the 18th to the 21st of September 2023. The global workshop brought together 28 participants from all Alliance members and partners from all programme regions.

In addition to the 120 responses received from the online survey, 57 participants (24 male/33 female) took part in online and face-to-face interviews. A total of 197 participants representing all local implementing CSOs from all 11 programme countries took part in the three-day country MTR workshops. Additionally, focus group discussions with women, young women and young men took place in Bolivia, Colombia, DRC, Ghana, Indonesia and the Philippines. These meetings were organised and facilitated by country partners at landscape level.

Stage 4: Analysis

Content analysis was used to review the programme's secondary data. Thematic analysis was conducted on the primary data emerging from key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions and the project connect online platform. The themes were generated in line with the MTR matrix – criteria and sub questions while being sufficiently flexible to develop new themes from the data. The online questionnaires, which received 120 responses, were analysed using Microsoft Excel. The assessment of progress towards the achievement of programme targets was conducted collaboratively with the GLA team to ensure accuracy of the findings with M&E data. This analysis consisted of assessing progress against stated programme indicators as set out in the revised⁵ results framework (attached as annex 3 in part two of this report). This analysis was conducted at programme level as well as country levels (the summary reports are presented in annex 1). Progress towards the donor's basket of indicators was also conducted and presented as annex 4. As set out in the evaluation matrix, different data sources were utilised to reach a judgment on the findings related to each evaluation question.

This evaluation report represents a comprehensive and rigorous analysis, underpinned by a robust methodological approach that leveraged the principle of triangulation to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. Triangulation was meticulously applied across various data sources and methods to cross-validate information and interpretations, thereby enhancing the credibility of the conclusions and the strength of the recommendations.

1. **Diverse data collection methods:** The evaluation employed a multi-faceted approach, encompassing interviews with project staff, an online survey of partners, case studies, focus group discussions with stakeholders, and key informant interviews with external stakeholders. This diverse array of data sources ensured a rich and nuanced understanding of the project from multiple perspectives.

Stage 5: Reporting

Based on the above analysis, 11 country reports were produced as well as six reports for the thematic topics and policy dossiers. These are presented in summary form as annex 1 in part two of this report. An initial draft report was submitted for feedback ahead of the global MTR workshop in Manila. Detailed discussions of the findings took place and contributions, feedback and suggestions were submitted to the GLA, consolidated and transmitted to the consultants. These comments were addressed, and a revised version was submitted to the GLA for peer review. Separately, the results of the MTR were presented to the supervisory board (SB) and their comments and suggestions were considered and addressed in the final report. The findings are presented using simple tables, figures, boxes, case studies and quotes from respondents to highlight their lived experiences.

2. **Cross-referencing document review:** A thorough document review was conducted, which served as a foundational layer for cross-referencing and validating information gathered from primary sources. This review provided historical and contextual grounding for the project, enabling a deeper understanding of the interventions and achievements, challenges and lessons.

3. **Participatory workshops:** Data collected from three-day participatory workshops involving country partners offered valuable insights into the real-time dynamics and operational realities of the project. The emerging evidence from the workshops also served as platforms for testing preliminary findings derived from other data sources.

4. **Global workshop feedback:** Feedback from a global workshop was instrumental in refining our understanding and interpretations. This platform provided an opportunity for a broader range of stakeholders to weigh in, bringing diverse and global perspectives to the evaluation process.

5. **Methodological rigor in data analysis:** The analysis phase involved meticulously cross-checking data points and findings across different methods and sources, providing a more robust and nuanced understanding of the project's complexities and challenges.

6. **Formulation of conclusions and recommendations:** The conclusions and recommendations of this report are the product of this rigorous triangulation process. They are not based solely on isolated data points or singular perspectives but are the result of a synthesis of a wide array of data, views and experiences. The triangulation of data from multiple sources and through various methods has been fundamental to ensuring the depth, breadth and accuracy of the MTR findings. This approach has been pivotal in formulating well-grounded, comprehensive and actionable recommendations for the future direction of the project.

⁵ The results framework has undergone various revisions as part of the programme management process.

2.3 Tools and participants

The research tools developed were limited to the minimum required to provide robust data for assessing the progress of the programme. They were developed by the consultants, based on an understanding of what was feasible and possible and with support and ongoing consultation with the PMEL working group.

The participants/respondents for each of the tools were identified in order to gain the perspectives of a cross section of those involved at all levels of the programme and from a variety of partners. Table 3 sets out the tools/mechanisms used to seek those perspectives and gain quantitative measures of progress as well as the corresponding participants.

Table 3: Review tools and participants

	Tool/Activity	Participants/Respondents	Facilitated By
1	Indicator forms	Country coordinators and country partners	Country coordinators/consultants
2	Project connect/outcome harvesting	Online	Country partners
3	Focus group discussion	Forest dwelling IP&LCs, especially women and youth	Partners/country facilitators
4	Online questionnaire	All partner staff and technical advisers involved in the programme	Consultants with support from Alliance staff
5	Key informant interviews	Selected Alliance member staff, country partner staff, external stakeholders including government, civil society, consultants	Consultants
6	Three-day workshop	All country coordinators, focal persons and board/working group members	Country facilitators
7	Global meeting for validation of findings	Country coordinators and representatives of all working groups	Consultants

2.4 Challenges and limitations

The tight time scale created some challenges, particularly in terms of ensuring that the results of the three-day workshop and other country results were uploaded in time for the country reports to be written. This then had a knock-on effect on the drafting of the consolidated report. Ensuring that partners conducted FGDs with IP&LC members, specifically women and youth, before the three-day workshop also created some challenges for partners.

Interviews with community members, especially women and other primary stakeholders in forested areas, had not been provided for in the budget. Featuring their voices in the MTR was essential for lesson learning and developing strategies that transform gender relations and increase inclusive governance of forests. To address this challenge without creating too much additional work for country teams, the consultants asked as many partners as possible to conduct FGDs with women and youth in the forested areas in which they operated. The results from those FGDs were incorporated into key sessions in the three-day country workshop and submitted to the consultants and the PMEL team. Not all countries were able to conduct the FGDs within the timescale and budget. Some partners did not report all of their outcomes and results, and some did not fill out all the indicators on the programme's online monitoring and evaluation platform - Project Connect and reporting templates. As a result, some of the outcome harvesting and indicators are not complete, and numbers are likely to be underestimated. In any case, the data uploaded by partners on Project Connect provided relevant evidence and testimonies from communities and project stakeholders regarding the achievements, changes and contributions of the programme.

Consultants who visited the programme countries and interviewed partners face-to-face gained a deeper understanding of the complexity of the programme. The visits added value in terms of gaining a greater sense of how the programme operates on the ground. It would have been an advantage for the consultants to visit a greater number of countries.

2.5 Dealing with bias

In conducting this comprehensive MTR, it was imperative to acknowledge and address potential biases inherent in the diverse methodologies employed. Recognizing these biases is crucial for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of our findings and recommendations.

One significant challenge was the risk of selection bias, particularly in participant-driven methods such as interviews, surveys and focus groups. To mitigate this, we endeavoured to include a broad and representative sample of stakeholders. This approach aimed to encompass a diverse range of perspectives, ensuring that no single viewpoint dominated the findings. Furthermore, to counteract response bias, especially in instances where participants might provide socially desirable answers, we assured anonymity and confidentiality throughout the process. This was crucial in encouraging honest and candid responses, particularly from project staff and KIIIs who might otherwise have felt inclined to provide overly positive feedback.

Another key consideration was the potential for confirmation and interviewer biases. To address this, we adopted a mixed-methods approach, facilitating the triangulation of data from various sources. This strategy allowed us to cross-validate findings and challenged us to consider alternative explanations and viewpoints. Additionally, all interviewers and evaluators received training to maintain neutrality and consistency in their approach, further reducing the risk of bias in data collection and interpretation. In analysing the qualitative data, multiple analysts were involved to ensure a balanced and objective interpretation of the results. This collaborative approach to data analysis was instrumental in mitigating the influence of individual biases and preconceptions.

While acknowledging the inherent limitations in any evaluative process, concerted efforts were made to minimise biases through careful methodological design, participant selection and data analysis. By adopting these measures, we aimed to enhance the reliability and validity of our evaluation, providing a solid foundation for our conclusions and recommendations.

2.6 Structure of the report

The findings are organised in two parts, in line with the two MTR questions. The first part represents the core of the review, while part two consists of the annexes.

In **part one**, we present an assessment of the progress achieved towards the programme's theory of change pathways and the enabling and hindering factors. This is followed by an assessment of the programme's achievements of its gender and intersectionality goals and the collaboration objective. The findings address the value added of the alliance and its challenges, followed by the relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch Embassies. We then explore the sustainability of the gains achieved so far and the underlying risks which might undermine the continuation of the gains beyond the project initial period. The draft report ends with recommendations for the MTR.

Part two consists of four annexes organised as follows:

1. Annex 1 presents summary results and infographics from the 11 GLA partner countries which give an overview of aggregated progress made and highlight key results achieved at country level. This is not a full picture of all actions and achievements and may not fully represent progress made at the individual country partner level.
2. Annex 2 presents summary results and infographics for two thematic programmes (Community Rights and Deforestation Drivers and Just Energy Transition) and four policy dossiers (Convention on Biological Diversity [CBD], United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], European Union Deforestation Regulation [EUDR] and mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence [UNBT/EU MHRDD]).
3. Annex 3 presents the updated results framework, with the levels of achievement to date compared to the baseline.
4. Annex 4 provides an overview of programme indicators and their alignment with the donor's basket indicators.



CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE OF THE INTERVENTION

3.1 Relevance of the programme

Relevant context since baseline

The pressure on forests and the IP&LCs that depend on them remains unrelentingly high. Identified risks related to safety and security, shrinking civic space, Covid-19 and natural disasters related to climate change have materialised and required mitigation. The FfJF partners are fully cognizant of the challenging environment in which they operate and understand the need to be flexible, vigilant and ready to respond to unexpected events.

Climate-related factors

Since the start of the FfJF, momentum has gathered to act in accordance with the international climate goal of limiting global warming to a maximum of 1.5°C⁶. There is also greater awareness of the key role and contribution of forests and IP&LCs in addressing climate change. Playing a part in this has been the publication of authoritative and increasingly alarming studies stressing the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C; the potential for a corresponding pathway for the global energy sector; the interconnection between biodiversity loss, climate change and the role and rights of IP&LCs; momentum from the UNFCCC COP26; and global grass-roots climate movements

and CSO actions. However, the acknowledgement of the global 1.5°C goal and the significance of IP&LCs' involvement has yet to translate into reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and large-scale sustainable forest management by IP&LCs.

In 2022, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emphasised “the urgency of immediate and more ambitious action to address climate risks. Half measures are no longer an option⁷.” The IPCC published its sixth assessment report (AR6) on climate change which painted a terrifying picture of the state of the climate crisis and the urgency and scale of the changes that are needed to address it in time. Some of the forests the FfJF programme intends to protect may perish due to rising temperatures. There is an increase in extreme weather events around the world, for example strong typhoons and the shear line effect in **the Philippines**⁸ which brought torrential rains triggering floods and landslides. In **Malaysia** in May 2021, the only bridge linking the villages in the Apoh-Tutoh river basin was washed away by huge floods caused by climate change and deforestation along with logging debris which clogged the bridge⁹. The destruction of the bridge made it more difficult and costlier for the FfJF partners to reach the landscape on the other side.

⁶IPCC (2018). Rogelj, J., D. Shindell, K. Jiang, S. Ffita, P. Forster, V. Ginzburg, C. Handa, H. Kheshgi, S. Kobayashi, E. Kriegler, L. Mundaca, R. Séférian, and M.V. Vilarinho, 2018: Mitigation Pathways Compatible with 1.5°C in the Context of Sustainable Development. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 93-174. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157940.004>

⁷IPCC (2022). Sixth Assessment Report on Climate Change: A threat to human wellbeing and health of the planet. Taking action now can secure our future. February 29, 2022.

⁸Plan International (2023) <https://plan-international.org/philippines/news/2023/03/10/typhoon-flooding-response-visayas-mindanao/>

⁹Rahman, S. (2022). Malaysia's Floods of December 2021: Can Future Disasters be Avoided? ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute Perspectives 2022, No. 26.

Both the climate crisis and extreme weather events affect structurally excluded and disadvantaged groups (women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, people living in poverty) differently, often disproportionately, and this highlights the importance of taking a gender responsive and intersectional approach in the programme. To mitigate the impact of extreme weather, FfJF partners are increasingly providing direct relief assistance and/or linking affected communities to groups that provide support when FFJF landscapes are affected.

In many places in the world, including Europe, access to water is a growing problem. This shows the strong interconnections between climate change, biodiversity loss, water, industrial agriculture and human rights. For example, in Bolivia, meat exports have risen from 1.4 million kilos in 2018 to 19.5 million kilos in 2022¹⁰. Seventy-four percent of the cattle ranches authorised for meat exports are located in the three provinces of Chiquitania. Livestock companies divert surface water courses, dig wells affecting aquifers and build dams illegally. This is a clear violation of the local water rights and impacts the livelihoods of communities who suffer from water scarcity and low water quality as a result, which may be aggravated by changing weather patterns caused by climate change. The Bolivian FFJF partners are investing in strengthening the capacity of data and information collection and lobbying and advocacy.

Social factors

There is now greater acknowledgement that the climate change crisis and climate change mitigation measures are intrinsically linked with entrenched patterns of inequality. The poorest and most vulnerable groups bear the brunt of climate change impacts yet contribute the least to the crisis.

Climate change is more than an environmental crisis - it is a social crisis and compels us to address issues of inequality on many levels. The most vulnerable are often also disproportionately impacted by measures to address climate change. In the absence of well-designed and inclusive policies, efforts to tackle climate change and deforestation can have unintended consequences for the livelihoods of certain groups, including by placing a higher financial burden on poor households. For example, policies that limit access to forests, if not designed in collaboration with IP&LCs, could adversely impact indigenous communities, especially women, that depend on forests year-round for their livelihoods.

In addition, there is a need to understand and address the social inclusion, cultural and political economy aspects and identify opportunities to address social inequality.

Social unrest and conflict

The programme in some countries was affected by social unrest and conflict. For example, in Colombia each year was marked by a significant presence of armed actors in the territories, which generated instability and an increase in the risks and violence faced by (W)EHRDs. Conflicts were exacerbated by legal and illegal mining and the extraction of hydrocarbons, as well as the presence of large-scale agro-industrial and infrastructure projects. This led to the first years of the programme being characterised by protests, which intensified in 2021 leading to a national strike and social outbursts. The protests in response to the acute human rights, economic, political and environmental crisis prompted partners to engage in collective introspection and re-evaluate their strategies in aligning with these evolving circumstances, leading to coordinated advocacy efforts. In 2022 and 2023, the presence of armed groups intensified in several territories such as the Caquetá department where Tropenbos Colombia works.

Economic factors

In all countries, inflation and rising commodity prices, such as for petroleum, food and transport, had significant impacts on people as well as the programme budget and planned activities. The FfJF programme partners mitigated the impact of rising programme costs and general economic decline by monitoring the budget closely and adjusting where necessary as well as looking for ways to reduce costs. Programme investments in enabling communities to manage their land and forest, protecting natural resources and establishing sustainable businesses will reap long-term benefits and make communities more resilient inclusively and sustainably to external shocks like economic crises. In addition, our focus on women's leadership, youth, Indigenous people and gender equality aimed to mitigate the disproportionate effects the crisis has on these groups.

Many governments, the private sector as well as international financial institutions seek a way out of the crisis by pushing more extractive and large-scale agricultural projects for development and economic

¹⁰ https://trendeconomy.com/data/export_h2?time_period=2022&reporter=Bolivia&trade_flow=Export&commodity=02

recovery, without understanding or acknowledging the value of natural landscapes and the threat to social equality. For example, in **the Philippines**, the government views the mining sector as pivotal for economic recovery, accelerating the approval of new projects, opening up more Indigenous territories for mining, plantations and dams¹¹. The demand for minerals is increasing as the green transition is gaining traction, accelerated by the war in Ukraine. This trend will increasingly have impacts on tropical forests. These projects are threatening the forests, watersheds and food production and have put environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs), especially women, at risk. Owing to their impoverished situation the promises of money, employment and other benefits lure IP&LC members into supporting extractive and destructive projects. Additionally, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) have entered into a memorandum of agreement to convert ancestral lands into economic zones, resulting in escalated development activities such as tourism, land leasing and monocrop plantation¹². This has generated concern among Indigenous peoples, particularly given that ongoing projects such as the Kaliwa Dam have proceeded without fully adhering to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) guidelines.

Rising inflation in the **Philippines**, which spiked to 8.1% in December 2022 due to global crises and natural disasters¹³, has further strained communities. The steep rise in food prices, epitomised by the quadrupling in the cost of onions¹⁴, has compelled community members to divert their focus from development to securing livelihoods. In response, GLA partners are diversifying and fortifying income-generating opportunities for Indigenous and local communities and seeking private sector partnerships for livelihood support.

In **Cameroon**, inflation and the country's high debt level has prompted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to intervene in the management of public finances¹⁵. This situation will likely make way for companies to gain the right to use the forests and land for industrial purposes, reducing the usable area for communities. This situation increases the need to enable community members to manage their land themselves as well as ensuring communities

access benefits from companies that are active on their land. However, on a positive note, the new 2022 financial law increased the tax on exported timber products as part of the discussions on halting exports from Central African countries. This was seen as an opportunity for the country partner to raise awareness on the need for better forest protection and a disincentive for the export of logged timber. This awareness raising is expected to lead to a reduced volume of logged timber exploitation and export.

The dire economic situation in many countries is often used by politicians to promote the myth that investments in fossil fuel projects will contribute to development, for example in **Uganda** where the government promotes the East African crude oil pipeline project (EACOP) through the Support EACOP group¹⁶. However, research shows that most of the profits from fossil fuel projects in low-income countries flow to the international companies who own the projects and the financial institutions that finance them. The country hardly benefits, but still suffers the consequences of the detrimental environmental and social impacts of the project. FfJF addresses this risk by exposing these myths via evidence-based research and disseminating the counter facts in advocacy activities, through the media and by community mobilisation work.

Political factors

The political landscape in many FfJF countries has changed since the start of the programme. For example, in **Viet Nam** there have been a spate of legislative changes in recent years, including newly enacted programmes and decrees aimed at rural construction, poverty reduction and ethnic minority development¹⁷. These changes often align with the project's objectives, particularly in fostering green growth and improving the well-being of mountainous communities. However, political changes also come with drawbacks. Delays in issuing regulatory guidelines for new laws hinder quick decision making at the local level. Anticipated challenges include the delicate handling of human rights issues and limited scope for CSOs, which could impact the project's effectiveness in the foreseeable future.

Since the start of the programme, elections have taken place in a number of FfJF countries including

¹¹USAID (2017). <https://www.land-links.org/country-profile/philippines/>

¹²PEZA (2022). PEZA, NCIP strengthen partnership to empower IPs to become ecozone developers/operators, promote social justice.

¹³Rivas, R. (2023). Consumers' pain worsens as inflation climbs to 8.1% in December 2022.

¹⁴Time Magazine (2023). <https://time.com/6245568/philippines-onions-shortage-inflation/>

¹⁵IMF (2022). IMF country report - Cameroon. Report No. 22/268.

¹⁶<https://eacop.com/>

¹⁷World Bank (2022). 2022 Vietnam Poverty and Equity Assessment - From the Last Mile to the Next Mile.

the Netherlands and Uganda in 2021. In Uganda, elections were accompanied by unprecedented civic space repression. Fifty-four CSOs were temporarily suspended, and six staff members of AFIEGO, a FfJF CSO partner, were arrested¹⁸. As a result, the implementation of planned activities was affected. In the **Netherlands**, national elections took place in March 2021 and were followed by nine months of negotiations before a new government was formed in December. This slow process has delayed the process of realising national mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence (mHRDD) legislation as well as actions related to international commitments on biodiversity, climate and human rights¹⁹.

In **Brazil** and **Colombia**, elections in 2022 have influenced the political context. Both countries' governments made ambitious commitments related to preventing deforestation²⁰. In **Colombia**, FfJF partners and other CSOs were able to show the environmental and social problems experienced in the prioritised territories to presidential candidates, the authorities and national journalists which helped

to place deforestation, violations of human rights and territorial dispossessions on the national agenda. In the **Philippines**, President Rodrigo Duterte reversed all policies and practices on mining including lifting the ban on open-pit mining²¹. This resulted in FfJF partners stepping up their anti-mining campaigns at the local, national and Amazon wide levels.

The results of the **Liberian** elections were still being awaited at time of writing. These could be crucial for IP&LCs and forests, as a new government may come with new parliamentarians and objectives that may either derail or enhance the achievements made on natural resource governance (land and forests). In any case, the rights of local communities will be at stake relating to community forest management and customary land formalisation.

In the Netherlands, the elections in November 2023 may have an impact on policies and legislation as well as its level of support for the ambitious new EU legislation to stop deforestation in supply chains and engagement with producer countries including in the EUDR.

The war in Ukraine and energy security

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 had severe worldwide impacts, including in the FfJF countries. It affected global power dynamics and impacted massively on the worldwide economy, leaving no time to recover from the impact of Covid-19. The war contributed to high inflation and an increase in energy and food prices with disastrous effects on poor people and poor countries. The war also showed the risk of Europe's dependence on Russian gas and forced European leaders to look for other energy sources. As a result, investing in new fossil projects returned to their political agenda.

There has been an increased focus on domestic exploitation of fossil fuels in countries such as the US, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands (North Sea). The crisis also led to a rush for gas exploitation in African countries, whose governments saw that new fossil projects could spark their economy. FfJF partners responded to this changing context by supporting the fight against gas and other dirty energy projects on the African continent even more strongly and advocating in Europe against African gas.

Conversely, the war in Ukraine also has the potential to accelerate the energy transition. However, acceleration can lead to even less stringent requirements to produce wind turbines, solar panels and electric vehicles, and the raw materials required for this. Mining of the transition minerals often takes place in areas of unique biodiversity and of high climate importance such as tropical forests, including in FfJF landscapes. For example, in Sulawesi, **Indonesia**, nickel mining for electric vehicle batteries is causing large-scale deforestation²². As over half the world's energy transition minerals are on Indigenous lands, the impact on IP&LCs is also huge. Research has highlighted the gender-differentiated risks such as sexual and gender-based violence, which are associated with extractive industries.

The EU aims to strengthen the African Union-European Union partnership as a result of the war in Ukraine, which poses significant energy and food security challenges for the two continents. DRC holds almost half of the world's cobalt reserves and remains one of the main raw mineral exporters, primarily exporting to China and the EU. Demands for DRC cobalt are increasing and are expected to rise further. The European

¹⁸GLA Annual Report 2022.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰GLA Annual Report 2022.

²¹Article - Philippines ends open pit mining

²²Supriatna, J., et al. (2020). Deforestation on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi and the loss of primate habitat. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, Vol. 24, e01205.

Commission estimates that the EU will need five times more cobalt in 2030 and almost 15 times more in 2050, most of which will come from the DRC²³. The EU, through the Global Gateway Initiative, has announced 50 million EUR in investment to boost the DRC's critical minerals sector and various mineral-related infrastructure initiatives.

Laws, policies and regulations

Positive developments

In many of the FfJF countries we have seen promising new laws, policies and regulations that were promoted by FfJF partners and other CSOs. These developments pave the way for IP&LCs to sustainably govern their land and benefit fully from its natural resources. For example, in **Colombia**, **CSO and IPLCs opened dialogue and participation spaces** with the newly installed progressive government to ensure the participation of Indigenous peoples in the drafting of the development plan of the new government's programme²⁴. As a result, Indigenous representatives were active participants in drafting the national development plan (PND) 2023-2026. However, in spite of the positive change in government, it has not been easy to establish direct contact or open participation spaces, and Colombia has the most murders of (W)EHRDs, according to a recent report by Global Witness.

The election of president Lula da Silva in **Brazil**²⁵ and his promise to halt deforestation is another important and positive development for the region and the world²⁶. Under his presidency, Indigenous representatives have taken leadership roles in governmental bodies. According to Mongobay (2023), Brazil's National Space Research Institute (INPE) preliminary data for 2023 showed 22% reduction in deforestation compared to 2022. This is seen as a sign that Lula's efforts to curb deforestation are taking effect.

In the **DRC**, the validation of the land-use planning policy document and the drafting of the nationally determined contributions document²⁷, which addresses the rights and welfare of IP&LCs, represents significant opportunities for the achievement of the programme's objectives. The current land reform process is also bringing

hope that customary land can be secured through the proposed institutionalisation of a rural land register²⁸.

In the **Netherlands**, the government presented a policy to stop new financial support from the Dutch export credit agency (ECA) Atradius to fossil fuel projects from 2023, as agreed at CoP26 (2021)²⁹. Though the new policy still has loopholes and exemptions, it is a major step forward.

The Netherlands is the largest EU importer of soy, palm oil, cocoa, non-EU wood, cattle and coffee. As a leading member of the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership, it has been very supportive of ambitious new EU legislation to stop deforestation in supply chains and has been focusing on ensuring the entry point for partnerships and the engagement with producer countries is included in the EUDR. Brazil is the largest supplier of deforestation-linked goods to the Netherlands. The food industry accounts for the largest share in domestic processing of deforestation-linked goods. Overall, the country's wood imports have doubled in two decades, supplying a huge demand in the paper industry, construction, furniture, and business services. The FfJF plays a strong role in holding the government and private sector to account to ensure that the country is meeting its international commitments.

At the international level in 2022, the FFJF contributed to important policy frameworks that are expected to positively influence the next few years of project implementation. These policy processes include the EU deforestation regulation (Pathway B); the post-2020 biodiversity framework of the CBD, which includes a stand-alone target on gender and recognises Indigenous territories as management units that contribute to biodiversity protection (Pathway A); the ASEAN guidelines on recognition of customary tenure in forested landscapes (Pathway A); the IPCC loss and damage

²³European Parliament (2023). Risks arising from the increase in demand for cobalt.

²⁴GLA Annual Report 2022 (p.5).

²⁵Although Brazil is not (yet) a GLA country, it is of regional importance and its influence resonates throughout the region.

²⁶Mongobay (2023) Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon falls 22% in 2023 <https://news.mongabay.com/2023/11/deforestation-in-the-brazilian-amazon-falls-22-in-2023/>

²⁷DRC Nationally Determined Contributions revised 2021 - CDN Révisée de la RDC.pdf (unfccc.int).

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹GLA Annual Report 2022.

fund for vulnerable countries (Pathway A); the UN right to a healthy environment³⁰; the OECD review; the EU Due Diligence Directive; and the financial sector regulations in the EU and divestments or blacklisting of harmful companies. These international policy developments can be considered major successes for the environmental and climate movement and IP&LCs around the world.

Several GLA partners (IUCN NL, TBI, WECF and Gaia) participated in the UN Water Conference held in March, co-hosted by the Dutch government, which called on countries to discuss the global water agenda³¹. Gaia organised a side event about the Amazon flying rivers as key to the global water cycle, rain patterns and water supply at a continental level³². High-level officials from the Dutch MoFA attended the event.

Concerns

Despite these positive advances at the global level, there were worrisome developments at country level that hindered progress in the sustainable governance of forested landscapes. In **Asia**, a regional learning session on the status of extractive, destructive and intrusive projects and programmes in the FfJF Asia countries (September 2022) showed governments used the Covid-19 pandemic to justify development (more dams, plantations). In the **Philippines**, the 2022 elections saw the defeat of progressive candidates, making it harder to push for policies on forest conservation and protection³³.

In **Indonesia**, the discontinuation of the oil palm (OP) moratorium was particularly concerning when considered alongside the Omnibus Law. While the moratorium had some success, notably in West Papua with the revocation of 14 OP permits, its discontinuation raises questions about a potential surge in new OP concessions.

In the **DRC**, government discussions on lifting the moratorium on the allocation of forest concessions to industrial loggers presented a major challenge, as this would deprive IP&LCs of usage rights of their forests³⁴. This also applied to a call for tenders for the auction of 30 oil and gas blocks, which adversely affects the forest and environmental rights of IP&LCs and compromises their access to ecosystem services. All these developments confirmed the need for the FfJF programme to strengthen and mobilise IP&LCs and CSOs to resist, lobby and advocate against harmful laws and rights violations. There will be elections in DRC at the end of 2023 which risk being violent and may not result in any improvement of governance and civic space.

At a pan-Amazon level, the 2022 elections in **Brazil** created some challenges but also positives. There has been a major shift in cross-border and biome-level dynamics. Brazil has adopted a global agenda for the protection of the Amazon, expanding opportunities to address problems and solutions at the pan-Amazon level³⁵. However, this will inevitably represent a challenge in terms of acquiring financing for the processes in **Colombia**, which has led to a call by several organisations for the Andean-Amazonian bloc of CSOs to advance joint fundraising. Partners of the program have developed, in the framework of the MTR and in response to this regional context, proposals and a clear agenda for joint work, both on issues of advocacy and strategic communications, as well as on gender and intersectionality. In the future, they also plan to jointly apply for international support based on the diversity and complementarity of their commitments.

Civic space across the EU is not in a good state. Civil society involvement in EU policy making remains insufficient, informal and fraught with obstacles. The EUDR, which has been in force since June 2023, was a milestone and a step in the right direction, however, the new legislation includes some weaknesses including adequate access to justice, the inclusion of finance and reparation and the protection of smallholders³⁶. To meet the drastic increase in demand for the materials policymakers have identified as being crucial for the EU's future prosperity and security, the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) will allow accelerated extraction permit processes which risks having major impact on forests and people in mining countries such as the DRC and Indonesia. The EC's draft proposal did not include crucial safeguards protecting nature and Indigenous peoples' rights.

³⁰GLA Annual Report 2022.

³¹UN 2023 Water Conference/Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³²https://www.gaiaamazonas.org/noticias/2023-04-19_la-alianza-noramazonica-pone-a-la-amazonia-en-el-centro-de-la-agenda-global-del-agua/

³³GLA Annual Report 2022.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵<https://www.gov.br/planalto/en/latest-news/brazil-announces-measures-to-expand-protection-of-the-amazon>

³⁶EUDR Policy dossier Report 2022.

Safety, security and repression

A central part of the FfJF ToC revolves around mitigating safety and security risks and stopping the repression of IP&LCs and civil society. In 2021, safety and security risks and repression hindered IP&LCs, (W)EHRDs and CSOs from taking action on environmental and human rights violations. The mitigation strategies laid out in our ToC and programme document remained therefore relevant and unchanged. Activities to protect (W) EHRDs and the civic space are described under Pathway C.

At the end of 2022, the FfJF carried out an internal baseline survey to get a more in-depth and nuanced overview of civic space in the countries and landscapes where the programme is implemented³⁷. The data was analysed in early 2023, also taking into account other external sources to complement the information gathered. The results from the survey and what is reported by the country teams in their annual reports, showed a further deterioration of civic space in many FfJF countries, while in some countries the situation remained the same. Further details can be found under Pathway C.

The latest Civicus survey ranked the **Philippines** as one of the more repressed civil societies in the Asia-Pacific region³⁸. Red tagging continued, especially in areas where people are opposing government projects. Security issues in both the northern and southern Sierra Madre have heightened, which made conducting fieldwork activities difficult. In the last quarter of 2022, there was a spike in killings of local officials and politicians in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) because of rising post-election political tensions and the division of Maguindanao province. FfJF partners have strengthened their security measures.

In **Uganda**, Hoima Sugar was licensed by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to plant sugar cane on 2,393 hectares of Bugoma CFR, a government gazetted forest. This was testimony to the growing pressure on forests and the ecosystem services provided to IP&LCs³⁹. FfJF CSO partners need to remain vigilant as the government

continues to push forward with the development of both the oil and gas refinery and the EACOP without FPIC to the Project Affected Persons (PAPs).

In **Colombia**, the emergence of new armed actors has led to intense conflicts for the control of strategic territories. This is reflected in the murders of social and environmental leaders, once again making Colombia the country with the highest number of killings of (W)EHRDs⁴⁰.

Meanwhile, the expected civic space benefits of the new Sacred Union of the Nation government have not materialised. Efforts by the General Inspectorate of Finance and the judiciary to track down and convict perpetrators of corruption were rendered futile in 2022 by judicial rulings that reflected a manipulation of judicial power. The political space has narrowed with the repression of public demonstrations, the arrest of rights activists and attacks on freedom of the press. Despite this, there is a great deal of activism by CSOs and citizen movements. As the security situation in and around Goma deteriorated because of the presence of the M23 rebel group, IUCN NL provided emergency funds to environmental defenders.

Also of concern are the negative developments in the **Netherlands** around the right to protest and increasingly severe action taken against climate protests linked to the government's fossil fuel subsidies.

The shrinking of civic space and insecurity go beyond the mitigation options that FfJF partners can provide. However, FfJF activities can reduce the impact of repression on CSOs and IP&LCs, and hopefully slow down the further deterioration of civic space. Strengthening national and international collaboration, lobbying and advocacy and monitoring of rights violations all contribute to this.

³⁷GLA Annual Report 2022.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹MTR Uganda workshop country report.

⁴⁰MTR Colombia workshop country report.

Covid-19

Restrictions related to Covid-19 continued throughout 2021. In most countries, these were gradually lifted over the course of the year, but the virus has had a lasting impact in many of the programme countries. It led to increased encroachment, land grabbing, biodiversity loss due to poaching, increased human-wildlife conflicts and deforestation, partly due to lack of monitoring. The economic impact of Covid-19 was also used to justify some projects and negatively impact others. The FfJF thematic programmes were extremely impacted by the pandemic. The plans to bring southern voices to international decision-making platforms and engage in international conferences or collaborations were impossible to conduct. However, alternatives were found such as delegating research to local researchers and online lobby and advocacy meetings. The economic hardship and restrictions caused by the pandemic also increased existing inequalities and conflicts and delayed essential policy processes.

While the Covid-19 crisis affected everyone, women and girls faced specific and often disproportionate economic, health and social risks due to deeply entrenched inequalities, social and cultural norms, and unequal power relations. It is estimated that the global effects of the pandemic have set women back 36 years on the road to equality. Furthermore, violence against women and girls intensified during and since the outbreak, with violent partners using confinement to further exercise power and control. At the same time, women had less income, fewer opportunities for social contact and limited access to services and community support, all of which resulted in fewer exit options. This left a legacy of power inequalities and violent relationships in many communities which are hard to eliminate.





EFFECTIVENESS

This section explores the extent to which the programme is achieving, or is on track to achieve, its objectives and targets. Progress and achievements are assessed against the programme's ToC and its pathways and the results framework. The facilitating and hindering factors are explored leading to the formulation of recommendations to enhance effectiveness.

4.1 Progress against Pathways - programmatic focus

4.1.1 Pathway A: Strengthening IP&LC governance over increased areas of forest

Introduction

The FfJF programme operates with a profound commitment to support IP&LCs in their endeavour to sustainably govern extensive forested areas. The recognition of IP&LCs as pivotal agents in climate change mitigation and adaptation forms the cornerstone of the programme's mission. These communities, often reliant on forests for their livelihoods, possess deep-rooted knowledge of sustainable forest management. However, their formal rights over these lands are frequently overlooked or disregarded, jeopardising both the forests and local livelihoods⁴¹.

The changing climate is already impacting the livelihoods of IP&LCs, as mentioned by some of those participating in MTR focus group discussions. For example, Mujeres Lomerio in **Bolivia** were concerned about the regular occurrence of frosts, droughts, deforestation, forest fires and a lack of water. These climatic changes have affected the agricultural activities in the region, making it difficult for the community members to grow crops. As a result, they have to rely on external sources for their food supply. In the **Philippines**, responses raised concerns about land grabbing, selling of ancestral lands and large-scale programmes with impacts on their communities and livelihoods. The respondents also expressed concerns about the impact of climate change on their livelihoods. They mentioned poor harvests, increased pests and changes in weather patterns. One respondent

explained: 'The climate has changed, resulting in poor harvests such as red pepper. There are many pests, like cutworms.' In **DRC**, IP&LCs expressed their frustration with the lack of involvement in the management of the Kahuzi Biega National Park and the neglect they feel from NGOs. The discussions highlighted their concerns about the conflicts with the park due to the lack of a place to live and cultivate the land. They mentioned that medicines, firewood and trees for building huts come from places where they are denied access.

