

Performance Story Report

Exploring IUCN's influence on the development and growth of the Bonn Challenge

February 2017

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1. Executive summary

The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to restore 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. It is an implementation vehicle for national priorities such as water and food security and rural development while contributing to the achievement of international climate change, biodiversity and land degradation commitments. The 2020 target was launched at a high-level event in Bonn in 2011 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Government of Germany and was later endorsed and extended to 2030 by the New York Declaration on Forests of the 2014 UN Climate Summit. Regional implementation platforms for the Bonn Challenge are emerging around the world, including Initiative 20x20 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and AFR100 for Africa.

KNOWFOR is a DFID funded partnership between the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), IUCN and the World Bank Program on Forests (PROFOR). Titled *“Improving the way knowledge on forests is understood and used internationally”*, KNOWFOR aims to address the gap between the supply and up-take of knowledge by practitioners and decision makers in the forestry sector.

This report is one of three in-depth evaluative case studies prepared as part of the DFID KNOWFOR program evaluation. Each case study needs to align with an agreed, overall methodology (either performance story reporting, or episode study), and respond to KNOWFOR key evaluation question 1: *“Did KNOWFOR contribute to equipping decision makers and intermediaries? If so, what lessons can be drawn from KNOWFOR’s approach to translating knowledge for action?”* Specifically, this case study assesses the degree to which the following hypothesis holds true:

“IUCN used its unique combination of linkage to members, knowledge brokering, technical analysis and convening attributes to play a critical role in the development and growth of FLR.”

To understand IUCN’s contribution to equipping decision-makers and intermediaries, a long-term perspective that goes back to the origins of the forest landscape restoration (FLR) approach is needed. IUCN has played a central, consistent and visible role in the conception, promotion and adoption of the FLR approach by northern and southern governments from the perspective of policy, funding and implementation.

The theory of change behind the development and implementation of the Bonn Challenge (although not defined explicitly by IUCN) revolved around three principle strategies:

- Identifying champions within government institutions (both donors as well as implementing agencies) and using them to communicate internally to political leaders to build political support for the concept. The use of case studies from countries with strong political commitment on FLR (such as Rwanda) was a key element of this work.
- Focussing on mainstreaming the Bonn Challenge (as an implementation model) into existing international conventions and commitments on biodiversity, land degradation and climate change that countries have already signed up to, as well as communicating how restoration can help advance domestic goals such as increased food and water security, disaster risk reduction

and rural development. Again, knowledge products play an important part in the communication of this strategy.

- Working with individual countries to plan and deliver FLR action on the ground, using FLR assessments as the foundation. Capacity building is an essential element of this country-focused activity.

The FLR concept was conceptualised, articulated and presented in a way that was attractive to political leaders in a wide variety of concepts. FLR draws on domestic (rather than externally-derived) goals, presents opportunities for social, economic as well as environmental benefits, and delivers low trade-offs and opportunity costs, as the land being targeted is of low economic value. IUCN has used knowledge products developed through KNOWFOR to communicate how FLR can deliver domestic as well as international benefits to participating countries.

IUCN was strategic and tactical in identifying multiple entry points, platforms, forums and opportunities for “seeding” the FLR concept, and then helping articulate how FLR could help address the specific goals of that forum (climate change, biodiversity, food security, desertification and others). This included its membership in networks such as the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) (which it hosts), United Nation Forum on Forests (UNFF), Global Programme on Forests (GPF), Global Landscapes Forum, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of Parties (COP) meetings. In parallel to the development of the FLR concept over the last decade, there has been growth in environmental agreements around forests, degradation and biodiversity – all of which have been searching for implementation approaches and solutions. IUCN, through its involvement in these parallel processes, was well placed to foster linkages between FLR and these emerging agreements and conventions. Furthermore, by working at an institutional, rather than project, level senior IUCN forests staff were able to use their multiple mandates and roles across a range of international as well as national processes, to lobby for the inclusion of FLR concepts.

In terms of “equipping decision makers”, IUCN has demonstrated an ability to develop and deliver a range of target quality knowledge products (including assessments, policy briefs, studies, methodologies and training materials) in a responsive, timely and opportunistic manner, with a view to generating evidence and building an evidence base for FLR. This has been particularly useful in demonstrating how FLR is an effective delivery mechanism for key international agreements related to environment, conservation and climate change. Since the Bonn Challenge, KNOWFOR knowledge products have also been targeted towards the development of technical materials supporting FLR assessments, planning, implementation and capacity building. The effectiveness and impact of KNOWFOR funding was maximised through its flexible and adaptive nature – IUCN was able to respond quickly to emerging requests for knowledge products at key events such as the CBD COP in December 2016.

The evidence compiled in this case study has shown that the specific contributions made by IUCN to the process leading up to and after the Bonn Challenge were possible due to a number of factors including its wide network of governmental and non-governmental members; the quality, relevance and timeliness of its knowledge products; its broad analysis drawing on grounded field examples that went beyond traditional forest sectoral boundaries and its ability to convene players at global, regional and national levels. As such, the hypothesis proposed for this case study is confirmed.

2. Introduction

2.1. Objective of the report

KNOWFOR is a DFID funded partnership between the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Bank Program on Forests (PROFOR). Titled “*Improving the way knowledge on forests is understood and used internationally*”, KNOWFOR aims to address the disjuncture between the supply and up-take of knowledge by practitioners and decision makers in the forestry sector. Specifically KNOWFOR aims to increase the interaction of policy makers and forestry practitioners with relevant research and other knowledge products, tools, and capacity building activities through improved planning for knowledge use and more deliberate learning and reflection. The programme brings together three significant and complementary organisations in the international forestry development sector to leverage their comparative strengths and networks to improve the uptake of relevant knowledge in priority forest-related practice and policy processes

This report is one of three in-depth evaluative case studies prepared as part of the DFID KNOWFOR program evaluation. Each case study needs to align with an agreed, overall methodology (either performance story reporting or episode study), and respond to KNOWFOR key evaluation question 1: “*Did KNOWFOR contribute to equipping decision makers and intermediaries? If so, what lessons can be drawn from KNOWFOR’s approach to translating knowledge for action?*” Specifically, this case study assesses the degree to which the following hypothesis holds true:

“IUCN used its unique combination of linkage to members, knowledge brokering, technical analysis and convening attributes to play a critical role in the development and growth of FLR.”

2.2. Scope of the report

This case study explores IUCN’s influence on the development and growth of the Bonn Challenge, the international forest landscape restoration (FLR) policy mechanism. The case study uses the “performance story reporting” technique to develop an evidence-based narrative against key evaluation question 1. This involves clarifying the programme logic, developing guiding questions for the social inquiry process and data trawl, and integrating findings using a results chart. Final conclusions about the extent to which this intervention has contributed to outcomes are presented at the end of the report, and have been subjected to a validation exercise by IUCN staff.

The report focuses mainly on the specific contribution of the KNOWFOR project to the implementation of the Bonn Challenge. However, over a decade of work was undertaken by IUCN in the years leading up to the Bonn Challenge meeting in Bonn in 2011. Although this falls outside the scope of this assessment, the results of the KNOWFOR project are intimately linked to the activities and outcomes that preceded it. As a result, the report does describe and seek to identify the contribution of IUCN to the policy process, and the build-up of political momentum that occurred in

the years preceding the Bonn Challenge, while focusing on the specific results delivered by KNOWFOR.

No specific theory of change was developed by IUCN to describe and capture the contributions of IUCN and others to the achievement of the goals regarding the planning and implementation of the Bonn Challenge. Much of the work has taken place outside formal project-defined funding periods, but has been more normative work undertaken by the IUCN forests team as part of their work, until funds were raised through DFID (KNOWFOR) and the German government (BMUB-IKI) when increased capacity and resources were needed to take it to the next level. A theory of change is presented in Section 3 as part of a wider description of the process behind IUCN's work.

2.3. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand how the KNOWFOR project contributed to equipping decision makers and intermediaries, with regard to the development and implementation of the Bonn Challenge. This is part of a wider evaluation of the KNOWFOR project, of which this case study forms a part. Of particular interest to this case study is clarification of the specific impact pathways that resulted in wider change – in other words, the specific actions implemented by IUCN (and others) that contributed to securing international political support for FLR within the context of the Bonn Challenge, and the subsequent actions that supported its implementation. By teasing out these impact pathways, and identifying the specific contribution of IUCN to the international FLR policy process, it is hoped that lessons can be learned by IUCN (and others) on how such change processes can be managed and supported in the future.

The audience for this study is IUCN and KNOWFOR partners as well as DFID.

2.4. Methodology

The methodology used in this performance story report included the following steps:

1. **Gaining an understanding of the Bonn Challenge/FLR “story”, timeline and wider context.** This was done through in-depth interviews with senior staff within IUCN as well as reviewing written materials on the Bonn Challenge process and achievements. One output of this was the development of a timeline of key events leading up to and after the Bonn Challenge, which is presented in Section 3 of this report.
2. **Developing a retrospective theory of change (ToC) to describe how change was realised and the contributions of IUCN to this change.** This ToC model presents a simplified view of the incremental steps along a results-chain pathway, leading to the development and implementation of the Bonn Challenge. The ToC model is based on the synthesised inputs of IUCN staff presented in Step 1.
3. **The development of a “results chart” based on programme logic identified in Steps 1 and 2 above.** The results chart (presented in Section 4) also includes summaries of the performance of the initiative at different levels of the intervention logic, based on the key KNOWFOR-supported activities in the retrospective ToC. Strength of evidence assessments are provided for each level.

