PANORAMA

SOLUTIONS FOR A HEALTHY PLANET

SOLUTIONS IN FOCUS:

Policy Impact of The Restoration Initiative on Forest and Landscape Restoration

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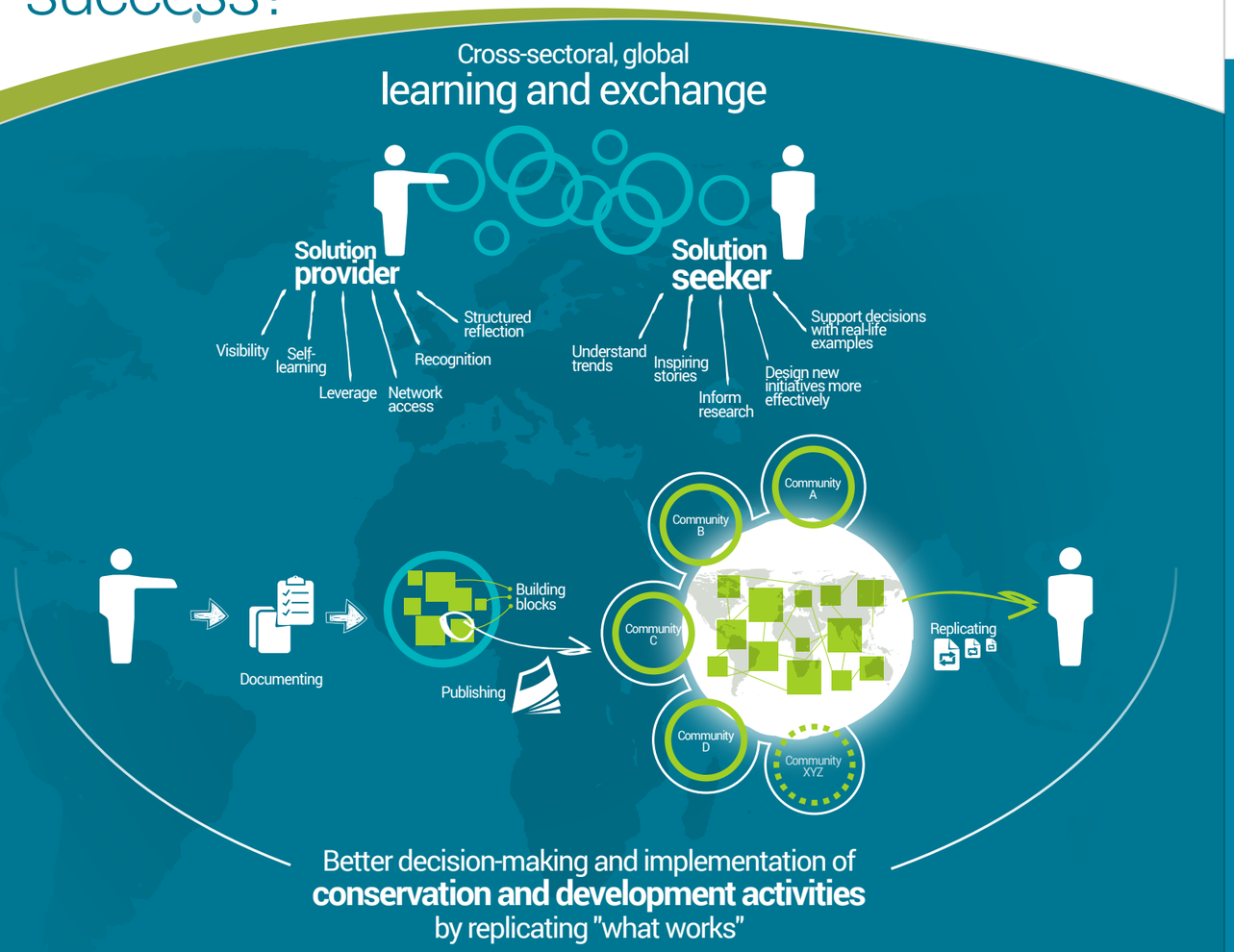

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This booklet is part of a series of compilations assembling PANORAMA solution case studies on a defined topic. *Solutions in Focus* zooms in on a topic of interest covered by PANORAMA, allowing to explore common elements and shared learnings across success stories. It is a snapshot of the PANORAMA portfolio at a given time, rather than a representative assembly of selected "best practices" on the issue at hand.