In response to these concerns, the programme's multifaceted strategy revolves around empowering IP&LCs to advocate for themselves effectively. This involves not only ensuring legal recognition of their collective rights but also fostering an environment where IP&LCs can protect their territories against external threats. Legal frameworks are indispensable, providing the foundation for inclusive participation of IP&LCs and civil society in forest governance. The implementation and enforcement of these laws are paramount, bridging the gap between policy rhetoric and on the ground realities. Within its sphere of influence, the programme facilitates an active partnership between IP&LCs and CSOs. Together, one of the strategies they employ is to engage in vigilant monitoring, meticulously documenting any infringements of IP&LC rights. This approach holds both governmental bodies and private sector entities accountable for their actions. The comprehensive

⁴¹The programme acknowledges that IP&LCs are not homogenous and that action needs to be taken to ensure that all those, especially women and youth and other potentially marginalised groups who are forest-dependent or on whom deforestation and mitigating measures might impact, are included and able to have their voices heard.

documentation of deforestation and rights violations acts as a robust tool, exposing harmful practices by international companies. It serves not only as a means of reporting to public authorities but also as evidence in grievance mechanisms.

Crucially, the programme advocates for the active participation of IP&LCs in decision-making processes. It champions the establishment of institutionalised spaces where IP&LCs can engage meaningfully in multi-stakeholder dialogues. Collaboration with CSOs strengthens their collective voice, ensuring their interests are acknowledged and respected. This participation is not limited to the national level. The programme emphasises IP&LCs' involvement in international forums. Recognition of IP&LC-governed territories becomes essential, not only at the national level but also in global agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity. This acknowledgment reinforces the significant role IP&LCs play in forest and biodiversity conservation, as well as climate mitigation efforts on a global scale. Strengthening the livelihoods options for IP&LCs is a strategy employed by the programme.

Programme interventions seeks to achieve the following intermediate outcomes:

- IP&LCs and CSOs participate in monitoring and enforcement;
- IP&LCS including women and youth participate in decision-making processes;
- Multilateral bodies operationalise IP&LC-governed territories as contributing to forests and climate; and
- Governments recognise IP&LC interests at the national and international levels.

It is important to highlight that the ToC lacks a specific intermediate outcome statement on livelihoods. The MTR analysis assessed this outcome in line with the evidence.

4.1.2 Overview of achievements to date

Pathway A of the programme is **on track** based on the quantitative assessment of indicator targets but largely supported by the wealth of evidence demonstrating real progress towards the programme outcomes. There are examples of excellent innovations and achievements in each of the countries, even though partners have had many challenges to overcome in the past two years. Key areas for additional focus over the final two years include a greater focus on gender and youth equality, especially on young women, and the establishment of qualitative indicators/progress markers to assess progress and to complement the quantitative data in the monitoring framework.

The following section reviews progress against quantitative indicators under this pathway, followed by qualitative evidence of the achievements to date under stated outcomes. The box provides a summary of achievements to date against Pathway A indicators at midline.

Achievements to date against Pathway A indicators at midline

Result 1: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LCs) sustainably govern increased areas of forest

Indicator 1: Area of land (hectares) under improved sustainable forest management or other improved practices contributing to decreased deforestation

The FfJF programme has influenced an area of over 34 million hectares of forested landscapes, an increase of almost 5,000,000 hectares over baseline. Twenty-one percent of the area was targeted to improve ongoing practices, 15% to bring under IP&LC control while the remaining 64% as forest lands to be conserved.

Result 2: IP&LCs implementing gender inclusive and sustainable forest governance and livelihood strategies

Indicator 2a: Number of people (women, men, young men and young women) who are better prepared and/or supported to use improved sustainable practices and to participate in (local) governance

192,710 people (47,650 women, 122,850 men, 6,840 young women, 15,370 young men) are better prepared and/or were supported to use improved sustainable practices and to participate in (local) governance

Indicator 2b: Number of people (women, men, young men and young women) who practise (improved) sustainable activities and/or actively participate in (local) governance and thus experience increased adaptive capacity (resilience) to climate change

26,245 people (6,820 women, 12,830 men, 1,985 young women, 4,620 young men) practice (improved) sustainable activities and/or actively participate in (local) governance and thus experienced increased adaptive capacity (resilience) to climate change

Result 4: IP&LCs install inclusive governance structures and (local and national) authorities support sustainable IP&LC forest management

The GLA Alliance has contributed to 91 changes in policies and practices, contributing to governance structures and sustainable IP&LC forest management. Fifty-one out of 91 policy changes represent a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups

Result 8: IP&LCs, including women and youth, participate in decision-making processes, are an active part of the monitoring and enforcement bodies and their interests are recognized by governments at national and international level (also under Pathway C)

The GLA Alliance has contributed to a total of at least 140 spaces in which IP&LCs have increased participation. The groups that reported increased in these spaces were CSOs (19), community-based organizations (6), social movements (14), women's groups (32), indigenous communities (48) and local communities (21). (See the narrative in column H in the indicator table)

Result 9: Alliance members and partners strengthen their capacity

By mid 2023, as a result of efforts of the GLA programme at least 56 first ring partner have reported to increase their capacity in different topics and 111 second ring CBOs / CSO have been strengthened in capacity and skills to advocate effectively.

The FfJF programme indicators aim to measure changes in its aim of halting deforestation and promoting sustainable use of forest resources by forest dependent communities.

4.2 Increasing areas under sustainable forest governance

One of the indicators of change (indicator 1), measures the increase in the area of land (measured in hectares) under improved sustainable forest management or other improved practices in the tropical forest landscapes where the partners operate. This includes three categories of land use: areas under sustainable land use practices; areas under IP&LC governance; and areas with protective measures against deforestation.

As an impact indicator, indicator 1 is beyond the programme’s control. It is, however, of interest because programme activities are geared towards contributing to this goal. The indicator is also challenging to measure accurately, even with the assistance of satellite, because it assumes that the forest landscapes in which partners work can be precisely measured. Moreover, the contexts in which GLA partners work and IP&LCs live vary from country to country and landscape to landscape. It also varies over time depending on the various changing contexts. Moreover, not all partners work on increasing the area but focus instead on creating or strengthening the enabling conditions for inclusive and sustainable forest governance and improving IP&LC governance, equity and sustainable land use in forested landscapes.

Consequently, while this measure provides an indication of progress towards some elements of the programme, it should not be seen as an absolute measure of the programme’s success. The baseline identified that, at the start of the programme, approximately 29 million hectares of land in the areas where the partners work was subject to varied ways of sustainable forest management and/or under the governance of IP&LC and that nearly 19 million hectares, or 65% of the total, were forested areas with some form of protective measures against deforestation.

The baseline highlighted that a significant portion of the forested area with protective measures against deforestation was governed by IP&LCs, accounting for 13.6 million hectares. Additionally, the public sector governed 4.9 million hectares out of the total 5,326,000 hectares. This indicated that, even at that time, both IP&LCs and the public sector played crucial roles in managing and protecting these forested areas.

As shown in Table 4, at baseline, the forested areas were 29,005,000 hectares and the target agreed for the end of programme is 42,910,000 hectares, so the MTR measure of 34,066,400 hectares is well on track.

Table 4: Progress at MTR

ToC result area	Indicator	Baseline	MTR	Target
IP&LCs sustainably govern increased areas of forest	Area of land (hectares) under improved sustainable forest management or other improved practices contributing to decreased deforestation	29,005,000 hectares	34,066,400 hectares	42,910,000 hectares

In a survey of all programme partners (see chart 2), seven percent of the 94 respondents indicated that significant progress had been made in increasing forested land under IP&LC control since the programme began. A further 71% said that some progress had been made.

Perceived progress in terms of areas under IP&LC control

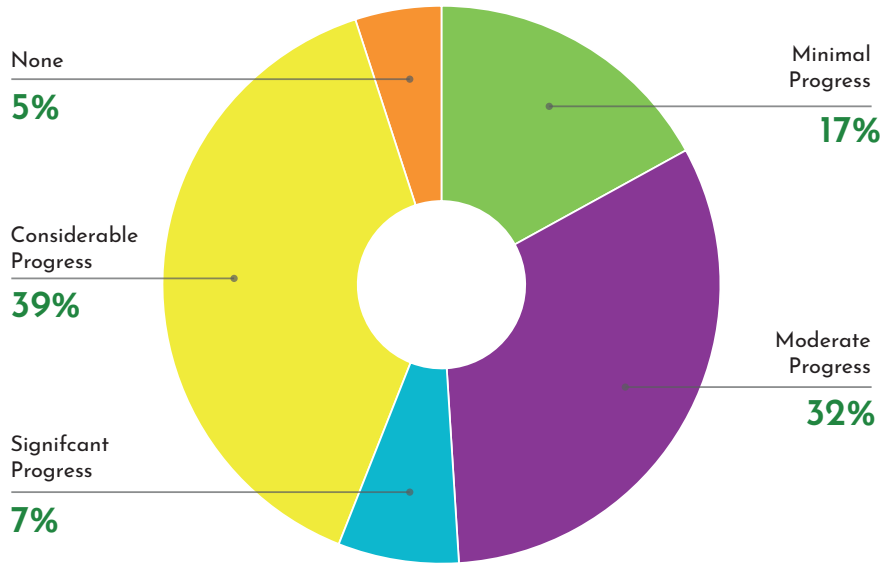


Figure 2: Perceived progress in terms of areas under IP&LC control

Source: Online survey - N=95

4.2.1 Enhancing IP&LCs’ land governance and claiming their rights

Significant progress has been made over the past two years to strengthen IP&LCs’ governance over their lands and in claiming their rights (indicator 2a). Through the support and guidance of GLA partners, IP&LCs have acquired formal land rights, established community governance structures and implemented sustainable land management practices. These achievements have empowered IP&LCs and contributed to their self-determination and sustainable development.

In a survey of all GLA partners, the majority of respondents indicated that IP&LCs had been strengthened to govern their lands with just two percent indicating that no progress had been made (see figure 3).

Perception regarding IP&LCs’ strengthened ability to govern their land

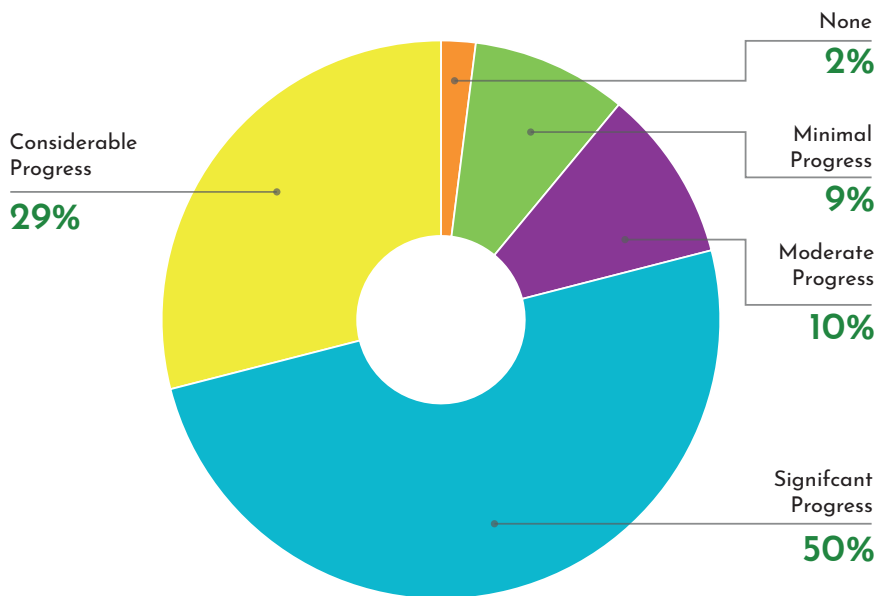


Figure 3: Perceptions regarding IP&LCs’ strengthened ability to govern their land

Source: Online survey - N=99

In all 11 partner countries, there were many examples of the progress that has been made, as highlighted in the 2021 and 2022 annual reports and project connect data in 2023.

For example, In **Liberia**, seven communities formalised and adopted their community by-laws on land management, and the Liberia Land Authority validated their community self-identification. By law, women now have equal representation in all governance bodies of the land management, thereby promoting a gender transformative approach. This legal requirement was obtained after decades of campaigning by SDI in a coalition with Liberian and international NGOs including the CRDD programme. In **DRC**, 13 local community forest concession titles were granted, providing the legal grounds to collectively govern their resources and secure tenure over their lands. In **Indonesia**, Indigenous community-conserved areas were registered and social forestry approvals were acquired.

In the **Philippines**, Indigenous people formulated and adopted their ancestral domain sustainable development and protection plans, and local government units formally adopted these plans. An indigenous youth from Northern Mindanao (Philippines) said, 'our elders have protected and preserved the ancestral lands and the forests for us. It is just right that the youth take part in whatever small way we can in the management of the forest. The future is still uncertain, but it depends on how the forest is managed in the present. If we take care of our forest properly, our situation in the future will likely be favorable'. She added that the FfJF programme is shaping the youth and molding their confidence.

Progress has also been made in ensuring the formal recognition and rights of IP&LCs to manage their

land. In **Cameroon**, support was expressed for the recognition and protection of collective land rights. In **Bolivia**, management committees of protected areas were legally consolidated⁴². In **Colombia**, Indigenous territories have advanced in their formal recognition as territorial entities (municipalities) as part of the state structure in the Colombian government. This recognition gives autonomy and tools to the Indigenous local government to coordinate actions with the departmental governments and the national government without intermediaries. Interviews with external key informants in Colombia emphasised the importance of contributing to the strengthening of Indigenous and rural communities in a way that builds their autonomy and strengthens independence processes based on their own forms of government, in order that they are more effective in defending and governing their forest landscapes.

In order for the landscapes to be sustainably managed and to address equity and human rights issues, there is a need to take action to ensure that all those living within the landscape, especially the most forest-dependent, are included in discussions and decision making in local governance structures, as expressed in all focus group discussions with IP&LCs. This requires action to address inequalities and enable women, youth and those with intersectional constraints to effectively participate in any local governance structures and to benefit from the process. If such action is not taken, opportunities for greater inclusion and addressing inequality may be lost and the crucial knowledge and experience and future potential of forest dependent women and young men and young women may be lost. Despite the achievements outlined above, the quantitative data provided by the programme and shown in the tables raises a number of questions in terms of the efforts to tackle inequality.

Table 5 shows that by midline the GLA programme had reached more than 192,000 people in the various landscapes and countries. This number included a large number of men (122,850), which already surpassed the end of programme target of 87,600. On the other hand, the programme still needs to work towards reaching the targeted number of women and young men and young women.

⁴²Consolidated Annual Reports 2021 and 2022.

Table 5: Quantitative results for indicator 2a (number of people who are better prepared and/or supported to use improved sustainable practices and to participate in governance)

Progress	Women	Men	Young Women	Young Men	Total
Baseline	0	0	0	0	0
Midline	47,650	122,850	6,840	15,370	192,720
Target	89,100	87,600	32,000	31,700	240,400
% towards target	53%	140%	21%	48%	80%

However, the data needs to be read with some caution as there is likely to be some double counting because in some cases the same group may have received support from different interventions. Furthermore, the midline reported across 11 countries and the combined data hides country differences. For example, the country analysis showed that some countries such as Colombia and Liberia were already making a significant difference, while others have further to go on the equality journey, as shown in Table 6. **Cameroon and Viet Nam** appear to have done extremely well in this area, but there is a need to explore further how the calculations were made, to learn from the strategies employed and possibly amend the targets. This is one area in which greater opportunities for learning across countries would be extremely beneficial.

Table 6: Percentage towards target

Countries	Women	Men	Young Women	Young Men
Bolivia	73%	148%	37%	42%
Cameroon	183%	150%	0	0
Colombia	68%	52%	88%	43%
DRC	36%	33%	36%	42%
Ghana	35%	33%	4%	15%
Indonesia	23%	48%	80%	73%
Liberia	28%	23%	28%	22%
Malaysia	35%	75%	57%	49%
Philippines	62%	99%	42%	49%
Uganda	98%	201%	11%	57%
Viet Nam	185%	184%	230%	193%

The FfJF has targeted women and youth and aims to increase their effective participation in forest governance. The programme was designed to be gender just/gender transformative, which would mean a prioritisation of previously under-represented groups (those who currently participate less); addressing gender inequalities and power inequalities based on other intersecting identities such as age or indigenous status; and provision of a greater proportion of resources (funding, time, effort and attention) for activities to support those groups, especially women and young women. It would also mean working with local authorities and other landscape actors to proactively overcome gender inequalities and practices that constrain women's and youth's participation in training and forest governance activities.

A gender transformative approach would involve more activities, resources and support provided to women and youth (especially young women)⁴³. Yet, the quantitative data currently shows that across the programme, while more than 50% of the targeted women have been supported on livelihoods, men had a significantly greater level of programme support than women. Young men gained more than young women. Bringing about changes to deeply embedded inequalities takes time, reflection and learning, but it also needs proactivity, resources and prioritisation. For those countries that have further to go in the equality journey, this data provides a target for endline and an opportunity to demonstrate the programme's overall impact on inequalities in the forested landscapes.

Table 7: Percentage of groups supported at midline against targets set

Percentage of groups supported	Women	Men	Young Women	Young Men	Total
Target % of all persons supported	37%	37%	13%	13%	100%
% of those reached at midline	25%	64%	3%	8%	100%

Table 7 further illustrates the importance of addressing inequality, as it shows the benefits accrued to participation in the programme. Of particular concern is the disparity in access to improved income and food security, in which men benefit three times as much as women. Table 8 highlights the distribution of potential benefits amongst different gender groups.

Table 8: Potential benefits from programme participation

Indicator 2a summary table per potential benefit	Target				MTR progress			
	Women	Men	Young women	Young men	Women	Men	Young women	Young men
Improved access to resources	53,519	72,579	7,626	19,430	15,088	37,564	5,610	13,483
Improved capacity to participate in management and governance processes	54,051	72,579	20,451	23,309	15,862	38,468	5,978	13,914
Improved income	19,445	44,169	7,626	12,417	10,739	31,779	4,766	11,794
Improved food security	45,847	61,105	17,890	19,430	11,358	32,126	3,708	11,494
Total	172,862	250,432	53,593	74,586	53,047	139,937	20,062	50,684

⁴³The MTR acknowledges that equity does not necessarily equalize the numbers, as increasing the number of women in politically privileged spaces by the non-indigenous world could create an imbalance leading to inequality from a cultural perspective. This is because specific cultural spaces for each gender might be neglected.

This quantitative data needs to be read with caution as it is at odds with many of the qualitative examples received. However, it is currently the only objective measure in the programme monitoring framework, which is the crucial measure against which the overall programme is likely to be judged. It is recommended that GLA agrees to add additional qualitative progress indicators or markers to the indicator framework for Result 2. These qualitative progress markers should be developed at a global level but each country could develop its own set based on the specific context.

Overall, the programme has employed a multifaceted approach to empower IP&LCs in governing and claiming their lands. Key strategies included the formalisation of land rights and the establishment of community forest governance structures such as community forests, as evidenced by the legal advancements made in **Liberia and**

the DRC. Capacity building is another pillar, helping communities to engage in sustainable land management practices and resource management, such as the forest land allocation processes initiated in **Viet Nam** and the collaborative forest management agreements in **Uganda**. Advocacy for the legal recognition and consolidation of indigenous territories and management committees, as seen in Colombia and Bolivia respectively, proved successful. As recommended by KIIs and IP&LC participants in the focus group discussions, the programme needs to maintain focus to ensure that these gains are secured and that communities effectively exercise their rights. The MTR team concurs that efforts to include marginalised groups, such as women and youth, in governance processes while addressing inequalities and promoting inclusive participation could be further enhanced considering the quantitative data reported.

4.2.2 Strengthening gender inclusive, sustainable forest governance and livelihoods

To strengthen IP&LC forest governance and improve livelihood strategies, the programme partners, local authorities and other landscape actors provided support to IP&LCs for gender inclusive, sustainable forest management. The assumption was that when people are better prepared and/or supported to use improved and sustainable practices and to participate in governance (indicator 2a) many of them will adopt more sustainable practices or become directly involved in (local) governance processes in their landscape (impact indicator 2b)⁴⁴. Support from the programme included capacity strengthening for all IP&LC members, improving IP&LCs' access to finance and support for monitoring and rights enforcement. In some situations, IP&LCs have also been supported to identify and implement sustainable livelihoods. The programme has also supported and financed low-carbon sustainable forest management projects including agroecology models, non-timber forest product enterprises, developing just energy transition alternatives, and the protection of sacred sites and Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs).

Indicator 2b focuses on IP&LC members practising more sustainable livelihood strategies as well as their involvement in decision making. Improved livelihoods have many positive side effects in terms of social cohesion, resilience and (women's) empowerment. This is particularly true if action is taken to address unequal gender relations and unequal access to resources and decision making.

Table 9: Quantitative results for indicator 2b (number of people who practise sustainable livelihoods and/or actively participate in local governance)

Progress	Women	Men	Young Women	Young Men	Total
Baseline	4,600	9,900	1,050	1,800	27,350
Midline	6,810	12,820	1,975	4,620	26,225
Target	15,300	19,200	4,600	5,200	44,300
% towards target	45%	67%	43%	89%	59%

⁴⁴While there is an assumption that improved sustainable management practices would result from the programmes intervention, in many communities IPLCs actions are not conditioned by increasing their capacities (indicator 2a) but through application of traditional knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems

Of the 122,850 men (indicator 2a) who have been provided with support, about 10% (26,225) have reported effectively practising sustainable agriculture, as well as being empowered and participating in forest governance. In interviews and focus group discussions, some recipients of support or capacity strengthening on livelihoods practices explained how valuable they found it.

Perspectives of program participants regarding the value of GLA Programme support

"GLA supported us in a water recharge study. The community members are becoming aware. They are supporting reforestation with almond and citrus seedlings." (Young woman, Bolivia)

"The trainings that we attended helped us understand the laws related to IPs and the environment. We were able to file a case/complaint against NCIP for violations in the conduct of FPIC. This was dismissed by the NCIP but we were able to file an appeal in the Court of Appeals." (Man, Sierra-Madre landscape, Philippines)

"As we participate in the workshops we have new knowledge even on the subject of gender, because we must bear in mind that in the future, we can be leaders in our communities or in the territory." (Young man, Agwara de Guarayos, Bolivia)

"The integration of trees in our cocoa farms has been widely accepted by farmers. Lobbying and advocacy training for women in the landscape on the gender dialogue platform has really helped build their capacities and now can make their voices heard on issues that are of interest to them." (Woman, Ghana)

"I feel a change in myself when I express my opinions in the discussion about our forests." (Young woman, Indonesia)

"I participated in consultations and decision making related to mining. I participated in the Information education communication, barricade against mining. It is important to attend these activities to know and understand what should be done and the importance of the environment." (Young man, Palawan, Philippines)

However, some partners expressed concern that insufficient action was taken to first understand the local context and the capacity of local farmers. 'Training farmers to practice agroforestry and recommending the integration of trees on their farm will not necessarily result in farmers keeping trees on their farms because they do not have the resources to do so,' said one respondent. In another example a female subsistence farmer from Bolivia said: 'In Lomerío we apply ancestral knowledge according to the life cycles of nature and the time of year. Regarding agricultural practices in the Chaco, as women they did not train us. Training in orchards is there for anyone in the communities that work with them.'

Notwithstanding the skew in the data towards men, there has been a demonstrable increase in livelihood strategies aligned with sustainable forest management over the past two years. In **Malaysia**, local communities initiated an eco-tourism project and established a local project management committee. These examples indicated that IP&LCs have strengthened their capacity to self-organise and implement sustainable forest governance and livelihood strategies. Furthermore, the youth and

women of Long Meraan established community-based non-timber forest product enterprises (CBNE) as a livelihood through conservation, rehabilitation and farming activities. During the lockdown in 2021, NTFP-EP Malaysia was able to deliver vegetable seeds to the IP&LCs, which became their main source of food during the restrictions on movement. Some of the women began to sell their crops to fellow villagers in 2022 and are motivated to continue gardening not only for themselves but also to earn extra income for their family. In August 2022, the women initiated a community garden which showed a growth in confidence and enabled women to have a space where they are free and comfortable to share ideas.

In **Viet Nam**, CBNEs and IP&LCs gained better knowledge and skills in sustainable production and business operations thanks to a number of national and international training and exposure events. As a result, IP&LCs can produce and sell more and higher quality forest-originated products to the market. This contributes to improving their livelihoods with climate smart, forest-friendly livelihood options, reducing pressure on forest resources and improving the deforestation situation. A network called

CBNE Viet Nam was established with the initial participation of 22 CBNEs from nine provinces. The development and sharp increase of CBNEs in 2022 was remarkable and brought new energy into the communities, especially to young people and women. There is high potential to use non-timber forest products to improve local livelihoods, forest-friendly production and forest conservation and revitalising the local culture which had eroded in the current socio-economic development context.

In **DRC**, 25 households in Bukoma were supported in the implementation of climate-resilient agricultural practices, including agroforestry, mulching, row seeding and using organic fertiliser. This group passed on their knowledge to 125 other households which are now applying drought-resilient techniques in their fields, which has increased their production by 20% to 60%. Also, a beekeeping cooperative in Kanyabayonga was legally registered in 2022 and supports its members with the marketing of their products, contributing to the improvement of their income and the protection of forests for the survival of bees. During focus group discussions in DRC, farmers appreciated the contribution of the programme, while requesting further support to enable them to consolidate and scale up their activities. This included requests for more training and access to productive inputs and market access.

In the **Philippines**, farmers report changes improvements in their communities as a result of the programme's interventions. 'I can see the change because of the impact of the program. Before you can see that only grass grows in our ancestral lands. Now, you can visit the farms and you will see coconut trees growing, instead of grass. I see that this

kind of programs can definitely help us. There are also different ideas that can help sustain the sulagad (agroecological) system and farming', said the farmer from Maguindanao del Norte, Philippines. In **Ghana**, in Juaboso-Bia, cocoa farmers expanded agroforestry practices to about 400 hectares of cocoa lands between May and August 2022 and trees have been integrated in 719.96 hectares of farmlands in the Atewa landscape. In **Uganda**, IP&LCs have embraced forest based enterprises (FBEs), with four CFM groups actively participating in bee keeping and two registered women's associations taking part in commercial tree nurseries to boost their incomes. Women have also joined the male-dominated community forest patrols to support the protection of forest resources from abuse by lumber companies and charcoal burners.

The assumption here is that if communities adopt and practice sustainable livelihoods, then they will reduce their impacts on forests and contribute to their protection and preservation. National implementing partners promote the livelihoods options which they consider promising. However, there is no consistency in the nature of the support provided. Additionally, the demand for livelihood support is far greater than the technical and financial resources available for national CSO partners to respond to the needs on the ground. Consequently, harmonising the approach to livelihood support throughout the alliance and allocating sufficient resources would enhance the impact of the intervention in targeted landscapes. In programme countries, livelihood support to communities is as important as other advocacy actions geared towards improving the institutions governing the management of forests.

4.2.3 Progressing gender and inclusivity

The successful inclusion of marginalised groups and achieving gender equality, especially in decision-making processes, are core objectives of the GLA ToC. The GLA is dedicated to the empowerment of local and indigenous communities in forested landscapes, especially women and youth. These groups are strongly dependent on the forest and their engagement and knowledge is essential for long-term sustainability, yet they are often underrepresented or excluded from decision-making processes. Such groups include Indigenous people, smallholders and women.

During the MTR global meeting, CSO partners demonstrated how they contribute to making the voice of excluded groups heard and how they enable excluded groups to address the root causes of their exclusion through empowerment and capacity development. This was evidenced by many examples in which CSO partners successfully achieved the inclusion of underrepresented groups in decision-making bodies, and in the formulation and implementation of inclusive laws, policies and practices that address concerns of marginalised groups. Examples include **Liberia** (Land Rights Act), Viet Nam (revised Forest Law) and the Philippines (ICCA Bill, Bangsamoro Organic Law). In **Indonesia, the Philippines, Ghana, Cameroon and Liberia**, the CRDD thematic programme has facilitated indigenous and local people to become forest monitors, reporting on illegal logging and discouraging unsustainable practices. In **Asia**, the ASEAN Guidelines on Recognition of Customary Tenure in Forested Landscapes has adopted a specific principle on the Right to Equitable and

Sustainable Involvement of Women (Principle 4).

This emphasises the need for countries to implement and use the guidelines and to take active measures to ensure women are meaningfully able to engage, participate and, where possible, lead processes to secure customary tenure rights at all levels of decision making, management and planning. It also emphasises the need for countries to collectively integrate inclusive gender perspectives and intersectionality in the design, approval, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes for the recognition of customary tenure.

This section has already outlined some of the challenges and opportunities that the final years of the programme will face. Local IP&LCs, especially women and youth, are primary stakeholders or active participants in this programme. Indeed, the programme outcome is dependent on their changed behaviours and practices such as their increased participation in decision making and protection of forests and developing and maintaining sustainable agricultural practices. At baseline, limited consultations were conducted with communities because of Covid-19 restrictions and methodological considerations, although, for example, in some Asian countries, they are at partner level. Their voices have been included in this MTR to a limited extent in the most cost-effective way possible but we recommend that their views be sought and their voices included more fully in future monitoring and reviews.

Ensuring inclusivity of governance structures and the full and meaningful participation of all forest-dependent community members, especially women and youth, is a key priority in all countries. In almost all countries, partners have taken some action to reduce the gender gap and exclusionary practices. Capacity strengthening and the empowerment of women and youth are key strategies. Because social norms may currently constrain their confidence to speak up in mixed groups, a number of partners have established discrete women-only and female and male youth-only groups to ensure that their voices are heard and listened to.

In **Liberia**, Article 36 (Governance and Management of the Land Rights Act 2018) dictates the need for inclusive community land development and management committees (CLDMCs) comprising of men, women and youth. Therefore, special educational sessions for women and youth groups, women-only by-law drafting meetings and motivation and leadership training have been provided by the programme.

In **Indonesia**, a network of women's champions has been formed in seven GLA model villages in

Ketapang, West Kalimantan, after feminist participatory action research (FPAR). The FPAR modules were developed and facilitated in all Indonesian landscapes by the gender technical partners (the Indonesian gender team composed of Aksil, Solidaritas Perempuan and Yakkum Emergency Unit). The trained women led the transformation in their respective villages, including by actively encouraging other women to be more courageous in expressing their opinions at village meetings and documenting the transformation of women that took place in their own village.

In **Bolivia**, IBIF and SAVIA contributed to the establishment of 10 youth groups, consisting of 200 young people who take action against threats to their territories. The Monkox Indigenous women's organisation of Lomerío (organised with the support of IBIF) decided to become an autonomous organisation with its own vision and management. It has the support and recognition of the Indigenous headquarters of the original communities of Lomerío (CICOL).

In **Ghana**, GLA supported the Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) of Atewa and Ayensuano districts to develop constitutions, management plans and governance instruments that ensured inclusivity (result 4). The community partners said that through the trainings and continuous interaction with the community of Tropenbos Ghana, their community has seen changes. Their degraded forest reserves are now being replanted with the involvement of the communities through the modified taungya system (MTS). The community was educated on the effects of galamsey (small scale gold mining) and because of that they are now unwilling to sell away their farmlands. The widespread galamsey practice has been reduced in the area.

Further details can be found in the section on inclusion, gender and youth.

The strategies outlined above and many other good practice examples now need to be maximised, upscaled, more fully shared amongst partners and Alliance members and adapted by partners for the different contexts. This will mean greater prioritisation and realignment of budgets to ensure that such activities are sufficiently resourced. There is also a need for partners to work more with Indigenous leaders and men to help them understand and better support women's and youth's involvement. It will also require partners to listen more to the voices of all the different community members, especially those receiving less benefit from the programme, and to analyse more deeply why this is the case. For example, if women are not attending capacity

building workshops, why? Is the topic not relevant to their day to day lives? Is the timing not appropriate for them? Do they need childcare? Are there cultural reasons for their non-attendance? Gender analyses were conducted in most countries at the start of the programme. It is recommended that gender and inclusion/intersectionality analysis be undertaken in landscapes at regular intervals. This does not necessarily need to be a large-scale, expensive operation but could be a simple set of questions relating to who participates and who does not; the barriers to their participation; and what could be done to address this.

4.2.4 Strengthening policies and practices for IP&LCs to sustainably govern their lands

Since the baseline, the programme has contributed to 91 changes in policies and practices contributing to governance structures and sustainable IP&LC forest management. Forty-nine of the changes in policies have been implemented or adopted. Twelve changes resulted in the blocking of a negative policy. Fifty-one of the changes represented a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups.

Fifty-four of the 91 policies depicted a change in IP&LC inclusive governance structures, while others were changes in multistakeholder settings or general government structures. Continuous effort by the GLA could potentially lead to several changes in one policy across multiple years. Examples of policy/legal changes were also identified. For example, in the **Philippines** on April 11, 2023, the Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples' (NMIP) Code was submitted to the Bangsamoro parliament. This was a bold move given that NMIP rights issues are not always prioritised by local governments.

In the **DRC** the National Ministry of Land Affairs, through the National Land Reform Commission, validated and adopted in the Council of Ministers the preliminary draft law modifying and supplementing the law relating to the general regime of property, land and real estate and security.

In **Asia**, the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry formally adopted the ASEAN Guidelines

on Recognition of Customary Tenure in Forested Landscapes during their 44th meeting on October 26, 2022 in Lao PDR. Prior to the adoption of the guidelines, there was no specific policy framework at the ASEAN regional level dealing with the recognition of customary tenure. This caused problems for IP&LCs who often had to contend with domestic state-level laws that were not fully aligned with the diverse and complex land use practices of IP&LCs. The need for guidelines on customary forest tenure recognition arose in response to clear gaps, contradictory national positions towards Indigenous and local knowledge, systems and practices, inadequate implementation and the need to enhance forest governance in ways that promote existing forest stewardship, biocultural diversity and sustainable practices. Aside from government offices and policymakers, the guidelines are also intended to be used as a reference by the private sector, civil society and academic institutions implementing activities, research or development on the customary lands and territories of IP&LCs as well as their natural resources.