4. **Interviews with key actors and further literature review.** Interviews were conducted with a range of actors and resource persons inside and outside IUCN, who were/are involved in the development and implementation of the Bonn Challenge. In total 8 IUCN staff and 5 external interviews were held. Additional literature was consulted, particularly literature written by other agencies in the FLR arena. The objective of this was to verify the ToC pathways and results chart, by providing an independent validation of the contribution claims made by IUCN.
5. **Validation of report with IUCN staff.** A summary of the case study was presented to IUCN staff, where evidence and findings were presented for validation and comment. Based on these comments and inputs (and additional evidence where it was found) a final case study report was written.

The report is structured as follows:

- **Section 3** provides a history and timeline of the events leading up to and after the Bonn Challenge. Drawing on this, a simplified ToC is proposed to describe the principle contributions and role played by IUCN in this.
- **Section 4** introduces the concept of a results chart, based on the ToC, and gives a summarised assessment of the degree to which results have been achieved, and the contribution of IUCN within that.
- **Section 5** gives more detail and context to the processes and products that IUCN delivered with KNOWFOR support, assesses the overall contribution of IUCN and the significance of the impacts achieved to date. The section concludes with a summary of findings and lessons learned.

A concluding note on sources: Throughout this report, evidence is referenced. Documents referenced are included as footnotes to the text. A list of persons interviewed as part of this evaluation is presented in Annex I. When citing specific interviews, these are referenced with a coding system that maintains their anonymity while demonstrating a link back to one, or more of the interviews conducted. Interviews are numerically coded with the prefix [I###], or [E##], where “I” refers to an internal source (internal to IUCN) and “E” refers to an external source, outside IUCN. The coding key has been saved separately from this evaluation document. Many of the interviews were recorded, with the permission of the respondent, and have been filed by the author of the case study.

3. The program context

IUCN has been supporting and promoting the concept of forest landscape restoration (FLR) since the late 1990s. The concept is rooted in the belief that an integrated and holistic approach is needed to restore degraded landscapes. It incorporates multiple interests and opportunities that exist across a given area and reflects the wider goods and services provided by forests at local, national and even international levels. This contrasts with earlier attempts to plant trees, or restore forests, which tended to view forests in isolation from the wider drivers of land-use change and focused on trees in terms of economic uses such as timber or fibre. A timeline of activities, milestones and events leading up to the Bonn Challenge is presented in Figure 1, showing the long period of support that was provided by IUCN (and others such as the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the governments of Germany and the U.K.) in building the case for FLR internationally.¹

The concept of FLR was first coined at a meeting convened by IUCN and WWF in July 2000 in Segovia, Spain² IUCN contributed to discussion papers for the World Bank's policy review of its forest programme in 2000, emphasising a broader and more inclusive perspective to planning forest investments, looking beyond timber and utilisation to wider goals and benefits. Following much of this work promoting the concept within key institutions, the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) was launched at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Forestry meeting in March 2003 in Rome. This provided an institutional platform from which FLR could be further communicated and promoted and was an important point for engaging with key forestry agencies in countries such as the U.K., U.S.A. and Germany.

The GPFLR held its first "implementation meeting" in Petropolis, Brazil in 2005 and issued the "Petropolis Challenge", setting out a political agenda for FLR. This was picked up by key political leaders in Brazil and the U.K. and communicated to the UNFF Ministerial Dialogue on "Restoring the World's Forests" held in May 2005. In 2009, the U.K. government became increasingly interested in the concept of FLR and convened a high-level, roundtable meeting in London, at which the "London Challenge" was issued. IUCN, working together with WRI, prepared an estimate of the global land area with restoration potential – at 1 billion hectares. This gave an initial picture of where FLR was most needed and the transformation potential it could provide if implemented. In May 2010, the U.K. had a change of government and the U.K. Forestry Commission was restructured, leading to two of the principle FLR champions taking early retirement. The "centre of gravity" behind FLR then shifted to Germany, where IUCN and others had been actively engaging with key decision makers within the German forest service. This was translated into political engagement and a decision was made to host an international meeting in Bonn in September 2011 to further galvanise action around FLR. The "Bonn Challenge" (as it later became known) was complemented by the publication by IUCN, WRI and the University of South Dakota (with funding from the World Bank's PROFOR programme) of

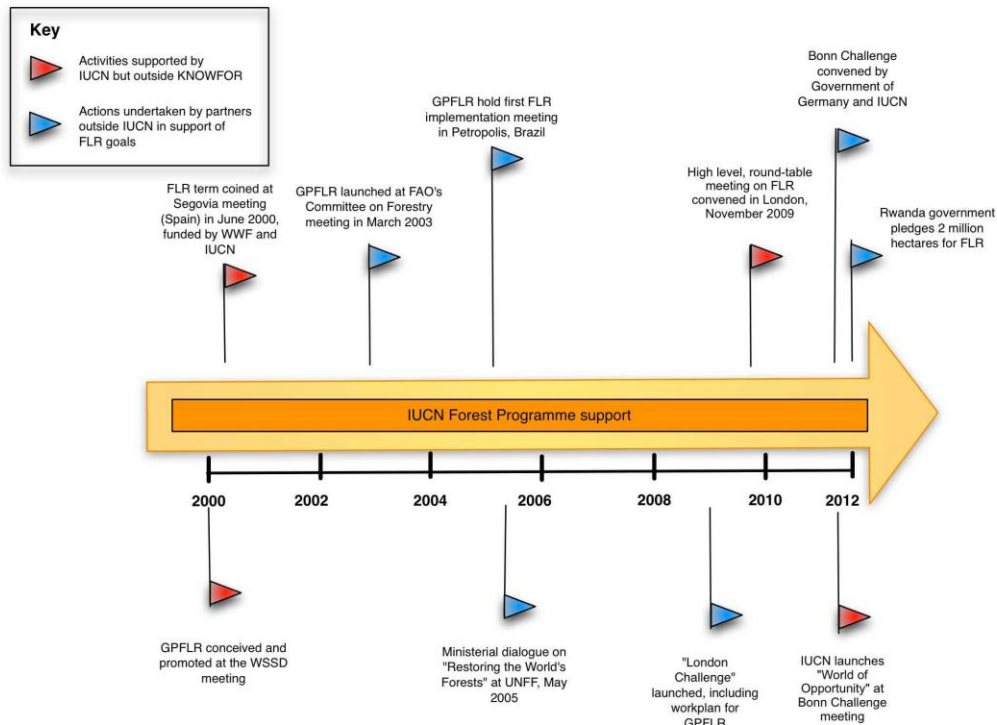
¹ The narrative for this timeline is based on information gathered from interviews with senior staff within the IUCN forests teamforestry programme, senior representatives from government agencies and NGOs working on the Bonn Challenge and published literature on the Bonn Challenge (cited separately)

² L. Laestadius, K. Buckingham, S. Maginnis and C. Saint-Laurent. 2015. Before Bonn and beyond: the history and future of forest landscape restoration. *Unasylva* 245, Vol. 66.

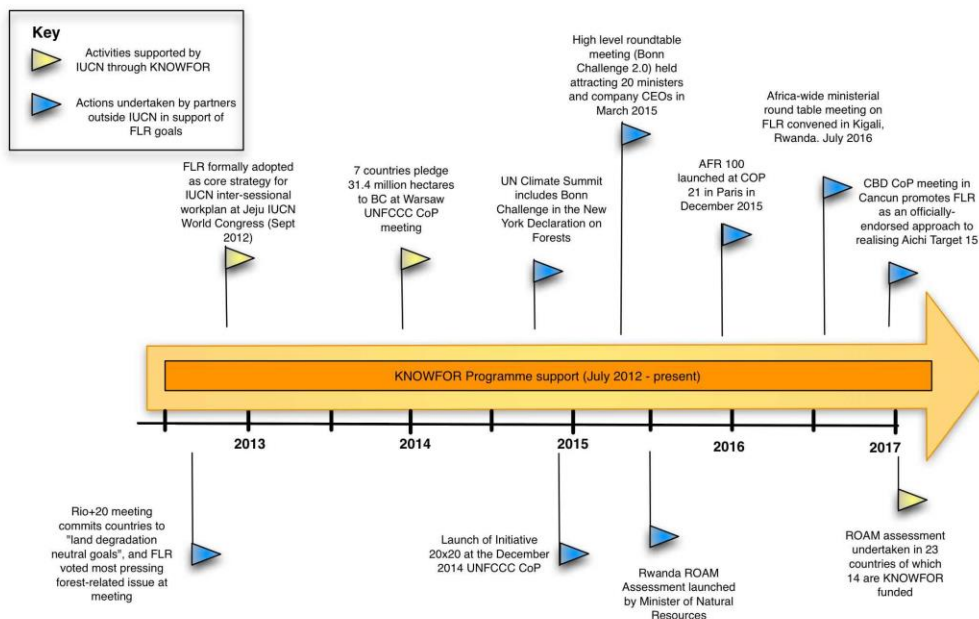
the “World of Opportunity” Map,³ which showed an area of greater than 2 billion hectares of degraded land that could benefit from restoration.