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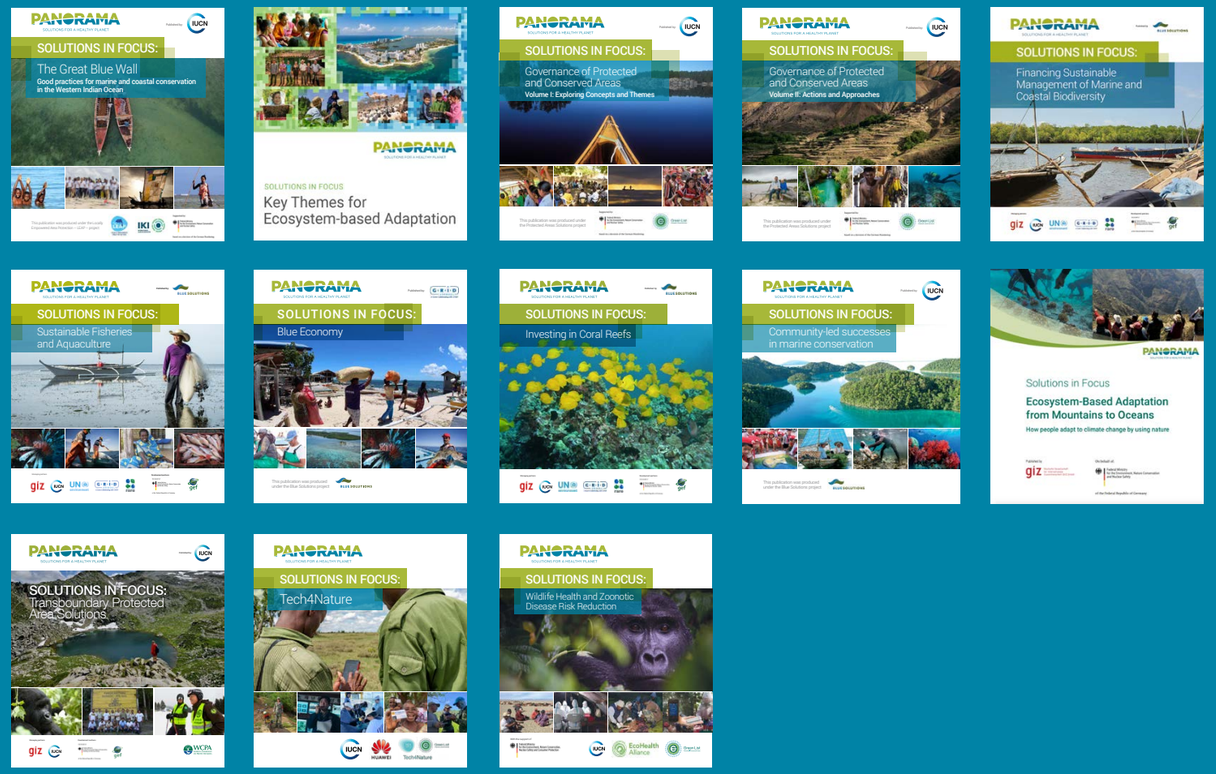

PART 1:
A ROADMAP FOR READERS

Introduction

Over 30 per cent of Earth's arable land is currently degraded[1] and over half of the world's tropical forests have been destroyed since the 1960s[2]. With people directly dependent on land productivity – which can be severely impacted when trees are removed from a landscape – for subsistence, food security and income, land/forest degradation and deforestation are putting the health, livelihoods, and security of over 3 billion people at risk[3]. Degradation processes and deforestation also threaten the survival of many species and reduce forests' ability to provide essential services like clean air, clean water and climate regulation. As such, the ability of forests to play a role in climate change adaptation is significantly weakened, whilst forest and landscape degradation make people even more vulnerable to extreme climatic events, worsening their already precarious living conditions. The restoration of degraded and deforested lands is therefore urgently needed.