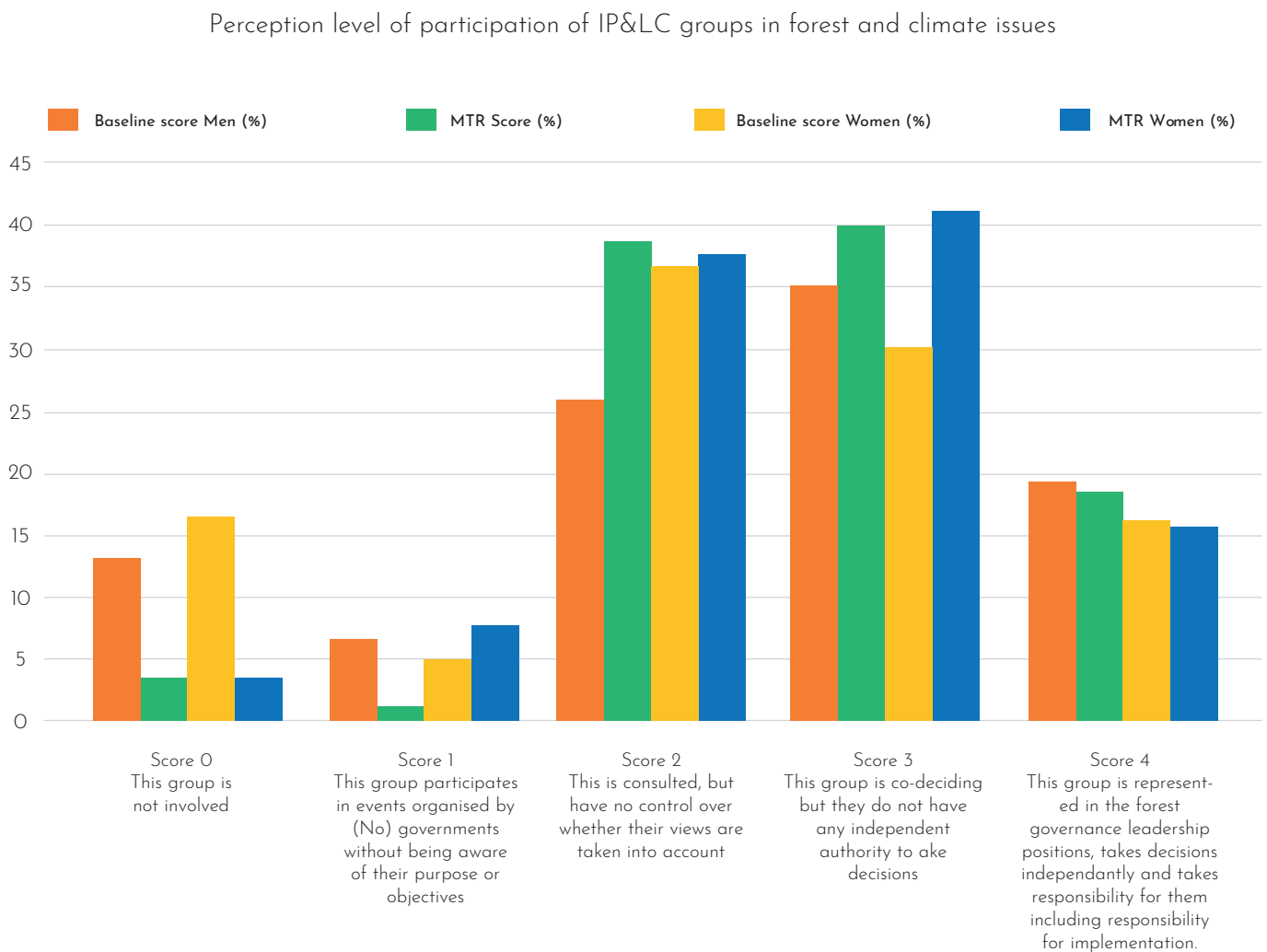
The changes reported here are often the result of multiple interventions including the contribution of GLA partners. In the cases presented here, partners provided support to the policy processes through mobilising and convening actors, reviewing and debating policy proposals and ensuring that their concerns and those of communities they represent were taken into consideration. As shown in the Philippines, engagement with allies such as parliamentarians and law makers is crucial to champion the voices of communities.

4.2.5 Improving participation in monitoring and enforcement and in decision making

The GLA alliance has contributed to a minimum of 140 spaces in which IP&LCs have increased participation. The groups that reported an increase were CSOs (19), community-based organisations (6), social movements (14), women's groups (32), Indigenous communities (48) and local communities (21).

The survey of GLA partners also assessed the level of participation of IP&LCs in decision making since the start of the programme. The results in figure 4 show that IP&LCs are increasingly being consulted in decision-making processes on forests and climate. This can be seen in the reductions in score 1 and the perceived increases in scores 2 and 3 compared to the baseline.

Figure 4: Perception of level of participation of IP&LC groups in forest and climate issues



This result shows a qualitative improvement in the participation of male and female IP&LCs in decision making in the project’s areas of intervention. The figure also shows a consistent improvement in the participation of women in decision-making processes that concern them. When the data is further disaggregated, it also shows a significant increase in the participation of young men⁴⁵ on issues of forest and climate. The indigenous youth from Palawan (Philippines) said that through FfJF programme, they attended various trainings on lobby and advocacy, leadership, organizational development, public speaking, environmental laws, and indigenous rights. They were also able to participate in youth camps in the **Philippines and in Malaysia**. While their participation is still limited especially when it comes to tribal issues, they said they are now invited to participate in forest management meetings and in the development of their ADSDPP (ancestral domain plan). The indigenous youth are also now involved in Local Government planning as members

of the Municipal Planning and Development Councils (MPDC) and various local special bodies.

These results demonstrate that the programme is contributing to increased participation of various IP&LCs at high levels of decision making. This further strengthens the relevance of the programme and draws attention to the need to remain focused and mobilise the resources and tools needed by IP&LC leaders to translate decisions into realities on the ground. This includes, for instance, alternative livelihood options and clean energy transition options. It also demonstrates the need for the programme to continue to engage with decision makers, so that decisions taken can be delivered in an inclusive manner and communities can benefit from the outcomes of their actions⁴⁶. It is important to also highlight that in some contexts, exercising autonomy is to continue to live based on existing knowledge systems and current livelihood options. In such contexts such as those in which Gaia

⁴⁵The data is combined for women and young women.

⁴⁶This is a key challenge as data from the MTR showed a disparity in the actual benefits derived by men, women, young men and women from the programme’s intervention (see table 5-6).

operates in Colombia, the linear perspective where increased participation spaces translate into autonomy and sustainable livelihoods being implemented, is not always the reality. In these contexts, sustainable livelihoods are implemented and exercised based on cultural knowledge systems and practices (which is an expression of autonomy). The participation spaces recognise these as being legitimate ways of governing their lands. Consequently, more participation spaces are not a prerequisite for sustainable livelihoods to be applied.

The programme aims to increase the level of influence or participation in decision making by IP&LCs in more processes, especially at the national and international level. The GLA alliance has contributed to a total of 140 spaces in which IP&LCs have increased participation. The groups that reported an increase in these spaces were CSOs (19), community-based organisations (6), social movements (14), women's groups (32), Indigenous communities (48) and local communities (21). In all countries, community monitors have been trained and supported with important results.

In **Uganda**, illegal settlements were discovered inside Zoka central forest reserve. Local community members successfully demanded the responsible agency demolish the structures and evict the illegal settlers. In **Ghana**, the forest services division of the Forestry Commission responded to reports by community monitors by arresting over 40 people in the Western North region. Four illegal forest operators were given jail sentences, while the others were fined.

In **Liberia**, communities strengthened their land rights through the establishment of land governing bodies. The Community Rights Support Facility (CRSF) facilitated the organisation of seven community land governance committees, as requested in the 2018 Land Rights Act, to represent the interest of their communities in the use and management of their customary lands. This committee is called the Community Land and Management Committee (CLDMC) with equal representation of 10 men and 10 women (including

youth). The seven committees also formalised and adopted their community bylaws on the management and use of their lands.

In the **Philippines**, the programme interventions have contributed to reduce illegal artisanal logging in target landscapes. A leader from Maguindanao del Norte said, 'No one is using chainsaws (to cut trees). Before, locals used to operate using the machine but we talked to them by holding meetings. Before, people outside the community would cut trees but now I can tell that they have stopped. No one is cutting trees anymore'.

In **Ghana, Liberia, Cameroon, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Ivory Coast and Uganda**, community members have been trained to use the This is MY Back Yard (TIMBY) app⁴⁷ to record and report on forest violations, including from the mining sector, water pollution and sexual harassment. The app can record visual, written and oral evidence which can be uploaded to the dashboard. It uses GPS to pinpoint exactly where the violation occurred. At the end of each month, the entries are analysed, and a newsletter published. Partners report that this gives them the evidence for advocacy and legal challenges. In 2022, hundreds of reports were sent by local forest monitors to Friend of the Earth groups in **the Philippines, Liberia, Cameroon and Ghana**.

Civil society-led independent forest monitoring is a tested approach for improving transparency and holding those in power to account. The publication of reports draws the attention of citizens and interested parties to the challenges facing the governance of natural resources. However, in most cases, the recommendations for sanctions are not taken up by relevant law enforcement agencies, which limits the potential impact of the approach. Combining the publication of independent forest monitoring reports, engagement with the judiciary and advocacy for stronger law enforcement could help strengthen its impact on the ground.

⁴⁷See example of training for Liberia - https://www.linkedin.com/posts/sustainable-development-institute-sdi_milieudefensiefriendsoftheearthnetherlands-activity-7036290267456368640-YZz1?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android

4.2.6 Ensuring that governments and multilateral bodies recognise IP&LCs

Under Pathway A, the programme worked on two relevant international policy dossiers to ensure IP&LCs' participation in these policy processes and to include support for sustainable, inclusive forest management. For further details please see the separate report on the policy dossiers.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

After three years of negotiations, one of the highlights of 2022, was the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework (GBF) that was adopted at the UN CBD CoP15 (December 2022), with 23 goals including specific self-standing gender targets aimed at halting global biodiversity loss and restoring biodiversity by 2030. Many GLA partners contributed to the advocacy and lobbying process at national and global levels, in particular to gain recognition about the importance of local ownership and governance, the role of IP&LCs in reaching biodiversity targets, and of indigenous territories as management units which contribute directly to biodiversity protection in area-based targets.

Part of the Alliance's efforts were also to resist corporate capture in the CBD.

Resisting corporate capture in the CBD

In response to increasing evidence of corporate capture and influence in many aspects of the CBD process and the Global Biodiversity Framework, FoEI initiated a campaign to address this specifically. FoEI commissioned research to analyse and expose the strategies companies are using to lobby for their interests and for inclusion of green-washing proposals such as nature positive, nature-based solutions, no net loss/net gain and self-reporting over binding regulation. The report "The Nature of Business" was launched on December 5 in advance of the CBD COP. It received attention from civil society and in the media. Articles on the report were published in Devex in the US, in Le Monde in France and in El Salto in Spain. FoEI also received many requests for interviews. The campaign was successful in raising awareness from parties at the COP and contributed to some positive changes in the final text.

As part of ICCA Consortium, NTFP-EP contributed statements demonstrating how the targets for community-based conservation initiatives (ICCAs) can be used to address IP&LCs' rights and contributions to conservation. Various contribution papers and conferences drew global attention towards the goals promoted by members of the alliance. Gaia mobilised the North Amazon Alliance, and through collective messaging helped to position the Amazon area as a crucial region for biodiversity and the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). This helped member CSOs and Indigenous organisations in Amazonian countries to voice an Amazonian perspective towards the GBF, informing the negotiations from their perspective and achieving the recognition of Indigenous territories as management units which contribute to biodiversity protection. This opens the door to an innovative conservation paradigm in the hands of indigenous peoples. As part of a diverse portfolio of advocacy tactics and strategies, Gaia Amazonas participated in the GBF negotiations of the Convention on Biological Diversity at COP15 and in the 2023 UN Water Conference, with a side event highlighting the role of Indigenous people and their knowledge systems.

UNFCCC and nationally determined contributions (NDCs)

FfJF aimed to strengthen the recognition and position of IP&LCs, women and youth in the discussion, design and implementation of climate action, in particular in relation to the NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPS) which are the main instruments guiding climate action in the countries where we work. Activities included strengthening the capacities of IP&LCs, women and youth groups to participate in national and international discussions on climate action (Result 8).

The November 2022 UNFCCC CoP27 in Egypt took place in a context of civil society repression and threats to activists, and with high presence from fossil fuel representatives. It was therefore all the more important that CSOs and representatives of IP&LCs were present and heard. GLA partners organised many activities and events including a press conference on moving towards rights-based and gender transformative solutions to climate change to examine false solutions to climate change connected to the discussions. Panellists from Africa, Asia and Latin America participated in the press conference. WECF and the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) lobbied for climate-damaging activities to be redirected towards community-governed, rights-based and gender-just climate action. They also advocated for divestment from harmful incentives and climate funds.

4.3 Pathway B: Drivers of deforestation

Introduction

Addressing the power imbalances between economic and political elites, IP&LCs are essential in halting deforestation and human rights abuses. To achieve this, the FfJF programme seeks to establish enforceable legal frameworks and robust agreements that can transform economic sectors driving deforestation and rights violations. One of the main programme strategies involves advocating for effective policies, both voluntary and binding, as well as their stringent enforcement. Focus is on following the money and conducting research to expose malpractices and illegal activities. Additionally, the FfJF programme aims to demonstrate how governments and corporations undermine efforts to mitigate the impacts of these sectors. These issues are experienced daily by communities in the target countries and these aims are aligned with the aspirations of communities.

One young women in Moa village in Indonesia said: 'For the community of Moa village, managing the forest can fulfil food needs and become a source of livelihood if properly cared for. The negative impact can cause floods and landslides if there are many people cutting down trees. It can be a shelter if we take good care of it.'

The primary goal of the FfJF programme is to shift the trajectory of deforestation by ensuring that governments and key sectors like agro-commodity, extractives, energy and infrastructure no longer contribute to deforestation and human rights violations. To achieve this, the FfJF programme engages with national governments and inter-governmental bodies such as UNFCCC, CBD and the EU. The programme also focuses on private sector initiatives like RSPO, RTRS, DISCO and TFA2020, recognising the mutual influence between governmental and private actors. The strategy involves enhancing government control over the private sector through regulations, ensuring the enforcement of environmental and human rights policies and directly engaging with public and private financiers.

In both the public and private sectors, the FfJF programme aims to encourage national and international investors, including banks, pension funds, development banks, ECAs and governments, to desist from detrimental investments. It advocates for compliance with legal frameworks, standards, and commitments, promoting sustainable alternatives. Crucial prerequisites for these outcomes include the adoption of measures by the EU and other regional bodies to curb deforestation drivers and financiers while promoting alternative finance and practices. The FfJF programme advocates for the inclusion of gender-responsive policies, emphasising gender equality, ensuring the voices of IP&LCs, especially women and youth, are heard, contributing to more comprehensive and inclusive climate, forest and land policies.

The expected outcomes are:

1. Governments and private sector increase transparency about natural resources;
2. Governments and private sector ensure participation of CSOs, women and IP&LCs;
3. The UN adopts binding compliance mechanisms; and
4. The Dutch government supports policy positions that halt deforestation and human rights violations in international bodies.



4.3.1 Achievements to date

Outcome harvesting and contribution analysis was critical to assessing progress towards Pathway B outcomes, considering that only two quantitative indicators were identified at baseline. The quantitative assessment combined with focus group discussions in project landscapes, interviews from key informants, outputs from the three-day participatory country workshops and documentary review. The following section briefly presents achievements against the indicators but goes beyond to demonstrate the programme's contributions to these achievements.

The MTR finds that the FfJF programme has made **significant progress and is well on track to achieve its stated outcomes by 2025**. Despite the challenging context of implementation as discussed in chapter three, the programme benefited from being highly embedded in its countries of intervention to drive change. Its ability to create and sustain alliances with like-minded organisations, networks and social movements nationally, regionally and internationally, effectively enabled the alliance to achieve more the sum of its individual partner contributions.

Achievement of Pathway B indicators at midline

Result 5: Public and private actors (in relation to agro-commodities, extractives, energy and infrastructure sectors) adopt policies/standards/agreements that promote forests and human and women's rights (relates to Pathway A & B).

Twenty-six changes have occurred because of the programme's intervention. Fourteen reflected a change in policies by public government actors, while 10 reflected a change in policy by local (indigenous) authorities and two reflected a change in a private (business) actor. Seventeen out of the 26 represented a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups.

Result 7: Media, community members and (other) CSOs highlight environmental IP&LC and women's rights issues and deforestation drivers

As a result of the programme, 170 issues received attention by media and social movements. Seventeen out of 26 changed policies (54%) represented a change in gender equality.

Indicator 5: Number and nature of changes in policies, agreements, investments, standards and regulations adopted by local, national, regional and global public and private actors to address the drivers of deforestation in a gender-responsive way and to protect the rights of (W)EHRDS.

Twenty-six changes have occurred because of the programme's intervention. Fourteen out of 26 policies reflected a change in policies by public government actors, while 10 reflected a change in policy by local (indigenous) authorities and two reflected a change in a private (business) actor. Seventeen represented a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups. A target of 48 policies was set at the baseline. **This indicator is therefore currently on track.**

Indicator 7: Degree to which environmental IP&LC and deforestation drivers issues, including gender just reports, affecting IP&LCs are taken up by and are on the agenda of social movements, constituents, media.

As a result of efforts by the FfJF programme, 170 issues received attention from social movements, media and constituents during the review period: 11% received limited coverage, 34% moderate coverage, 40% good coverage, and 14% high profile coverage. Sixty-three percent of issues or reports were local, 66% were national and 32% covered the international level (multiple levels are possible per issue). The levels of coverage have improved when compared to the baselines. At baseline, out of 178 issues identified, 3% had some coverage; 20% had moderate coverage; 38% had good coverage; and for 12% it was a high-profile issue. This indicator is consequently on track, though improved communication of FfJF activities and achievements on the ground would contribute significantly to drawing attention and media coverage. **This indicator is therefore currently on track.**

The following section provides evidence of the changes and strategies applied at different levels.

4.3.2 Strengthening transparency, participation and compliance at national levels

FfJF partner CS and IUCN NL in **Bolivia** successfully raised awareness on the issue of mercury contamination resulting from unregulated gold mining. Through media campaigns and engagement with the UN Rapporteur on Toxic Waste and Human Rights, they were able to generate significant public pressure. As a result, representatives of two gold mining associations publicly acknowledged the problem and called for government support in carrying out responsible mining practices. Facing difficulties influencing national governments, the partners have decided to modify their strategies to focus on influencing state administrators, especially at the local level.

CEDIB and PROBIOMA conducted studies on the water crisis in the municipality of San Ignacio de Velasco, providing valuable information for community workshops and outreach materials. The communities proposed joint actions to demand environmental protection regulations be enforced. Community members confirmed that changes were the result of the training, knowledge transfer and community mobilisation from the project. The participants expressed a desire for training on other

The following box provides an example of how GLA engaged with private sector actors to secure commitments on environmental and social safeguards in Colombia.

Case Study: Colombia - Partner engagement with private sector to secure commitments

FCDS is facilitating analysis and recommendations for the implementation of good environmental and social practice standards associated with two strategic value chains: palm oil and livestock. Systematic communication has been established with FEDEGAN (Colombia's main livestock association), prioritising traceability issues and the exchange of information. Together with FEDEPALMA, progress has been made in the analysis of the impact of palm cultivation in delimited polygons, taking into account the regulations recently approved by the European Parliament. The Animal Traceability Bill, which aims to implement monitoring of cattle to prevent grazing in deforested areas, natural parks, or indigenous resguardos, has achieved a significant milestone. This bill has been presented and successfully passed its first debate in the Colombian Congress, in collaboration with the Congress of the Republic and the group of Congressmen for Forests.

In May 2023, FCDS, the National Business Association of Colombia and the University of Los Andes held the forum "Zero deforestation and due diligence: challenges and opportunities for its implementation in Colombia." This was a multi-stakeholder and inter-sectorial dialogue on the challenges faced by production chains in curbing the marketing of products from deforested and degraded areas. This contributed directly to Pathway B at a global level, particularly, "private sector (international) complies with legal frameworks, standards and commitments, adopts sustainable alternatives" and "(regulatory) standard setting bodies implement higher (environmental and social) standards". It also contributed to this Pathway at the country level, in particular, "companies of the private sector in Colombia and the organisations that join them include greater environmental and social controls in their productive practices" and "the government of Colombia relies on greater control mechanisms to guarantee the traceability and transparency of products from the Amazon" and "the Colombian government and the private sector increase transparency on the origin of products that cause deforestation".

subjects such as public speaking, leadership and forest management. They believed that training would empower them and enable them to contribute positively to forest management. As one participant said, 'We have received training on public speaking and it would be good to continue reinforcing this subject.' Young women expressed interest in participating in spaces where they can acquire new knowledge and develop leadership skills. They called on partners to focus such future events on leadership, public speaking, rights and obligations of youth in management plans and environmental issues.

CED and MD initiated a lobbying campaign that successfully led to the suspension of road construction into the Ebo forest in **Cameroon**. Additionally, in a court case in France, Cameroon farmers accused the French company Bolloré of abusive practices and environmental harm. The judge ruled in favour of the farmers, requiring Bolloré to provide documentation on its corporate relationship with the Socfin plantation company to the lawyers of the local communities.

In **Colombia**, FfJF partner FCDS conducted analyses on the causes and drivers of deforestation linked to oil palm plantations and cattle ranching and identified gaps in traceability processes.

Law makers have appreciated the contribution from FfJF partners. A congress stated that “the legitimacy of some civil society organizations that have supported us has added a lot of value. They have helped us build bridges and have unions wish to contribute within the framework of this process. For example, a public hearing was held (Villavicencio) inviting representatives of unions and citizens, in which the text could be reviewed and known in depth, and the FCDS and several other CSOs participated. From there we felt that fertile ground was built for the initiative to move forward.”

In some programme landscapes in the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, the indigenous populations (IP) feel neglected and unheard. During focus group discussions with IPs in Kavamu, they expressed concerns about not being protected and promises not being kept. The lack of legal basis and accountability mechanisms also hinders their ability to make their voices heard and influence decisions. IUCN NL, TBI and national FfJF partners and communities worked to address violations of national and provincial environmental laws by influential policy makers. Partner CSOs also took action against the illegal exploitation and trafficking of wildlife and plants in the Virunga, Upemba and Salonga regions. They employed various strategies including court cases, which led to the dismantling of nine environmental criminal networks. This experience helped in strengthening a judicial and administrative approach to safeguard the integrity of protected areas. Over the past 2.5 years, partners efforts have resulted in the arrest of a deputy for incitement to violate laws, particularly those related to nature conservation. Some provincial governors were removed from their positions due to their failure to uphold nature conservation rights, particularly in cases of illicit mineral exploitation by Chinese companies in Kahuzi Biega National Park. Interviews and focus group discussions with IP&LCs emphasised the benefits of the project interventions, but also raised concerns regarding continued illegal activity. Participants demonstrated their willingness to serve as community monitors and to alert NGO partners about illegal activities in their communities.

In Ghana, FfJF partner ARG’s advocacy efforts together with the Concerned Citizens of Atewa and IUCN NL contributed to significant progress in addressing illegal gold mining and protecting the Atewa forest from industrial bauxite mining. The Okyehene (tribal chief) publicly spoke out against illegal mining and expressed support for a green economy in the Atewa area. One community

member explained, ‘The community was educated on the effects of galamsey and because of that we are now unwilling to sell away our farmlands for such purposes. The widespread galamsey⁴⁸ practices that were once rampant have been reduced.’

In **Indonesia**, FfJF partner WALHI played a crucial role in advocating for the evaluation and withdrawal of illegal permits to palm oil companies. They successfully regained control of land previously controlled by the palm oil company PT. Ranah Andalas Plantation, allowing local communities and women’s groups to manage it.

By the end of 2022, communities in Muara Jekak started to implement sustainable and good agricultural practices in their farming with the knowledge they obtained from the Farmer Field School (June 2022 to April 2023) organised by Tropenbos Indonesia. This included using certificate seedlings, organic fertilizer, organic pesticides and herbicides and implementing intercrop agriculture. Young people appreciated this support but wanted more in the future.

One young woman in Moa village said: ‘We need training on good forest management and utilisation for the future. Our skills need to be improved to make NTFPs products in the form of crafts.’ A young man added: ‘We also utilise forest products such as rattan and pandan for handicrafts. Our hope is the forest remains intact and well maintained and safe from illegal logging so that we can still use and manage our forests for daily needs and livelihoods, preserving forests for future generations to enjoy.’

The box below highlights the challenges faced by young men and women in being heard and participating in local forest governance structures. The programme needs to redouble efforts in these communities to strengthen their voices and participation in decision making about their forests.

⁴⁸Illegal mining activities.

Challenges faced by young men and women in being heard and participating in local forest governance structures

'So far we have not been heard much, because it is considered that we do not have much experience. We have practiced forest utilisation and management but we have never been involved in forest meetings. We have expressed opinions but rarely used, because they are still dominated by people who are considered more experienced even though what they are saying is not necessarily true. Not all Indigenous elders have the ability to provide information related to sustainable forest use and management.' (young man, focus group discussion)

'We rarely engage and participate in meetings about the forest, its utilisation and management. Most young women never express/voice their opinions in community meetings. Their opinions about forests and utilisation are not accepted by the elders in the village.' (young woman, focus group discussion).

The CRDD thematic programme filed a complaint against Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) for illegal clearing of high conservation value (HCV) and high carbon stock (HCS) areas, as well as violations of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in Liberia. GVL was compelled to restore 1,000 hectares of deforested areas. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice committed to working with the SDI/CSO oil palm working group on the **Liberia**⁴⁹ national action plan on business and human rights. SDI played a leading role in the working group, which organised an information sharing and engagement meeting with state and non-state actors.

In the **Philippines**, FfJF partners contributed to significant achievements at both the national and local levels. They successfully mobilised against the division of Palawan into three separate provinces, preventing increased socio-economic costs and environmental risks. Additionally, members of SOS Yamang Bayan, a multi-sectoral alliance of Indigenous people, NGOs, people's organisations, faith-based groups, youth and artists pushing for the Alternative Minerals Management Bill, approved the inclusion of a gender-just framework in the proposed bill. For the IPs in Southern Sierra Madre (Philippines), the trainings conducted under the FfJF helped them understand the laws related to IPs and the environment. They were able to file a case/complaint against the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for violations in the conduct of FPIC. (The case is currently with the Court of Appeals as the NCIP en banc dismissed the case).

In **Uganda**, FfJF advocacy contributed to action by the Ministry of Lands and the National Forestry Authority (NFA) to halt further encroachment in the Bugoma forest by sugar cane companies⁵⁰. The Minister of Tourism of the Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom

also intervened to prevent the destruction of cultural sites by loggers in Bugoma forest. Also, the national efforts led to the district governments in Mayuge and Buikwe adopting land use plans and alternative methods of oil palm growing in their district development plans. Furthermore, the parliament passed the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) Bill with recommendations to improve it, aiming to protect community livelihoods and forest landscapes, thus addressing the concerns raised by FfJF partners. Through litigation and sustained advocacy, FfJF partners successfully maintained public and political attention on the negative impacts of the EACOP oil project on forested landscapes and community livelihoods. The case was heard in the European Court of Justice, contributing to the ongoing efforts to save the forest. The oil refinery court case against Total Energies in the French high court pressured the Ugandan government to provide land titles and restoration programmes for the people affected by the oil refinery. This legal action sought to ensure proper compensation and support for affected communities.

In **Viet Nam**, FfJF partner PanNature collaborated with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to support businesses in the Central Highlands in sustainable forest management and benefit sharing with local communities. They engaged in conversations with the FSC and the Dak Lak Rubber Joint Stock Company on sustainable forest management and certification. Through these efforts, 1,100 hectares of rubber were produced in a sustainable way, meeting international standards for ecological restoration, biodiversity conservation and community consultation.

The application of evidence-based advocacy is a powerful tool to drive positive change. This approach

⁴⁹ <https://sdiliberia.org/node/326>

⁵⁰ See <https://observer.ug/businessnews/67336-govt-to-ascertain-bugoma-forest-boundaries>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/7/9/ugandan-campaigners-vow-keep-on-fighting-for-bugoma-forest> and <https://www.nema.go.ug/media/nema-embarks-restoration-degraded-kyangwali-mixed-land-use-project-area>

is characterised by a systematic and data-driven approach, which enables advocates to present compelling arguments and make informed decisions. One key aspect of evidence-based advocacy is the emphasis on capacity building and knowledge dissemination. For instance, partners highlight the transformative impact of providing stakeholders with the ‘right kind of information’ and ‘requisite knowledge’. This approach has empowered IP&LCs to assert their rights and actively participate in decision-making processes, leading to tangible outcomes, as seen in Bolivia.

Another critical element of evidence-based advocacy is the recognition of the economic interests that often underpin environmental challenges. In Colombia, as has been shown above, advocates have called for a dialogue with the private sector to address deforestation, acknowledging the need for ‘traceability and better safeguards’. Similarly in Viet Nam, private sector engagement led to commitments on ecological restoration. In Liberia, the publication of a report on broken promises by an agro-commodity company led to a financial compensation and demonstrated the power of evidence in holding companies accountable.

4.3.3 Contributions to binding compliance mechanisms

A key outcome achieved with the leadership of the technical partner Fern, working with WECF, IUCN NL, TBI and the NGO Alliance, was the successful contribution to the passage of the landmark European Union Deforestation Regulation. By promoting the consumption of ‘deforestation-free’ products and reducing the EU’s impact on global deforestation and forest degradation, the new Regulation on deforestation-free products is expected to bring down greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss. The regulation is part of a broader plan of actions to tackle deforestation and forest degradation first outlined in the 2019 Commission Communication on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests. This commitment was later confirmed by the European Green Deal, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The thematic work on the EUDR achieved significant results through demonstrated contributions to:

1. **Improved EUDR text.** FfJF alliance members and technical partners played a crucial role in preserving FPIC and Indigenous peoples’ rights, requiring the EC to develop a strategic framework for partnering with producer countries to comply with EUDR standards. They also urged the EC to assess the need for legislation around the financial sector and vulnerable ecosystems. This progress required a coordinated effort from civil society actors, including FfJF partners, who conducted advocacy activities, including policy tours to Brussels and Hague in 2022, publishing public letters on smallholders, opinion pieces, and research reports. The CRDD thematic programme successfully lobbied to ensure that certification would not be included as a proxy for due diligence, including through this statement.

2. **Strengthened political will and buy-in among some EU governments and the European Commission to adopt a partnership-based, multistakeholder approach to supporting producer countries in meeting the requirements of the EUDR.** FfJF partners have played a crucial role in promoting a supply-side approach to regulation, involving supply side measures and explicit partnerships. For example, the CRDD thematic programme organised a speakers tour in Brussels and the Netherlands to advocate for collaboration with partner countries. Fern’s paper, circulated among the Commission and Member State governments, led to discussions with various commission members. In October 2021, 17 European Parliament members called for the integration of supply side measures and explicit partnerships in upcoming regulation. The Dutch government has become a strong proponent of this approach within EU institutions. Support for this approach was not automatic, as the commission and some member states were hesitant to over expand the EUDR’s scope.

3. **Greater awareness of, interest in, and capacity to engage with the EUDR among local, national and regional CSOs working on forest issues and smallholder farmer issues more generally (see C.1 above for details).** Fern and Tropenbos International together with other CSOs have been offering training, workshops and strategic conversations with NGOs and CSOs in producer nations. A webinar on “Recommendations for a Smallholder-inclusive EU Regulation” in April 2022, co-hosted by Fern and Tropenbos International, attracted 64 CSOs from Europe and the global South.

4. **FfJF partners have successfully advocated for the inclusion of the finance sector in the scope of the EUDR.** The commission is committed to evaluating the role of financial institutions in preventing deforestation. FfJF partners have also called for the expansion of the EUDR to cover other

fragile ecosystems and ecosystems with significant carbon storage and biodiversity value. These expansions provide new opportunities for advocacy and campaigning work to achieve impact indicators related to governments and agro-commodities no longer driving deforestation and promoting forests and human and women's rights.

5. Gender dimensions were key components of the global advocacy efforts on the EUDR. This included research and publication by GFC in collaboration with Fern. This report⁵¹ analysed the gender dimensions of the draft EUDR.

Milieudéfensie, in collaboration with its African JET partners, Both ENDS, Oil Change International and platforms like ECAWATCH, engaged in lobbying efforts to pressure countries, including the Netherlands, to create public finance policies to end fossil support overseas. This advocacy focused on urging export credit agencies (ECAs) to stop financing fossil fuels abroad. Despite two decades of civil society advocacy for this cause, little progress had been made until 2021. The JET network's involvement with UK campaigners and policymakers contributed to the UK government's creation of the first fossil phase-out policy in 2021. This policy

included JET perspectives and criteria and was announced at COP26, receiving strong support from civil society partners. JET partners also played a crucial role in pressuring nations to join the Glasgow Statement on International Public Support for the Clean Energy Transition, which calls for ending new direct overseas support for fossil fuels by the end of 2022.

JET partners successfully influenced Dutch MPs in relation to the Glasgow Climate Change Commitment. The commitment has garnered the endorsement of 39 states and institutions, prompting signatories to prioritise renewable energy in their government-backed international financing. To date, 12 countries have issued and published their fossil phase out policies following the Glasgow statement – moving an estimated 5.7 billion USD per year out of fossil towards renewable energy support. Key for this success was the massive coalition building and advocacy pressure stemming from the north-south partnerships that were built over the past years, to which JET has contributed significantly.

Impact case

The COP 26 commitments reflected a major and concrete result of joint ECA advocacy, with 34 governments and financial institutions committing to phase out their public support for fossil fuel projects overseas. The Mozambique Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) case played an important role in this result, both in the UK (where FoE EWNI issued a court case against UKEF), as well as in several other countries, providing ECA support to the LNG project. Campaigning helped to raise critical awareness at the policy and public levels on the many risks (climate, HR, environmental, economic) of fossil public finance and supported our advocacy work calling for a stop on ECA fossil support. In the Netherlands, this resulted in a critical independent investigation into the Dutch ECA support for the LNG project, requested by parliament. The results confirmed that the risk analysis conducted by ADSB had serious flaws. In late 2022, the Netherlands also published its ECA policy committing to stopping fossil fuel developments abroad, following up on the Glasgow commitment. Although the policy still contains loopholes, this is a major breakthrough in a policy domain that did not move for decades.

Milieudéfensie, along with FoE Europe, JET partners from Latin America and Africa, IUCN NL with some of its partners and advocacy groups like the European Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) Coalition and the Mining and Energy Transition Platform (MET), advocated for a just energy transition perspective in renewable energy policies. Within the African JET network, several partners, such as AFIEGO, EGI, and FoE Ghana, mobilised against fossil fuel projects and advocated for a just energy transition in their respective countries. Their activism led to notable victories including the European Parliament's denouncement of the EACOP project's human rights breaches and the withdrawal of funding from financial institutions.

⁵¹ Global Forest Coalition (2022) A Gendered Perspective of the Proposed EU Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products. https://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/EN_A_Gendered_Perspective_on_Deforestation_Regulation.pdf

4.3.4 Tackling the private sector's role in driving global deforestation

Significant efforts were dedicated to tackling the private sector's contribution to deforestation and human rights violations. The alliance lobbied for effective policies at national and international levels, generating evidence of the impacts of companies on deforestation and spotlighting the financial implications of their engagements. The European anti-deforestation legislation was modified with a finance sector assessment and without certification as a stand-in for due diligence but rather as a source of information for this due diligence. Not only does this provide a way to hold firms responsible for deforestation, but it also sets the stage for other trade agreements that include anti-deforestation provisions. Additionally, it gives the financial sector inclusion a very clear orientation.

CRDD campaigns against violations of human rights and environmental concerns led to the suspension of Indonesia's second-largest palm oil producer by nine firms and lenders. The ruling that the palm oil business must restore 1,000 hectares of forests and respect FPIC in Liberia is the first-ever victory in the international high carbon stock forest grievance system after the CRDD thematic programme filed a complaint. Joint legal work through the Ministry of Labour in Liberia in the CRDD thematic programme ensured a palm oil company was forced to compensate human rights defenders for wrongful dismissal. CRDD also succeeded in delaying certification of Africa's largest palm oil company Socfin and engaged in ongoing grievances based on IP&LC complaints to ensure the certification is withdrawn and the harms addressed. These victories highlighted the importance of adopting a legal perspective to current efforts to fight deforestation as opposed to voluntary standards. In other areas, following the release of the FoE Europe Meat Atlas in 2021, more than 300 European and worldwide media outlets revealed the interests of the top 20 firms and financiers in the industrial meat sector that support deforestation in the developing world.

Milieudefensie's report on soy supply chains of major Dutch meat and dairy companies revealed insufficient efforts to address deforestation. In response, FrieslandCampina and Royal Agrifirm Group committed to introducing dedicated supply chains to ensure the use of deforestation-free soy for animal feed. IUCN NL promoted sustainable plant-based protein chains as an alternative with guidance on responsible practices of 16 trade chains.

The Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (DISCO) developed a roadmap on ending deforestation and forest degradation, which was accepted by the DISCO steering board and members. Tropenbos International played an active role in blocking and improving earlier versions due to insufficient support and ambition. Further efforts to influence the private sector were implemented by Milieudefensie through the publication of evidence highlighting the money flows from Dutch financial institutions to forest risk commodities in 2021. This research aimed to emphasise the need for including the financial sector in the regulation. In February 2022, FMO and other European development banks withdrew from a controversial palm oil plantation, Feronia-PHC, in the DRC. Six international consumer goods companies, at least two international traders and one Dutch investor suspended and divested from the Indonesian plantation company Astra Agro Lestari in 2022 over adverse environmental and social impacts⁵².