Figure

1:



Timeline of events and milestones in the period leading up to the Bonn Challenge



³ See: <http://www.bonnchallenge.org/what-our-global-restoration-opportunity>

Figure 2: Timeline of events following the Bonn Challenge

One of the strategies developed by IUCN and others was the development of a global target (in terms of hectares of land to be restored), against which countries could contribute a pledge. This was met with some resistance from some quarters, but IUCN lobbied hard for the concept of a target, proposing that an initial global target should be set to restore 150 million hectares by 2020. This target was derived from the “World of Opportunity” map as well as Aichi Target 15, which calls for restoration of 15% of degraded ecosystems by 2020.

As a demonstration of further momentum behind the Bonn Challenge, in September 2014 the UN Climate Summit included the Bonn Challenge in the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF). With the endorsement of over 100 governments, civil society and indigenous organisations as well as private enterprises, the New York Declaration committed to:

“Restore 150 million hectares of degraded landscapes and forestlands by 2020 and significantly increase the rate of global restoration thereafter, which would restore, at least, an additional 200 million hectares by 2030.”⁴

The Bonn Challenge was arguably the high water mark of building political will and support internationally for FLR. From 2011 onwards, much of the effort shifted towards implementation – securing country-level pledges and ensuring that the global political targets were reflected in national action plans, as well as linked to wider commitments made as part of other international agreements

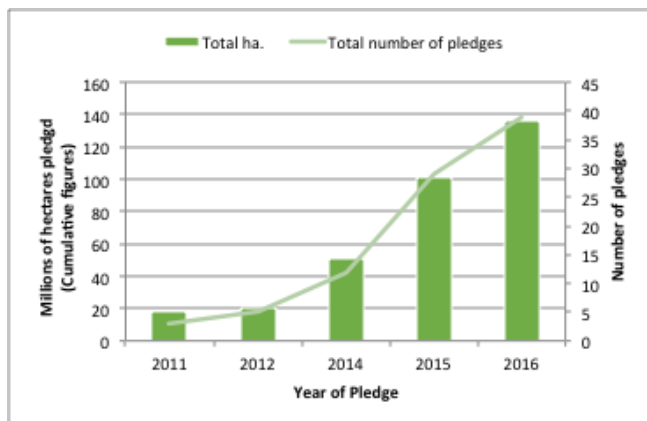


Figure 3: Cumulative growth in pledges to the Bonn Challenge from 2011 to 2016

(such as the UNFCCC, CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets (primarily 5, 14, 15), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and others. Many of the key events and milestones in this period are presented in Figure 2. The KNOWFOR project was instrumental in this work and provided the resources for IUCN to both attend and convene key events at global meetings through which FLR could be further promoted. For example, at the Lima UNFCCC COP in December 2014, KNOWFOR supported a GPFLR side event at which countries as well as donors could meet and exchange

experiences. Evidence was profiled from early adopters, and case studies were presented, showing the mitigation and adaptation benefits from the implementation of FLR. The growth in country pledges made towards meeting the Bonn Challenge targets after 2011 is shown in Figure 3, with a peak in 2015, and with 17 countries making pledges totalling over 50 million hectares.

⁴ United Nations. 2014. New York Declaration on Forests. Available at: <http://www.un.org/climatechange/summit/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/07/New-York-Declaration-on-Forest---Action-Statement-and-Action-Plan.pdf>

Prior to the advent of the KNOWFOR project, IUCN relied on mobilising internal funding to support the influencing and advocacy process that underpinned the FLR work. A small group from IUCN's forests team, based in Gland, Switzerland, were the primary agents of change. They worked closely and increasingly with other agencies, such as WRI and WWF to build political momentum.

With support from the KNOWFOR project, IUCN developed a tool for use at the national and sub-national level to plan FLR interventions, known as the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM). The tool has been used to date in 27 countries and sub-national jurisdictions (of which 23 are supported directly by KNOWFOR) such as Colombia, Mexico, Ghana, El Salvador and Rwanda to identify and plan investments from public and private sources in support of FLR targets. Rwanda, in particular, was seen as an early adopter of the FLR model. A particularly strong support to the FLR concept was provided by the Rwandan Environment Minister and a target proposal of 2 million hectares of land was targeted to be restored as part of the Bonn Challenge⁵. In addition to supporting countries to plan FLR at national or sub-national levels, IUCN with support from KNOWFOR, also supported capacity building efforts by training resource persons from both government and NGOs in FLR approaches and methods. As of December 2016, the Bonn Challenge has received pledges totalling over 136 million ha from 39 national and sub-national governments, restoration alliances and companies.⁶

The ToC behind the development and implementation of the Bonn Challenge (although not defined explicitly by IUCN) revolved around three principle strategies:

- Identifying champions within government institutions (both donor as well as implementing agencies) and using them to communicate internally to political leaders to build political support for the concept overall. The use of case studies from countries with strong political commitment on FLR (such as Rwanda) was a key element of this work.
- Focussing on mainstreaming the Bonn Challenge (as an implementation model) into existing international conventions and commitments on biodiversity, land degradation and climate change that countries have already signed up to, as well as communicating how restoration can help increase domestic goals such as increased food and water security, disaster risk reduction and rural development. Again, knowledge products play an important part in the communication of this strategy.
- Working with individual countries to plan and deliver FLR action on the ground and in particular through the use of FLR assessments. Capacity building is an essential element of this country-focused activity. A second, but equally important aspect of this strategy is fund-raising, both on behalf of IUCN and helping countries mobilise resources from external sources in support of FLR

These three outputs are presented graphically in boxes 5, 6 and 7 in Figure 3. IUCN was supported by a range of donors to fulfil its role as presented here, and other players, most notably WRI. DFID funding through KNOWFOR has had strong (but not exclusive) contributions to Boxes 4, 5, 6 and 7 in Figure 4.

⁵ Clear Horizon 2015. Rwandan Forest Landscape Restoration: Tracing the Influence.

⁶ IUCN. 2016. Restoration of forest ecosystems and landscapes as contribution to the Aichi Biodiversity targets. Information document submitted by IUCN. Gland, Switzerland.
<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/46598>

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The model presented is necessarily a highly simplified version of what took place. In reality, things were more complicated and less “linear”, particularly with regard to the period leading up to the Bonn Challenge when political support was being garnered. Much of the work was context specific, dependent on key individuals acting as champions within their own networks, and highly adaptive. More specifically, within the context of Box 5, in some cases IUCN facilitated country-level assessments, which then provided countries with firm figures on which pledges could be based, rather than the other way round. Box 1 relates to the work of IUCN with regard to facilitating field-level pilots within the context of projects such as the Livelihoods and Landscapes project. This took place throughout the period leading up to the Bonn Challenge, and evidence from the field was used to develop case studies and communicate results to ongoing international processes as a means to build credibility. Furthermore, throughout the period leading up to the Bonn Challenge (Boxes 1-4) IUCN was able to use its position as secretariat to the GPFLR as a means to promote the FLR concept formally and informally through its networks. Following the Bonn Challenge meeting, the GPFLR became a forum for promoting (and more recently) monitoring implementation, through IUCN tools such as the Bonn Challenge “Barometer⁷.”