Faced with the acute challenge of restoring rapidly degrading and deforesting forests, stakeholders, including national and local governments as well as international organisations, are increasingly committing to forest and landscape restoration (FLR) through the Bonn Challenge, a global effort launched by Germany and IUCN to restore 350 million hectares by 2030. FLR is the ongoing process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested and degraded forest landscapes. It draws on the latest science, best practices, and traditional and indigenous knowledge, applying that information in the context of local capacities and existing (or new) governance structures. The interventions aim to restore multiple ecological, social and economic functions across a whole landscape and generate a range of ecosystem goods and services that benefit diverse stakeholder groups. FLR is based on the idea that approaches should be adjusted over time to reflect changes in environmental conditions, knowledge, societal values and other factors.

FLR can benefit food and water security, climate, biodiversity conservation, and job creation. The following list represents some of the key actions needed to carry out effective FLR, regardless of the scale[4]:

a. Alignment of relevant policies, laws and governance structures to create an enabling environment for restoration;
b. Development of accurate and detailed information on the nature and extent of deforestation and degradation and restoration opportunities;
c. Mobilisation of financial and technical resources; and
d. Awareness-raising on best FLR practices.

The Restoration Initiative (TRI), a Global Environment Facility (GEF-supported) programme, was created to address these challenges of degradation and deforestation. The TRI programme brings together the collective strengths and resources of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), together with 9 African and Asian countries to turn restoration ambition into results. The programme seeks to restore over 483,000 hectares of land and improve land management on over 754,000 hectares, benefiting 287,000 people and mitigating 30.4 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent between 2018 and 2026. So far, TRI has brought 355,672 hectares under restoration, 715,000 hectares under improved land management, empowering 810,526 people and mitigating 27,413,621 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent[5].

TRI is implemented in countries with diverse ecosystems – from arid lands, through tropical forests to mangroves – as those with with particular realities regarding restoration policy, legal and governance structures, information availability, financial and technical resources, and restoration knowledge or awareness. TRI consists of 10 projects – 8 in Africa (2 of which are in Kenya) and 2 in Asia – and represents the largest ongoing GEF investment in restoration. This publication will focus on one key component of TRI and show the diversity of strategies employed across TRI countries to achieve a positive enabling environment for implementing and scaling up FLR.

1 "About The Challenge," IUCN, accessed September 16, 2024, https://www.bonnchallenge.org/about

2 IUCN. "Deforestation and forest degradation," *IUCN Issues Brief* (2021), https://iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/deforestation-and-forest-degradation#:~:text=Over%20half%20of%20the%20tropical,forests%20to%20provide%20essential%20services.

3 "About The Challenge," IUCN, accessed September 16, 2024, https://www.bonnchallenge.org/about

4 "About TRI," IUCN, accessed September 16, 2024, https://www.therestorationinitiative.org/

5 Countries with reported GHG emissions include Cameroon, China, Guinea Bissau, DRC and Tanzania.

TRI's approach to forest and landscape restoration policy

To overcome existing barriers to the restoration of deforested and degraded landscapes, TRI works on implementing project interventions in four key areas:

1. Policy development and integration enhancing the in-country enabling environment for FLR;

2. Implementation of restoration programmes and complementary initiatives providing direct support for the implementation of integrated landscape restoration work and providing scalable models for wider uptake;

3. Capacity building and finance mobilisation supporting efforts to unlock and mobilise additional funding for FLR, and to strengthen and enhance the abilities of countries, institutions and people to plan and manage FLR; and

4. Knowledge sharing and partnerships supporting the capture and sharing of innovative experiences and best practices, raising awareness of FLR needs and opportunities and developing and strengthening critical partnerships.

The first project area responds to the need for an enabling policy environment for FLR programmes to be successful. The policy environment is conducive to FLR if it incentivises, facilitates, and mobilises FLR initiative implementation and achieves national and sub-national commitment to FLR. The way this was accomplished, however, was not similar across TRI countries. This is because, in the initiation phase of TRI, project countries found themselves at different stages of their FLR policy and governance journey. A helpful framework that conceptualises these divergent baseline levels is the Policy Cycle[6], which encapsulates the steps needed to develop a successful policy – in this case, an FLR policy framework. Before any policy-influencing work was initiated, TRI countries identified the starting policy and governance context. Collecting and analysing this information helped countries better understand the stage at which they were in the policy cycle, the challenges they will need to overcome and – crucially – the key policy-influencing strategies that would help them achieve their objective.