Six ECAs and 21 reinsurers (including Euler Herms, SACE, Bpifrance, Argo Group, Axis Capital, and RSA Insurance Ltd Britam) publicly declared that they would not support the EACOP project or any other oil and gas activities as a result of EGI's collaboration with groups affiliated with the Stop EACOP coalition, the OECD Watch, ECA Watch, ECA Network Africa and international media organisations. Additionally, IUCN NL and VBDO published a report on the Dutch financial sector's lack of progress in integrating biodiversity concerns into their risk management. They engaged with the Dutch National Bank and other banks on financial risks related to ecosystem conversion and biodiversity decline. DNB adopted recommendations expressed in the VBDO report, underscoring the importance of immediate action.

SDI and MD are running approximately eight campaigns based on demands from, and in collaboration with, southern partners as part of the CRDD programme. The programme supported local communities who spoke out in great numbers against Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certification of plantations in West Africa, as it is not preventing unsustainable practices. A formal complaint within the RSPO system was accepted in July 2021 by Assurance Services International (ASI) in relation to RSPO certification of four Socfin plantations in Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. ASI has since started an investigation. Joint evidence-based lobby and advocacy led to Dutch financiers divesting from controversial palm oil companies Golden Agri-Resources and

⁵²See <https://fd.nl/financiele-markten/1431103/ontwikkelingsbank-fmo-stapt-uit-omstreden-congolese-palmolieplantages>

Socfin/Bolloré. Additionally, there has been initial engagement of FoE Africa with ECOWAS and ACHPR on the fight against monoculture crops and (W)EHRD efforts to protect forests. Through FFJF, Milieudéfense and SDI work with other grassroots groups, inside and outside the Friends of the Earth network. They also join and strengthen several

national, regional and international social movements with a diversity of organisations in order to reach lobby and advocacy goals. At the same time, several MTR respondents called for more integrated working including seeking contributions from FFJF national and alliance partners beyond its network in the countries where they intervene.

4.3.5 Addressing drivers of deforestation from the extractives sector and the just energy transition

GLA's focus under Pathway B is also to promote and advocate for a just energy transition while addressing the impacts of the extractives sector as a driver of deforestation. While not being fully aligned with the wider work of the alliance, work on this thematic area achieved several significant achievements.

IUCN NL organised several events on mining and deforestation. In July 2022, a side event at the African Parks Congress (APAC) was organised on the threats of mineral mining for renewable energy. The session, organised with our FfJF partner A Rocha Ghana, sought to set up an African Watch Network to engage the transition process. On October 6th, a debate was organised about the ecological impact of mining for the energy transition in Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam, with

FfJF partners A Rocha Ghana, ATM Philippines and IUCN NL as speakers. The event was organised in collaboration with Action Aid, SOMO and Milieudéfense. IUCN NL and several other NGOs provided input on the Dutch Raw Materials Strategy during a live session in January 2022. The resulting national strategy was published in early December 2022. The ecological footprint of the energy transition as well as the hot topic of deep-sea mining is now part of the strategy, as is 'responsible mining'. IUCN NL has also worked with the Dutch Association of Investors for Sustainable Development to address mining issues (including social and human rights) and promote responsible investments with financial institutions and investors.

Case study: Indonesia: the forests and biodiversity-energy transition nexus in Tompotika Forest

The Tompotika forest in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia is an area of tremendous biodiversity which is the target for at least eight new commercial nickel mines to supply for the explosive increase in worldwide demand for nickel, an essential component of most rechargeable battery technologies. The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AITo) has been working in partnership with local communities in the Tompotika region since 2006. Through these partnerships it has successfully recovered endangered species, established new protected areas, conserved natural ecosystems and empowered local communities for an improved quality of life.

In 2021, IUCN NL began supporting AITo to respond to the new threat from nickel mining, and advocate for regulations at the local and country level and higher standards for the extraction of minerals needed for the energy transition and beyond. Based on the experiences of CSO partners in mining landscapes, IUCN NL provided input to a number of policy dialogues and expert meetings including: metals for the energy and digital transitions by the Green European Foundation and Wetenschappelijk Bureau GroenLinks; the OECD Working Group on Environmental Due Diligence tool development for the metal sector; and the International Responsible Business Conduct (IRBC) agreement for the metal sector.

The MTR also demonstrated significant efforts to mainstream gender in pushing for a just energy transition. Research and communication around Mozambique such as the 'Fuelling the crisis' report on the Mozgas campaign website in 2022 highlighted the impacts of the gas projects and the conflict on women's rights. Milieudefensie also included gender impacts in the fossil impact analysis and case studies developed for the joint research on private and public fossil flows to Africa - Locked out of a

Just Transition: Fossil Fuel Financing in Africa. The 2022 CSO Equity Review Report's analysis (to which FOEI contributed) suggests that eliminating the debt of countries in the global South would allow governments to fund vital public services and support the implementation of comprehensive economic changes that promote resilience, diversity, reduced dependence on fossil fuels, fairness and gender justice in sustainable economies.

Case study: Women's participation and leadership in JET

JET partners make sure women are included in their activities. JET partners (AFIEGO) in Uganda noted that their 2022 advocacy was successfully driven by women and youth. Almost 90% of the 19 lobby and advocacy products such as open letters, press releases, public statements and newspaper articles done under the project were produced by or led on by women or youth.

FoEI ensured gender inclusive and gender-balanced participation at the UNFCCC COP27, with specific attention to supporting female activists from the global South to advocate against false solutions and demand specific actions that support a just transition.

In Argentina, OPSur/CEASE organised a series of four virtual meetings as part of the online energy course "Energy Crises and Latin American Perspectives". This was done with LatFem, a feminist media organisation, which contributed to the participation and empowerment of women in energy issues, with participants including Latin American women and activists from social, trade union and environmental movements.

In Colombia, the registration process for the JET exhibition requested nominees to disaggregate the (in)direct impact of the Just Transition initiatives on men, women and young people. The registration forms specifically requested information about the role of women in the initiative. This was qualitative information that allowed CENSAT to better understand and deepen its own gender perspective in relation to JET. It found that many of the JET initiatives in the virtual exhibition were women-led. Through this active engagement, women strengthened their political and organisational ties to the community, which in turn opened up new spaces to claim their rights, strengthen their autonomy, and create bonds of solidarity. CENSAT indicated that it is important to continue deepening the analysis of the contributions that women make in the JET initiatives, in order to highlight the priorities, demands and potential of women's transformative agendas.

The MTR noted that being part of ongoing JET efforts could be more coordinated. Not including the DRC in its focus countries was concerning, considering the strategic role this country is likely to have in the global energy transition. National partners have been working on policies that prevent the exploitation of oil, minerals and other natural resources in the protected areas and promote green economy since the start of the programme. Awareness raising and mobilisation of IP&LCs of the Salonga and Virunga landscapes was undertaken and students and local communities and public and

private media have initiated actions against the exploitation of oil in Salonga and Virunga. Additionally, IUCN NL has also led actions in Uganda on the EACOP case, yet no coordination took place with MD. These efforts could have benefited from the ongoing JET efforts⁵³.

Promoting a just transition requires demonstrating the short-term gains that can emerge from the transition, including at the landscape level. Communities that are already suffering the impacts of fossil fuel expansion value the need for

⁵³The other Alliance partners did not support the integration of the JET work into FfJF, nor did they build a JET focus into their work. To continue the work, MD set up its own JET programme, which had a limited budget, impacting how much it could spend.

international advocacy, but also require short term remedies to alleviate their day-to-day concerns. AFIEGO in Uganda is working to address the local RE/national RE energy policies affecting populations' access. The Colombia partner CENSAT supports local RE energy projects to communities. Strengthening the introduction of renewable energy options and alternatives to fuelwood would continue to further the JET at local levels.

This section has demonstrated the enormous achievements delivered by partners under this pathway at the landscape, national, regional and international levels. Partners have successfully drawn on their expertise and experience in the areas of intervention, working alongside other like-minded organisations, networks and social movements to deliver on a wide range of strategies that have culminated in the achievements reported. It is suggested that the Alliance continues and scales up the strategies developed to secure the gains achieved, while continuing to push for change from governments and private sector actors. Participation and ownership from local CSO partners and IP&LC communities is critical for the sustainability of the intervention. Achieving these goals would require continuous capacity strengthening to further enhance participation and stronger alignment between the programme's interventions on JET and other thematic areas, country programmes and dossiers. **The programme is well on track to achieve its outcomes by 2025.**



4.4 Pathway C - Civic space

Introduction

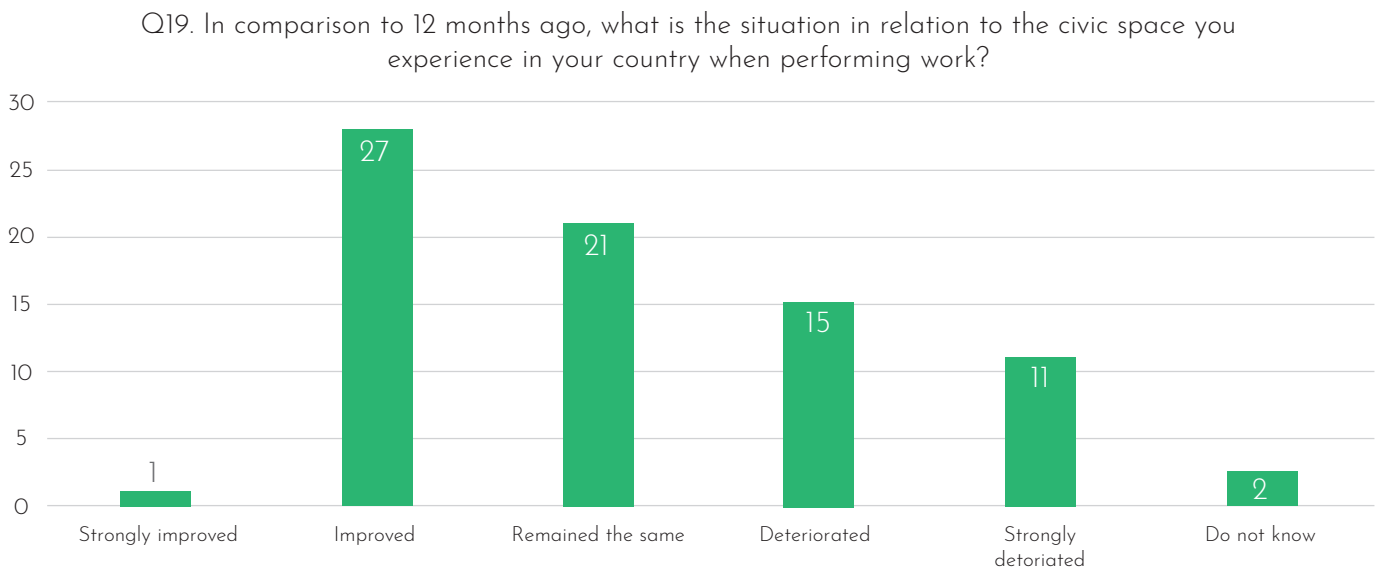
The FfJF programme recognises that CSOs and environmental human rights defenders working towards the protection of forests and forested landscapes have faced and continue to be confronted by increasing challenges to their fundamental civic freedoms and human rights. The FfJF programme seeks to secure, monitor and, when possible, expand civic space. The main approach involves analysing, monitoring and documenting abuses and human rights violations. This information serves as the foundation for establishing effective safety and security strategies, advocating for enhanced protection of women and human rights in national and international policies and agreements and ensuring access to justice for affected communities and EHRDs at both the national and international levels.

Through its contacts within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IUCN NL and other partners continuous-

ly brought the issue of shrinking civic space in the programme countries to the attention of the Dutch government. IUCN NL also provided country specific input to the human rights ambassador of the Netherlands and gave its FfJF partners the opportunity to provide input themselves.

The FfJF programme aims to ensure that citizens can enjoy human and women's rights and actively participate in social movements without the risk of threats, criminalisation or violence. While international treaties and resolutions recognise the rights of environmental human rights defenders, the practical implementation of these rights is restricted in many countries where the FfJF programme operates. In a civic survey study commissioned by GLA in 2023, though some respondents reported an improvement regarding the country conditions in the past 12 months, one third reported a deterioration (15) or strong deterioration (11), as shown in Figure 5. The majority of respondents stated that the civic space was either repressed, narrowed or obstructed.

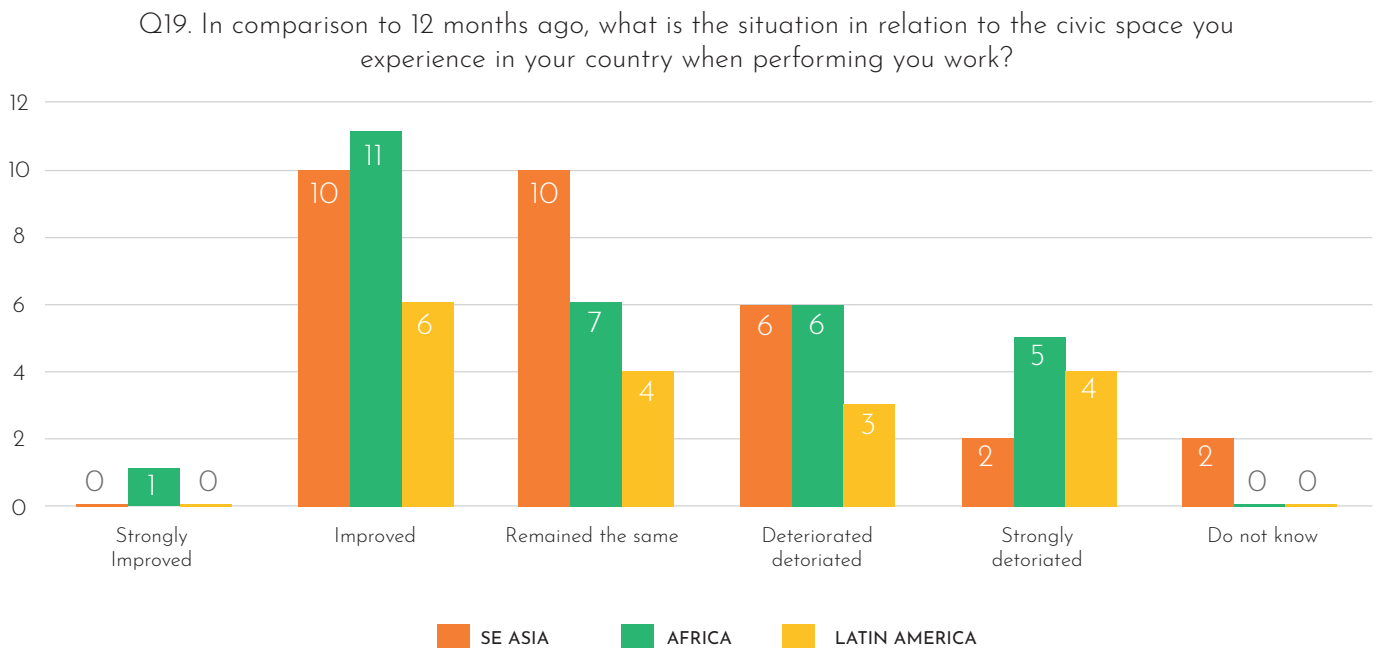
Figure 5: Civic space in FfJF partner countries



Source: Civic space survey 2023

According to the survey, GLA partners who reported that the situation in their countries either 'remained the same/did not worsen' or 'improved' were from Southeast Asia. The greatest number of GLA partners who believed that the situation had 'improved' or 'strongly improved' were from Africa. However, most GLA partners who reported that the situation had 'deteriorated' or 'strongly deteriorated' were also from Africa. It is possible that these reports portrayed feelings of positivity after elections or the passage of favourable political reforms. Feelings of deterioration were linked to limited access to information, increased repressive activities in target countries resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and other restrictive practices on civil society funding and freedom of association introduced by governments.

Figure 6: Perceptions of GLA partners regarding civic space



In such contexts, effecting change requires a shift in policies and attitudes at the national level, acknowledging and safeguarding human rights, particularly for (W)EHRDs.

Recognising that acts of violence and rights abuses are systemic problems perpetrated strategically by economic and political actors to maintain power and suppress collective rights, the FfJF programme's approach extends beyond traditional human rights frameworks. It challenges the power imbalances underlying violence, aligning with Pathways A & B, aiming to influence policy and legal processes and support (W)EHRDs facing threats. The focus is on building community-based capacity for monitoring environmental and social harms and documenting verified evidence, enabling affected communities to pursue legal action against environmental and human rights offenders. The programme emphasises the need to provide immediate support to threatened (W)EHRDs, facilitated through CSO networks and collaborations with Dutch embassies,

ensuring rapid responses to emergencies, legal aid, safety measures and relocation to safe havens when necessary. Through its interventions, the programme seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Networks of CSOs and Dutch embassies respond rapidly to EHRD emergencies;
2. UN bodies improve and implement binding human and women's rights in climate, biodiversity and business agreements; and
3. Courts and dispute resolution authorities admit community-based evidence to prosecute environmental and human rights offences.

4.4.1 Achievements to date

The MTR found that the FfJF programme had made **good progress** and was on track to achieve its stated outcomes by 2025. However, it is a more challenging pathway considering the increasingly restricted civic spaces in programme implementation countries and globally as highlighted in Figure 5. The rise of misinformation/disinformation, political turmoil and conflicts and the rise of authoritarian and right-wing regimes in many countries, means that achievements to date have happened slowly and are even more fragile to secure. This reemphasises the relevance and the goals of the Power of Voices Programme.

The following section summarises the achievements to date using quantitative indicators, followed by a detailed analysis drawing on outcome harvesting, the civic space survey of GLA partners, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and document content analysis.

The following box summarises the progress achieved towards the two quantitative programme targets under this Pathway.

Pathway C indicator results at midline

Result 3 : Government and agro-commodities, extractives, energy and infrastructure sectors no longer drive deforestation. (Pathway B and contribute to Pathway C)

There were 72 policy changes with 42 representing a change in gender and/or inclusiveness.

Result 6: National governments and other actors protect EHRD and women rights defenders (Pathway C)

Extent to which men and women IP&LCs, men and women EHRDs, groups that work with a gender transformative/gender justice approach, and other CSOs experience increased civic space, human rights, and women's rights – civic space survey – there was no baseline nor target for this indicator

Indicator 3: Number and nature of policies, agreements, investments, standards and regulations implemented, complied with and/or blocked by local, national, regional and global public and private actors that address drivers of deforestation, distinguishing between those that have a gender perspective and those that do not (qualitative).

Of the 72 changes, 42 represent a change in gender and/or inclusiveness. Of the 72 changes, 26 were changes to the agro-industry sector, 11 to mining, 15 to forestry, nine to finance and five to infrastructure. Forty-four were made by public government actors, 14 by community leaders, nine by private sector actors and one by an international human rights organisation. At baseline, 60 policies were identified with 11 considered as gender responsive. At midterm, the changes represented an achievement rate of 75% compared to the 2025 target of 75%. **This indicator is therefore currently on track.**

Indicator 6: Extent to which men and women IP&LCs, men and women EHRDs, groups that work with a gender transformative/gender justice approach, and other CSOs experience increased civic space, human rights, and women's rights.

The FfJF commissioned a survey among partners to assess the civic space within their countries. The survey showed that partners experienced challenges related to civic freedoms, the enabling environment, participation and other constraints.

4.4.2 Engaging and mobilising CSOs networks to respond to (W)EHRD emergencies and use of courts and dispute resolution mechanisms

The programme has been highly successful in mobilising CSO networks and leveraging the role of Dutch embassies to provide needed emergency responses to (W)EHRDs.

With the support of Protection International and IUCN NL, IP&LC communities and FfJF partners in **Bolivia, Uganda, Ghana, the Philippines and Indonesia** addressed issues such as red tagging, criminalisation, and threats in their landscapes.

With the support of Protection International and IUCN NL, IP&LCs and FfJF partners in **Bolivia** developed collective self-protection strategies. These strategies primarily focused on judicial defence efforts, technical advice, communications with international human rights organisations, press coverage and the establishment of a team of lawyers to support (W)EHRDs.

The work conducted with Protection International has contributed to a deeper analysis of institutional risks and vulnerabilities. It has also led to the development of institutional protocols to address these risks. For example, in **Bolivia** through outreach efforts, IP&LCs from San Ignacio, San José de Chiquitos, Roboré Guarayos and Lomerío received information about the relationship between the water crisis and the pressure of extractivism on soil and water and climate change, generating mechanisms and taking action for the defence of their territories and human rights. The documentation system for mapping threats and violations against environmental defenders by CEDIB/CONTIOCAP is operational.

In **Cameroon**, communities supported by CED and Milieudéfense raised complaints against palm oil companies HEVECAM and SOCAPALM. In one case, communities affected by HEVECAM's breach of commitments organised a public demonstration, resulting in the arrest and detention of six people including two women. FfJF provided support to the communities and helped build their capacity to defend their rights. The issue of EHRDs was raised in parliament in November 2022, and one defender (from the Avebe village in the town of Djoum, south of the Dja reserve) was allowed to present his case in parliament. A process for systematically identifying EHRDs was put in place with local informants who also include Indigenous peoples' representatives. This was achieved through

building confidence with the local community who approached the FfJF partner for help and advice.

In **Colombia**, the territories where the programme is being implemented faced increased uncertainty, instability, military operations and the resurgence of informal armed groups. This worrisome situation was accompanied by the criminalisation of social leaders and EHRDs, further exacerbating distrust and anxiety within and between communities. Safety and security protocols were developed and continue to be updated by the Colombian partners to ensure the protection of individuals and organisations working in challenging environments. However, partners reported that achieving the desired results in terms of security and self-protection in Colombia was challenging in 2022. As a result, rather than directly addressing security concerns, workshops focusing on legal first aid were conducted. An internal organisational protocol was also developed by Tropenbos Colombia, which included a contextual risk analysis to ensure that the organisation's presence in communities does not pose a risk to their safety.

At the national level, there was expanding space for CSOs and IP&LCs in Colombia. Gaia Amazonas, the Colombian Amazon Indigenous Peoples Organization (OPIAC) and local Indigenous governments carried out advocacy actions to open spaces for the participation of IP&LCs, as well as to influence the 2022-2025 national development plan, including specific articles that enable indigenous governance, autonomy and the recognition of their environmental authorities. Gaia Amazonas also led the setting up of a direct advocacy line for indigenous organisations based on long-term partnership agreements with five Indigenous organisations from the Jaguars of Yuruparí Cultural Affinity Complex (Vaupés, Colombia). Gaia Amazonas has multi-scale advocacy strategies, from the territorial to the regional pan-Amazonian level, related to biodiversity (CBD), the global water agenda, UNPFII, UNFCCC and the Minamata Agreement.

Similarly in **Indonesia**, significant progress was made by WALHI in the protection of (W)EHRDs. In February 2021, the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission Representative of West Sumatra, the Indonesian Ombudsman Representative of West Sumatra, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Law

and Human Rights of West Sumatra Province and the Regional Police of West Sumatra expressed a joint commitment to encourage the protection of human rights defenders in West Sumatra. The project provided financial assistance for legal costs, protection measures, healthcare costs, and exposure/advocacy for WEHRDs who were under threat⁵⁴.

Case study: Indonesia: Hemsu gets his land back

Another successful example of local, national and international cooperation is the story of how Hemsu was able to reclaim his land after 15 years of fighting. It demonstrates the necessity of ongoing support for human rights advocates in order to secure redress and advance IP&LC land rights. The CRDD initiative seeks to develop grassroots campaigns that are coordinated at all levels to produce results by sticking with cases for extended periods of time. Hemsu believes that his trip to the Netherlands to speak with bankers and government officials face-to-face had an impact on how his case was handled in Indonesia.

Case study: Indonesia: Women's network empowerment through training and advocacy

The most remarkable change in Pathway-C in Indonesia was the rise of an empowered network of women alumni from the Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) program, spanning seven of GLA's model villages. This accomplishment is noteworthy for its seamless integration of gender-transformative approaches with Pathway-C's objective: empowering literate citizens and women to participate safely in social movements. In West Kalimantan, the FPAR initiative was a collaborative effort involving several FfJF partners including TI and Walhi West Sumatera, supported by the Indonesia gender team (IGT). The IGT comprises organisations such as AKSI! for Gender Justice, Solidaritas Perempuan and the Yakkum Emergency Unit. The programme kicked off with a train-the-trainer session in October 2022, where IGT piloted its newly-developed training modules. Field-level FPAR trainings were rolled out, reaching a broader participant base from seven villages across the Ketapang and Kayong Utara landscapes including villages such as Sinar Kuri, Muara Jekak, Kenanga, Mekar Raya, Pangkalan Suk, and Pangkalan Telok.

Impact and activism

The FPAR trainings succeeded in equipping women from IP&LCs with a nuanced understanding of their roles and positions within social hierarchies. These trainings allowed women to articulate their individual and communal needs, scrutinise their access to and control over natural resources, understand local power dynamics in the context of patriarchy and globalisation and pursue collective interests. As a direct result, FPAR alumni have transformed into rights activists across various sectors, including ecotourism groups, village forest management collectives, local governmental representations, traditional handicraft communities, ICCA restoration projects, women's farming organisations and plant nurseries.

⁵⁴See <https://www.beritaminang.com/berita/8714/konflik-lahan-petani-bidar-alam-dan-pantai-cermin-solsel-mengadu-ke-komnas-ham.html> and <https://suarakampus.com/konflik-lahan-sawit-pt-rap-komnas-ham-sumbar-upayakan-mediasi/>

In **Liberia**, significant progress was made in addressing labour injustices and ensuring justice for affected individuals. On September 2, 2021, the government of Liberia through the Ministry of Labour, compelled Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) to pay salary arrears as compensation to 16 employees who were unjustly terminated. These individuals had endured illegal imprisonment for one year and had remained unemployed for more than five years. With the support of the CRDD thematic programme and SDI, the affected individuals were able to win their case. GVL made a payment of over 35,000 USD to the 16 individuals⁵⁵. This outcome represented a significant step towards ensuring fair treatment and compensation for those who suffered due to the company's actions. The Western Region Women Network Association (WERWONA) was established to undertake joint advocacy around natural resource management and business and human rights in three counties. Through this network, community women have actively participated in the process of documenting violations and have shared their stories in an organised and coherent manner. For instance, the network held a press conference in both Gbarpolu and Cape Mount counties demanding justice for a rape victim and asking men to stop rape and sexual violence against women in agro-commodity concessions.

In the **Philippines**, red-tagging, the practice of labelling opposing voices as rebels or terrorists, was prevalent among those in power during the MTR period, including by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). However, there was a notable success in October 2021 when the 80th Infantry Brigade of the Philippine army ceased the red-tagging of Indigenous leaders in Daraitan,

Tanay and Rizal. This positive outcome followed a dialogue between the Indigenous leaders and the military, with the support of NTFP-EP Philippines. The TK3 women's collective plays a vital role in documenting violence against women and other human rights violations. Their documentation is included in the peace and order reports submitted to various platforms and venues within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). This recognition further emphasises the importance of the TK3 women as a key source of information on violations in the area, highlighting their critical role in addressing human rights abuses.

In the **DRC**, FfJF actors took the lead in establishing the ROPE movement, which brought together over 100 environmental NGOs from across the country. The aim of this movement was to protect (W) EHRDs⁵⁶. In 2022, IUCN NL provided emergency funds to partners in and around Goma due to deteriorating security conditions. This was prompted by the imposition of curfews and the displacement of many villagers amid intensified conflict. The emergency funds primarily covered communication and fuel costs in the event of the M23 rebel group entering Goma. Despite the risks, partners continued their work. WECF's partners prioritised supporting newly-displaced people in the area and addressing concerns related to fuelwood and income generation from harmful forest practices.

Case study - DRC: Empowered communities using legal redress mechanisms

Communities in Barumbi Tshopo, Bapondi, Bafwomogo and Bafwabula have formed an inter-community forest platform to defend their rights on natural resources and resolve conflicts collaboratively. They have written to local authorities who are increasingly consulting IP&LCs and considering their concerns regarding land allocation to third parties. A notable example is the NGO AJBS denouncing human rights violations and environmental law breaches by the Chinese logging company COKIBAFODE. They reported the situation to the Prosecutor-General of the Mongala Court of Appeal, who has taken up the case.

⁵⁵See <https://thedaylight.org/2021/10/23/former-gvl-workers-receive-payoffs-after-labor-ministrys-ruling/>

⁵⁶See <https://actualite.cd/2021/12/08/rdc-les-aires-protgees-sont-menacees-cri-dalarme-de-la-societe-civile-environnementale>

In 2021, there was a significant increase in the repression of NGOs in **Uganda**, resulting in the suspension of several organisations including the Democratic Governance Facility and 54 other CSOs. This crackdown also led to the arrests of EHRDs. During this challenging period, the collaboration between the FfJF team in Uganda, IUCN NL and the Dutch Embassy proved to be valuable in providing support to the arrested staff. Repression tactics also involved creating distrust and division between communities and civil society actors. However, reports from Uganda highlighted the importance of partnerships and collaboration, strengthening the bonds between organisations. For instance, when the team leader of Friends of ZOKA (FoZ) was under surveillance and faced the threat of arrest, the FfJF team in Uganda, led by ETA and IUCN NL, engaged with the Dutch Embassy to intervene. IUCN NL also brought in Protection International to help. More recently, when the

executive director of FoZ encountered an issue at Entebbe airport when trying to travel to Oslo for the Oslo Freedom Forum, the executive director of AFIEGO collaborated with IUCN NL to ensure the individual's safety and well-being.

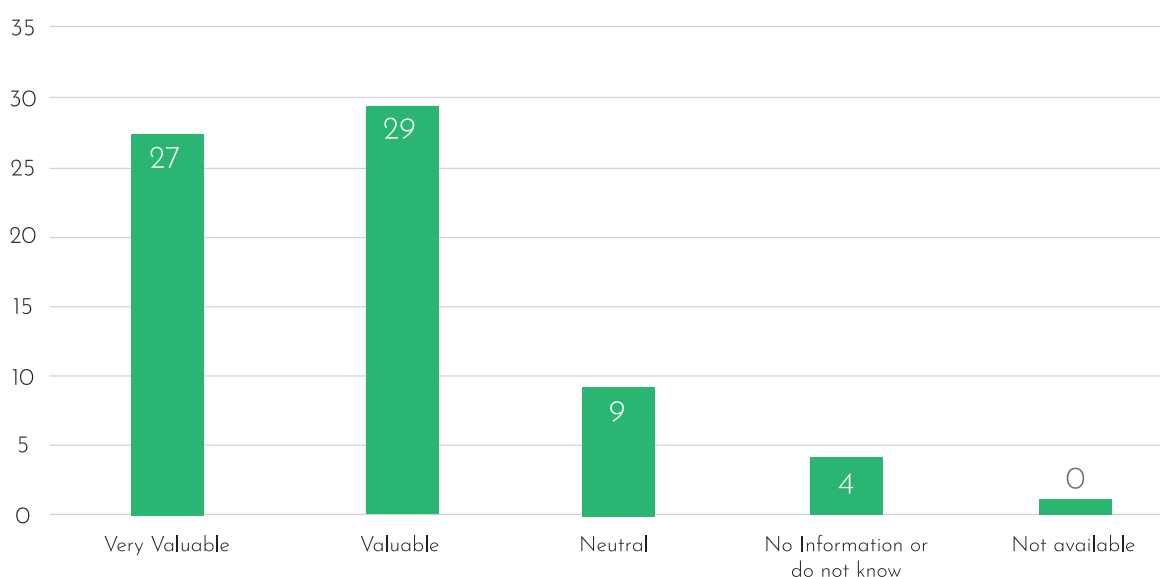
The establishment of civic movements in Arua Yumbe and Gulu has established foundations of advocacy and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations. The civic movements are continuing to grow and receive executive support including a presidential decree banning the commercial production and trade of charcoal in northern Uganda. The Northern Albertine Region Conservation-Group (NARC-G), a group of conservation organisations in the Bugoma landscape, re-invigorated the landscape platform, consolidating actions and amplifying the voice of IP&LCs, and other movements in the West Nile region and Gulu.

4.4.3 Leveraging the role of Dutch Embassies and diplomatic missions

The FfJF programme has focused on strengthening links with Dutch embassies to support national partners. However, engagement with the embassies has been variable. As the GLA-commissioned study on civil space (2023) revealed, direct lobbying for the embassy to issue statements regarding the situation of local civil society is not seen by all FfJF partners as socially or culturally appropriate. Not all countries have a Dutch Embassy in-country which affects any engagement between civil society and the embassy. The Cameroon partner, CED, reported that relations with the Dutch embassy in Cotonou and the consulate in Yaoundé are very cordial and there have been some enquiries about support needs of the partner. However, there is limited evidence that the other FfJF CSO partners have engaged with any embassies, despite evidence suggesting that they value the role foreign embassies can play in the context of civic space/human rights situations.

Figure 7: Perceptions of the value of foreign embassies in fostering the civic space agenda

Q64. Does your organisation consider foreign embassies located in your country as valuable allies in the context of civic space / (environmental) human rights situations?



Source: Civic space survey 2023

Going forward, the FfJF could adjust its focus to target embassies beyond the Dutch embassy where there are opportunities for engagement.

It is evident that all country partners are facing the challenge of human rights violations and civic space restrictions. There is no evidence that collective action has been taken in the FfJF to harmonise, learn from and share experiences of partners' lived experiences on this topic. There appears to be room

to pilot community monitoring practices and systems throughout the Alliance, including the use of modern technologies for documenting and highlighting human rights violations as well as actions taken/results emerging from these efforts. Examples of systems for documentation and mapping threats and violations against environmental defenders used by CEDIB/CONTIOCAP and others could be upscaled.

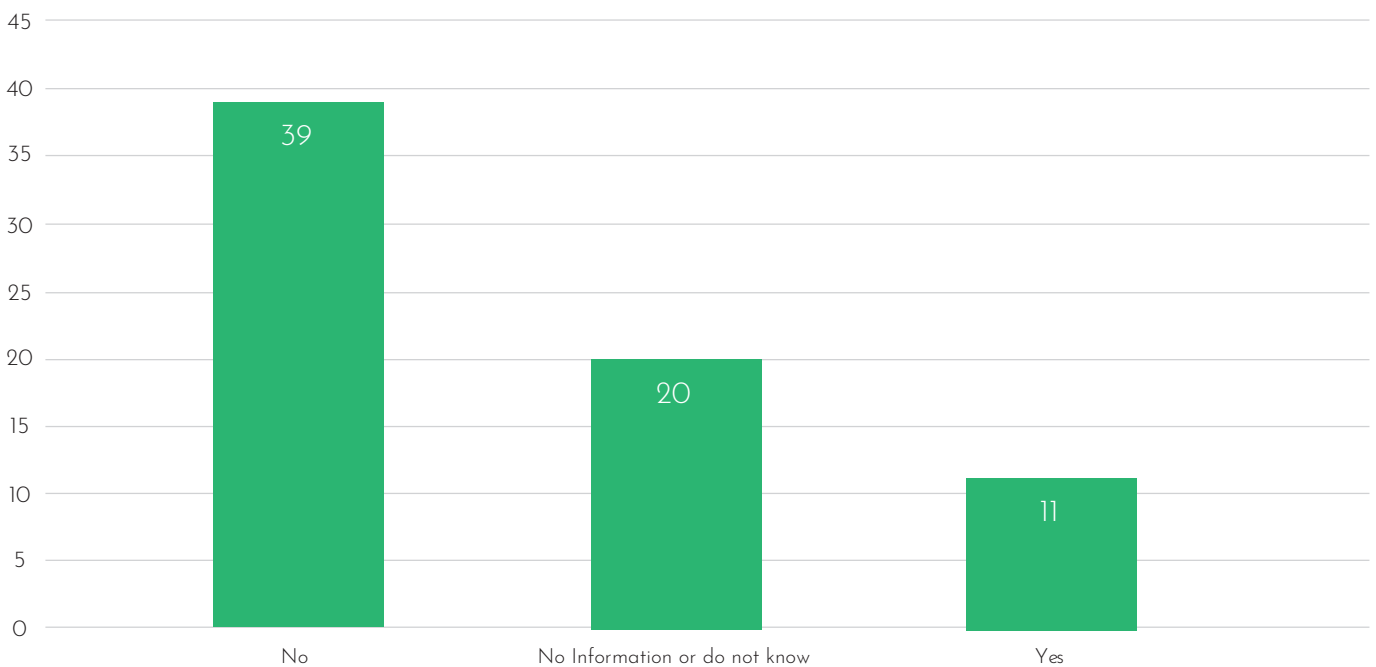
4.4.4 Facilitating access to rapid emergency funds for (W)EHRDs

European Alliance members and NTFP-EP in Asia operate emergency response funds for (W)EHRDs, although the modus operandi differs per alliance member. The experience of rapid response emergency funds for (W)EHRDs has been widely appreciated in the Philippines, Cameroon, Liberia, Uganda, DRC and other countries. These funds provide much needed support for (W)EHRDs to protect themselves when faced with aggression or to seek safety when needed.