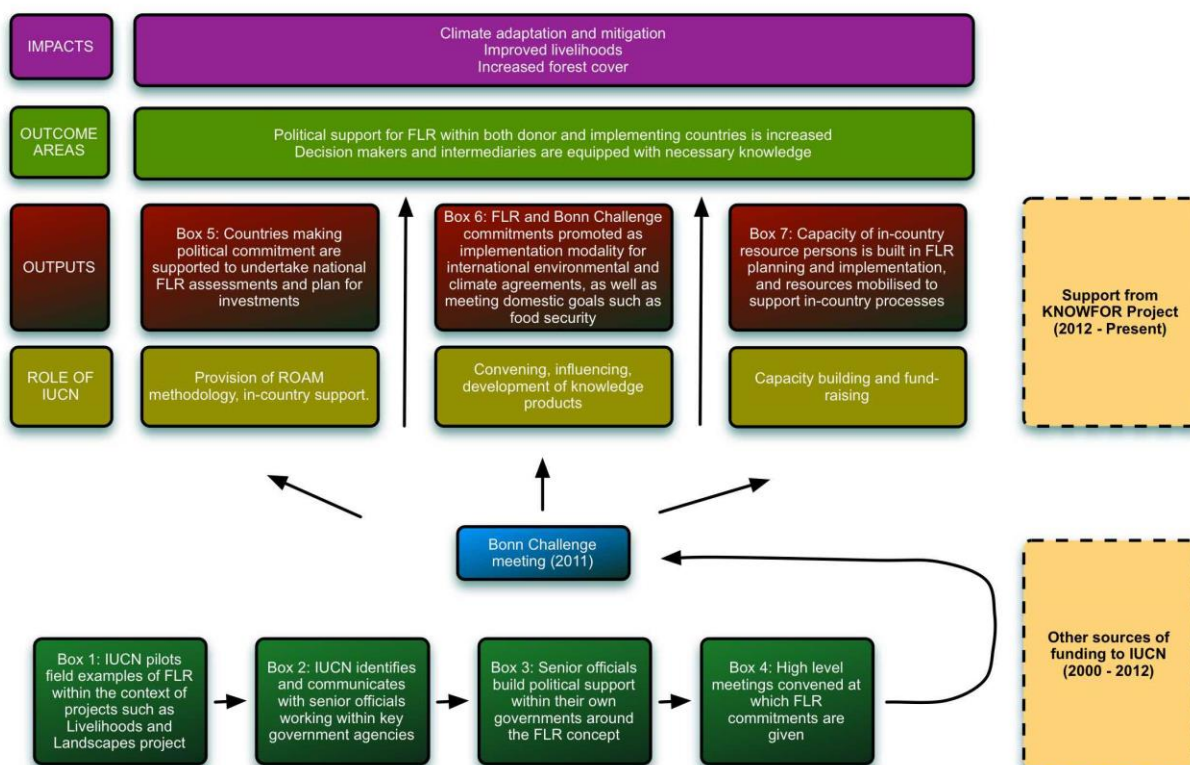


Figure 4: Theory of change for process before and after the Bonn Challenge

The overall ToC behind the approach used by IUCN to build and maintain political momentum can be compared with the “diffusion theory of change”, developed by Everett Roger.⁸ Diffusion theory refers

⁷ <http://infoflr.org/bonn-challenge/bonn-challenge-barometer>

⁸ Sarah Stachowiak, 2013. Pathways to Change: 10 Theories to Inform Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts. ORS Impact

to the process by which a change agent (e.g. individual, informal group, or organisation) models or communicates an innovation. The innovation can be as diverse as a product, practice, programme, policy, or idea. The change agent is widely perceived as a trusted individual, who is able to communicate the innovation or idea in way that addresses the interests of the user. As discussed, IUCN invested heavily in identifying and “cultivating” key individuals within influential donor government administrations, within intergovernmental bodies and within developing country contexts, with a view to facilitating a “diffusion” of policy influence. This ultimately resulted in the high level of political support that FLR has enjoyed during and since the Bonn Challenge meeting in 2011. The process following the Bonn Challenge has been mostly about responding to and meeting demands at country level in terms of planning and implementation, while ensuring opportunities for maintaining political momentum at international levels are taken advantage of.

4. Results Chart

A results chart for IUCN's work in support of the Bonn Challenge is presented below. The results chart is based on the logic for this specific case study. The three outputs correspond to the three red boxes (Boxes 5-7) in the ToC presented in Figure 3. As discussed earlier, these actions are not exclusively supported by KNOWFOR, but these three areas are identified as those where KNOWFOR support has been most concentrated. In column two, a performance summary is provided, which assesses the degree to which the outcome has been met, or significant progress has been made. A more detailed discussion of these results is presented in Section 5 of this report.

An assessment of the strength of evidence is provided. In large part, this strength of evidence has been scored on the degree to which claims made by IUCN have been confirmed by external (i.e. non-IUCN) resource persons, experts or representatives from collaborating institutions involved in supporting the Bonn Challenge process. However, as the evaluation has essentially been desk-based, supported by phone interviews, the strength of evidence is not as high as a more detailed evaluation with a larger selection of information sources and key informants.

Table 1. KNOWFOR programme results chart

	Performance question	Performance summary at each level	Evidence	Evidence contribution	rating	/
Reach and relevance outputs	<p>Were the knowledge products relevant and targeted to requirements of users? And were these knowledge practices enhanced through feedback and learning? Did they include gender considerations?</p>	<p>The ROAM methodology was developed as a response to demands from a country-level to develop grounded and realistic FLR plans, and uptake is high – with 23 KNOWFOR-supported countries using it at either national or sub-national levels. They have been introduced in different country-contexts and different jurisdictional levels. The ROAM manual is currently undergoing a revision based on feedback and learning. This includes helping to position forest restoration as a vehicle for implementation of the Paris climate agreement and a new module on gender.</p> <p>Many of the most effective knowledge products have been driven by opportunity. Knowledge gaps have been identified and requests made to IUCN, which have been rapidly assimilated and responded to, as seen with the example of how KNOWFOR produced knowledge products within the context of the CBD meeting in December 2016. High levels of flexibility from DFID KNOWFOR has meant that opportunities can be responded to in a short time period, ensuring that they are both relevant and effective.</p> <p>Gender aspects have been strongly emphasized in knowledge products relating to FLR and mainstreamed within country-level FLR planning processes. This includes gender case studies commissioned in Latin America, gender action plans developed and the new module on gender in the ROAM guidelines.</p>	<p>Review of KNOWFOR knowledge products, many of which are available online. Interviews with IUCN programme staff as well as non-IUCN staff involved in FLR work.</p>	<p>Medium.</p> <p>No independent verification has been possible through country-level visits of detailed interviews with country-level staff as part of this evaluation.</p>		

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Output area 1	How effectively was IUCN able to support countries who had made political commitments to undertake national FLR assessments and plan for investments?	IUCN was quick to recognise that targeted support would be needed to help countries translate political momentum into action around planning for and implementing FLR. KNOWFOR funding was used to develop and roll-out the ROAM methodology, which is currently supporting 27 countries and sub-national jurisdictions to plan FLR initiatives at the national or sub-national levels, 23 of which are directly supported by KNOWFOR. Much of the work to date has involved supporting countries with planning FLR work, and this has yet to be translated into widespread action, so it is not possible to assess overall outcome and impact of this work at this stage.	Interviews with IUCN staff working on FLR processes, DFID Annual Review reports, interviews with non-IUCN staff working on FLR processes .	Medium. No independent verification has been possible through country-level visits or detailed interviews with country-level staff as part of this evaluation.
Output area 2	How effectively did IUCN communicate the FLR and Bonn Challenge commitments as implementation modality for international environmental and climate agreements, as well as a means for meeting domestic goals such as food/water security?	IUCN was effective in finding ways to mainstream FLR within wider international and national processes. For example, IUCN was quick to spot an opportunity for influencing the CBD COP13 process in Cancun and was able to rapidly put together an information document for delegates, showing how FLR can contribute to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. IUCN's strong presence in the build up to the Paris UNFCCC COP (the Lima-Paris Roadmap), and earlier support to the NYDF, meant that it was able to build political commitments for forests and FLR within the UNFCCC process. At a country level, when planning for FLR, domestic agendas are identified and addressed. For example, in Malawi, a major focus of FLR-planning has involved addressing the national priorities of food security and gender.	Interviews with IUCN staff working on FLR processes, DFID Annual Review reports, interviews with non-IUCN staff working on international environmental agreements and processes (such as UNFCCC, CBD and others).	Medium. No independent verification has been possible through country-level visits or detailed interviews with country-level staff as part of this evaluation.
Output area 3	How effectively did IUCN support the capacity of in-country resource persons in FLR planning and implementation?	IUCN has been developing partnerships with external specialists, who are already engaged in capacity development in the field of forests and climate change. This is most advanced with the ELTI partnership, which has delivered four online courses on FLR across different regions and languages in the developing world. The training was deliberately targeted at those individuals working on FLR processes within countries that have made a clear and explicit political commitment to advancing FLR processes. A second training course, to be delivered through the UNEP-developed REDD+ academy is currently under development. In addition, IUCN has supported a range of capacity building initiatives, such as the FLR Forum meeting in Washington DC in 2015 and gender training in Brazil and Malawi	Feedback scores from participants and training reports developed by IUCN.	Low. Only one course has been written up and evaluation scores correlated. No interviews with alumni have been possible within the context of this case study.

KNOWFOR Evaluation
Performance Story Report

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Outcome area 1</p>	<p>What outcomes if any, did KNOWFOR contribute to in terms of changes in policy and practice?</p>	<p>IUCN contributed strongly to international commitments made before, during and after the Bonn Challenge meeting in 2011, with respect to FLR targets. They were also able to help translate this into national-level commitments in early-adopter countries such as Rwanda and El Salvador. They were able to communicate this commitment and help build corresponding commitments in other countries such as Brazil, Malawi and Ghana. At present, this commitment has been translated into working plans, but due to early stage of implementation, systematic evidence on changes at the field level (improved livelihoods, improved forest cover etc) is not yet available.</p>	<p>Summary of evidence provided by interviews with IUCN programme staff as well as non-IUCN staff involved in FLR processes.</p>	<p>Medium It has not been possible to include senior politicians (from the north or south) in this evaluation, and as a result, first-hand confirmation of political changes has not been possible.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Outcome area 2</p>	<p>To what extent and how did KNOWFOR equip decision makers at different levels?</p>	<p>KNOWFOR has been able to provide important evidence and documentation that has supported the acceptance and adoption of FLR processes internationally. However, alone this would have been insufficient to achieve the changes that have been delivered over the past 15 years. Much of the success behind FLR has involved long, patient and careful support to building political momentum for FLR at different levels. Without strong political will, FLR would not be in a position to equip decision-makers for better decision-making.</p>	<p>Interviews conducted with senior IUCN programme staff as well as non-IUCN staff involved in the processes leading up to and after the Bonn Challenge.</p>	<p>High. Interviews conducted with key decision makers within international processes confirm the strong contribution made by IUCN, and the value of both knowledge products as well as convening and influencing roles.</p>

5. Findings and implications

5.1. Processes and Products

IUCN has played a number of key roles in supporting the three main output areas described in Figure 4. This has included:

- i) Developing and communicating results from knowledge products and tools
- ii) Engaging and convening stakeholders at different levels, with a view to influencing and informing discussions,
- iii) Building capacity of those individuals involved in FLR processes at a country level.