The section below will outline some of the common challenges countries faced, the different policy-influencing strategies they chose to address them, some of the common success factors that enabled the strategies to achieve the desired outcome, and—to conclude—the lessons learned.

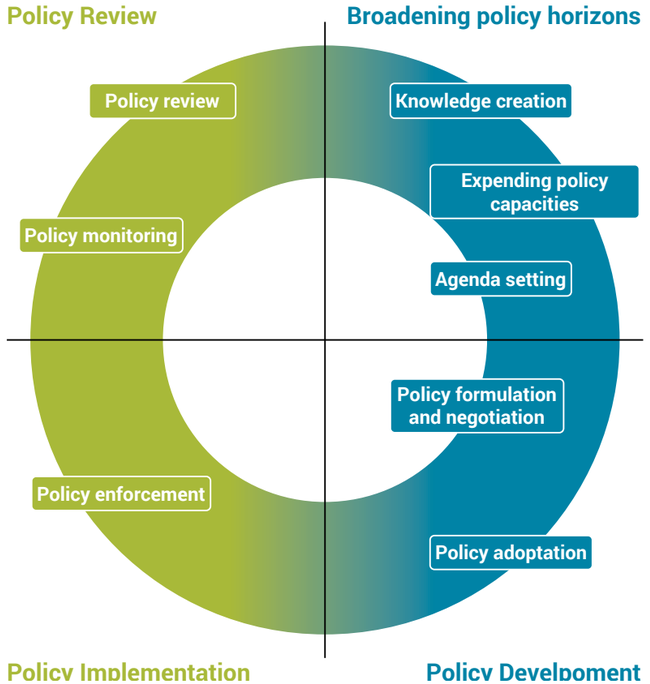

Figure 1: The Policy Cycle. Adapted from "Review of IUCN's Influence in Policy (2005)"

COMMON CHALLENGES FACED ACROSS PROJECTS

The socio-political environment of a country plays a critical role in shaping the strategies implemented by the TRI projects to create a supportive policy environment for FLR. A common challenge across restoration projects was the competition between policy priorities. Governments often prioritised short-

6 See IUCN, "Review Of Iucn's Influence On Policy Phase I: Describing The Policy Work of IUCN," (2005): 35–38, https://iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/global-iucns-influence-on-policy-phase-i-february-2005.pdf. Note that the diagram displayed in this document is slightly amended following internal discussions and a literature review.

term socio-economic benefits over conservation and restoration efforts that contribute to long-term socio-economic development. At the outset of TRI, Tanzania, the Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea-Bissau, and Kenya Tana Delta faced insufficient political will for FLR initiatives among government officials. Politicians' priorities can change during election cycles, sometimes neglecting restoration objectives. The highest policy priority often revolves around socio-economic development, which, without considering sustainability, could result in incompatible land uses and the degradation of forests and landscapes. In the Kenya Tana Delta area, many county governments were reluctant to allocate funds for FLR implementation. Instead, they preferred to invest in policies with strong political support and could potentially secure votes, even if these policies did not align with conservation and sustainable development goals.

The challenge of competing priorities also extended to local stakeholders. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, many local stakeholders involved in TRI projects participated in rice production. For this reason, they viewed mangrove ecosystem restoration practices as a potential threat and competing with their source of income. TRI sought to build an understanding among these communities of how restoration can benefit them and ensure their livelihoods.

A lack of public awareness about the severity of forest degradation and deforestation and an understanding of the principles of restoration was another common issue in TRI countries, particularly Cameroon, Tanzania, Kenya (Tana Delta and Arid and Semi Arid Landscapes - ASAL), Guinea Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe. In Cameroon, for example, there was a lack of consensus among government officials regarding the parameters used to measure and evaluate restoration efforts. For example, some government officials viewed restoration as a measurement of the surface area of the forest, while others viewed restoration as ecosystem functionality. This lack of alignment in defining and measuring restoration processes posed a challenge in developing cohesive and effective restoration initiatives.