When respondents to the evaluation were asked about their knowledge of the schemes, the majority were unaware they existed, as highlighted by the civic space survey (Figure 7).

Figure 8: Access to emergency response funds

Q67. DO you have any experience accessing the emergency funds (as part of GLA) that can be called upon in the event of an emergency related to violations of (W)EHRD rights?



Source: Civic space survey 2023

There is a need to share more information and provide support on how to access the available emergency funds. Strengthening local financial resource mobilisation capacities would also strengthen the sustainability of the rapid response mechanisms. Additionally, the recommendations emerging from the civic space survey could inform future collective actions including establishing community-based human rights monitoring systems, strengthening regional discussions on strategic lawsuits to address participation and strengthening capacities of how local legal strategies could adopt lessons from international trends.

4.4.5 Contributions to improve and implement due diligence legislation on human and women's rights, the environment and climate

In addition to national level efforts, FfJF also seeks to influence the international agenda on human rights defenders. The UN BT and EUDD policy dossier aimed to strengthen collaborative lobbying and advocacy efforts for mandatory legislation on business and human rights at global institutions such as the UN, the EU and the Netherlands. The focus was on compelling businesses to conduct due diligence throughout their value chains, particularly regarding potential violations of human rights, the environment and impact on the climate. The project engaged with the development of EU and Dutch mandatory human rights due diligence (mHRDD) legislation and the UN Binding Treaty on business and human rights. Milieudefensie and IUCN NL actively participated in CSO coalitions at the Dutch (NL4Treaty coalition) and European level (UNTreaty EU Coalition).

SDI and Friends of the Earth Africa, as part of the CRDD thematic programme, for the first time addressed the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights on the impact of monoculture plantations on IP&LCs. SDI gave a presentation

on the role EHRDs play in the land struggles and halting deforestation and followed up with bilateral conversations with the African Commission working group on extractives.

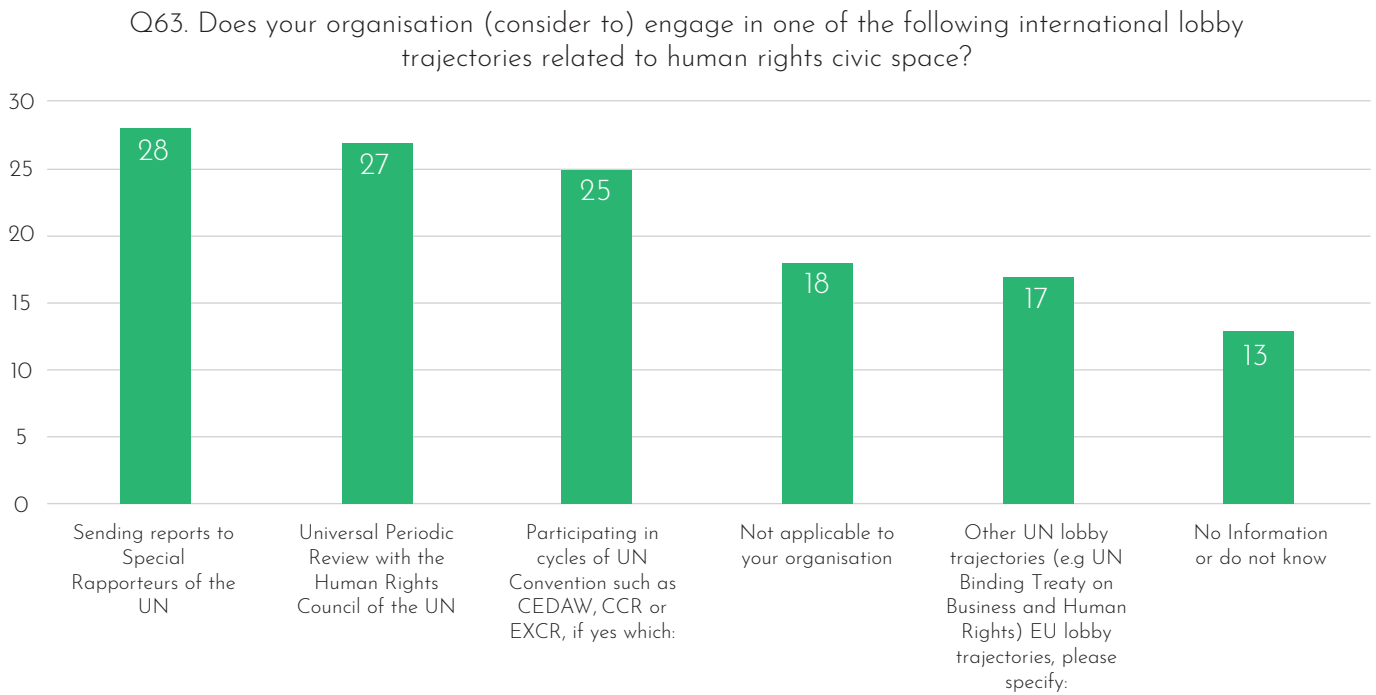
With delays experienced in the publication of the EU mHRDD legislation in 2021, lobby and advocacy efforts were focused on the UN BT and the Dutch mHRDD legislation. Milieudefensie developed and implemented a campaign and petition, endorsed by over 42,000 individuals, to emphasise the importance of including a climate duty in national mHRDD legislation. Within the NL4Treaty Coalition, FfJF alliance members organised an expert session on the third draft of the UN BT to advocate for increased participation by the Dutch government in the process. Additionally, a seminar was held in July 2021 to demonstrate the complementary nature of the UN BT with the EU and Dutch mHRDD, in collaboration with the Asser Institute. The Alliance has been successful in promoting outcomes under the civic space through reports to special rapporteurs, UPR sessions, the UNBT campaign and the EU lobby. For example, IUCN and MD work on UPR NL was effective, as all recommendations to NL were included⁵⁷.

Regional efforts were also conducted by Asian FfJF CSO partners who organised campaigns to raise public awareness about the need for stronger mechanisms for corporate accountability, following their participation in a discussion with the Asia Task Force on the UN BT.

FfJF partner CSOs value the importance of engaging in these international processes and frameworks to advocate and push for the protection of human rights, as can be seen in Figure 8. The graph shows that there remains interest and motivation to engage in the regional and international processes, which represents an opportunity for the FfJF to link the national level issues to regional and international structures.

⁵⁷See <https://www.iucn.nl/en/news/dutch-companies-indirectly-involved-in-human-rights-violations-in-the-global-south/>; <https://www.iucn.nl/nieuws/nederland-krijgt-verzochte-aanbeveling-op-invoering-due-diligence-wetgeving/> and <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/nl-index>

Figure 9: Interest in international lobby trajectories



Source: Civic space survey 2023

As recommended by the civic space survey, FfJF efforts could further strengthen partner risk management and protection plans and align them to more regional support mechanisms. Part of this process could involve learning and discussion platforms bringing IP&LCs together to generate collective knowledge and perspectives on civic space actions. Capacity building and provision of resources to pursue the viability of accessing regional jurisdiction for case filing appear to be viable platforms to explore.

Related to the protection of W(EHRDs), FoEI mobilised marches on March 24 and December 9, 2022 in Geneva and Montreal respectively, to draw attention to the daily risks of environmental defenders.

In June 2022 during the XV World Forestry Congress in Seoul, South Korea, NTFP-EP and partners organised a side event entitled, "Communities Speak: Indigenous Peoples' Local Actions and Initiatives are Vital to Implement the Paris Agreement and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework." This event opened space for participants to reflect on the essential roles and contributions of Indigenous people to the global fight against climate change and biodiversity loss. It also allowed participants to explore advances, challenges and recommendations in relation to Indigenous peoples' biodiversity and climate change engagement at different levels, in particular in

relation to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

FfJF partner CSOs see a huge role for INGOs to amplify the situation of local NGOs, local CSOs and IP&LC communities at the international level. International processes such as the UPR and other UN trajectories provide unique opportunities for LGL engagement, yet it appears that the Alliance has so far been uncoordinated in its approach. As one respondent said, 'It is hard to have visibility on what each one is doing and to coordinate it.'

NTFP-EP has been instrumental in driving the regional agenda and linking it up with international partners and processes. Gaia mobilized the North Amazon Alliance, and through collective messaging helped to position the Amazon as a crucial region for biodiversity and the implementation of the GBF. It helped member CSO and indigenous organizations from Amazonian countries to voice an Amazonian perspective in the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) informing the negotiations from their perspective. Related to the protection of W(EHRDs), FoEI mobilised marches on the 24th of March and the 9th of December 2022 in Geneva and Montreal respectful, to draw attention to the daily risks of environmental defenders.

Case study - Regional: NTFP organises regional collaboration and learning session

In September 2022, there was a regional collaboration Asia meeting and learning session. Regional partners shared and discussed experiences, best practices, challenges and the impacts of their activities such as participatory mapping, NDCs, challenges and practical experiences on gender integration within the programme, as well as possible regional joint activities. A forest governance and customary tenure session was organised by NTFP-EP, Tropenbos International and member organisations of the forest governance and tenure rights topic group. It featured a presentation from TBI on NDCs and the current situation, process, plans and progress. Other presentations included: sharing learning from NTFP-EP partner organisations on initiatives to strengthen IP&LCs' contribution to NDCs; understanding how IP&LCs and CSOs can participate and contribute meaningfully to the development and achievement of the NDCs; and identification of action points/recommendations for CSOs, IP&LCs and the government on how NDCs can contribute to the enabling conditions for community and Indigenous peoples' rights.

In Latin America, work has been done under the ESCAZU agreement. IUCN NL provided support to the Environmental Citizenship Training for Women Defenders (ECA para Defensoras) in collaboration with FARN and Eco Maxeí from Argentina and Mexico. During 2022, the first edition of the training brought together 25 female environmental human rights defenders from Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Argentina. This training provided the tools needed for W(EHRDs) to exercise their rights. Building on the Escazú Agreement in Latin America and the Caribbean, IUCN NL and partners are seeking to reverse the situation where dozens of environmental defenders are killed every year - a large percentage of whom are Indigenous or local leaders. Local partners mobilised representatives from Latin American and Caribbean during the second Conference of the Parties (COP2) of the Escazú Agreement⁵⁸ in April 2022, to push for the advancement of the Environmental Defenders Protection Implementation Plan.

4.4.6 Review of the programme ToC: risks and underlying assumptions

Theory of change

The ToC illustrates how the programme intends to bring about change and how that change should contribute to the wider impacts and ultimate goal. It provides the basis for the direction of change and where the programme is heading but provides the space for innovation and different approaches. It is broad enough to encompass the complexity of the challenge, the pathways taken by the different

partners and countries and for each country to be able to develop and implement its own ToC which contributes to the overarching ToC.

At the global MTR meeting, country coordinators and other partners and alliance member representatives emphasised how valuable the ToC was in their annual planning and their assessment of progress. They said they used the ToC much more than the monitoring framework, as the results indicators and the connection between the two was unclear to them.

The ToC is a powerful, visual representation of the change the programme is trying to achieve and as such provides a unifying tool for the programme. The delivery of the programme activities and strategies under the sphere of control are expected to contribute to the achievement of 11 outcomes organised around the three pathways. If achieved, these are expected to lead to higher level impacts in the programme's sphere of interest. Assessing the programme's progress towards the projects outcomes (sphere of influence) is challenged by the lack of measures which the programme can use to assess progress.

The programme has adopted an outcome harvesting approach to assess progress at the sphere of influence/control level. An assessment of what partners report as outcomes in many cases are activities or strategies implemented. For the outcome harvesting to inform the future of the programme, it would benefit from developing concrete metrics to assess the outcomes, or at the least provide training to ensure that partners report at the right levels of change. This will ensure that changes at output, outcome and impact level are clearly differentiated.

⁵⁸The Escazú Agreement is a regional political treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean to improve access to information, participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters. Its full name is the "Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean." The agreement came into force in 2021, and the first COP took place in April 2022

Implementation risks and assumptions

The FfJF programme identified three main types of risks that could impact programme delivery. These included contextual, programme and implementation risks. The comprehensive risk analysis conducted during project design was robust and, consequently, the measures suggested have worked well to mitigate the impacts on the programme. Chapter 3 of the report highlighted the main contextual factors that have emerged since the inception of the project.

The MTR found that the programme had been proactive in the monitoring and development of responses to the changing environment. The annual country reflection meetings were utilised to assess the context of implementation and to identify responsive measures. The annual reports demonstrated that the programme had effectively monitored risks, identified new ones and developed mitigation measures. For instance, two new risks emerging from the war in Ukraine and price inflation have been fully included in the risk management framework. Additionally, the rise of misinformation and disinformation linked to the programme's areas of work has been identified.

As part of the MTR, all country teams were tasked with carrying out a participatory review of the country's risk framework and to assess the validity of the assumptions. These assessments effectively validated the programmes' risk analysis while developing country-specific adjustments. For instance, in **Colombia**, partners re-emphasised that long term results depend on political will and are subject to a politically changing context. In **DRC**, the risk of financial resource sufficiency was identified as well

as the worsening security situation in the eastern landscapes as well as increasing repression of (W) EHRDs. In **Bolivia**, partners highlighted the intensification of repressive actions by the government. Partners also identified the ESCAZU agreement as an important measure that they could leverage to advocate for the protection and promotion of (W) EHRDs. In **Liberia, the Philippines, Uganda, Indonesia, Viet Nam** and **Cameroon** no additional risks were identified.

Considering the robust risks analysis implemented during the programme design which was revised during the project baseline, the related programme assumptions have also held true for the most part. Only **Cameroon** and **Viet Nam** considered some initial assumptions as no longer valid. A common theme was related to the assumption that increased coverage of climate issues would cause private companies and governments to invest in climate resilience. However, with the Ukraine war, economic downturn, inflation and the rise of mis/disinformation on climate solutions, there has been an uptick in resistance and a drive by governments and private companies to promote the use of fossil fuels. This further justifies the role and relevance of the FfJF programme, to maintain pressure and momentum to achieve a just energy transition. The review of programme assumptions is presented in Table 7.



Figure 10: Review of programme assumptions

	Assumption	Justification	Does this assumption still hold?	If not, what changes
1a	With secure tenure and access rights to land and natural resources, inclusive decision making and adequate capacities and support in place, IP&LCs will prosper and effectively protect forests.	Experience in the GLA showed that, if the right incentives are in place, community-based management is an effective mechanism for sustainable conservation and use of forests. Incentives include building local capacity, promoting inclusive local governance, having supportive legislation in place and supporting sufficient livelihood opportunities.	Yes	Yes but what is called incentives here should simply be built into programme activities
1b	Forest and land use will become more sustainable and resilient to change once national and landscape level decision-making processes integrate the interests of IP&LCs and systems are in place to implement agreed sustainable resource-use plans in an effective, transparent and equitable way.	We assumed that land use decisions that reflect the inputs, interests and concerns of all relevant/affected local stakeholders would better consider the impacts on those stakeholders. We assumed this would be more sustainable because (1) those decisions take the range of interests that exist, including long-term, public and off-site interests into account; and (2) there would be a broader support for their implementation. Taking a wider range of interests into account would prevent drastic land use changes and lead to measures and decisions that maintain existing land uses on which people depend for their livelihoods.	Yes	
2	Regulating and challenging power imbalances between economic and political elites and IP&LCs will effectively reduce deforestation and human rights abuses.	Unequal distribution of economic, political and social power is a fundamental underlying driver of deforestation. Inequality also forms a barrier for the societal cooperation required to maintain forest landscapes in the long run. We assumed that more equal economic, political and social relations would result in more checks and balances on harmful developments, better representation and balancing of interests and ultimately the development of trust required for cooperation in favour of long-term maintenance of forest landscapes.	Yes	
3	Binding (inter)national legal frameworks are necessary to complement or replace voluntary frameworks and effectively impose norms on the activities of corporates and governments.	Legislation and enforcement based on international norms is a prerequisite to regulate and guide activities of corporations and governments. With binding legal frameworks, companies and governments can be held legally accountable. In addition, the adoption of binding international sustainability standards and criteria helps to create a level playing field between corporations, governments and IP&LCs. Voluntary sustainability commitments can stimulate positive action towards raising standards and challenge businesses to improve on corporate social responsibility. However, the non-binding nature limits their implementation.	Yes	
4	Binding legal frameworks, compliance and enforcement are effective in securing operational civic space.	The operational civic space of human rights and environmental CSOs, IP&LCs and (W)EHRDs is under threat in all GLA countries, often through the implementation of restrictive laws and policies. Binding legal frameworks to protect civic space, and the enforcement of these frameworks, is therefore essential.	Yes	
5	Ensuring operational space for (W)EHRDs is indispensable for effective forest conservation and will also increase civic space for other civil society actors.	We assumed that successful action and legal frameworks to expand civic space of (W)EHRDs, or at least to prevent it from shrinking, would have positive spill-over effects and benefit other societal actors by encouraging them to express themselves freely, by dissuading state authorities and corporations from resorting to smear campaigns and attacks and by institutional learning of different ways of dealing with conflict than repression and elimination. (W)EHRD activity is often linked to opposition against deforestation and environmental crime, so providing operational space to (W)EHRDs would strengthen societal resistance to these processes and thereby promote forest conservation.	Yes	

	Assumption	Justification	Does this assumption still hold?	If not, what changes
6	We assumed that concern about the impacts of climate change on doing business and on the economy as a whole would drive corporations and governments to take action in favour of forest conservation.	We have seen a growing awareness of climate change over the past few years, resulting in large mobilisations in many countries on all continents. They include: growing resistance against new fossil fuel projects; mass demonstrations related to forest fires and at each UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP); Greta Thunberg Fridays for Future school strikes; and Extinction Rebellion. Research shows that worldwide close to 70% of people view climate change as a major threat. ⁷⁹ Climate change will affect all sectors of society and a better awareness and understanding of these impacts is triggering many corporations to seriously explore how to make their practices more sustainable, reduce their risks and costs and protect their reputation. Governments are expected to act to protect citizens, fulfil international commitments and reduce the economic and social impacts of climate change. Therefore, increased concern about the impacts of climate change, connected with awareness of the opportunities offered by forests in mitigating it and adapting to it, is expected to lead to action in favour of forest conservation.	Yes	
7	A well-organised, legitimate, accountable civil society effectively represents the full diversity of voices and interests of citizens, including IP&LCs, women and youth and nature.	For the success of our programme, it is essential that civil society represents the voices and interests that live in society at large, as well as voices that are underrepresented, in our case those of IP&LCs, women and youth and nature. We assumed that once civil society is organised and accountable to constituents it has legitimacy and is capable of representing the full range of voices, rather than those of a few or of CSOs themselves.	This will only hold true if a significant amount of consultation and capacity strengthening is undertaken to begin to addressing long-standing and deeply rooted inequalities.	This does not hold as an assumption without activities being built into the programme.
8	The interests of civil society at large are well aligned with those of IP&LCs and favour the protection and sustainable management of forests.	IP&LCs are facing increasingly negative impacts of climate change and loss of functioning natural ecosystems. GLA works with civil society actors including IP&LCs and women and youth to safeguard forests and forested landscapes. We believe that this leads to an alignment of interests and objectives. Nevertheless, we recognise that IP&LCs may pursue a range of different goals by mobilising the support of various actors and that trade-offs between different goals may exist.	Yes, especially with the increased focus on climate change.	
9	Despite different approaches, CSOs will overcome their differences and collaborate to achieve shared goals.	We assumed that when they agree on common goals, CSOs that are united in a partnership as diverse as GLA would be able to bridge contrasting approaches and ideology, and mobilise a wider array of instruments, strategies, tools and networks in effective lobby and advocacy activities.	Yes though this may take some action on the part of partners.	
10	Well governed forests provide a large range of services to humans, thereby fulfilling human rights.	This is related to assumption 1 where we assumed that IP&LC governance of forests is sustainable and contributes to resilience to change. If forests are well-governed and based on rights-based approaches, forests directly and indirectly contribute to a range of human needs and rights, including the right to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture and development	This alone will not fulfil human rights but will contribute to it. More action is required to fulfil human rights.	Needs to change to 'thereby contributing to human rights'

	Assumption	Justification	Does this assumption still hold?	If not, what changes
11	Well governed forests will store carbon, sequester carbon dioxide and provide basic livelihoods needs that increase the resilience of IP&LC to the effects of climate change.	Forests provide a range of services. Not only do they provide livelihoods to millions of people but they also sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide, store and cycle water and nutrients and harbour biodiversity. Deforestation fuels climate change, which leads to increased frequency of extreme weather events and natural disasters, rising sea-levels and the spread of tropical and vector-borne diseases. Forests that are well governed are better protected from factors that drive degradation, they retain their capacity to provide ecosystem services including carbon sequestration and are more resilient to climate change. As a result, these forests will be better able to fulfil the needs and provide the services that underpin IP&LC livelihoods. This 'natural capital' will help them better absorb and resist the negative effects of climate change.	Yes	
12	Through improved understanding of their rights, strengthening their organisations for collective action and engaging with other actors, IP&LCs will increase their agency and the likelihood of policies and practices that favour them, reduce land grabs and ensure the long-term maintenance of forest landscapes.	IP&LCs are key actors in the management of forest landscapes. With agency we refer to the ability of IP&LCs and members of these communities to choose, act and influence realities around them, whether individually or collectively. Rights and legal processes provide one entry point for IP&LCs to exercise agency by interrogating and renegotiating the ways in which policies and practices affect them. We expect that that socio-legal empowerment - the combination of recourse to both soft and hard law combined with related strategies such as collective action and gaining greater political savviness - will contribute to this.	Yes, but more action needs to be taken to ensure it is inclusive.	This does not hold as an assumption without activities being built into the programme.
13	Adequate legal and institutional frameworks are a necessary precondition to foster inclusive participation of IP&LCs and civil society in the governance of forested landscapes.	Inclusion of civil society actors and IP&LCs in existing legal and institutional frameworks around forest governance provides one of the strongest incentives for authorities to allow for participation of these stakeholders. Without legal backing, authorities will be inclined to bypass participation processes.	Yes	
14	Greater and explicit recognition of gender equality and the different ways in which gender affects forest use and vice versa, will result in a more sustainable governance of forested landscapes.	Women play key roles in forest management and the protection and use of natural resources. Their voices are therefore indispensable for sustainable governance. At the same time, inclusive governance will contribute to increased gender equality and recognition of women's roles.	Partly as this requires action as well as recognition	
15	Governments and (inter) governmental bodies will be open for policy dialogues on gender responsive policies.	Gender equality and women's and young people's rights are widely acknowledged in international frameworks. We therefore expect that governments and (inter)governmental bodies, such as the UN, EU and other regional bodies, will take responsibility for ensuring women's and youth participation and the development of gender-responsive policies.	Yes, but many advocacy activities need to be built into planning.	
16	By involving feminist and women's rights organisations in the mainstreaming of gender in the GLA programme, partners and the consortium will become more gender responsive.	Through gender analysis and gathering gendered evidence on drivers of deforestation, GLA partners will better understand how to promote gender-responsive policies and strategies to address those drivers. A greater understanding of gender issues and experience in the implementation of gender-responsive strategies will enable the Alliance members and CSO partners to advocate more effectively for gender-responsive policies	Yes, as long as trust is established.	
17	IP&LCs will protect forests and stop the expansion of agro commodities, extractive industries and infrastructure at the expense of forests.	We assumed that IP&LCs would prefer to protect forests and support sustainable governance of forest landscapes if this is compatible with their vision of 'self-determination' in the form of clear tenure and access rights, clean water, food security and possibilities for income generation.	Yes, in most cases.	

4.4.7 Overall assessment of achievements to date

Implementation risks and assumptions

The programme was highly successful at mid-term, as demonstrated by the significant achievements reported under the three programme Pathways. Table 11 makes an assessment of progress against each indicator in the programme's results framework using a traffic light system. The updated MEL framework is Annex 2a.

Table 11: Summary of progress towards programme indicators

Goal: Tropical forests and forest landscapes are sustainably and inclusively governed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, to fulfil human rights and safeguard local livelihoods		
Programme Indicators	MTR Result	Notes / Comments
1. Area of land (hectares) under improved sustainable forest management or other improved practices contributing to decreased deforestation	34,066,400 hectares	Globally On Track - 82% towards 2025 target. This breakdown is presented with the caveat that some partners may have underreported, as in some categories they did not fully report on all targets.
2. 2a. Number of people (women, men, young men and young women) who are better prepared and/or supported to use improved sustainable practices and to participate in (local) governance	47,650 women 122,860 men 6,840 young women 15,370 young men	80% towards target. As of mid-2023, the FfJF programme had reached more than 192,000 people in various landscapes and countries. The programme still needs to work towards reaching the targeted number of women, young men and young women, standing at roughly 52%, 43% and 21% of the intended targets respectively.
2b. Number of people (women, men, young men and young women) who practise (improved) sustainable activities and/or actively participate in (local) governance and thus experience increased adaptive capacity (resilience) to climate change	6,810 women 12,829 men 1,975 young women 4,620 young men	As of mid-2023, there were 26,225 people recorded to have adopted improved sustainable practices in agriculture and forestry (54% of the target) or to be actively involved in local governance processes (41% of the target), with the remaining five percent reported with unknown distribution among the two categories. This represents roughly 60% of the previously determined target, or 66%, 45%, 88% and 43% for men, women, young men and young women respectively.
3. Number and nature of policies, investments and regulations implemented, complied with and/or blocked by local, national, regional and global public and private actors that address drivers of deforestation, distinguishing between those that have a gender perspective and those that do not	72 changes in policies with 42 representing a change in gender/inclusiveness	On track: 75% progress towards target Unsure if 'inclusive and gender-responsive governance structures' means that they have a specific gender perspective
4. Number and nature of changes in policies and practices contributing to inclusive and gender-responsive governance structures and sustainable IP&LC forest management	91 changes in policies and practices contributing to inclusive and gender-responsive governance structures and sustainable IP&LC forest management	Exceeded: 111% over target 51 out of 91 policy changes represented a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups

<p>5. Number and nature of changes in policies, agreements, investments, standards and regulations adopted by local, national, regional and global public and private actors to address the drivers of deforestation in a gender-responsive way and to protect the rights of (W)EHRDS</p>	<p>26 policies have been adopted/improved/drafted by local, national, regional and global actors to address drivers of deforestation and to protect civic space and protect the rights of (W)EHRDS specifically</p>		<p>On track: 54% progress towards target</p> <p>17 out of 26 policies represented a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups</p>
<p>6. Extent to which men and women IP&LCs, men and women EHRDs, groups that work with a gender transformative/ gender justice approach, and other CSOs experience increased civic space, human rights, and women's rights</p>	<p>No data currently available</p>		<p>The FfJF civic space survey reported an improvement in civic space, even though a third of alliance members reported deterioration or strong deterioration. The MTR found significant achievements in the protection and promotion of (W)EHRDs</p>
<p>7. Degree to which environmental IP&LC and deforestation drivers' issues, including gender just reports, affecting IP&LCs are taken up by and are on the agenda of social movements, constituents, the media</p>	<p>170 relevant issues/topics taken up by social movements, constituent and media, covering 11 countries including the Netherlands</p>		<p>No target</p>
<p>8. Number of spaces in which IP&LCs including women and youth have increased participation in decision-making processes, are more active in monitoring and enforcement bodies and their interests are increasingly recognised by governments at the national and international level</p>	<p>140 spaces in which IP&LCs including women and youth have increased participation in decision-making processes, are more active in monitoring and enforcement as well as increasingly recognised by governments in 11 countries including the Netherlands.</p>		<p>No target</p> <p>Needs further differentiation - including women and youth;</p>
<p>9. Degree to which CSOs have increased capacity and skills to collaborate and advocate effectively and/or with improved ability to activate and strengthen the capacity of other civil actors</p>	<p>As a result of the FfJF programme, at least 72 first ring partners have increased their capacity in different topics and 111 second ring CBOs/CSOs have been strengthened.</p>		<p>No target, however, an online survey showed 52% of respondents reporting considerable improvements in capacity</p>
<p>11. Degree to which actions by Alliance members and CSO partners are gender transformative</p>	<p>43 (≈ 66%) Alliance partners have paid special attention to gender in their strategies and actions in 12 countries. These reported on a total of 110 campaigns and other advocacy strategies using a gender and social inclusion lens</p>		<p>Positive results at the international level but needs renewed efforts to avoid perpetuating and possibly deepening inequality at the community level</p>
<p>12. Degree to which Alliance members adhere to the principles included in the FfJF vision of collaboration</p>	<p>49 partners of the FfJF have actively worked to adhere to the principles of collaboration. This includes collaboration between partners at the country level, designing joint activities and strategies and international collaboration</p>		<p>56% of respondents in an online survey were satisfied or very satisfied with power relations</p>

4.5 Inclusion, gender equality and youth

While deforestation harms and disrupts IP&LCs and people's livelihoods in general, it also exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and inequalities within communities. Within IP&LCs, deforestation disproportionately affects women and youth, and other groups that face existing inequalities (linked to ethnicity, ability, sexuality, socio-economic status). FfJF programme document

Introduction

The need for a strong focus on gender equality and inclusion, and actions to address gender and power inequalities, was justified in the baseline report which said GLA 1 found that:

- despite existing policies, laws and quotas in many countries, the participation by adult women directly involved in public office or in (local) governance processes, in particular in community-level decision making and forest governance, was more limited than that of men and the participation of young women and men was very limited.
- lack of women's participation in community level decision making and forest governance has been highlighted as a major obstacle to effective, sustainable and inclusive forest management. This highlights the need to invest in gender equalities to address obstacles to effective, sustainable and inclusive forest management instead of considering it an add on at the cost of something else.
- the frequency with which IP&LCs participate in decision-making processes and monitoring and enforcement bodies was greatest for IP&LCs composed of men. Young women IP&LC groups participated the least.
- social movements and CSOs composed of adult men were consulted more than those composed of adult women, while groups mostly composed of young women were consulted the least.
- more training and support for GLA members and partners was needed to realise the transformational changes that the programme was aiming for.

Consequently, the FfJF programme explicitly aims for a gender-just or gender transformative approach which ensures that gendered actions and policies are embedded in overall planning, structures and the organisational culture of the consortium and local partners. Action at all levels is key to achieving the ultimate programme goal of the 'sustainable and inclusive governance of tropical forests and forest landscapes to mitigate and adapt to climate change, to fulfil human rights and safeguard local livelihoods' (AR 2022). However, power structures and gender and age-related roles and behaviour are deeply ingrained in society, families and people's thinking and within the programme structures and partner organisations themselves. Changing this takes reflection, learning and time. As described earlier in the report, it also takes willingness and awareness on the part of all partners and staff to be proactive, make changes and prioritise resources to address gender and power inequalities. This needs to be taken into account when considering the MTR recommendations.

The programme's main strategies include the capacity building of partner CSOs on mainstreaming, lobbying and advocacy of different state actors at the national and international level to implement binding human and women's rights in forest, climate and biodiversity policy; calling for attention on feminist perspectives in the JET and ASEAN guidelines on recognition of customary tenure; and for women's participation and leadership in development and land-use plans such as the ancestral domain sustainable development plans and in other decision-making spaces.

4.5.1 The structure of gender support

WECF and GFC

WECF/GFC take on an advisory and facilitating role aimed at strengthening transformative gender mainstreaming and promoting an intersectional approach in the ToC, intervention strategies and indicators at both the central (Alliance) and country level.

At least one representative from WECF/GFC participates in all Alliance-level governance and coordination bodies. Through this participation, they work to ensure that gender and intersectionality are integrated in all aspects of the programme, including implementation, planning, monitoring and advocacy strategies. WECF/GFC also engage in some of the thematic groups where these align with our lobby and advocacy work at the organisational level.

Incorporating WECF (with its strategic partner GFC) into the programme has resulted in a symbiotic relationship in which the Alliance and partners benefit from the experience and expertise of the two organisations; WECF and GFC receive additional funding for their work and greater operating exposure and the Alliance can tap into WECF/GFC's long-standing advocacy work with the Dutch government and in CBD and UNFCCC.

In-country gender technical partners

In addition to WECF/GLC being brought into the Alliance, the two organisations also brought their network of women's organisations in a number of programme countries to liaise with, support and strengthen the gender capacity of in-country partners. These have become known as gender technical partners (GTP). Acknowledging that the FfJP programme is diverse and complex, with many different landscapes and contextual challenges and that no 'one-size-fits-all', the role of WECF/GFC and partners in country depends on the needs of the GLA country (implementing) partners, context and the question of whether a working relationship and trust can be established between country gender partners and implementing partners. Where this has not been possible, or in countries where no partner exists, gender consultants have been engaged to provide support.

The gender hub

Six members of WECF and GLC attend the gender hub meetings, joined by a representative from each of the six Alliance partners. They meet once or twice a month and, as described in the governance document, monitor and review progress of gender strategies and results across the programme and ensure systematic communication, capacity strengthening and knowledge exchange. They advise GLA partner CSOs and Alliance members on how to improve and implement an intersectional and gender transformative approach to achieve inclusive and sustainable forest governance and advise the SB, PCG and PMEL groups and GLA country partners on how gender can be integrated at all levels of programme development, implementation, monitoring and learning.

The above structure has been well received by all key informants interviewed and the support provided by WECF and GFC has been strongly appreciated throughout the programme. There continues to be a lack of clarity about what the gender hub does vis a vis the technical partners. The WECF continues to work on tasks that the gender hub agrees to carry out, leading to pressures on the technical partners to deliver on the mandate.

4.5.2 The programme’s progress towards its gender and intersectionality objectives

The inclusion of a gender transformative approach is well on track and there are many achievements, even though the journey is long. The baseline assessment made a number of recommendations in relation to gender, as shown in Table 12, along with achievements at midline.