These three roles are presented and discussed below, and evidence is compiled regarding the contribution of IUCN through the KNOWFOR project, as well as other funding streams.

Knowledge products and tools

To date, IUCN have generated 43 different knowledge products with the support of KNOWFOR. (See Annex 3 for a complete list). The products cover three main areas: The first area covers restoration knowledge, which includes the theoretical background for FLR, a definition of terms, and filling gaps relating to FLR. The second area relates to restoration tools and strategies, introducing tools and approaches that can be used to implement forest landscape restoration. The ROAM guidelines⁹ best

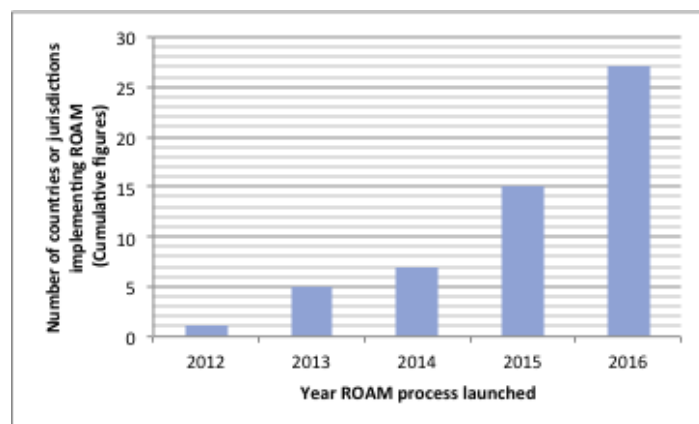


Figure 5: Cumulative growth in demand for ROAM assessments since 2012

typify this kind of support, which are now widely seen as best practice by agencies supporting FLR efforts at the national and sub-national level (E02). These documents have been translated into French, Spanish, Bahasa-Indonesia, Russian and Portuguese for securing a wider readership. The growth in ROAM assessments at national and sub-national levels (as illustrated in Figure 5) provide evidence for a growing demand for IUCN-developed knowledge products¹⁰. The third area covers restoration in practice – and gives on the ground case studies of where and how forest landscape

restoration is being implemented. These documents help to make the case for FLR, and show how FLR has the potential to support the wider but related themes and objectives of food security,

⁹ The ROAM guidelines can be downloaded from https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/roam_handbook_lowres_web.pdf

¹⁰ Although 27 ROAM assessments are or have been supported, this does not imply that 27 countries have been supported, as a number of countries (eg Mexico, Brazil and Rwanda) have carried out ROAM assessments at national as well as sub-national level. The total number of countries supported to date has been 23 countries.

climate mitigation, adaptation to climate change and water security.¹¹ They are rooted in field experience and based on real cases from countries as diverse as Indonesia, Tanzania, Brazil and Rwanda. Other knowledge products are more “tool-based” and provide methodological guidance for undertaking FLR assessments, cost-benefit analyses and other more practical approaches.

In many cases, these publications were developed jointly with collaborating institutions, such as WRI, the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), CIFOR and FAO. This strategy has the dual advantage of bringing external expertise and input into publications, but also ensures that documents are communicated widely, using the circulation networks of multiple, rather than just one organisation.

Gender has been well incorporated into many of the knowledge products and processes, in recognition of the role played by both men and women in FLR, and the different goals, incentives and interests that exist with regard to both men and women. A key manner in which gender has been promoted is by mainstreaming gender into country level FLR assessments. For example, in Malawi a gender working group was established to advise the broader FLR assessment task force. Based on a gender analysis, a gender strategy was developed in advance and the gender working group briefed the overall task force regarding gender opportunities and constraints. Gender focal persons were included within each of the four technical working groups (stocktaking, mapping and monitoring; economics, finance, and food security; and policy and institutions). Gender training was also provided to all working groups as a means to build capacity and raise the profile of gender across the whole FLR planning process.¹²

In Brazil, during the development of FLR plans, it became apparent that other related processes lacked a gender lens. As a result, IUCN was requested to support gender mainstreaming in other planning processes such as the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP), which countries are required to develop under the CBD. The process adopted was similar to that used in the Malawi case, described above. Essentially, a broad assessment of policies, plans and guidelines was undertaken to identify how and where gender could be emphasised. This was followed by a series of capacity building events for key stakeholders involved in the NBSAP preparation and review, and then a national workshop to identifying opportunities for gender inclusion within the NBSAP.¹³

Engagement and convening

Engagement and convening has been a central aspect of IUCN’s strategy in the period leading up to and after the Bonn Challenge. The IUCN forests team was able to use its wide network of institutions and individuals to access decision-makers within key government institutions (U.K., Germany, Norway and the U.S.) to mobilise and build political will and engagement on the issue of FLR. Secondly, IUCN has been able to capitalise on its links to global environmental and climate agreement processes to effectively advocate for the inclusion of FLR concepts within themes such as biodiversity conservation (through the CBD) and reducing deforestation (through the UNFCCC). Using their position as secretariat to the GPFLR, IUCN has been well positioned to influence discussions at side events such as the Global Landscapes Forum meeting in Marrakesh (UNFCCC COP22) held in November 2016. Using the high level political interest in FLR that was generated through the New York Declaration on Forests, IUCN was able to ensure that restoration was firmly embedded in the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, which then went on to ensure that it was formally included in the final agreement and subsequent “action agenda” after the Paris COP meeting (I10).

¹¹ These documents can be viewed and downloaded from: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/forests/our-work/forest-landscape-restoration/publications-forest-landscape-restoration>

¹² IUCN. No date. Gender Responsive Forest Landscape Restoration in Malawi

¹³ IUCN. No date. Development of a gender responsive NBSAP in Brazil.

The position of IUCN Senior Policy Officer (based in Washington DC) was partly funded through KNOWFOR. His role was to engage with and influence multi-lateral as well as bilateral donors working on climate change (particularly with regard to mitigation). A key aspect of his work was to embed the FLR concept within key processes and funding instruments, such as the UNFCCC, and financing instruments such as the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), UN-REDD, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Norwegian Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI). KNOWFOR knowledge products were often used strategically to leverage larger sums of funding from these funding agencies. For example, when countries develop emission reduction programmes, for submission to funds such as GCF, and the World Bank Carbon Fund, countries were supported to include restoration within their plans, through, for example, the use of ROAM assessments. This helped countries include plans for addressing degradation (the second “D” in REDD+) through restoration, while providing solid data and figures to support funding requests to international agencies. Within the context of the UN-REDD programme, IUCN country teams were able to engage with REDD+ focal points to influence plans being made for results-based financing, with a view to including restoration in their plans. The Norwegian government, a major financier of REDD+ initiatives has also engaged with FLR, although only relatively recently. There were initial concerns that FLR could take the focus of REDD+ away from protecting natural forests, but when the point was made by IUCN that restoration can be seen as a tool for securing permanence (and thereby reducing risk), and that FLR can be used in carbon accounting to support emission reduction targets, they were won over (E03). KNOWFOR has helped bolster this view through developing additional knowledge products that provide guidance on how FLR can be included within reference scenarios and MRV systems that were originally designed to measure the impact of avoided deforestation only. Engagement from the government of Germany (leading up to and after the Bonn Challenge meeting) resulted in changes in how funds from the International Climate Fund (IKI) were disbursed. One of the funding streams under IKI was originally targeted specifically to REDD+, but with a strong focus on avoided deforestation. This was changed after Bonn to include a specific reference to restoration. Although this has taken some time to filter through to a changed portfolio - now a major portion of funds allocated are provided specifically to support country-level FLR efforts (E03). And finally, an important element in the influencing story is the mainstreaming of FLR into IUCN itself. In the period before Bonn (when FLR as a concept was being conceived and developed), it was only being promoted by a few key individuals within the IUCN forests team. After some work to promote the concept internally, it was finally formally adopted by IUCN as a core strategy. At the IUCN Congress in Jeju in 2012, the Bonn Challenge and FLR were integrated within the inter-sessional work-plans – and became an official policy of the organisation¹⁴, allowing the full network of IUCN to be harnessed in promoting FLR at international, regional and national levels (E03).

Another strategic engagement point for FLR was through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), which was chaired by FAO and to which UNFF acted as a secretariat and for which IUCN was a permanent member. IUCN, through its engagement with UNFF had already championed FLR but the CPF offered new opportunities as a number of members were drawn from intergovernmental bodies (such as CBD, UNFCCC, GEF, UNCCD and others). Furthermore, 11 of the members of the CPF are

¹⁴ World Conservation Congress (2012). Recommendation 158: Support for the Bonn Challenge on restoration of lost forests and degraded lands. IUCN. Available at: https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC_2012_REC_158_EN.pdf

also members of the GPFLR, increasing opportunities for cross-transfer of ideas.¹⁵ As such, by “seeding” FLR concepts to the CPF, a range of potential down-stream opportunities were created and followed up within the context of these other intergovernmental bodies (E12).