Insufficient technical capacity and resources were also a significant challenge in many of the TRI countries. Policy development, especially the implementation phase, requires substantial resources. In the Central African Republic, the most crucial obstacle in achieving policy milestones and goals was the availability of financial resources. Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), capacity was a challenge when establishing policies supporting FLR. Local coordinators and provincial bodies need to have the financial, political, and administrative capacity to push policies through the approval process and ensure their successful implementation. The strategies designed by the TRI sought to address the common challenges and cater to each country's specific needs.

TRI policy influencing strategies

To achieve their desired policy objective of enhanced in-country enabling environments for FLR and increased national and subnational commitments to FLR, the TRI country teams had to address the above challenges and employ a number of policy-influencing strategies. The section below presents the most commonly employed strategies across the TRI project countries.

POLICY FORMULATION AND NEGOTIATION

Across the TRI country projects, the most common policy influencing strategy was facilitating policy formulation and negotiation. This involved bringing in experts to develop policy drafts, assisting the drafting process, providing technical input and hosting stakeholder dialogues and consultations. Through these interventions, TRI country teams successfully integrated FLR policies into national and local regulatory, legal and policy frameworks. This strategy was used in most TRI countries. Examples of this strategy can be found in Kenya ASAL, Pakistan, DRC, CAR, Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya Tana Delta and São Tomé and Príncipe. Below are two summaries – from TRI Kenya ASAL and Pakistan, respectively – illustrating TRI's policy formulation and negotiation strategies.

TRI's Kenya ASAL project facilitated the integration of natural resource management and FLR policies at the county and local levels. To do this, the country project team created a policy influence plan to mainstream FOLAREP (Forest and Landscape Restoration Implementation Action Plan) within county units and assisted with the creation of three County Environment Action Plans, which were validated through consultations and workshops with local leaders. TRI Kenya ASAL also supported the development of a policy framework for the management and utilisation of NTFPs (non-timber forest products) using a multi-stakeholder consultative approach – TRI participated in a Technical Working Group which drafted the First National Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Commercialisation of NTFPs in Kenya and then supported the process of subjecting the draft to public participation across the country.

In Pakistan, with technical input and by hosting and engaging in stakeholder consultations, TRI facilitated the development of forest management and landscape restoration frameworks for Chilgoza Forest Ecosystems in Sherani, Chitral, South West, and Gilgit Baltistan districts. The respective districts' forest departments drafted the plans, building on the findings of the participatory ROAM (Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology; further explained below) assessments conducted by TRI Pakistan.

POLICY REVIEW

Another common policy influencing strategy employed across TRI countries was the review and analysis of relevant existing policies, identifying their gaps and effectiveness to promote FLR implementation. TRI countries then use this analysis to create a series of recommendations and advocate for their implementation, thereby contributing to a policy environment that is more conducive to FLR. The strategy was employed in Tanzania, China, Cameroon, Pakistan and São Tomé and Príncipe. The examples below describe the policy review strategies in TRI Tanzania and Cameroon.

TRI Tanzania collected baseline data on policy, development plans, and legal frameworks that impact sustainable landscape restoration (SLR) initiatives and evaluated the extent to which they supported SLR. As such, they identified policy gaps and created key recommendations for enhancing the regulatory enabling environment for SLR in Tanzania. Additionally, TRI Tanzania assessed the institutional capacity for mainstreaming restoration in institutions with mandates related to SLR and generated recommendations for its enhancement.

In Cameroon, TRI reviewed and analysed policies and plans that support or hinder forest restoration, from which it was able to extract beneficial actions and suggestions to be included in new policy tools. This allowed TRI Cameroon to work with government officials in the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) on elaborating a framework document on a national FLR strategy. The framework document then served as the basis of the approved Harmonised Action Plan – a guideline document laying out the different FLR activities the national government could implement.

KNOWLEDGE CREATION

Knowledge creation is a key policy-influencing strategy used particularly at the beginning of the policy cycle and one that was also commonly employed. Across TRI countries, this has particularly taken the form of participatory ROAM assessments, which were used in Guinea-Bissau (see example below), Pakistan, and Cameroon. In other cases, data was collected and analysed through a valuation of ecosystem services (CAR) or through the successful implementation of a pilot intervention (China, see example below).