Table 12: Progress towards addressing baseline recommendations on gender

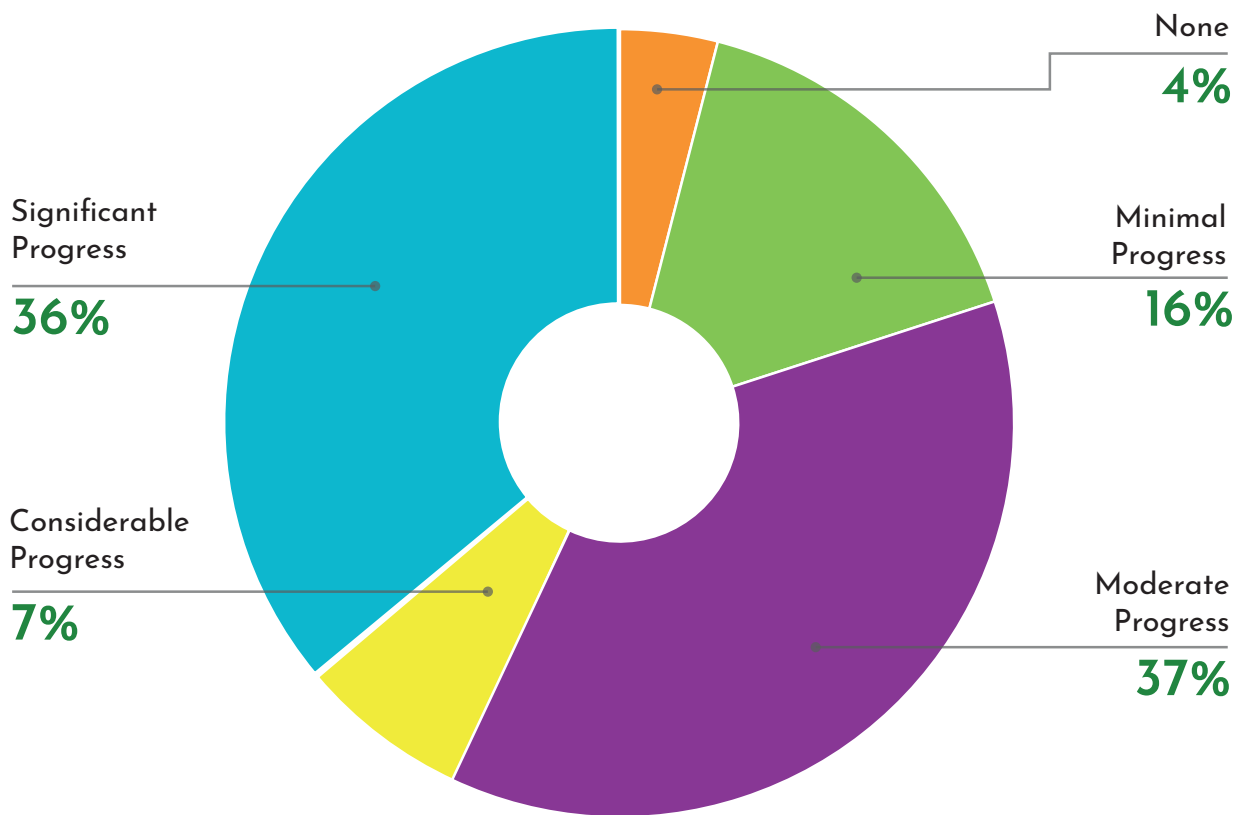
Baseline recommendations	Progress/achievements
To pay special attention to increasing the participation of IP&LC groups composed of adult women and of young women or young men in governance processes.	There has been some excellent examples of involvement of women’s groups in advocacy and protection of the forested landscapes in which they live and work. These show what can be achieved but are still insufficient to ensure significant transformation towards inclusive governance. There is some evidence of involvement of young men, but there remains very limited, if any, involvement of young women.
To pay special attention to women, young women and young men when providing support for the adoption of sustainable activities.	While there are some good examples of this, much more needs to be done. There is also a need to investigate the sustainable strategies already undertaken by local community members, women and men before training in different methodologies not necessarily appropriate for the local situation. However, where young women and young men have been involved in awareness of climate issues, they have reported significant enthusiasm for respecting and preserving the forest for the future.
To internally discuss outcome indicators 4 and 5 and other indicators that refer to being gender-responsive or gender-transformative.	Some discussion has occurred and an assessment of the extent to which policies are gender-responsive or transformative has been made. However, since the gender-specific indicators for each indicator have been removed there has been a tendency to focus more and more on just indicator 11.
The involvement of different groups such as young and adult women along with young men and to work on their own gender action plans.	It is unclear whether this has happened yet in any location.
For partners and Alliance members to each work with WECF, GFC or country-based GPTs to provide capacity building and support for the adoption of a gender-just approach in programming and at the organisational level.	An initial round of capacity building was undertaken although Covid-19 created some delays and challenges. There is now a need for renewed effort. However, there is also a need to listen, understand and start from where people are at, using terminology that they understand and adapting programmes to the local context.

4.5.3 Gender transformation in landscape IP&LCs: in country achievements to date

'For us, forest and land are not only economically valuable, but have a broader meaning. Forests and land have social, cultural values and are part of the existence of women's lives. This is what must be guarded and defended' - words from a woman leader in Indonesia.

This statement emphasises the relevance of a gender transformative approach in the governance of forests by this programme. While the quantitative data has yet to show any improvement in terms of women's and youth's participation in forest governance, and currently shows a deepening of inequalities (as outlined in Pathway A), the perception of partners is that there has been progress. In the MTR online survey, when partners were asked about the progress of women and youth participation in forest governance, 36% indicated that considerable progress had been made and 37% that moderate progress had been made. Four percent felt that no progress had been made, as seen in Figure 9.

Figure 10: Participation of women and youth in forest governance structures



The results of the level of women and young women's participation in decision making can be seen in Table 13. Only 10 out of the 95 participants felt that women and young women have independent authority and can take responsibility for decisions made.

Table 13: Level of participation of women and young women in decision making on forest protection

Score	Numbers	Percentage
Score 0 - This group is not involved	3	3%
Score 1 - This group participates in events organised by (no) governments without being aware of their purpose or objectives	8	8%
Score 2 - This group is consulted but has no control over whether their views are taken into account	35	37%
Score 3 - This group is co-deciding but they do not have independent authority to make decisions	39	41%
Score 4 - This group is represented in forest governance leadership positions, takes decisions independently and takes responsibility for them including for implementation	10	11%
Total	95	100%

However, there are many examples of women's participation at the landscape and country level, from which lessons can be learned and ideas adapted to different contexts.

For example, in **Ghana**, the FfJF programme provided local women in the forest landscapes with training on advocacy and education on current issues including natural resources and cocoa. As a result, women's groups received recognition by relevant state institutions and are able to stand up for their rights. A women's cocoa farmer cooperative was able to engage with the Cocoa Health and Extension Division of the Cocobod within the Adjoafoa Cocoa District (Juaboso-Bia) landscape for direct supply of inputs instead of routing them through their male counterparts. The same group, together with two other women's cocoa groups within the landscape, came together to urge the government to expedite action on reforming the tree tenure arrangement to give them benefits from trees they nurture on their farms.

In **Bolivia**, CCIMCAT provided the women of Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní APG in Yacuibá Tarija with assistance in reclaiming territory, which had been in the hands of agro-industrial landowners. Despite having already obtained the land title, they faced a significant legal battle to defend their territory. The leadership of this fight was held by a female captain. Once the legal victory was achieved and they had their land title, the women had to physically take possession of the territory, setting up tents under challenging conditions. This experience led to the creation of a book, "First Ancestral Territory Longed for and Consolidated" by the Organized Force of Guaraní Women."

Focus group discussions in the **DRC** highlighted the benefits of the support provided by the programme while reiterating their commitment to take active part in the management of their natural resources.

The women's group Baloloke (Maendeleo) received several training courses on empowerment and support in the form of inputs. The group expressed the need for effective advocacy both at the local and Kinshasa levels so that their voices will be heard. In this way, they believe they would be able to confront park officials as part of their population has been dispossessed of their land. A group of young men from KAVUMU said, 'our lives depend on the existence of the forest. We were born there, and we grew up in and of the forest. We want to be involved in making decisions regarding park management. We are subject to decisions made by other people on our behalf, sometimes without consulting us. We have become a commodity for certain NGOs. It dehumanizes us'. This suggests the need for the programme to engage with the park management officials in this landscape in order to find pathways for community participation in decision making.

In **Viet Nam**, GLA2 partners, Tropenbos, PanNature, NTFP-EP VN and their affiliate, Caritas Da Lat, actively pursued knowledge in women's rights, gender equality and children's protection. They have implemented a newly-established code of conduct covering women's rights, gender equality, children's protection, human rights, prevention of sexual harassment, and fostering positive working behaviours. The code is now followed by all NTFP-EP VN staff and partners in all project activities, ensuring a safe and respectful environment for everyone involved.

While the changes in gender equality are more powerfully highlighted in qualitative examples and discrete gender indicators no longer exist in the programme monitoring framework, it is still useful to consider the gender achievements against each programme quantitative indicators, as shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Achievements against programme indicators

Goal: Tropical forests and forest landscapes are sustainably and inclusive governed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, to fulfil human rights and safeguard local livelihoods	
Programme indicators	Gendered achievement
1. Area of land (hectares) under improved sustainable forest management or other improved practices contributing to decreased deforestation.	Geographic area of land assessed. Issues of women's land ownership, tenure, access and control yet to be considered.
2a. Number of people (women, men, young men and young women) who are better prepared and/or supported to use improved sustainable practices and to participate in (local) governance.	Much smaller proportion of women than men supported or trained by the programme. Even fewer young women targeted. (See Pathway A)
2b. Number of people (women, men, young men and young women) who practise (improved) sustainable activities and/or actively participate in (local) governance and thus experience increased adaptive capacity (resilience) to climate change.	Excellent examples of good practice in terms of women's activism and leadership found in almost every country, but yet to translate into any significant numbers or transformation.
3. Number and nature of policies, investments and regulations implemented, complied with and/or blocked by local, national, regional and global public and private actors that address drivers of deforestation, distinguishing between those that have a gender perspective and those that do not	Of the 72 changes, 42 represented a change in gender and/or inclusiveness.
4. Number and nature of changes in policies and practices contributing to inclusive and gender-responsive governance structures and sustainable IP&LC forest management.	51 out of 91 policy changes represented a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups. 54 of the 91 policies depicted a change in IP&LC inclusive governance structures, while others are changes in multistakeholder settings or general government structures.
5. Number and nature of changes in policies, agreements, investments, standards and regulations adopted by local, national, regional and global public and private actors to address the drivers of deforestation in a gender-responsive way and to protect the rights of (W)EHRDS.	17 out of 26 policies represented a change in gender equality, justice and/or inclusiveness of marginalised groups.
6. Extent to which men and women IP&LCs, men and women EHRDs, groups that work with a gender transformative/gender justice approach and other CSOs experience increased civic space, human rights, and women's rights	No data available
7. Degree to which environmental IP&LC and deforestation drivers issues, including gender just reports, affecting IP&LCs are taken up by and are on the agenda of social movements, constituents, media.	No data available on number of gender-just reports.
8. Number of spaces in which IP&LCs, including women and youth, have increased participation in decision-making processes, are more active in monitoring and enforcement bodies and their interests are increasingly recognized by governments at national and international level.	A total of 140 spaces in which IP&LCs have increased participation in decision-making were reported including: 32 women's groups, 48 Indigenous communities, 21 local communities, 6 CBOs, 19 CSOs and 14 social movements. However, this does not necessarily indicate that women and/or youth increased their participation in decision making.

<p>9. Degree to which CSOs have increased capacity and skills to collaborate and advocate effectively and/or with improved ability to activate and strengthen the capacity of other civil actors</p>	<p>At least 72 first ring partners have reported increasing their capacity on different topics and 111 second ring CBOs/CSOs have been strengthened.</p> <p>No indication of the degree to which CSO partners have strengthened capacity and understanding to claim and use political space to ensure gender just forest governance, or to fight drivers of deforestation with a gender perspective and/or to stand up for WEHRDs and women's rights</p>
<p>10. Degree to which actions by Alliance members and CSO partners are gender transformative</p>	<p>43 (≈ 66%) Alliance partners have paid special attention to gender in their strategies and actions in 11 countries. These included a total of 110 campaigns and other advocacy strategies using a gender and social inclusion lens. The main strategies included capacity building of implementing partners and CSOs on gender mainstreaming; lobbying and advocacy of different state actors at the national and international level for instance on implementing binding human and women's rights in climate and biodiversity policy; calling for attention on feminist perspectives in the just energy transition; and in the ASEAN, guidelines on recognition of customary tenure and women's participation and leadership in development and land-use plans such as the ancestral domain sustainable development plans, Additionally, 36 Alliance partners reported having developed/strengthened their organisational gender action plans.</p>
<p>11. Degree to which Alliance members adhere to the principles included in the GLA vision of collaboration.</p>	<p>No information related to this indicator.</p>

4.5.4 Gender transformation in programme organisations

After training/capacity building by the programme, the majority (77%) of the Alliance partners have formulated an organisational gender action plan (OGAP). This encouraged partners to reflect more about their organisation and understand that gender equality is not just about having equal numbers of men and women in the office. The plans are internal and external and set out the things they intend to do the within their own organisation and how they will approach gender equality in their activities. While it has not been possible to see the OGAPs, interviews and statements by partners in annual reports revealed that there appears to be greater focus on the internal aspects of the OGAP than the external plan.

In an online survey, 77% of partners indicated that their organisation had an OGAP. Of those, 50% stated that the plan was implemented as planned and 33% to a moderate extent, as illustrated in Figure 10.

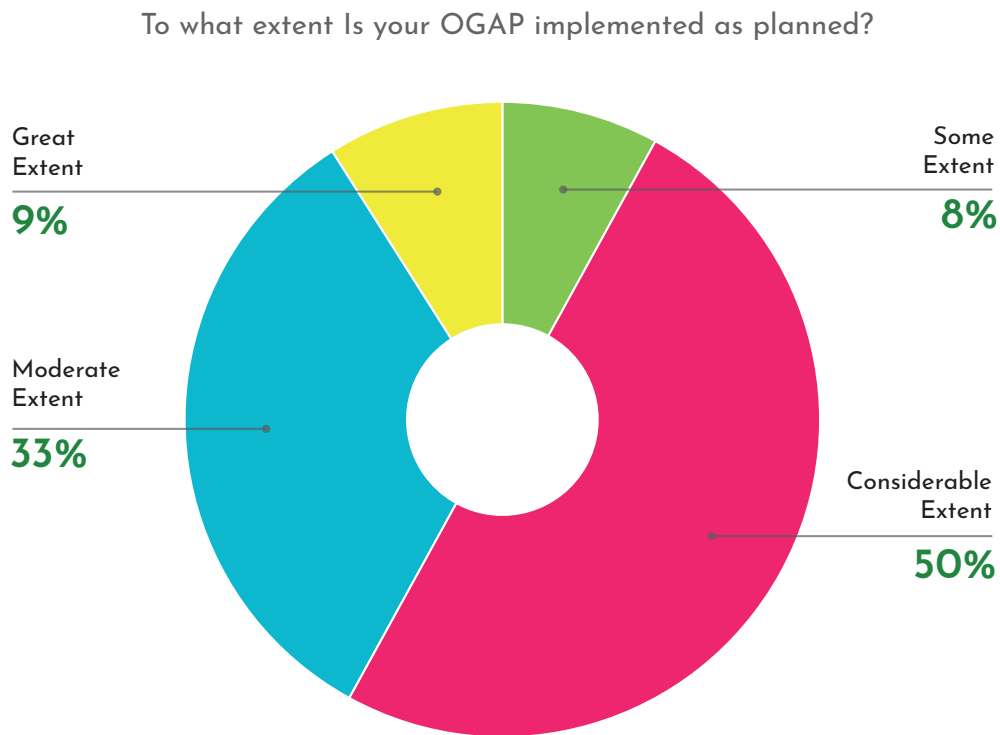


Figure 11: To what extent Is your OGAP implemented as planned?

4.5.5 Gender at a global level

At a global level, WECF/GFC have had considerable success in terms of advocacy at European and international levels, for example:

WECF/GFC has been advocating to the Dutch government to improve gender awareness in international policies. In October 2022, WECF launched a policy analysis entitled 'Forest feminist frameworks: Why gender matters for Dutch forest and biodiversity policy.'

At the end of 2021, WECF and Dutch partners provided input to the development of the Dutch

feminist foreign policy. In May 2022, a reaction to the first commitment was published and in November a written response to the ministry's online consultation was submitted.

In a survey of FfJF partners, 45% of respondents indicated that Alliance partners were gender transformative to a considerable extent, 38% to a moderate extent but only 3% to a great extent.

To what extent are the actions by Alliance members gender transformative?

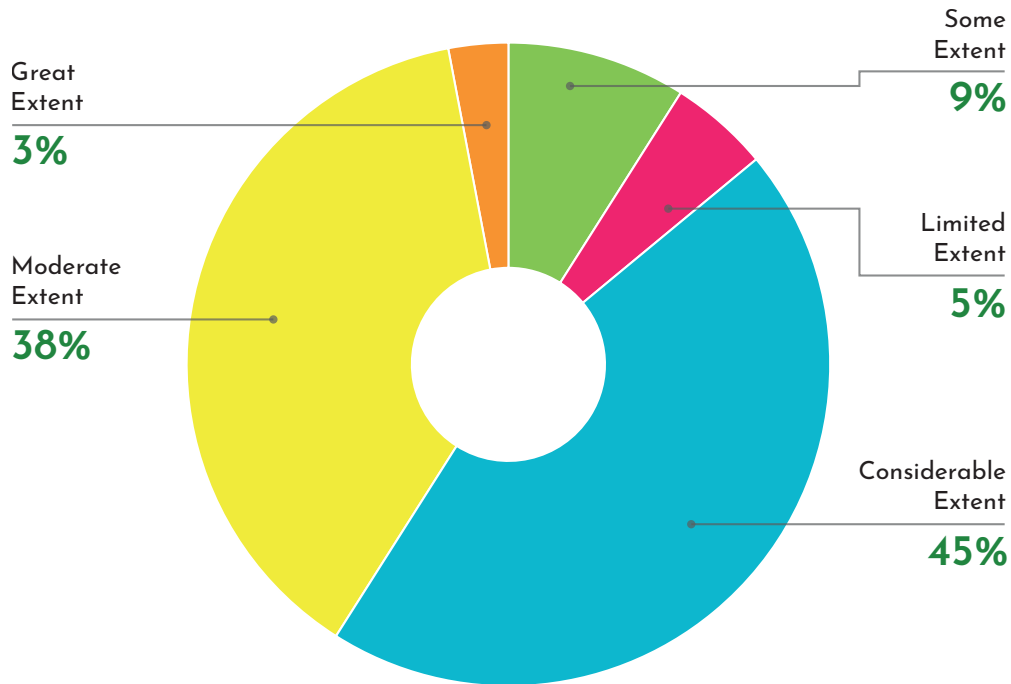


Figure 12: Degree of gender transformative of Alliance members

Challenges ahead

Despite the many positive results to date, the long journey of addressing gender equality and inclusion is still ongoing and all programme personnel need to remain aware that achieving the outcomes is dependent on all Alliance partners being proactive in addressing inequalities to enable women, youth and those with intersectional constraints to effectively participate in any local governance structures. As one key informant, a member of the gender hub, explained:

'We always encouraged partners to be more proactive towards gender transformative. But I think this is a long-term process, as some GLA partners still do not fully understand what "inclusive forest governance" means or do not see the win/win aspects of integrating gender.'

Gender already embedded

A further challenge is to help some partners understand that gender is not an add-on but already deeply embedded in the programme, their work and the decisions they take. A key informant explained that, when encouraging a partner to address gender issues in their forested landscapes, she was told: 'You know, this is a forestry programme -

not a gender programme. The work that we're already doing is hard enough. We're already fighting, you know, the powers that be in our countries and outside our countries - these big multinational, extractive companies. This work is already hard enough without having to consider gender.'

As emphasised under Pathway A, there is now a need for further awareness work to help partners to better understand the importance of gender from a women's/human rights and practical perspective and how this is essential to achieving programme objectives. These views are captured in the views of community leaders in Colombia.

On gender, a male member of Colectivo Vivento Sur acknowledged that this component could still be strengthened. Although the issues are problematic for women and from intersectional approaches, there is room to problematize them in greater depth, beyond participation, something that allows connecting their visions and views with criticism, and bringing the roles of women in the territories. The leaders of these movements are often women and their ancestral authority has to be valued. In the future, for the programme, there is also a need to strengthen the focus on human rights.

The OPIAC leader narrated that in Guainía, Putumayo, and Amazonas, the women have insisted on being part of the processes, not because they

are women but because they have capabilities and necessary knowledge. Thus, they asked to be integrated into decision-making processes, even to lead the processes.

Sharing good practice from programme countries

In the gender hub meetings, valuable discussions were held in relation to conceptual approaches to gender transformation, feminist approaches, intersectionality and decolonisation. These discussions were extremely valuable in terms of international advocacy and the development of academic papers. However, they would be enhanced by a greater linkage with what is happening in the communities. One member of the gender hub who is also an implementer explained that she would welcome more opportunities to share stories from the forests and hoped they would inform policy:

‘Maybe in these meetings you should be asked if there’s anything that you want to share from your organisation or from where you work. Because sometimes there’s a lot to share. Like I said, there should be more room given to it, so people who actually work on the ground can speak because they have the real story. They see what is really happening and they express what is happening. So there should be more room given to people like me so that all these stories will come out. Then the gender hub will be able to learn from them and integrate them. For example, if women are being put in jail and they don’t have any form of legal support we should put something in place and find a solution. It would be good to discuss these practical things rather than starting from theory and policy. The practical needs more space and more time.’

It is therefore recommended that partners with stories to share be invited to at least one in four gender hub meetings and that other platforms and mechanisms are put in place to discuss and learn from what is happening in the field. Establishing a community of practice may be a way forward.

The challenge of gender transformation

The challenges of addressing gender inequalities are great and often hidden/unconscious because it is about power and it affects everyone, as one key informant explained:

‘What I notice in that programme, although nobody will say it, but there is more enthusiasm for youth inclusiveness. Everybody agrees and is enthusiastic

about it. But for gender, it’s more difficult. People say ‘Yes, we have to do it’ but doing it is difficult. It’s to do with power, I think. I feel that kind of resistance. I think that it’s very deeply embedded within individual psyches. It is complicated and challenging.’

Gender transformation is a long-standing challenge which takes time to address. It is therefore suggested that partners at all levels discuss what gender equality means to them and why they think it is so challenging to address and identify organisational and programmatic strategies for moving forward.

Different landscapes and changing contexts

Each country and landscape are different and there are challenges including all those affected by deforestation. Mitigating strategies may also change as contexts change. This was especially true, for example, when Covid-19 restrictions set back moves towards gender equality and inclusion in many locations. Many partners undertook gender and inclusion analyses at the start of the programme but there is a need to repeat these regularly to ensure that the programme is adapting to change and targeting and supporting those with the greatest need.

Land tenure

Women’s ability to exercise their land and forest rights in both customary and statutory regimes and how to secure their decision making rights over their land hasn’t received much attention. Earlier gender training may have helped raise the issues but the remaining two years of the programme provides an opportunity to further explore the situation and address related challenges in the landscapes.

Language

Language relating to gender needs to be appropriate to each situation. Using the wrong term could create confusion and possibly backlash. For example, the word ‘feminist’ is very acceptable now in academic circles and in some countries, but in others it can create immediate negativity and reduce trust. It is also of great importance to remain aware that if partners are not using a specific terminology, it does not mean that they do not understand the concept and are not working to address the issue. For example, they may be working with women and men to change gender relations, addressing some of the underlying causes of inequality, yet they may not

use the term 'gender transformation'. Furthermore, a number of partners mentioned that they do not fully understand the term 'intersectional,' yet they may already be working to ensure participation of people with overlapping social identities and differences that have previously impeded their participation. It is important to listen to what's already happening in any country, the ongoing work on gender and the language that is used, and start from that point.

Monitoring

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, there is a need for greater precision. Saying that an action is 'inclusive of women and youth' holds very little meaning and is close to saying the achievement was gender blind. As one key informant said: 'There is a need for more analysis and discussion to determine what has actually changed. When results say that 17 of the 50 policy changes had a gender inclusiveness element, what exactly does that mean in that context? What is that? How do you interpret it?'

The issues of time and priorities

One of the key challenges for Alliance members of the gender hub is the time that they are able to allocate to it. WECG/GFC have the time allocated in their contracts, but it is more challenging for others to do more than simply attend meetings. As one key informant explained: 'One of the key challenges is just time. The other gender hub members just do not have enough time allocated to their gender work. I see so much desire of the others to be part of these initiatives and to have gender activities at a central level in the programme, but they just don't have enough time. So, we have now pushed for at least one-hour meetings every two weeks.'

This is maybe an issue for members of all working groups but is something that needs to be explored by Alliance partners in order to ensure that workloads take account of priority activities.





FINDINGS: COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

This section reviews the value added of the collaboration, internal and external alliance creation and collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch embassies.

1. To what extent has collaboration within the Alliance and the (country) partners created added value in programme countries or regional programmes? To what extent is collaboration with other partners, outside the Alliance members, taking place in programme countries, including with other strengthening civil society partnerships, and what has been the added value of those collaborations? What are the possibilities to further enhance this collaboration or mitigate challenges during the remainder of the programme and beyond?
2. In what elements of the programme has 'leading from the south' been satisfactory and what can be improved?
3. What has been the added value of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and of its embassies to the partnership? What is the value added of this Alliance to the MFA?
4. Looking at the GLA risk analysis (including integrity, fraud and corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment), have processes been put in place? Are there examples that these are being adhered to and are leading to better practices by partners within the programme? Are there also examples of challenges and risks that have emerged?
5. What are the main lessons learned and recommendations (related to the above questions) to reach greater programme impact?

5.1 Collaboration and value added by the Alliance

Figure 12 presents the perceptions of the programme stakeholders on the value added by the Alliance.

To what extent has collaboration within and between country partners created added value to the programme?

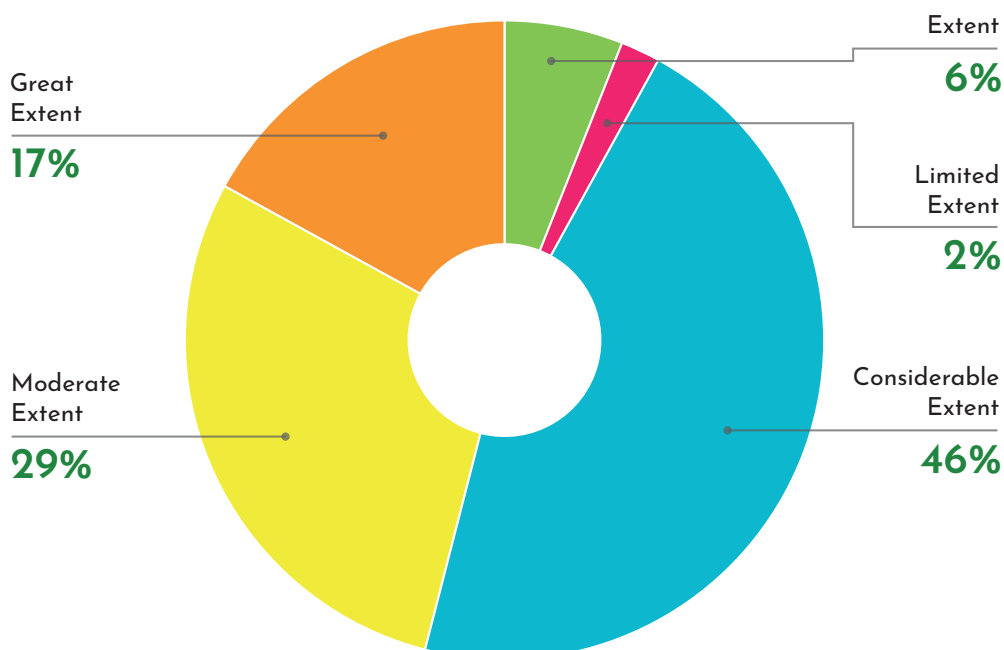


Figure 13: Value added by the collaboration

As Figure 12 shows, up to 63% of respondents considered that the collaboration within the Alliance has to a considerable and great extent created added value to the programme. However, 37% considered that the alliance has added little to moderate value.

There was no standard prescription as to how the country partners were to be organised. As such, they defined collaboration models that were flexible and adapted to address issues of country coordination, planning and reviews, as well as monitoring of the programme. The added value of the Alliance is seen in different areas including:

Complementary expertise

The diversity of skill sets, knowledge and capabilities among staff enriches the collective competence and resourcefulness of the collaboration. In **Bolivia** and **Colombia**, partners revealed how the programme had enabled them to work on collective issues, drawing on complementary experiences and expertise of the different partner organisations.

FfJF partners have also been able to witness the synergy happening between partners in Indonesia. This was illustrated in the collective efforts of how the (W)EHRD defence network of West Sumatra supported the communities of Bidar Alam and Ranah Pantai Cermin in regaining their access to their land.

The same was observed in **Cameroon** through close collaboration between CED and MD in fighting deforestation within protected areas. In **DRC**, TBI and national partners drew on complementary expertise to support the community forestry initiatives and contributions during the passage of the new country's indigenous peoples' rights law. In **Uganda**, the three partners draw from each other's various strengths, sharing research to enhance lobby and advocacy efforts.

Similarly, in May 2022 Milieudefensie and Fern jointly organised a lobby-tour with representatives of southern FoE groups (**Indonesia** (Walhi), **Colombia - Censat Agua Viva** and **Liberia**) with the EU Commission, MEPs, Belgian and Dutch officials and Dutch MP during EUDR advocacy efforts. In the **Netherlands** participants of the FfJF lobby tour joined forces with the policy tour Greenpeace organised with Indigenous leaders from Brazil. The joint delegation spoke during a hearing in the Dutch parliament. In November, Fern facilitated another policy tour on behalf of the GLA with NT-

FP-EP, SDI, GAIA and MD. These exchanges were highly appreciated by national partners and enabled them to bring their issues to the table.

Access to sustained funding

Being part of the Alliance has helped tropical country partners to access secured funding over a long period of time. This has helped to overcome the intermittent nature of other funding streams, which prevent local organisations from planning for the long term. NTFP-EP has benefitted significantly, enabling it to cement its regional presence and impact.

Capacity building, learning and development

The close-knit relationship among different organisations creates a conducive environment for mutual professional growth. This collaborative atmosphere enhances knowledge sharing, practical learning and joint problem-solving. In **Uganda and the Philippines**, the landscape partnerships created fostered achievement of collective goals. Local partners also appreciated the ability to access international expertise through north-south collaborations. For instance, IUCN NL mobilised Protection International to strengthen the capacity of 14 FfJF partners and IP&LC communities in **Ghana, Uganda, Bolivia, the Philippines and Indonesia** to address issues including red tagging, threats and intimidations in their landscapes, through trainings and direct support to and mentoring of (W)EHRDs and communities. Similarly, Fern strengthened capacities in the EUDR, enabling national stakeholders in producer countries to engage in the global advocacy efforts.

At the international level, the Exchange and Learning Sessions, organised and coordinated by TBI and GLA Global, have created a space for technical topics to be debated and implementation approaches to be explored. These collaborations have also helped to strengthen the capacity of the programme and its partners. As one interviewee from **Bolivia** explained, 'Virtual platforms have been utilised to address these topics, and we learned a lot from these interactions to apply in our work. This has been an opportunity to connect with other organisations, listen to their perspectives and engage in virtual workshops and seminars.' Indonesia partners said that the bi-annual reflection meetings have emerged as best practice within the FfJF partnership. These sessions cultivate a strong sense

of solidarity and ownership among partners, facilitating the exchange of insights on progress and challenges. Hosted alternately by each partner and conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, these meetings offer a platform for open and fluid communication.

Other examples of opportunities for learning included: TBI (**Netherlands** office) supported the other Tropenbos partners in Latin America in organising a regional exchange in Colombia (August 2022), jointly with their partner Tropenbos Colombia, to facilitate the exchange of experiences and emphasise

the importance of territorial management between indigenous, tribal and farmer communities. Tropenbos International partners identified areas of joint learning and identified conflict resolution as a priority for the coming year and opened up further collaboration with relevant third parties.

Figure 13 shows the extremely positive perceptions on collaboration and capacity strengthening of the partners.

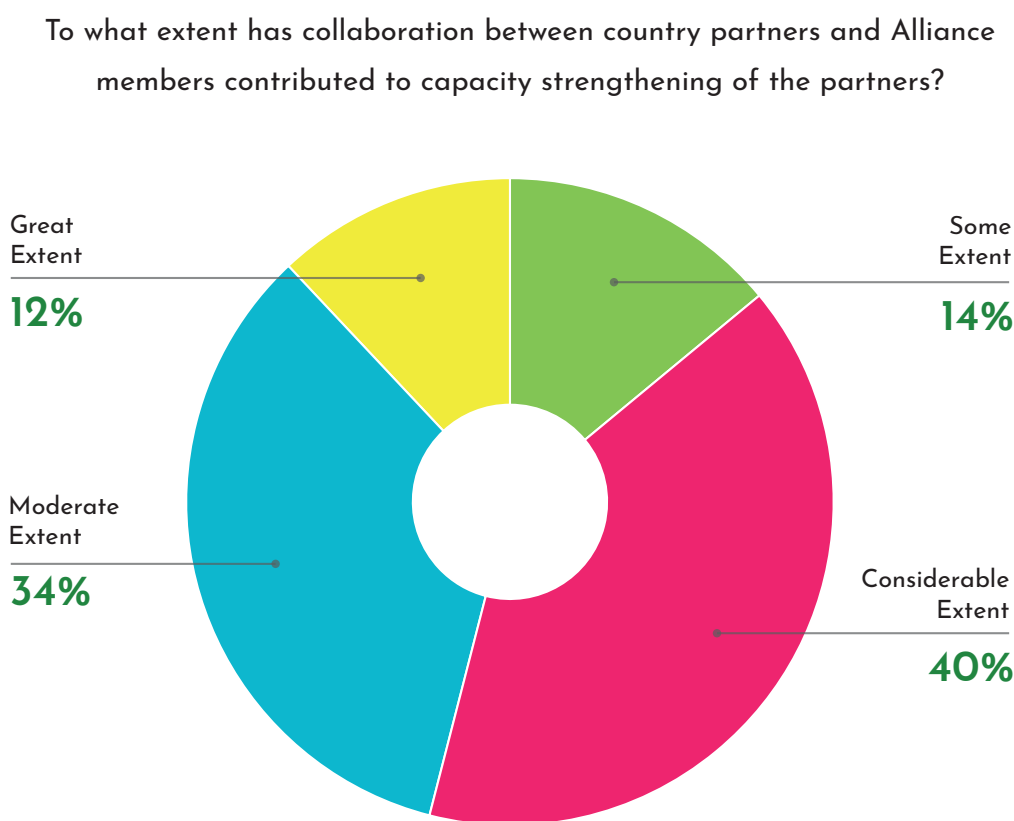


Figure 14: Perceptions on collaboration and capacity strengthening of the partners

Buffer in the face of aggression and attacks

The **Uganda** country program witnessed significant added value as a result of the collaboration between FfJF partners. Partners suggested that the Alliance acts as buffer when civic spaces are compromised. Partners offer support through various channels to ensure that those being victimised are safe. Through their collaboration, the partners have been able to support each other in both good and bad times, which has strengthened the partnership. For example,

when the team leader of FoZ was under surveillance and facing arrest, ETA and IUCN NL engaged the embassy to intervene. Also, when the executive director of FoZ was blocked by Rwanda Air at Entebbe Airport as he attempted to travel to Norway to attend the Oslo Freedom Forum, AFIEGO coordinated with IUCN NL Netherlands to ensure his safety. The implementation of the emergency response fund has been innovative, providing much needed support to W(EHRDs).

Strengthening strategic alliances and external partnerships

Programme partners attest to the fact that working in the different landscapes as well as on country-level advocacy issues has been enhanced by bringing together like-minded organisations, in addition to FfJF partners. One interviewee said, 'The achievements showcase the impactful work of the Alliance, especially in promoting Indigenous rights, environmental protection, and civil society participation.' This ability to address complex issues and work towards sustainable solutions has been a significant benefit of the Alliance. Links of trust have been strengthened within the Alliance, but also with other social movements, alliances, networks and like-minded organisations to drive collective action at the national, regional and international levels. In **Cameroon** for instance, strategic alliances with parliamentarians and wider civil society networks were critical in the achievements secured on the protection of the Ebo forest and land tenure legislation in the country.

The MTR showed that partners have collaborated with an average of eight organisations. One example of collaboration with other partners is the engagement with the North Amazon Alliance by Gaia. This alliance brings together national NGOs from Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela and Colombia to work towards the safeguarding of ecosystemic and socio-cultural connectivity in the Amazon region. This collaboration allows for the sharing of knowledge, experiences and joint advocacy strategies to address common challenges and promote the integrity of the Amazon.

In **Liberia**, SDI has been engaged in collaborative efforts with other civil society organizations working in the forest sector. SDI is an active member of the Liberia Oil Palm Working Groups, a network of over 10 CSOs. The working group serves as a platform for CSOs to collaborate and coordinate their energy on joint advocacy actions on critical issues affecting the oil palm sector. The added value of this partnership is that CSOs can harness and leverage their individual resources, expertise and contacts to advocate for reforms within the sector.

Collaboration with other civil society organisations has also been instrumental in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. FfJF partners CEDIB, PROBIOMA, IBIF and SAVIA worked together with CONTIOCAP to address underlying drivers of inequality and promote gender-responsive approaches. These collaborations have allowed for

the exchange of knowledge and experiences, as well as joint advocacy efforts. As one interviewee from **Bolivia** said, 'We have worked on this issue with CEDIB, conducting workshops for journalists. Due to the country's characteristics and context, most of the activities have been virtual, focusing on water, forests, pollution.' The collaborations with other partners have provided a platform for dialogue, learning and collective action. They have allowed for the sharing of resources, expertise, and best practices, leading to more effective and impactful interventions. As one interviewee from the programme in Bolivia said, 'It has been a learning process, marked by tolerance and solidarity. The transmission of experience is also crucial in this collaborative effort.'