The deployment of knowledge products, funded by KNOWFOR, has been an important aspect of engaging and convening. A recent example of how this was done comes from the CBD COP13, held in December 2016. The CBD secretariat encouraged IUCN to document how the Bonn Challenge could help meet commitments under the convention (particularly relating to Aichi Target 15). This was done in a relatively rapid manner, with the support of KNOWFOR, and drawing on specific evidence and cases from the field level (I09). This information document¹⁶ was then distributed as an official publication to all attending delegates and used in the high-level segment of the COP meeting.

Another aspect of “engaging” relates to how IUCN was able to work with highly placed individuals within government forest and development agencies, and these people were then able to translate their interest and engagement to the political level (I05). One example of this comes from the U.K., where the Forestry Commission (and to some degree DFID) were engaged within the FLR discussion in the period leading up to the Bonn Challenge.

DFID agreed to fund the Petropolis meeting, at which the Brazilian government expressed support for the FLR concept as it agreed well with existing plans for restoring degraded ecosystems.

Furthermore, REDD+, which was being promoted strongly at this time at the international level, encountered some initial resistance in Brazil as it was seen in some parts as an externally-driven objective and undermined local sovereignty (I05). Hilary Benn, at that time Secretary for State for Overseas Development, became engaged in the FLR discussion and agreed to fund a major meeting in London (which became known as the London Challenge):

“One of the objectives of the London meeting was to gather together work done on FLR to date and bring it in front of politicians, like Hillary Benn. He was former minister for environment, so understood both the international development as well as environmental perspective to the work. And he was able to reach out to other ministerial counterparts in countries like Germany, who then went on to become major champions of the FLR approach (E13)”

Specifically, a senior adviser to the German ministry of environment was contacted by IUCN, and who felt that the FLR concept was “the right concept at the right time” (E03). Germany then briefed their minister of environment, who appointed a state parliamentary secretary to attend the London meeting. Following the London challenge meeting, the German government became increasingly active and suggested to convene (together with IUCN) – the first meeting on FLR with a specific goal of bringing minister-level politicians together. The idea was promoted through a range of formal and informal channels (including the German environment minister promoting it to fellow ministers in other international forums, as well as IUCN promoting the concept through its own networks at national and regional levels), and resulted in the Bonn Challenge meeting of November 2011 at which the goal of restoring 150 million hectares was launched. This then led to the German

¹⁵ Statement of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests at the Second Global Landscapes Forum Closing Plenary, delivered by Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Chair of the CPF. Available at: <http://www.cpfweb.org/42207-0d0b779cf44f5eebe658857d993adfd3a.pdf>

¹⁶ IUCN. 2016. Restoration of forest ecosystems and landscapes as contribution to the Aichi Biodiversity targets. Information document submitted by IUCN. Gland, Switzerland.

international Climate Initiative (IKI) engaging and providing much needed financial support to IUCN and others (such as WRI) (I09, E03).

IUCN was also able to engage with the U.S. government with regard to obtaining a restoration pledge within the context of a developed country. The US Forest Service (USFS) committed 15 million hectares to the Bonn Challenge, representing an important political signal from one of the world's leading economies. Interestingly, FLR was not a new concept in the US and plans were already underway to restore large areas of forest, which had been negatively impacted by climate change, catastrophic wildfire, bark-beetle infestation and invasive species – with a view to restoring forest multi-functionality for recreation, environmental services and production.¹⁷ Making an ambitious FLR commitment presented a “quick-win” as it generated a positive international political profile, was easily translated from existing plans and would not require additional funding to achieve. At the time of the Bonn Challenge, the USFS was already in the process of developing a domestic, area-based cross-cutting target (encompassing areas being treated to improve fire resilience/reduce wildfire risk, improve water quality, restore abandoned mine-lands and improve/enhance fish and wildlife habitats). These target figures were transferrable from US domestic purposes to the international commitment under the Bonn Challenge (E06).

Capacity building:

A key aspect of the KNOWFOR project has been supporting FLR planning and implementation at the country level. A range of approaches have been adopted to reach this goal, which are described in more detail below. Current status in capacity building is well summarised by the DFID 2016 Annual Review report:

“IUCN has trained 150 people from 25 countries and created champions who are now able to support ROAM training in their own languages, regions and countries.”¹⁸

IUCN has used KNOWFOR support to develop a relationship with the Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative (ELTI), based at the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. ELTI who already offers on-line courses on relevant topics (including “Tropical Forest Restoration in Human Dominated Landscapes”) was requested to broaden their work in FLR to include new modules on the ROAM methodology as well as FLR theory and practice.

From May to August 2016, ELTI worked with IUCN to develop 12 new video lectures and one new interactive “clickable” theory presentation on topics linked to ROAM and scaling up FLR. The course comprises six distinct modules, each one lasting a week and covering core aspects of FLR concept and practice. The course uses a range of interactive, online facilities, including interactive presentations, online lectures, case studies, online live discussions and feedback from course leaders.¹⁹

In May 2016, ELTI launched the first (of six) courses on FLR. The course was conducted in English for 21 participants from Eastern and Southern Africa, in countries working on FLR at national or sub-national levels. Participants came from Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda. The course is specifically targeted to FLR teams working at the country level, who are engaged in FLR planning processes, and includes representatives drawn from government, NGOs as well as the private sector.

¹⁷ For further information, see: <https://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/>

¹⁸ DFID Annual Review of KNOWFOR, 2016

¹⁹ IUCN and ELTI. 2016. Course report. Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics. May 23rd to July 7th, 2016.

Feedback received from the participants showed a high level of satisfaction, although comments and suggestions were made regarding improvements of the course in its future iterations.²⁰

To date, three additional courses have been held, covering different regions of the world, and different language groups, with the final two planned for launch by end January. This will bring the total to 2 English courses, 2 Spanish courses, 1 Portuguese course and 1 French course (IO8).

In a separate, but related initiative, a “knowledge and training hub” is being developed in Kigali, Rwanda, made up of IUCN staff members, which has the capacity to provide ongoing regional support to FLR teams across the continent.

5.2. Outcomes

There is overwhelming evidence regarding the high levels of political commitment that were made at the Bonn Challenge, in the context of the NYDF and in the subsequent period. From 2011 onwards, there has been a growing commitment in terms of the areas pledged for restoration at country level. As of January 2017, 136.3 million hectares of land have been pledged for restoration purposes under the Bonn Challenge, with pledges reaching 60% of the 2020 target, and just under 40% of the total 2030 goal of 350 million hectares announced at the UN Declaration on Forests.²¹ Strong engagement from the country level with regard to planning restoration, through ROAM provides further evidence of how this political engagement is beginning to translate into action on the ground. Some useful quotes illustrate this high level of political engagement. The first example comes from Brazil, following the political commitment to target 12 million hectares for restoration:

“Brazil is once again demonstrating global leadership with its ambitious restoration announcement in Cancún. Restoring 22²² million hectares – an area larger than Uruguay – will absorb huge amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, generate clean and plentiful water and boost agricultural productivity.”²³

Herman Rosa Chavez, El Salvador’s Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, made the following public statement in December 2012, showing the degree of political support that FLR has generated:

“Our commitment to restoring one million hectares - half the country’s territory - is a serious and desperate response to a changing climate that earned El Salvador the first and fourth places in Germanwatch’s Global Climate Risk Index in 2009 and 2011, respectively. With adequate support, landscape restoration at this scale will also allow us to make an important contribution to climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation, greatly enhancing our carbon sinks, improving livelihoods, ecosystem services and disaster resilience. Landscape restoration may be seen as a mitigation strategy, but for El Salvador it is an urgent and

²⁰ ELTI. 2016. ELTI-IUCN Technical Report 1.

²¹ Latest figures from <http://www.bonnchallenge.org> (accessed January 2017)

²² It should be noted that of this total pledge of 22 million hectares, 10 are proposed for other land-use types (such as pasturelands) and fall outside the Bonn Challenge. As such, 12 million are pledged for the Bonn Challenge.

²³ Rachel Biderman, Director of WRI in Brazil, See: <https://news.mongabay.com/2016/12/brazil-pledges-largest-restoration-commitment-ever-made/>

essential element for adaptation and reducing escalating climate related losses and damages.”²⁴

A quote from Horst Freiberg (Head of Division within the German Ministry of Environment), regarding the level of public interest in the Bonn Challenge indicates how political support has gone beyond the political level and filtered down to that of citizens:

“During the ‘Rio +20’ talks in a global public vote, more than one million people voted the Bonn Challenge as the second most important issue upon which heads of state should act. There is now broad acknowledgement that the largest restoration initiative in history is truly underway.”²⁵

The contribution of IUCN to these political processes is discussed in more detail in Section 5.3 below.

These findings confirm the high level of political engagement that FLR has generated. What remains to be seen, however, is the degree to which this political will is translated into measureable action on the ground. Much of the area identified for restoration falls on land held by communities, individual farmers and private sector interests. The ROAM process engages these wider stakeholders in planning processes and identifies forms of support as well as financing. However, it is too early to assess delivery levels on the ground, as efforts to date have been focussed on the planning and building of in-country capacity.