All Alliance members have reported significant alliances and collaborations that have been nurtured and consolidated through the implementation of the thematic and policy dossiers. At the international level, sessions related to global climate issues and other thematic topics offered valuable insights and were integral to GLA's regional collaborations. As discussed in the analysis of the Pathways, the Alliances' engagement in CBD, EUDR, UNFCCC and discussions on the just energy transition elevated the voices of tropical country partners and informed global level norms. Tropical country partners have valued working with European partners and the ability to leverage their expertise and networks to bring their issues to the table. This is very well captured in the words of a member of Colectivo Vivento Sur (Colombia) said, "Personally, I feel stronger, more connected, and supported. The experience has to be replicated at multi-scale level, but always including the local factor. There is enormous value in strengthening people in the territories and connecting that to the international level."

Stimulating and strengthening innovation

The FfJF has demonstrated significant levels of innovation in different areas through collective action, drawing on the expertise and experiences of national and international partners. In the area of independent forest monitoring, partners developed and piloted the TIMBY forest monitoring application in six countries. In Cameroon, CED staff were trained in the use of radar-based satellite imagery technologies in advocacy efforts as part of their campaigns for the protection of the EBO forest. In DRC, IUCN NL and national partners are using theatre to change youth behaviours, as shown in the case study below featuring the Virunga landscape.

Case study: DRC: Theatre drives change for people and nature in Virunga

Chalondawa Mushiwa Jonathan, an artist and actor from Goma:

What are challenges for nature conservation in Virunga?

Poaching and deforestation threaten the conservation of Virunga, and land issues create conflicts between the people living in the area and the park authorities. Imposters sell land that actually belongs to the park, after which houses need to be demolished. This creates tensions that sometimes leads to lawsuits.

How does theatre stimulate change for nature?

We organise theatre productions with the people from the villages. Working closely together increases awareness on nature conservation, especially because we perform real-life situations on stage. These theatre shows are made with love and joy. We also produce short films with young people to inspire them and others to conserve the national park. In these video productions, we show land conflicts and other situations they may experience in their life. To reach as many people as possible, the actors who are from the villages speak Swahili. We publish the films on social media and they are broadcast on local television. We also organise public screenings for youth. I have noticed that youth organise their own

theatre groups inspired by our work. Working on these topics in a creative way, helps these young people to better understand the choices they have in their lives. Most of them learned that rangers are not their enemies but are young people like them trying to protect a pride of the world, Virunga National Park.

What changes have you seen?

By acting real-life situations, we share alternative solutions to land conflicts and other problems. We show why deforestation and other forms of disrupting nature are not solutions in the long term. Some videos inform the audience about possible imposters and share the park's legal context. Most of all, the productions encourage people to contribute to nature in a positive way, even though their personal, cultural and societal situation challenges that from time to time. In addition to driving change for nature conservation, the videos and theatre productions often function as social therapy. It is a positive, alternative way to deal with their problems together as a community.

Sometimes it also helps them stay away from problems, because they know how to identify imposters and other people who may put them in complicated situations.

Source: Theatre drives change for people and nature in Virunga | IUCN NL

In **Viet Nam**, partners mobilised youth and communities around their cultural spaces, spurring community entrepreneurship and development of community spirit around the long house. The advocacy strategies demonstrated throughout the MTR have been highly innovative including the use of lobby tours in advocacy, judicial mechanisms to seek redress for community and (W)EHRDs issues and building social movements and alliances. There is a huge benefit to documenting these innovations and best practices and making them readily available to FfJF and other development partners.

5.2 Challenges

As expected, the Alliance has also experienced challenges due to the complexity and diversity of the partners and the budget available for collaborative working and learning.

Measures to integrate new Alliance members

The expansion of the Alliance to include additional members (Gaia Amazonas, SDI and NTFP-EP) has been widely appreciated. However, the expectations and capacity of these partners to play the dual role as Alliance members and implementing organisations has been mixed. In Colombia, for instance, the 2022 country report highlighted the challenges faced.

The challenge of a dual role: Gaia Amazonas

There is an important challenge for the improvement of collaboration at the national and regional level that was identified by partner organisations in Colombia. This challenge is based on the understanding that the search for greater inclusivity in FfJF led the Gaia Amazonas Foundation to play a dual role in the programme, as a Colombian partner organisation and also a member organisation of the alliance at global level. Gaia Amazonas was therefore attempting to meet the goals set at both levels. This was inequitable compared to the working conditions and workloads of the other organisations that make up FfJF on a global scale.

The integration of NTFP-EP into the Alliance was facilitated by its long-standing collaboration with IUCN NL in Southeast Asia. This partnership helped ease NTFP-EP's entry as a new member. Along with SDI and Gaia, NTFP-EP has been incorporated into the Alliance's governance and advisory structures. Leveraging their regional networks, NTFP-EP and Gaia have effectively communicated the Alliance's activities to their partners in Southeast Asia and Latin America respectively. Civil society partners from these regions appeared to be better informed and engaged due to the established connections between Gaia and NTFP-EP.

There was a notable disparity among the African partners, particularly outside the Friends of the Earth (FoE) network. This gap was further highlighted by the perceived greater distance in the relationship between African civil society partners and the higher-level governance structures of the Alliance. This disparity underscored the need for improved engagement and coordination with African civil society partners to ensure more inclusive and effective regional integration within the Alliance's framework.

Leadership and coordination

The governance model at the global level includes four advisory groups, the senior programme coordinator and secretary, technical partners, topic groups/policy dossiers, Alliance members and affiliated implementing partners. Apart from understanding their direct links to their lead alliance members and technical partners (in the case of gender), there is scant understanding among implementing partners about the function of the advisory bodies, their roles and responsibilities. The coordination unit is appreciated for its adaptive capacity and response to changing needs (68%), while 32% reported limited to moderate levels of adaptive capacity (Figure 14).

To what extent has coordination demonstrated adaptive capacity/responded to the changing context implementation

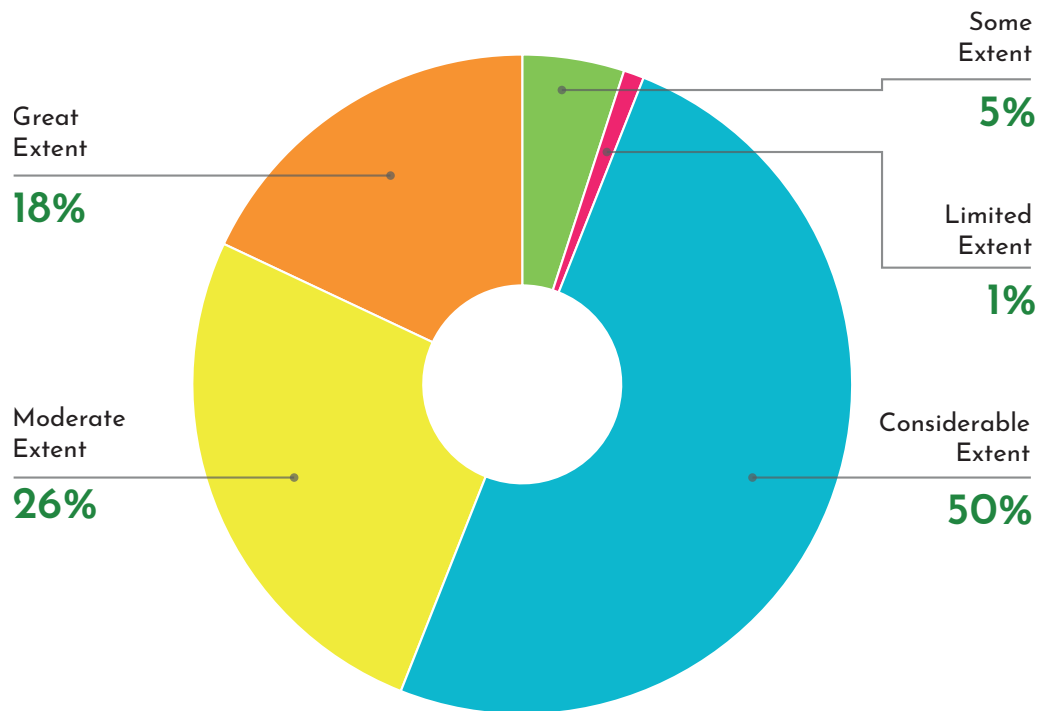


Figure 15: Perception of adaptive capacity of coordination unit

The global coordination unit in charge of daily operations of the Alliance is stretched with insufficient human resources (1.5 full time equivalent). The role of technical partners is appreciated, yet human resources and allocated budgets are also limited.

Across working groups and advisory bodies, time allocation is limited and participation by individual staff is mixed due to time and other pressures that are largely a consequence of the reduced budget. This situation is further exacerbated because some selected individuals belong to multiple technical and advisory groups and struggle to commit time and effort in addition to their technical roles. At the level of FfJF partner countries, there is currently no mechanism/structure which brings together country coordinators. While a certain level of monitoring and learning structures are in place, partners state that the diffuse structure is leading to inefficiencies. For example: 'Things take too long.' 'There is no follow up.' 'Partners do not receive feedback on their reports.' 'Lines of communication are unclear.' 'Links to decision-making bodies are not known.'

Budget

While diversity is a key strength of the Alliance, differences in approaches, priorities and capacities can sometimes hinder effective collaboration. As one interviewee from Bolivia acknowledges, 'It can be challenging to reach a consensus on how to present information, requiring significant work and time. Financial constraints also present a barrier, as we would need a specialist to work on this topic in a specialised manner.' With the cuts in the programme budget, financial resources for coordination and learning within the Alliance are considered to be insufficient for a more coordinated delivery of the programme. As shown in Figure 15 only 29% of 93 respondents thought that resources were sufficient with 71% stating that resources were only moderately sufficient.

To what extent are the financial resources sufficient for your organisation to achieve programme goals in your country (ies) of intervention

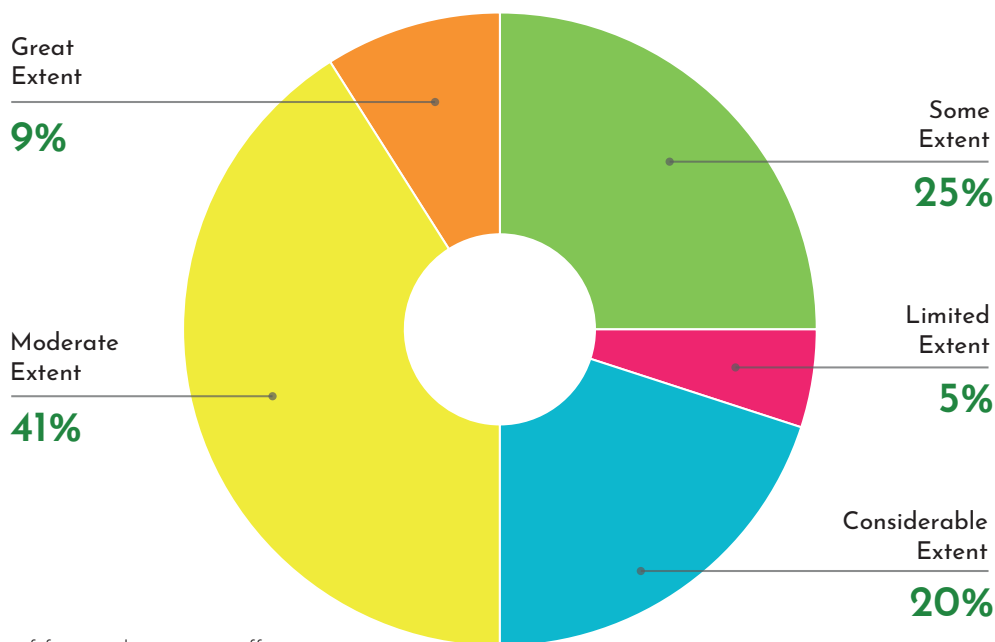


Figure 16: Perception of financial resource sufficiency

Frustrations, tensions and perceived competition within policy dossiers

The FfJF Alliance members agree on the objective of the programme and the change idea, however, some frustrations have emerged where expectations of synergies have not materialised. As an Alliance, partners may substantially differ from one another in their approach, strategy and objectives when working on a specific topic or landscape. Consequently, when expectations of joint action do not happen, this creates frustrations and tensions and in some cases a perception of competition amongst Alliance members. One of the respondents said, 'You are not going to hand out all your contacts or all your strategies and share it with somebody who is [lobbying against your position].' This view is obviously contrary to the openness and transparency principles guiding the Alliance. Wherever possible, the Alliance members have tried to work together and seek out common ground on issues, as demonstrated during the EUDR advocacy process.

CSO alignment and positioning

The Together4Forest movement brought together NGOs working on strong legislation based on a joint position including 16 asks, which was used as the backbone of EUDR advocacy work. As not all FfJF partners are aligned on how the regulation should look, not all partners signed up to the T4F position, making coordination and collaboration challenging. Nevertheless, after discussing different views with NGOs in the Netherlands and in Brussels, a constructive solution was found and an agreement was reached to collaborate on smallholders, an issue which was not contentious, common ground could be found and which filled an obvious advocacy gap.

Information sharing and learning

Regarding learning, there is an enormous wealth of data (from partner annual reports, global reports, outcome harvesting), knowledge, tools, methodologies and approaches that have been produced during the first 2.5 years of the programme. However, this learning remains dispersed and inaccessible to all partners. Various learning topics identified in the project document have not materialised, and the objective to capture and share tacit and implicit learnings at all levels has not yet been achieved. The online learning sessions (ELS)⁵⁹ have been appreciated, while the annual reflection workshops provided national partners with the opportunity to apply the triple learning loop⁶⁰, but there is strong demand for more opportunities.

⁵⁹ Participation has ranged from 30-100 people per session.

⁶⁰ Using the following three questions to guide learning: Are we doing the right things? Are we doing things right? How do we decided what is right?

When 99 respondents were asked to assess their awareness of programme activities in other countries and on LGL themes and dossiers, 23% reported high levels of awareness of but the majority were either unaware or only moderately aware (77%). This highlights the need for improved communication and cross-country information sharing.

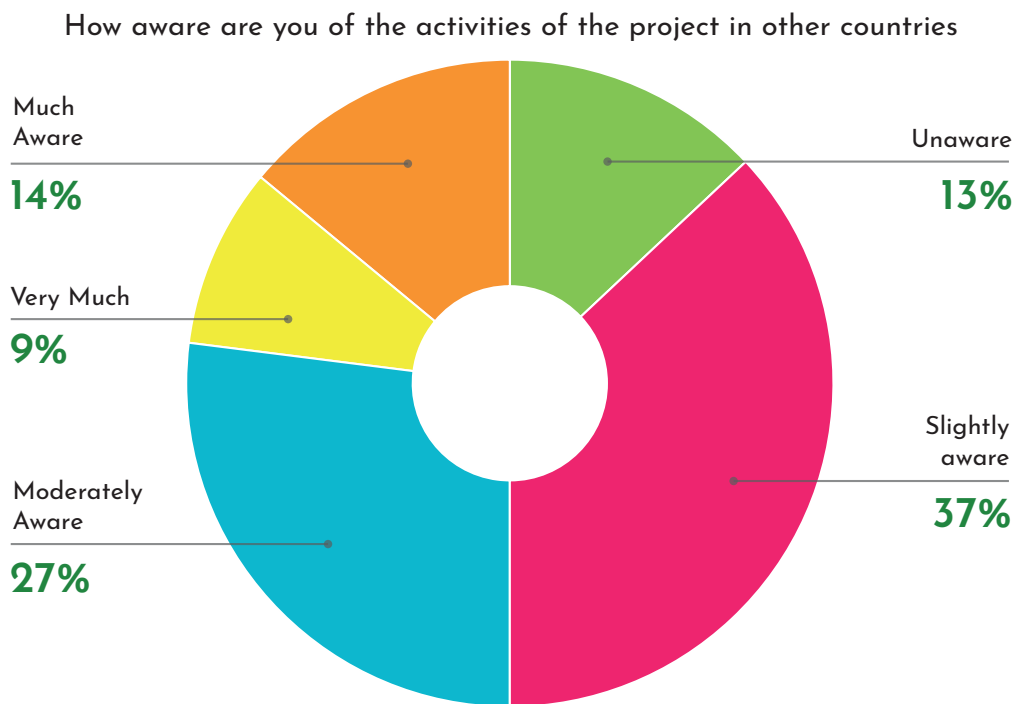


Figure 17: Awareness of programme activities in other FfJF countries

Monitoring and evaluation pressures and workloads

Virtual collaboration was initiated to adapt to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, much coordination and collaboration continues to be done virtually. The technological requirements for virtual collaboration are not uniform in the Alliance, especially with country partners who are often challenged with connectivity issues. The various request are often uncoordinated and put pressure on the implementing partners, and this often impacts on the programme work. Just over 50% of respondents approved of the current M&E system delivery at country level (Figure 17).

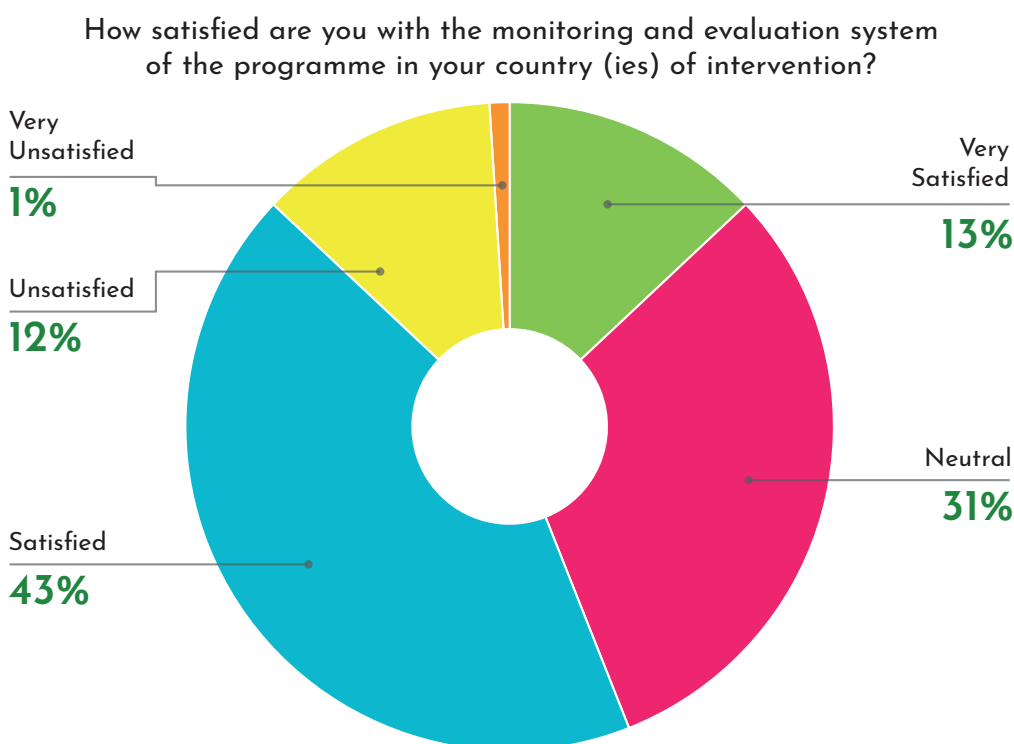


Figure 18: Level of satisfaction with programme M&E - N=100

Partner CSOs also identified the fact that those with additional northern funders apart from FFJF programme are particularly burdened as they must submit multiple, separate plans and reports. Consequently, partners complained that the heavy reporting burden and bureaucratic systems in the programme took away time from field activities. However, this is not necessarily the fault of FfJF but an inevitable consequence of working with several different funders. Late-night meetings due to time zone differences, and the overwhelming pace and timing of learning sessions also created challenges.

Figure 18 indicated the perception of workload by the country partner CSOs. Up to one quarter of respondents felt that the work effort was inadequate or that they were overloaded.

Partner perception of the monitoring load is possibly influenced by the significant burden that the baseline placed on them, rather than the current situation in which they are expected to report. In addition to harvesting outcomes, partners plan and report just once per year.

How would you assess your workload related to the implementation of the programme

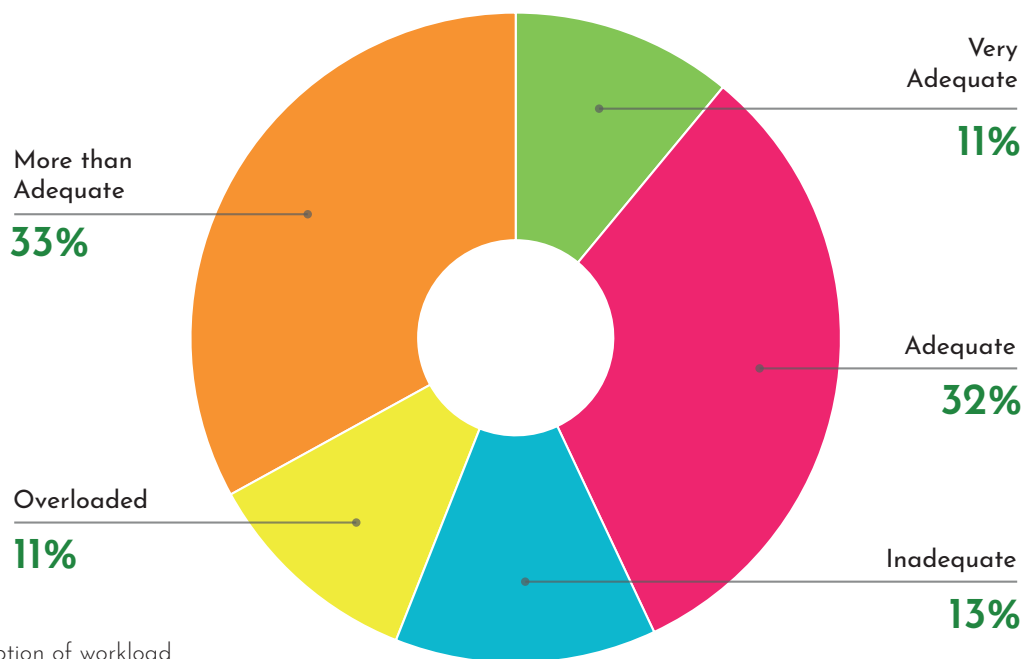


Figure 19: Perception of workload

Leading from the south

The concept of ‘leading from the south’ refers to the idea that local actors and organisations from the Global South should take a leading role in shaping and implementing development initiatives in their own countries and regions, while ensuring that their views and voices are taken into consideration at the international level. Vietnamese partner CSOs define leading from the south as a balanced, inclusive and effective partnership model. This concept advocates for the utilisation of a wide range of expertise and resources from various geographical and cultural backgrounds. It promotes a bottom-up approach and encourages open dialogue among all stakeholders. GLA 2021-2025 requires all Alliance members to commit to key principles such as

solidarity, integrity, trust, subsidiarity, honesty, openness, transparency, inclusiveness, equality and reciprocity, as these values are considered as essential in establishing a fair balance of power and ensuring equity. The concept of leading from the south is integral to the Alliance’s vision on collaboration and equity.

The MTR found that the understanding and application of the concept of leading from the south was very mixed. As shown in Figure 19, about 60% of respondents thought that their issues had been taken into account by the Alliance, while 40% suggested that their issues had been considered only to a very limited or moderate extent.

To what extent do you feel that issues specific to your country have been taken account of by the Alliance

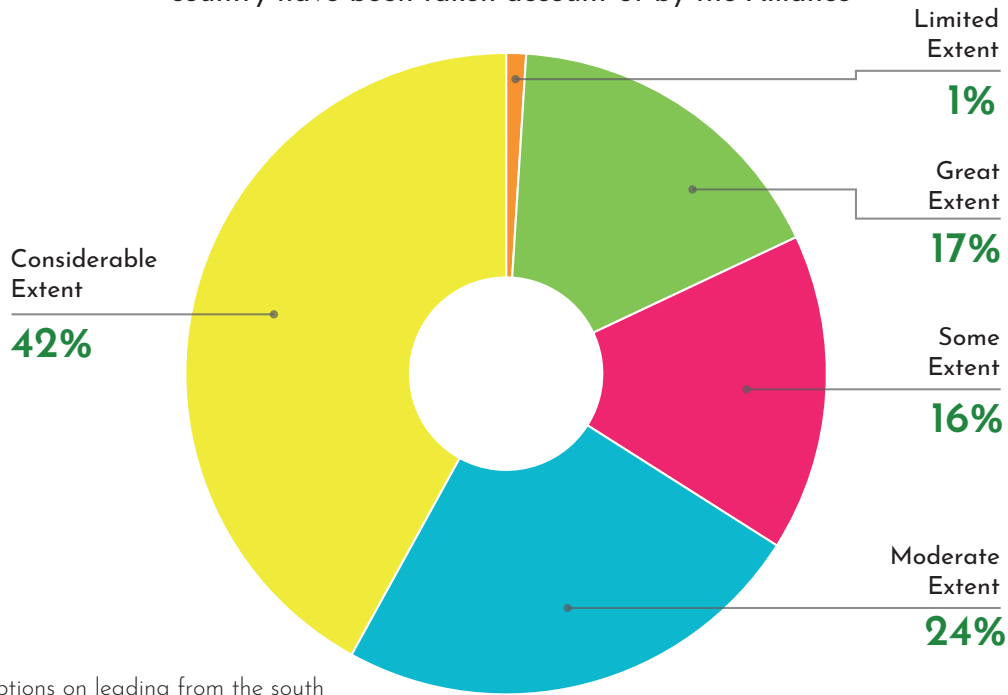


Figure 20: Perceptions on leading from the south

There is a recognition among the respondents that the FfJF programme has been successful in fostering partnerships and collaborations with and between local organisations and actors in the Global South. One respondent said, 'The programme promotes leading from the south as a key strategy, and I think we are doing well in that sense.' Another respondent highlighted the value added by the partnerships, saying, 'The FfJF gives them the freedom to develop and implement their own agenda.' To many respondents, the flexibility of partners to work on the basis of their national ToCs is a sufficient demonstration of leading from the south. Some others believed that leading from the south entails identifying issues that are of priority concern to southern partners by European partners, soliciting the views of national partners in support of those views and working together to amplify those concerns at the international level. Some have argued that local partners do not always have information about the fast-changing international policy processes, and consequently require those that are most informed to initiate actions, facilitate the southern partners to understand the stakes and to work collectively towards achieving these goals.

The North-South balance in the Alliance is a major step forward toward the leading from the south agenda. In Southeast Asia, this has enabled NTFP-EP to reinforce its regional presence, where it plays a significant role in driving GLA's regional programme. The same can be said for Gaia Amazons in Latin America and SDI in Liberia which

is beginning to strengthen and expand its regional activities. The presence of these new Alliance members in the various governance bodies has also facilitated information sharing within country partners to a certain extent. Where this has been effective, national partners have felt closer, aware and more involved in the wider activities of the Alliance.

However, other respondents argued that the concept of leading from the south in the framework of this Alliance has so far not materialised at all levels. Some countries are not represented at any level. GLA partner CSOs from some countries reported that there is a huge distance between them and the decision-making bodies of the Alliance, stating that the lines of communication are unclear. Bolivian partners called for the need for channels of influence in programmatic decisions, suggesting the need for increased communication and participation in decision making at the Alliance level.

The LGL thematic topics dossiers were formed to enhance coordination and synergies between Alliance members working on the same international policy dossiers and to foster coherence in planning and reporting. The weak coordination amongst the policy dossiers/topic groups, thematic programmes of MD/FoEI and country partner actions have limited the ability of the Alliance to make more positive strides towards the leading from the south in LGL actions.

One key challenge is the power dynamics between northern and southern Alliance partners. Northern partners often possess more institutional knowledge, and have a greater understanding of donor requirements. This can create a power imbalance and hinder the ability of national CSO partners to fully participate in decision-making processes. As one respondent noted, 'We still need time, we still need some capacity building or strengthening to get to the same level as the alliance members.' While acknowledging that northern partners may possess specialised knowledge on some topics due to their constant involvement with the issues, there needs to be better understanding of the different roles and expectations from northern and southern alliance members and partner CSOs. For partner CSOs, where possible, they need to be informed about the issues/policies/themes that the alliance members are working on, and on the expected timing and nature of their contributions. The annual country planning and reflection meetings provides the opportunities for these conversions to take place and for information on current/future advocacy actions to be shared within the Alliance.

In the absence of these conversions, GLA partner CSOs may go along with plans simply because they do not want to rock the boat. Any little funding they get is important, not only for their work but for their livelihoods. This highlights the need for information sharing, capacity building and equitable distribution of resources to ensure meaningful participation and decision making by all partners. It appears crucial for the Alliance to again clarify the leading from the south concept and to agree on the meaning as well as the mechanisms to strengthen this.

The programme document outlines specific strategies to tackle the identified challenges and issues related to power imbalances. These strategies include the use of advance communication, ensuring free prior and informed consent, applying critical power analyses and fostering continuous learning. These tools will be vital for the Alliance in the upcoming phase of the programme.

Collaboration with and added value of the MFA and Dutch embassies

The role of the Dutch MFA within the programme is seen as crucial, as they are the primary funders. The coordination unit maintains regular and continuous information exchange with the MFA which has been very constructive. This includes regular information sharing including through required contractual reporting but also through annual policy dialogues. There is, however, much less direct contact with the civil society unit of the ministry.

Regarding engagement at the country level, FfJF partner CSOs in countries where Dutch embassies operate report various levels of engagement. In **Ghana**, partner CSOs usually participate in the annual coordination meeting held at the embassy to give updates and share lessons learned. They also participated in the 'orange cocoa day', which was held at the embassy to showcase their work. In **Bolivia**, IBIF maintains relations within the framework of the Tropenbos working landscape programme with the Embassy of the Netherlands. CED in **Cameroon** reported being in contact with the Dutch consulate and the embassy in Cotonou during its advocacy campaigns for the protection of the Ebo forest. However, **Indonesian** partners reported that the added value of the Dutch embassy had yet to be felt.

The strongest relationship was reported in **Uganda**, as already reported throughout the report. The embassy plays a critical role in facilitating the work of FfJF partner CSOs, through leveraging its diplomatic tools to call for the protection of local partners by authorities. As mentioned in the civic space survey report, there are cultural issues for civic actors that are seen to be too close to foreign diplomatic agencies, as they may face even more scrutiny. Partners should be encouraged to engage when and where it is suitable including exploring similar collaborations where possible with other diplomatic institutions beyond the Dutch embassies.

Strong relationships have also been established and nurtured in the **Philippines**. Partner CSOs maintain regular communication channels with the Dutch embassy, adding diplomatic leverage to the partnership. On May 5, 2022, a Zoom meeting between the embassy and GLA partners was held to discuss the status and needs of (W)EHRDs. The embassy has been instrumental in linking partners with UNDP programs in the BangsaMoro area to support the mental well-being and essential needs of WEHRDs. In January 2023, an in-person meeting with a representative from the Dutch embassy and three GLA Philippine partners was organised. The session involved updates on the programme and a situational briefing on civic space. Further clarification about the Civic Space Flex Fund was provided.

The robust network and diplomatic support offered by the Dutch embassy and MFA amplified the reach and impact of GLA. Conversely, the social and environmental objectives of the FfJF Alliance align well with the broader diplomatic and developmental aims of MFA, making this partnership mutually beneficial.

5.3 FfJF risk analysis

Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) risks

The MTR did not identify any reports of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) during the first 2.5 years of programme implementation. The Alliance took significant steps at different levels to prevent and mitigate the emergence of these risks. The following examples demonstrate the actions undertaken.

Proactive policy development and training

In **Ghana**, partner CSOs have embedded SEAH prevention measures in their organisational policies. Focal persons at a high level have been designated to receive complaints and activate the complaints redress mechanism. Although untested due to the absence of reported cases, the existence of these mechanisms demonstrates a proactive approach to SEAH prevention. Similarly, FfJF partners in **Indonesia** have undertaken SEAH training at the country level and initiated reviews of their organisational policies. Additionally, the programme organised ELS sessions on the topic to ensure that the Alliance members and implementing partners were taking necessary steps to prevent and address any SEAH related risks. This proactive stance ensures that partners are well-prepared to handle any SEAH incidents.

Ongoing review and revision of policies

The recognition of SEAH as a critical risk has prompted partners in **Indonesia** and **the Philippines** to review and revise their existing policies. The learning sessions conducted within FfJF programme facilitated these revisions, ensuring that policies were updated to address contemporary challenges related to SEAH. In Colombia, partner CSOs strengthened internal policies, manuals and procedures to prevent the misuse of funds and prevent and protect against SEAH. For instance, FCA developed an ethics and integrity policy, while TBC established a committee on co-existence at work. Similarly, Censat developed a conceptual and methodological guide on gender while FCDS developed anti-corruption and fund management policies. This dynamic approach ensures that policies remain relevant and effective in preventing SEAH incidents.

Capacity building and gender inclusion

FfJF partner CSOs in **Viet Nam** have taken significant steps toward SEAH prevention by developing a code of conduct and child protection policy. These policies, mandating the inclusion of women and protecting against abuse and sexual harassment, underscore their commitment to creating safe environments. Furthermore, partner CSOs have undergone gender capacity enhancement training, leading to the development of gender policies that address the specific needs of women, such as increased traveling allowances and childcare support. This emphasises that gender sensitivity and inclusivity do not only contribute to the prevention of SEAH but also promotes a culture of equality within the alliance.

Continuous monitoring and support

In **Uganda**, the experience from Forested Landscapes for Equity has been leveraged to close loopholes related to SEAH, fraud and corruption. In **Cameroon**, the three-day workshop with partners established that there remained a strong appreciation of SEAH risks. In Liberia, partners called for timely transfer of project funds to mitigate the risks. The establishment of an integrity group and designation of integrity officers demonstrated a proactive stance in preventing SEAH and related risks. There is a need to ensure that this working group continues to be active and vigilant in its role. Annual audits and trainings on financial management ensure that project resources are used efficiently. By continuously monitoring the project environment, FfJF partners can swiftly respond to emerging challenges, ensuring a safe and secure atmosphere for all participants.

The MTR found that the FfJF partners' comprehensive approach to SEAH prevention, encompassing policy development, training, gender inclusion and continuous monitoring, reflected a commitment to fostering safe and respectful project environments. The introduction of an integrity working group within the Alliance further demonstrated the programme's commitment to preventing and addressing any emerging risks. These proactive measures not only prevented SEAH incidents but also contributed to the creation of inclusive spaces where all individuals can thrive and actively participate in FfJF initiatives.



SUSTAINABILITY

6.1 Are the noticed and measured changes sustainable?

The programme seeks to promote the sustainability of its achievements and gains through focusing on capacity building, lobbying and advocacy, ensuring civic space and inclusivity in its different spheres of intervention. The overall design of the project was premised on the foundation that sustainability is achieved through driving systematic change through: (a) changing norms and behaviours which drive environmental degradation and inequalities and generating models for sustainable forest management; (b) strengthening organisation and collaboration; (c) changing and influencing formal and informal rules (d) and pushing for application of the policies, practices and evidence generated.

In a survey of FfJF partners, 49% stated that the achievements were likely to continue beyond the project's initial period, while 21% said it was highly likely. Twenty-seven percent (26 out of 97 respondents) were neutral about the sustainability, compared to 3% who thought that sustainability was unlikely. See Figure 20 below.

To what extent are the gains/achievement of the programme so far likely to continue beyond the end of the programme in 2025

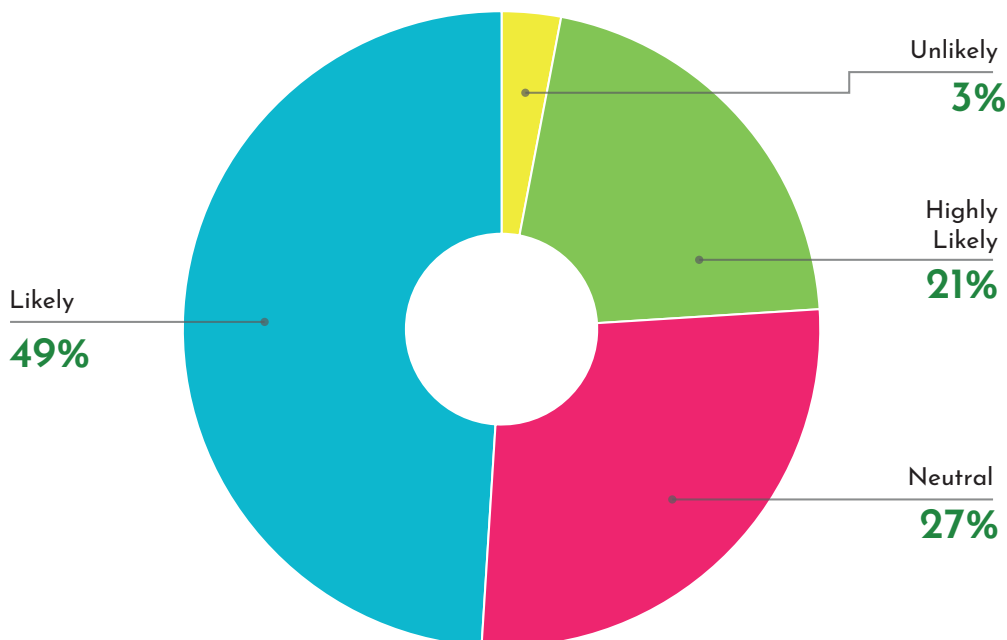


Figure 21: Perceptions on the programme's sustainability

In view of these findings and underlying social, institutional, political, economic and environmental risks, the sustainability of the programme is mixed, though this depends on the context in which it is being implemented.

6.2 Social sustainability

There is emerging evidence that the intervention of the programme is contributing to influencing community norms and behaviours which are likely to be sustained beyond its initial period.

For example, in the **Philippines** efforts to document Indigenous political structures, along with the empowerment of Indigenous women and youth organisations, translated into stronger roles in their communities. In certain localities, these groups naturally evolved into active roles within their Indigenous political structures—a process supported but not engineered by the FfJF programme. This organic participation denoted a meaningful sense of ownership over the expanded inclusivity in decision making through more impactful participation of Indigenous women and youth in subnational government local special bodies, reinforcing the influence of traditionally marginalised groups. In

DRC, Ghana and Uganda, there is a repositing in target landscapes, with women challenging the local norms and stereotypes, demanding for and claiming their rights. In **Ghana**, for instance, a women's cocoa farmer cooperative was able to engage directly with the Cocoa Health and Extension Division of the Cocoa Board within the Adjofoa Cocoa District landscape for the supply of inputs, instead of routing them through their male counterparts. The same group, together with two other women's cocoa groups within the landscape, came together to urge the government to expedite action on reforming the tree tenure arrangement to give them benefits from trees they nurture on their farms. In **Viet Nam**, through programme advocacy, the local government has endorsed and promoted Chau Ma culture, including traditional long houses, at higher government levels and across the country.

6.3 Institutional

The programme has delivered significant capacity strengthening support at different levels (detailed in Pathway A, B, and C narratives). Emerging evidence suggested that in some cases, this is leading to improved practices at individual, organisational and institutional levels. At individual levels, farmers in **DRC** and **Ghana** have adopted climate smart agricultural practices and livelihoods because of training received. Other training on forest monitoring, rights monitoring, gender, organisational management and SEAH have increased knowledge, tools and skills which have informed a stronger organisational performance. The Indonesia gender technical partners with local partners organised FPAR training sessions targeting (W)EHRDs across four landscapes. These trainings enabled grassroots women within IP&LCs to significantly contribute to the governance of forests and natural resources in their villages.

In **Indonesia**, institutional strengthening was reported through the formation of: a national network of indigenous youth, the Ugnayin National Network; a network to lobby and advocate for IP issues at the national level; five IP youth groups from Southern Sierra Madre, Palaui Island in Northern Sierra Madre and in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental in Northern Mindanao; a municipal wide-federation of women's organisations in Rizal, Palawan; women's organisations in Palawan, Misamis Oriental and in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim

Mindanao (BARMM). The potential sustainability of initiatives is also seen in the recognition of partners and their enhanced legitimacy in their areas of intervention. In **Malaysia**, for instance, the PACOS Trust was awarded the Conservation Partner Award at the Forestry Appreciation Ceremony 2022 on August 24, 2022, organised by the Sabah Forestry Department and held at the Sabah International Convention Centre in Kota Kinabalu. This enhances its ability to engage and advocate for the concerns of target communities in various policy arenas.

In **Ghana**, community management committees (CREMAs) in the Juaboso-Bia and Atewa landscapes have constitutions and have developed bylaws to guide their actions. In **Indonesia**, the strengthening of the grievance mechanisms for IP&LCs in Mudiak Baduo led to cases being filed concerning illegal or unjust activities on IP&LC lands. In the Kahayan landscape, the local community and labourers have filed grievances against an oil palm plantation. NTFP-EP has established a dispute resolution framework that will serve as a guide for the district government in addressing future complaints. Further training provided by Walhi in partnership with human rights defenders with the National Commission on Human Rights (KOMNAS HAM) and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, is expected to augment KOMNAS HAM's jurisdictional power, enabling it to summon corporations implicated in allegations of human rights abuses. The programme also

strengthened a network of independent forest monitoring organisations in **Liberia, Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia and the Philippines**, with plans to expand and strengthen this network in the coming years so that they can rely less on external input.

Gains achieved at the policy and institutional level were also identified by the MTR. In **Bolivia**, IBIF supported the Lomerio community in securing control over 467,556 hectares in the Indigenous territory of Monte Verde. In early 2023, 200 hectares of forest management area were allocated to the Lomerio Women's Organization (OMIML), marking a milestone in terms of women's access to forest resources in Bolivia. In the Philippines, three Higaunon ancestral communities—the Mat-i Man-ibay Civoleg Langguyod (MAMACILA) Higaunon Tribal Community, the Kalanawan, and the Pamalihi—have collectively designated 22,440,56 hectares in the Mt. Sumagaya and Mt. Pamalihi-Balatukan ranges as their Indigenous Communities Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs), known locally as Pina, Iglalaw daw Bahaw-bahaw. In **Uganda**, IP&LCs are sustainably governing increased areas of forests, by re-establishing four defunct Community Forest Management (CFM) Associations and two Private Forest Owners Associations. The Northern Albertine Region Conservation-Group (NARC-G), a group of conservation organisations in the Bugoma landscape, has re-invigorated the landscape platform, consolidating actions and amplifying the voice of IP&LCs in the West Nile region and Gulu.

In **DRC** through advocacy, policies, regulations and practices have been reviewed in favour of sustainable natural resources management including the reduction of tax on local wood transactions from \$10 to \$5 in the greater eastern region and the integration of article 10 into the electoral law to punish politicians who have been condemned for natural resources-related crimes. Communities are being granted rights over forest areas for management. This is the case for one community forest title in Mwenga territory of 51 hectares and five other community forestry titles in the central landscape. Partners contributed to the adoption of new laws in DRC including the 2022 law on indigenous peoples, the national land policy and draft proposals for the modification of the law on land tenure⁶¹.

In **Liberia**, the Ministry of Justice committed to working with the SDI/CSO Oil Palm Working Group on the finalisation of the Liberia national action plan on business and human rights on May 5, 2022. The **Ghana** Wildlife Resources Management Bill was passed into law after a long period of advocacy starting in GLA1 and flowing into FfJF⁶². This is significant as it will give a legal backing for the operations of the CREMAs, whose work contributes to forest conservation efforts in our landscapes. AFIEGO has influenced **Uganda's** Electricity (Amendment) Act, which addresses low access to electricity, forest loss, gender inequalities and undermines critical rights⁶³. The organisation mobilised 15 CSOs to submit proposals, which were later incorporated into the act and signed into law in June 2022.

In **Indonesia**, NTFP-EP Indonesia successfully completed spatial planning across the Lariang, Kahayan and K-KU landscapes. Efforts were made to include women and young people in the planning process. In the Mudiak Baduo region, sub-district authorities have expedited the settlement of village borders using village funds, and all 11 villages have committed to a sustainable natural resource management plan. NTFP-EP Indonesia and WGII have verified and registered three ICCAs in the target landscapes. This formal recognition is a critical step for these areas to gain customary forest status from the government. Furthermore, in the Lariang landscape, partners are using the complaint mechanism established between IP&LCs and the government. SADIA's local project management committee of the Bukit Bediri and Stika Forest Reserve in **Malaysia** is collaborating with the Sarawak Forestry Corporation as the Sedilu National Park Special Task Force Committee, promoting co-management of resources in the country. At international levels (details in Pathways B and C), the passage of the EUDR and GBF international agreements has potential long-lasting effects. They provide a leverage for future campaigns to demand government action and to hold corporations accountable for years to come.

⁶¹ See <https://rightsandresources.org/blog/drc-senate-adopts-new-law-on-the-promotion-and-protection-of-the-rights-of-the-indigenous-pygmy-peoples/#:~:text=In%20March%2C%20the%20government%20also,t%20been%20updated%20since%201973.>

⁶² See <https://www.theghanareport.com/passage-of-wildlife-resources-bill-progressive-jinapor/>

⁶³ See <https://www.reenergyafrica.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/UGANDA-ELECTRICITY-AMENDMENT-ACT-2022.pdf>

6.4 Economic

Strengthening the economic condition of target communities is a key strategy for reducing community impacts on forests over the long term. In countries where economic initiatives have been introduced, adoption of the practices could improve the conditions of communities but also their environmental footprint.

In **DRC**, there has been economic empowerment of Indigenous women who have been resettled from the Kahuzi-Biega national park through micro credits. The pilot village savings and loans association (VSLA) have been adopted and are stimulating the adoption of innovative agricultural practices.

In **Ghana**, partners report widespread adoption of improved agroforestry practices among cocoa farmers in the local communities within the Atewa and the Juaboso-Bia landscapes. This follows capacity building on climate-smart agriculture and on-farm technical support. This will increase tree cover outside forest reserves and prevent farmers from expanding into forest reserves since the local climate they seek in the reserves is also on their farms as a result of climate smart practices. Communities are monitoring and reporting infractions of forest laws, which is reducing incidences of illegal activities that contribute to deforestation. This will continue beyond the project and could lead to increase revenues for local and national governments, which, if equitably utilised, could strengthen law enforcement efforts, environmental protection and the provision of social services to communities.

6.5 Risks

The aim of the FfJF programme is to improve inclusive and sustainable management of forest resources. If social, economic and institutional gains and achievements are sustained, then it is likely that environmental gains can be achieved. However, achieving the project's overall gains could be constrained or even derailed by a number of risks.

The likelihood that programme achievements will continue beyond the initial period is affected by financial, institutional, political and environmental risks.

As mentioned earlier, systemic change includes pushing for the application of skills, knowledge tools and skills acquired by individuals and organisations, but also the implementation of policies and

practices. Higher-level outcomes in the spheres of interest offer more robust sustainability prospects compared to the output level achievements.

Financial

The likelihood of the gains identified above to continue beyond the project periods are affected by financial risks. This is primarily linked to the ambition of the programme versus the available budget. The FfJF programme is a 68 million EUR initiative operating on a 46 million EUR budget. Alliance members and implementing partners have identified that the available financial resources are not sufficient to meet all the programme ambitions. The financial risk has been further exacerbated by the global economic situation which has pushed inflation to unprecedented levels, increased operational costs of delivery, meaning the programme has fewer resources to achieve its objectives. This situation was further worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

The budget cuts have had a massive negative impact on overall coordination, and project teams are reported to be very thin. Consequently, partners are reporting work overloads, high staff turnover and the inability to implement field learning activities, or to upscale initial gains. For instance, the adoption of agro-ecology and other climate smart practices needs scaling up and continuous support for resistant communities. As one respondent said, 'it is not enough to provide trainings to farmers and IP&LCs who have immediate economic needs.' Support with productive resources could further enhance livelihoods, reduce pressure on forests and enhance their participation in policy processes that concern them. Most partners are dependent on a limited number of funding sources including GLA. Partners report that the ability to mobilise resources to augment funding from FFJF remains a challenge. There is limited internal capacity for resource mobilisation, particularly beyond traditional funding models.

Political

The main risks facing the programme are related to the political context of implementation. Most countries of implementation are characterised by weak governance. Elections often are undemocratic, and the outcomes are contested, for example in

Cameroon and the **DRC**. The key challenge is that gains secured under one government are undermined by newly-elected officials. With the loss of institutional memory that usually accompanies political changes, project partners have to start/restart from scratch to engage new officials and to push for the maintenance or implementation of policies or agreements secured before their tenure. There are fears that the upcoming Dutch and European elections could potentially impede or even undermine the progress in other areas, as the political agendas of those elected may change resulting in backsliding on existing policies.

Even without elections, there is always the risk that priorities will change, and that enforcement of agreed policies will not be applied. A lack of political resolve to combat deforestation and use participatory and human rights-supporting methods could derail efforts. Initiatives such as RAD-KSB, and Green Taxonomy and pilot projects like integrated area development and social forestry modelling, are closely tied to implementation quality and enforcement levels. These can be influenced negatively by corruption and vested interests of private and political elites.

The deterioration of civil space is also linked to the political situation in many countries. Partners in **Bolivia** reported the risk of repression of those exposing the illegal activities in the forestry sector, especially by operators backed by political elite. Paralyzing NGOs with administrative bureaucratic measures such as NGO registration and a reduction in external funding for CSOs was also reported. CSOs are also facing more stringent control measures. In **Cameroon** where human rights NGOs exposed government violations in the context of armed conflicts in some regions of the country, the government reaction was to fight back these NGOs very hard.

Partners and journalists in **Uganda** face government intimidation and security threats, with local activists facing disappearances and deaths. Stricter anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing rules have further restricted activists' access to information.

In Southeast Asia, red-tagging, security threats and conflicts represented significant risks for the gains achieved being sustained.

Dutch partners are facing significant difficulties in obtaining visas for colleagues travelling to international events from West, Central and Asia-Pacific regions. This has an influence on global campaigns, which involve IP&LCs and forest activists'

participation in global movements and decision-making forums. Meetings and events have been altered, postponed or cancelled. Fortunately, Alliance members have been able to access the support of the MFA which has stepped in.

Programmatic/institutional

The diversity of context in which the programme is implemented and the wide range of approaches adopted by national and international partners represents a strength but also a risk. There was a perception among some respondents to the MTR, that there is dispersal of effort in many cases in target countries, across regions and internationally. This has also led to a perception that decision making in the Alliance in some cases is not sufficiently driven by field realities, leading to sub-optimal decision making or constraining the ability of the programme to lead from the south.

There are calls for stronger collaborations within the Alliance. During the global MTR workshop in Manila, participants identified topics such as environmental human rights defenders, gender and intersectionality which could be organised more collaboratively. Respondents to this evaluation and participants at the workshop highlighted the need to strengthen connections, coordination and exchanges in national, regional and international policy spaces. It is up to the Alliance to explore how to respond to these calls or continue in its current approach, with the risk of undermining the performance and the motivation of key actors. In particular, the Alliance needs to address the lack of sufficient spaces for learning and exchange and joint advocacy.

Environmental

As the programme seeks to find solutions to the climate emergency, the impacts of climate change (El Niño, fires, food systems) are being felt across the globe. The implementation of international, national and local level policies, agreements and guidelines will continue to drive conversion of forest land to agro-industry, mining/extractives and infrastructure without appropriate community consultation, and will perpetuate environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, the emergence and/or persistence of conflicts and human suffering. This only increases the urgency and relevance of the FFJF programme.

6.6 Lessons learned

The FfJF programme has yielded valuable insights and lessons which can be categorized into four main themes: the power of collective action; the importance of diverse partnerships; the need for multi-level engagement; and the significance of long-term solutions.

1. The power of collective action

One of the key takeaways from the FfJF programme is the transformative potential of collective action. By bringing together various stakeholders, including affected communities, CSOs and international partners, the programme has demonstrated the power of a unified voice in driving policy change and achieving sustainable outcomes.

For instance, in **Liberia**, the programme emphasised the importance of working in networks of interest and acting as one voice to address critical issues. This collaborative approach, particularly through the CSO working group on oil palm, has proven effective in holding non-compliant concessionaires accountable and advocating for policy reforms. Similarly, the joint efforts of partners in **Uganda** and **the Philippines** garnered media attention, leading to improvements on the ground. Similar examples have been illustrated regarding the work on the EUDR and advocacy actions during COP 26 around the Glasgow statement.

2. The importance of diverse partnerships

The FfJF programme has underscored the value of diverse partnerships, both in terms of strategic actors and advocacy approaches. By leveraging the strengths, networks and expertise of different partners, the programme has been able to address a wide range of issues and engage with stakeholders at different levels.

In **Colombia**, for example, the programme's success can be attributed to the diversity of strategic actors and the ability to articulate, coordinate, and complement different approaches. This multi-actor and multi-scale strategy has enabled the programme to tackle diverse scenarios, from local to international, and from public to private. Moreover, the programme has recognised the importance of engaging non-traditional actors such as the private sector in the advocacy process. This approach ensures the inclusion of different perspectives and interests, leading to more comprehensive and effective outcomes.

3. The need for multi-level engagement

Another crucial lesson from the FfJF programme is the significance of multi-level engagement, spanning from local to global platforms. By strategically positioning their agendas at different levels, the programme partners have been able to maximise their impact and influence.

At the national level in **Indonesia, Uganda, Bolivia, Colombia, Malaysia** and **Ghana**, the programme has successfully positioned itself on the legislative agenda by aligning with the interests of both the public and private sectors. This has not only facilitated the advancement of key issues but also provided a platform for specialised advice and information to feed into advocacy efforts.

Simultaneously, the programme has recognised the importance of engaging with local communities and governments. In **Viet Nam**, for instance, the programme emphasised the role of active community participation in achieving crucial goals like livelihood restoration and climate change adaptation. Similarly, in **the Philippines**, collaboration with local government units was identified as a key factor in asserting local autonomy.

4. The significance of long-term solutions

The programme has highlighted the need for long-term solutions and sustainability beyond the project life. While campaigns and immediate actions can be effective in addressing immediate threats, long-term solutions such as legal protection and community forest management, are essential to ensure lasting impact.

For instance, the programme emphasised the importance of building on existing institutions and fostering collaborations that can continue beyond the project life. This approach not only ensures the sustainability of outcomes but also enables the continuation of engagements with project stakeholders. Furthermore, the programme recognised the importance of integrating advocacy strategies with direct support, particularly in the context of local farmers, women and IP&LCs. Simply providing training and recommendations may not be sufficient to drive lasting change. Instead, a comprehensive approach that addresses both immediate threats and long-term solutions is necessary.

5. Gender

It is clear that action still needs to be taken to improve gender and social equality in forest dependent communities. A number of key lessons were learned from the examples of good practice provided by partners and learning from other similar programmes. For example, no one-size fits all. Each context is a little different and it is important to understand as fully as possible the context, the diverse identities of persons and the intersecting constraints to women's, young women and young men's participation. It is also important to understand from a local perspective how some of these constraints may have been addressed in the past. Conducting formal or informal gender and inclusion analyses will help adapt actions to better meet the needs.

There also remains a need to prioritise resources (time and funding) in order to take action to remove barriers to participation and address inequalities. Action must be taken to ensure that all partners understand the purpose of taking a gender transformative approach from a practical and a human rights perspective and that they are willing and determined to make a difference. Furthermore, it is essential to involve men at all levels, including leaders, gatekeepers, spouses and others and to work with local leaders to ensure that there are opportunities for women to take leadership positions and provide them with support.

6. Need for well-funded and strategic approach to legal advocacy

Legal approaches and litigation are crucial tools in the quest for environmental justice, enabling the accountability of both governments and corporations

for their actions. These strategies have proven effective in raising awareness, garnering public support and achieving tangible results in the battle against abuse from political and economic interests. Pushing for change beyond voluntary compliance schemes has improved the potential for enforcement and accountability. This underscores the necessity of adopting a comprehensive approach that combines legal strategies with other forms of advocacy and community mobilisation.

In response to the shrinking civic spaces and rights violations, local partners are also strengthening legal capacities within their organisations, either through recruitment of lawyers or the establishment of legal departments. This empowers these organisations to advocate effectively and contribute to positive change. As one respondent said, 'adequate resources must be allocated for both legal and meta-legal actions' to ensure that local solutions, protections, redress mechanisms and emergency responses can be provided to IP&LCs and (W) EHRDs either to defend or claim their rights. This highlights the need for a well-funded and strategic approach to legal advocacy, which is essential for the success of litigation efforts.

In conclusion, the FfJF programme has provided valuable insights into the power of collective action, the importance of diverse partnerships, the need for multi-level engagement and the significance of long-term solutions. These lessons can be strengthened into the second phase of the programme and for future programmes, emphasising the transformative potential of collaboration, the value of diverse perspectives, the need for strategic engagement and the importance of sustainability beyond project timelines.





RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 FfJF MRT report recommendations

7.1.1 Recommendations for the Alliance

Programmatic

Recommendation 1: Prioritise and implement recommendations from the 2023 civic space survey

- Set up a task force to discuss the recommendations from the civic space report and operationalise those that are prioritised. These could include:
 - Share information and provide support for accessing emergency funds;
 - Continue, and where relevant, intensify engagement of country partners with Dutch embassies and other diplomatic agencies in their countries of intervention;
 - Further develop/strengthen partner and IP&LC risk management and protection plans, including the use of modern technologies; and
 - Provide capacity building and resources to pursue the viability of accessing regional jurisdictions for case filing and advocacy and accessing other regional inter-governmental platforms.
- Continue engaging the civic space survey consultant and conduct country-focused discussions to implement country-specific recommendations.

Responsibility: PCG

Timeline: within 1 year

Recommendation 2: Sharpen the focus of the programme's LGL work

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) suggests that the alliance should conduct a thorough assessment of its topic groups and dossier. This review should cover various aspects including their purpose, synergies, outcomes, and areas of agreement among partners. It should also evaluate the advocacy achievements to date. Based on this analysis, the alliance is encouraged to identify and act on advocacy opportunities that effectively connect local and global level efforts. Specifically for the CBD, MhRDD and UNFCCC topic groups, it is vital to clearly define their roles, aims, and scope.

This approach should involve establishing precise terms of reference around agreed issues, detailing leadership or direction, and specifying the roles and responsibilities of partners. Implementing these strategies will enhance transparency across the alliance, minimize overlaps and redundancies, improve accountability, and aid in more effective communication. This approach will also underscore the unique contributions of the alliance compared to standard practices or a 'business-as-usual' scenario.

Regarding thematic programmes, which are currently executed by Friends of the Earth (FoE) partners and allies, it is recommended that if the GLA plans to develop future programmes the groups in the thematic programmes will reassess strategic inclusion of CSOs, including those aligned to other alliance members active on those themes. This will ensure a more cohesive and integrated approach within the alliance.

Responsibility: PCG

Within 6 months

Recommendation 3: Harmonise the FfJF approach/position to allow for livelihood support across the Alliance and allow partners to reallocate the financial resources required to respond to expressed needs, based on the country's context and priorities

There is a need to strengthen the support provided to primary stakeholder groups beyond capacity and rights building to facilitate their access to productive resources, market access, and energy alternatives. Capacity building and livelihood support are often a prerequisite to collaboration on advocacy with communities for country partners in terms of building long-lasting relationships. Some partners provide direct support/grants to livelihood development in furtherance of sustainable and just forest governance goals, while others do not. This needs to be harmonised across the Alliance to allow national implementing partners to reallocate the financial resources required to respond to expressed needs, based on the country's context and priorities. This was a key recommendation from the Forested Landscapes for Equity programme MTR which has still not been fully addressed.

Responsibility: Alliance members

Duration: within 6 months

Recommendation 4: Maintain the Alliance's structure and ensure that approaches and strategies remain responsive to dynamic and emerging global, regional and national forest, climate and biodiversity priorities

The Alliance has achieved significant results, even in challenging situations. This success can be attributed to its balanced structure, with equal representation from both northern and southern members. The deep involvement and expertise of national partners across various landscapes, combined with their diverse strategies and approaches, have been pivotal to this success. For continued relevance in the dynamic environments where partners work, the MTR suggested the Alliance should:

- Continue to utilise the annual planning and reflection meetings to assess the implementation contexts and refine strategies and approaches as necessary; and
- Maintain the current balanced structure of the Alliance in future programming.

Responsibility: Alliance members

Duration: Ongoing and beyond

Inclusion, gender equality and youth

Recommendation 5: Continue and, where relevant, strengthen the inclusion, gender equality and youth core of the programme by:

- a) Continue working with WECF and reviewing the input, roles, modalities and effectiveness of in-country gender technical partners in some countries.

The inclusion of WECF as technical partner in the FfJF programme has proved successful to date. It is therefore recommended that partners and Alliance members continue to work with WECF to provide advice, capacity building and support for the adoption of a gender-just approach in programming and deepening understanding of the purpose of, and justification for, taking a gender transformative approach from a practical and a human/women's rights perspective.

The engagement of country-based gender technical partners has been very successful in some countries, especially where the partners have involved the gender technical partner as equal team members from the start. In other countries, the system has been less successful, especially where trust has not been built; where the partners already have their own gender technical staff/partners; have gender specialists within their team; or have been effectively addressing gender equality in their own way for many years. In some others such as Cameroon, there is no collaboration between the gender partner and GLA national implementing partner. It is recommended that FfJF programme now reflects on and reviews the current relationships in each country and makes appropriate changes if required.

Responsibility: PCG and WECF

Timeline: Ongoing within and 6 months

b) Focus on further closing the gender gap in targeting and power inequalities between primary stakeholder groups and develop qualitative indicators or progress markers

The data currently available in the monitoring framework to assess the number of different people supported by, and/or engaged by, the programme to date (indicator 2a) indicates that a greater level of support and resources were provided to men over women and young men over young women. This data, however, does not necessarily provide the full picture, which is more nuanced and differs from country to country. It is recommended that partners:

- Continue to pay special attention to women, young women and young men when providing support for forest governance and the promotion of sustainable livelihood activities and ensure sufficient allocation of budget for these activities (linked to recommendation 3 above);
- Consider collecting data for at least indicator 2a annually;⁶⁴ and
- Develop their own country level qualitative progress markers to complement the quantitative measures and ensure that the good practice in the programme is represented in the results framework. These measures could include leadership, ownership, voice, participation and contributions to relevant local and national policy processes.

Responsibility: Partners

Timeline: Ongoing

c) Continue implementing OGAPS but with greater focus on programming and community-level engagement/activities and lobby and advocacy

Seventy-two percent of partners have developed OGAPS and the majority of those have stated that they are being implemented as planned. The plans set out the things they intend to do within their own organisations and how they will approach gender equality in their activities. To date they have focused more on the internal and on creating more gender-responsive organisations. It is recommended that partners continue implementing their OGAPs, with a greater focus now on programming and implementing a gender justice approach in their work, especially in relation to the effective inclusion of forest-dependent and forest-dwelling young and adult women and young men whose interests, needs and voices may have been previously under-valued and/or under-represented.

Responsibility: Partners, with support from WECF and gender technical partners

Timeline: within 6 months

d) Renew efforts to conduct regular gender and inclusion analyses

Each country and landscape context is different. To design the most effective and relevant gender-transformative activities, it is important to understand as fully as possible the (changing) contexts, the diverse identities of persons, and the intersecting constraints to women's, young women's, and young men's participation, as well as to understand from a local perspective how some of these constraints may have been addressed in the past. It is therefore recommended that partners conduct regular gender and inclusion analyses in their forested landscapes. These analyses should include identifying the underlying drivers of inequality, access to and control of resources and tenure rights, as well as the impact of context changes on marginalised groups. Technically this forms part of the annual planning and reflection process but needs to be reviewed in depth each year to ensure that the planned interventions respond to the fast-changing contexts where the programme is implemented.

Responsibility: Partners, with support from WECF and gender technical partners

Timeline: Annually

⁶⁴This is not expected to add any additional burden on partners, as they are expected to document who participants in their activities.

Monitoring and evaluation and learning

Recommendation 6: Develop and deliver on a learning agenda within the Alliance

To learn from the achievements, lessons learned and challenges across the programme, the delivery of the learning agenda could focus on the following actions:

- Recruit/or reassign specific staff to lead the learning agenda of the Alliance;
- Document and share best practices, providing more spaces and platforms for partners to share stories of change, successful approaches and difficulties and barriers faced, including, but not limited to, gender, youth and intersectionality;
- Encourage partners to ringfence the time allocated to the gender hub and other working group meetings as set out in the programme guidelines;
- Create a resource base for the Alliance where partners can access reports, best practices, case studies and showcase their achievements and share experiences; and
- Create more opportunities for face-to-face exchange among country partners and between countries. This could include one-to-one exchanges based on synergies between partners, focused on south-south exchanges and learning.

Responsibility: PCG/PMEL/country coordinators and regional leads

Duration: within 1 year

Recommendation 7: Align the monitoring and evaluation framework with the ToC, document stories of change to demonstrate the contribution of the Alliance and utilise emerging data to strengthen programme direction

At the global meeting, many partners voiced their concern that they took their direction and assessed their progress against the ToC yet the results and indicators in the programme M&E framework did not directly or clearly link to the ToC. There are currently no measures to assess progress towards the 11 outcomes set out in the programme's ToC sphere of influence. Currently, the only monitoring data collected in the M&E framework is quantitative for most of the indicators. Those that could be more qualitatively focused are assessed by numbers (for example, the number of policy changes). The quantitative and qualitative data emerging from partners is not sufficiently used to inform the programme strategy and direction.

To ensure that future monitoring, reviews and evaluations align more closely to partner activities and provide a more nuanced and complete picture of the changes brought about as a result of the programme, it is recommended that:

- The M&E framework and ToC be reviewed and aligned more closely to each other;
- In order for the annual plans, annual reports and M&E framework be more aligned with partners achievements (captured in OH and through qualitative indicators) an analysis of correlated qualitative data be captured in a separate section of Project Connect through the inputs made by implementing partners;
- The FfJF programme considers and agrees how to evidence changes in practice. Indicator 4 focuses on the 'number and nature of changes in policies and practices contributing to inclusive and gender-responsive governance structures and sustainable IPLC forest management.' Evidence provided to date focuses only on policy;
- Outcome harvesting templates be restructured around the stated outcomes in the ToC area of influence to ensure documentation and analysis of the changes resulting from the contribution of the project. The 'contribution' column needs to explain in more detail exactly how the FfJF programme contributed (the actions taken specifically by the programme) and
- The emerging data needs to be analysed and used to inform the programme strategy and delivery.

Responsibility: PMEL

Duration: Ongoing

Reporting

Recommendation 8: Simplify and streamline programme monitoring and evaluation routines for national implementing partners

The MTR recommended the Alliance to reconsider its modus operandi and its reporting routines. Partners are concerned with the high volume of calls and reporting burdens, particularly for smaller implementing partners who do not have the resources and personnel compared to larger more resourced partners. The MTR recommended either providing additional resources to national partners to support reporting, or differentiating the reporting responsibilities and guidelines between the national implementing partners and Alliance members to lessen the reporting burdens.

Recommendation 9: Strengthen consultation with IP&LCs and ensure their voices are represented in programme reporting

Understanding how the programme actions are affecting the lives of different community members is essential in terms of understanding what has worked to date and what can be achieved in the final two years of the programme. Currently, most partners work intensively with communities on joint planning and advocacy. However, while community leaders are more often involved in such activities, the activity itself and its outcomes impact on ordinary women, men and youth in forested communities and on their livelihoods. From time to time there is a need survey/consult these community members in order to better understand the impact of the programme on their lives and livelihoods. At the moment, these voices are not evident in country or global reports, nor in the outcomes harvested. It is therefore recommended that local women, men, young women and young men in forested landscapes be consulted/surveyed from time to time and that their voices be represented in future monitoring and review activities, including in annual reports.

Responsibility: Secretariate and PMEL

Duration: within 6 months

Coordination and collaboration

Recommendation 10: Streamline and consolidate the governance and advisory structures of the Alliance.

In view of the governance and leadership challenges, the MTR recommended a review of the governance architecture. Subject to internal reflections and response, this model could be organised around:

- An inclusive gender balanced supervisory board and a programme coordination group of alliance members;
- Coordination unit which brings together all daily coordination/oversight, administration, finance, communications, integrity and PMEL;
- Gender technical partners and a gender hub; and
- Priority advocacy topics for the technical unit.

Responsibility: PCG

Timing: Future Alliance programme

Recommendation 11: Strengthen linkages between implementing partners and the governance structures of the Alliance

There is inadequate understanding throughout the Alliance regarding the roles and functions of the various governance and technical bodies. This also includes limited knowledge of procedures and guidelines for accessing the various governance structures. It is recommended that the Alliance develops and provides clear guidance on the workings of the various structures and modalities for accessing them. The MTR also recommended that the Alliance creates and pilots a country coordinators and facilitators ad hoc working group for the remaining two years of the programme. Lessons learned in how it operates could inform the creation of a more permanent structure in a future GLA programme.

Responsibility: PCG

Timing: within 6 months

Recommendation 12: Clarify the position of the Alliance regarding the regional coordination role of members

There is insufficient clarity and understanding within the Alliance regarding the regional coordination role of members. This is leading to unmet expectations amongst some member countries. It is recommended the Alliance clarifies roles and expectations and provides a plan and the resources needed for members to deliver on the functions.

Responsibility: PCG and SB

Timeline: within 6 months

Budget

Recommendation 13: Review the programme budget in line with the recommendations

While individual alliance members have made efforts to supplement GLA activities in certain countries/regions or LGL topics/dossiers, no apparent efforts have been made by the Alliance for the past three years to mobilise additional funding to plug the funding gap.

Implementing the MTR recommendations will require adjustments to the Alliance and country partner budgets. Alliance members and technical partners need to demonstrate flexibility to enable this to happen considering that global budgets have been agreed. One option is for each Alliance member to proactively allocate a share of its budget for coordination and learning and take proactive steps to correct any imbalance in gender targeting where identified.

Responsibility: Supervisory board

Duration: within 6 months

Sustainability

Recommendation 14: Develop an exit strategy to land the gains achieved and strengthen ownership and sustainability

The MTR proposed that the Alliance develops an exit strategy for this phase of the programme building specific to each country context. The Alliance needs to start discussions with partners to consolidate the achievements of the programme at all levels. The exit strategy and related discussions will also help to prepare partners for a scenario with or without future FfJF programme funding. Part of this process could include organising and providing training on resource mobilisation and funding proposal development for tropical country partners.

Responsibility: PCG and partners

Duration: within 1 year

7.1.2 Recommendations for others

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

We strongly recommend that the MFA continues its funding support for the programme beyond the current phase, addressing a wide spectrum of critical global challenges including climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss, gender inequality, just energy transition and the protection of Indigenous peoples' rights. This funding is indispensable for the programme's success in enhancing the voices of Indigenous peoples and local communities while improving their livelihoods. The programme serves as a powerful tool for indigenous peoples and local communities, addressing issues that are central to their well-being and rights and that are key in addressing the climate, water and biodiversity crises. It not only empowers IP&LC communities but also ensures their active participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives. This is crucial for achieving meaningful outcomes in areas like inclusive and sustainable forest governance, biodiversity conservation, gender equality, climate change and a just energy transition.

This Alliance is exceptionally well-positioned to lead this process effectively. It has already achieved significant milestones and demonstrated its capacity to respond to emerging needs. By continuing to support this initiative, the MFA can facilitate the consolidation of these achievements and enable the Alliance to take a leadership role in addressing global challenges comprehensively, promoting the voice and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities and supporting the Dutch government to deliver on its national and international climate goals.

Dutch embassies in GLA

Dutch embassies are integral partners of the FfJF program, given their crucial role as diplomatic representatives in GLA countries. However, acknowledging that embassies often operate with limited staffing and face varying degrees of commitment, it becomes essential to chart a pragmatic course for their collaboration with the programme. To enhance their support, embassies should begin by (or continue to) prioritise regular information sharing with FfJF partners in their countries or where they have jurisdiction. Even with limited resources, maintaining awareness of the programme's activities, goals and achievements can enable embassies to engage effectively and identify opportunities for collaboration that align with their mandates. The experience of Uganda demonstrates how valuable Dutch embassies can be in providing protections for environmental defenders.