5.3. Contribution

FLR has become a global phenomenon, and has attracted the participation of wide range of actors, including NGOs, donor agencies, governments and the private sector. Looking back across the timeline of FLR, the crowd thins somewhat and it is possible to trace the early contribution of IUCN and follow this forward to today. Reviewing the timeline in Figure 1 and the process described in Section 3, it is possible to see the central role that was played by IUCN in mobilising and galvanising political support for FLR processes at the international level. The role played by IUCN was well summarised by a senior figure who supported the FLR process in the period leading up to the Bonn Challenge:

“IUCN has played a central role in conceiving and promoting FLR to the level that we see today. In effect, IUCN has been the lynchpin of the whole process – particularly with regard to their long and consistent role in supporting FLR through their secretariat function in the GPFLR” (E13).

Others interviewed for their input to this case study point to the organic, adaptive way in which the FLR concept has grown and developed, and the clearly visible hand of IUCN in this pathway (E13, E02). A key factor in this “critical path” has been IUCN’s ability to identify, engage and mobilise key champions from within their wide network that extends across governments and NGOs. A number of these key players have been contacted and interviewed as part of this review and have confirmed

²⁴ <https://www.iucn.org/content/landscape-restoration-movement-approaches-50-million-hectares-el-salvador-and-costa-rica>

²⁵ Freiberg, H. 2014. The Bonn Challenge. *Arborvitae*. 45. Pp 8 – 9. IUCN. Gland

the central role played by IUCN along the FLR timeline. Ensuring that momentum is maintained, even when a key ally or champion is lost was an example of the adaptive and somewhat organic approach to building political support. In 2009, with the change of government in the U.K., and the loss of key champions such as Hillary Benn, it became apparent that the FLR process could falter or lose momentum. However, IUCN was able to identify and mobilise a corresponding level of political support within the German government, which ultimately led to the Bonn Challenge being hosted in Germany. As described by one respondent interviewed as part of this case study,

“One of the challenges was that key people kept coming and going, due to political changes or restructuring within government departments. IUCN was particularly adept at keeping a number of champions engaged in different contexts. So, if there was a drop in political momentum in one place, the baton could be taken up elsewhere by others” (E02).

IUCN’s strategy is exemplified by another external respondent

“Sometimes it’s the people you have to mobilise, not the organisation – as they have the real interest and drive. They can then act as change agents within their own organisations. And this is where IUCN were good – they identified people who became engaged and enthusiastic, and this enthusiasm gradually was passed on to their organisations (E13)”

Some other visible contributions of IUCN that enabled progress to be made include:

- **Early identification of FLR as a concept that had “come of age”:** IUCN was able to promote the FLR concept, as a means to address a range of challenges that had been identified with other reforestation initiatives (such as a narrow focus on tree planting for production purposes, without wider consideration of wider environmental or social benefits). This resonated with many other individuals or organisations who recognised similar problems, but who had yet to identify a workable solution. IUCN cannot claim to have invented and initiated the FLR approach – but they were able to use the FLR concept to “frame” an approach in a way that resonated with practitioners and politicians alike.
- **Persistence and long-term perspectives:** Senior staff within the IUCN forests team used their platform to promote the FLR concept over a long time period, even in the face of hostile resistance from some quarters who in some cases saw FLR as a distraction, diverting attention away from what some considered more important issues such as REDD+ (I09) – or the conservation of high biodiversity forest areas (E02) – or who in other cases felt FLR implied promotion of mono-culture plantations (E02). This “dogged persistence” as one respondent called it (E13) helped ensure that FLR was widely and strongly promoted.
- **Capacity and staffing:** Seed funding from the U.K. Forestry Commission meant that a small FLR team could be supported within the IUCN forests team in Gland, which then went on to provide secretariat functions to the GPFLR- which in turn generated increased influence (E13, I05). In the period leading up to the Bonn Challenge, IUCN was the only international agency with full-time staff capacity dedicated to supporting FLR, which also ensured that it remained central to the FLR evolution and development (E13, I05).
- **Working at an institutional (rather than project) level:** IUCN has a strong forest programme, which includes a range of projects working in areas that are highly complementary to FLR. This includes support to REDD+ and the international climate change process that was also evolving concurrently with the FLR concept. Senior IUCN staff within the IUCN forests team had multiple mandates and were able to use their roles across a range of international, as well as national,

processes to lobby for inclusion of FLR concepts (I10). Although in its earliest stages, FLR as a concept was not immediately embraced by IUCN as an institution, over time acceptance has grown (E02). Following the World Conservation Congress in Jeju (in September 2012), FLR has been incorporated as a mainstream strategy at an institutional level and is now being promoted across IUCN (through IUCN's four-year workplan) and throughout its networks (I09, E03).

- **Supporting early-movers to promote the FLR concept and generate grounded evidence:** Early movers such as Rwanda and El Salvador were supported by IUCN to generate important knowledge products, based on practical experiences from the field level. This was then used to demonstrate FLR as a tangible, workable and effective model and concept (I01).
- **Moving towards a “target-based” approach to FLR:** IUCN, working with other key facilitators and champions, lobbied hard for the establishment of a target of 150 million hectares as an overall goal of the Bonn Challenge, and against which individual countries could make public political pledges, or “quantified statements of political will”, as one respondent to this case study described it (PRS02). By simplifying the Bonn Challenge to a single numerical figure, it became tangible, easily communicated and accessible to policy makers and citizens alike. This contrasted somewhat with REDD+, which is much harder to qualify (being measured in emission reductions from avoided deforestation). Some of the key figures within the small group of facilitators were initially cautious about the idea of creating targets and felt that a more organic, incremental approach was needed initially (E13). However, IUCN maintained that a target would generate political “buzz” and was a necessary element of ensuring an increased political profile. This view prevailed and has since been seen by a number of observers as a key innovation that resulted in the success witnessed today. When countries make a pledge, it attracts international interest and profile, creates positive political goodwill and has the potential to attract additional financing (I10).
- **Presenting FLR as an implementation vehicle, which allowed countries meet climate mitigation and adaptation commitments.** IUCN was skilful in presenting FLR as a practical approach to meeting climate commitments such as REDD+ and adaptation. A critical part of this was finding ways to link FLR to the rapidly expanding opportunities for multilateral as well as bilateral climate finance that have been made available since 2009.

All of the above factors can be said to have contributed to equipping decision makers and intermediaries, thereby providing an answer to KEQ 1.

5.4. Significance

To date, KNOWFOR support has been primarily directed towards areas of building political support, capacity building, planning FLR at country level, the mainstreaming of FLR into international conventions, and the generation of knowledge products as a cross-cutting process in support of these objectives. To date, it is not possible to state with any degree of certainty the degree to which these actions have translated into restoration actions on the ground, although a monitoring process

is being set up through support from the German government (IKI)²⁶. As such, it is not possible to assess the significance, or impact of KNOWFOR support (or other IUCN support to FLR) in terms of tangible changes at the field level on key impact indicators related to livelihoods, food security, forest cover, conservation or climate change.

IUCN led a global analysis in 2011 that suggested achieving the Bonn Challenge – to restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded land by 2020 – would sequester approximately 53 Gt CO₂e over the course of 50 years and reduce the annual emissions reduction gap by between 11 and 20 per cent.^{27,28} The analysis showed that allowing primary and secondary forests to naturally regenerate, or assisting regeneration where necessary, could sequester 23 Gt of CO₂e over 50 years while using agroforestry to restore the productivity of degraded agricultural land could sequester approximately 18 Gt of CO₂e. Restoring degraded land with planted forests and forest plantations would sequester a further 12 Gt of CO₂e. Furthermore, achieving the Bonn Challenge target is projected to deliver \$85 billion per year in net benefits to local and national economies and increase crop yields by 30% on up to 50 million hectares of land.²⁹

In Ghana, for example, where the assessment identified 10.5 million hectares as suitable for restoration, researchers used published biomass growth data and market prices, and assumed different stocking densities of tree species for different types of restoration to estimate the associated economic impacts. They calculated that each hectare of restored forest in Ghana would create between US\$ 2,250 and about US\$ 13,000 per hectare in direct economic impacts on the local and national economies over a twenty-year period. Most of the value would come from increased crop yields and timber harvests, although payments for carbon sequestration services would also contribute to local and national economies.³⁰

5.5. Discussion, conclusion and lessons learned

Looking back over the past 16 years of IUCN involvement in promoting the FLR concept, it is apparent that KNOWFOR impacts are in large part, an extension of preceding work conducted by IUCN in the slow, but steady build up to the Bonn Challenge meeting in 2011. The visibility of IUCN throughout the evolution of FLR concept dating back to the Segovia meeting in 2000 has meant that identifying and assessing IUCN's organisational contribution has been relatively straightforward, despite the relatively crowded field of actors supporting FLR seen today. Some of the key lessons, or

²⁶ Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) The Bonn Challenge Barometer of Progress

²⁷ Maginnis, S and M. Verdone. 2014. The economic impacts of FLR. *Arborvitae*. 14, pp. 14-15. Gland, Switzerland

²⁸ This estimate is calculated by dividing the amount of carbon that FLR would sequester each year (53 Gt CO₂e / 50 years = 1.06 Gt CO₂e per year) by the minimum and maximum amount of carbon that must be sequestered each year until 2020 (5-9 Gt CO₂e per year) to keep the average global temperature from increasing beyond 2°C.

²⁹ http://www.forestlandscaperestoration.org/sites/default/files/topic/the_bonn_challenge.pdf

³⁰ Maginnis, S and M. Verdone. 2014. The economic impacts of FLR. *Arborvitae*. 14, pp. 14-15. Gland, Switzerland.

“criteria for success” that emerge from this analysis, which have application on other international policy processes are discussed briefly below.

- **Mobilising and animating strategically-placed champions, able to influence and build domestic and international political will was a key strategy for building momentum for change:** Senior IUCN programme staff were able to identify and engage key individuals in key donor governments such as the US, UK, Germany and Norway, who were then able to act as champions within broader national and international processes. By engaging multiple actors, risks of loss of political momentum (as seen with the changes in the U.K. government in 2009) were mitigated.
- **Generating quality and timely knowledge products was key in ensuring that knowledge products were used:** IUCN was able to use the considerable flexibility offered by KNOWFOR, to provide responsive and demand-driven knowledge products in a rapid and timely manner. These knowledge products were often useful in providing grounded evidence from FLR experiences at the field level, or showing how international environmental or climate agreements could be supported (or implemented) through the adoption of FLR practices.
- **Flexibility and adaptive management holds the key to effective interventions – but this requires reduced control from donors:** Funds from DFID, through KNOWFOR were used in an extremely responsive, flexible and adaptive manner, targeted to take advantage of specific opportunities and demands as they arose, which maximised their effectiveness (“generating the right information, at the right place at the right time”). This was a hallmark of KNOWFOR funding and differs substantially from funds obtained from other sources, which tend to be much more prescriptive, pre-planned and as a result less responsive to emerging demands and opportunities
- **Using IUCN’s wide networks and institutional platforms ensured that FLR concepts were diffused across a number of complementary processes:** IUCN is unique in that it draws its membership base from government and non-state bodies. As such, it is uniquely placed to communicate with and inform national as well as international processes. As an organisation best known for its convening power, but relatively low-key advocacy and influencing, different actors were afforded an opportunity to learn, exchange and communicate in a non-confrontational and directed manner.
- **Promoting a concept that was easily understood, communicated and which resonated locally was essential to ensure demand was built at national levels:** In contrast to REDD+ which is a concept developed at the international level and then introduced at a country level, and requiring significant efforts to communicate and demystify the concept, FLR is a relatively simple concept – which draws on existing initiatives already underway. Furthermore, FLR is less about “stopping the negative” (as some have argued is what REDD+ promotes) but more about “enhancing the positive” (E02). FLR is often promoted in the areas that some have described as the “forgotten lands” (E13) – those areas that have lost their value and in some cases have been abandoned. REDD+ on the other hand, focuses primarily in areas of natural forest, which face considerable opportunity costs from conversion to alternative land-uses (such as palm oil, beef, rubber or other plantation monocultures). Finally, FLR is more of an inclusive concept, which can provide a broad planning framework into which more specific approaches [such as REDD+ or Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)] can be incorporated. As such, within the context of FLR, there is less of a gap between international ambition and policy, and practical, workable opportunities on the ground. As one external resource person stated:

“FLR is about forests, but also about people, biodiversity and institutions and increasingly about climate. From my professional background, these were the things that I found to be relevant and inspirational. We needed a more inclusive approach that recognised the role of forests within landscapes and sought to engage a wide range of stakeholders” (E03)

The evidence compiled in this case study has shown that the specific contributions made by IUCN to the process leading up to and after the Bonn Challenge were substantially supported by a number of factors including: its wide network of governmental and non-governmental members; the quality, relevance and timeliness of its knowledge products; its broad analysis drawing on grounded field examples that went beyond traditional forest sectoral boundaries; and its ability to convene players at global, regional and national levels.

The case study hypothesis, was that *“IUCN used its unique combination of linkage to members, knowledge brokering, technical analysis and convening attributes to play a critical role in the development and growth of FLR.”* The evidence presented in this report indicates that this hypothesis is confirmed

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Persons consulted and interviewed

Name of person	Position	Institution
IUCN staff members		
Stewart Maginnis	Global Director, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme Nature Based Solutions Group	IUCN, Gland, Switzerland
Carole Saint-Laurent	Deputy Director - Knowledge, Policy and Environmental Governance, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme	IUCN (based in Toronto)
Patrick Wylie	(Former) Senior Policy Officer, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme	IUCN, Washington DC, USA
Julien Colomer	Monitoring and Learning Officer, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme	IUCN, Gland, Switzerland
Chetan Kumar	Manager, Landscape Restoration Science and Knowledge, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme	IUCN, Washington DC, USA
Miguel Calmon	(Former) Senior Manager, Landscape Restoration Knowledge, Tools and Capacity, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme	IUCN, Washington DC, USA
Mirjam Kuzee	Forest Landscape Restoration Assessment Coordinator, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme	IUCN, Washington DC, USA
Salome Begeladze	Programme Support Officer, Landscape Restoration, Global Forest and Climate Change Programme	IUCN, Washington DC, USA
Resource persons involved in FLR work, outside IUCN		
Lars Laestadius	(Former) Senior Associate	World Resources Institute, Washington DC
Mike Dudley	(Former, now retired) Head of International Policy	Forestry Commission, UK
Horst Freiberg	Head of Division for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forests, Biological Diversity and Climate Change,	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
Jerilyn Levi	(Former, now retired) Assistant Director, International Programmes	United States Forest Service
Jan McAlpine	(Former, now retired) Director	United Nations Forum on Forests

Annex 2: Terms of reference

Case study 1/3: Exploring IUCN's influence on Bonn Challenge development and growth

The KNOWFOR program (2012-2016) is being evaluated through a partner-led approach. These terms of reference are for the development of an IUCN case study that will respond to the **KNOWFOR key evaluation question 1**:

Key evaluation question 1. Did KNOWFOR contribute to equipping decision makers and intermediaries? If so, what lessons can be drawn from KNOWFOR's approach to translating knowledge for action?

- To what extent were programme outcomes realised and were there examples of KNOWFOR activities contributing to policy or practice change?
- How and under what conditions were decision makers equipped by our knowledge processes and products?
- What were the positive or negative unexpected outcomes from these efforts?
- What promising practices can be identified through partner experience?
- What lessons have been learned from partner experience?

The KNOWFOR evaluation plan is an integral part of these terms of reference and is annexed³¹. It contains the KNOWFOR theory of change as well as supplementary information to be used in developing the case study.

Growing interest in Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) as a mechanism to help countries meet domestic and international climate change, biodiversity and socio-economic objectives (e.g. Aichi, MDGs, SDGs) has led to the development of FLR-specific international and regional policy mechanisms (Bonn Challenge, 20x20, Afr100, FAO Mechanism, Regional Ministerial initiatives, FERI) and inclusion of FLR concepts, language and targets in related policy fora (e.g. UNFCCC). IUCN's role in these processes is widely acknowledged but IUCN's impact pathways are poorly understood. This case study will seek to explore IUCN's influence on the development and implementation of the Bonn Challenge via identification of main impact pathways, critical nodes of influence, and knowledge flow.

This case study uses the hypothesis "that IUCN used its unique combination of linkage to members, knowledge brokering, technical analysis and convening attributes to play a critical role in the development and growth of FLR".

1. Methodology

This case study will use *Performance Story Reporting* - The Performance Story Reporting technique is a framework for reporting on contribution to long-term outcomes using mixed methods. The process steps include clarifying the programme logic, developing guiding questions for the social inquiry process and data trawl and integration using a results chart. Final conclusions about the extent to

³¹ Annex 1: Overall DFID KNOWFOR evaluation plan

which an intervention has contributed to outcomes are made collectively by programme teams and stakeholders based on an assessment of the strength of the evidence.

Specifically this will mean developing or selecting a theory of change to test,³² developing guiding questions that align with KNOWFOR key evaluation question 1,³³ collecting evidence from document review and key informant interviews, mapping evidence against a results chart,³⁴ and writing an evidence-based narrative to describe the findings (the case study report).³⁵ Virtual meetings with the project team and key stakeholders are needed.

Detailed guidance on the implementation of the case study, including assumptions, critical questions to be included, and adherence to the overall KNOWFOR evaluation plan is available and will be provided through the IUCN Global Forest and Climate Change Monitoring and Learning Officer, Jules Colomer (julien.colomer@gmail.com).

2. Deliverables

The consultant will deliver a 20 page report, using available secondary information (project reports, related web-based information) and primary data (at least 5 key informant interviews) to provide an evidence-based narrative against the key evaluation question 1. Visual aids such as timelines will be used as appropriate to clearly convey key messages.

³² Annex 2: IUCN Forest Landscape Restoration theory of change

³³ Annex 3: Example guiding Questions

³⁴ Annex 4: IUCN results chart

³⁵ Annex 5: Case study report sections

Annex 3: List of knowledge products produced by KNOWFOR to date

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