In Guinea-Bissau, TRI conducted participatory ROAM assessments in three geographical zones: Cacheu, Quinara, and Tombali. This involved all parts of the community discussing the village priorities, especially with regard to rice farming (one of the main competing priorities for mangrove restoration). As a result, TRI was able to identify mangrove restoration opportunities in ten sites and confirm the mangrove landscape to be restored. Facilitating community input allowed for localised information to help develop national policies.

The example from TRI China represents a unique approach to information collection. The country team successfully worked on ensuring that the State Forest Farms' (SFF) governance structures across three pilot provinces supported the goals of FLR and that SFFs have the technical tools to upgrade management planning. The learnings from the project's implementation allowed TRI China to facilitate the production of a report on innovative governance and management of SFFs as well as create guidelines for the development of innovative forest resource management in SFFs.

Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM)

ROAM is a methodology that uses a powerful combination of stakeholder engagement ("best knowledge") and analysis of documented data ("best science") to identify and investigate FLR opportunities. Best knowledge includes information from local experts and other stakeholders with first-hand knowledge of the landscapes and livelihoods in the areas being assessed. It is designed to provide relevant analytical input to decision-making processes from the local to the national level.

ROAM involves looking at FLR potential through several different lenses, and is designed to help address questions such as:

- Where is restoration socially, economically and ecologically feasible?
- Which types of restoration are feasible in different parts of the country?
- What is the total extent of restoration opportunities in the country/region?
- What are the costs and benefits associated with different restoration strategies, including carbon storage?
- What policy, financial and social incentives exist or are needed to support restoration?
- Who are the stakeholders with whom we need to engage?

Addressing these questions will necessitate discussion and negotiation among the different stakeholders. This multi-stakeholder approach then offers a mechanism to address any trade-offs between different, and sometimes competing, land uses. Due to competing interests across many TRI countries, multi-stakeholder solutions like ROAM assessments were commonly used to advance FLR policies.

For more information, see A guide to the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM).

ESTABLISHMENT OF STAKEHOLDER PLATFORMS

A final policy influencing strategy commonly employed across TRI countries is stakeholder engagement through the establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms. Stakeholder platforms can be used to share new information (knowledge creation) but also to negotiate stakeholders' priorities or provide feedback to existing drafts (policy formulation and negotiation), all of which facilitate the policy development process. This strategy was employed in São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau (examples below) and Tanzania.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, TRI established a National Platform for Forest and Landscape Restoration to support and steer FLR. The platform included concerned institutions, private sector actors, civil society groups, local communities, and partner projects. By allowing members to discuss the different aspects of FLR in the country, the platform works to evolve knowledge around FLR. It also allows them to negotiate their priorities within FLR and thus formulate and negotiate FLR policies, including a new National FLR Plan, and FLR actions.

In Guinea-Bissau, TRI established the National Platform for Mangrove Restoration (PLANTA), which includes national and international partners working on mangrove landscapes, such as the Ministry of Agriculture. The platform was crucial in providing technical guidance and feedback on the National Mangrove Law and the National Mangrove Strategy, the draft of which was supported by experts brought by the TRI team. Without these steps, the policies would not have been robust or complete and would struggle to pass the approval process.

Common success factors and impacts

The policy influencing strategies outlined above and their successful outcomes would not have been possible without the presence of numerous enabling factors. An analysis of the ten country projects reveals three key success factors: (1) effective stakeholder engagement and the successful utilisation of participatory processes, (2) the interest and willingness of target stakeholders, and (3) technical input by experts and partners as well as trainings on various research methods needed to collect new data.

Out of the three success factors, **effective stakeholder engagement and the successful utilisation of participatory processes** were most common, as it was a key enabler in **all TRI countries**. Without these successes, TRI countries would have struggled with validating and garnering political will for their developed policies. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, without the participation of national stakeholders in the PLANTA (National Platform for Mangrove Restoration) network, the policies developed by TRI would not have been robust enough and would have struggled to pass through the approval process. Similarly, in São Tomé and Príncipe, stakeholder engagement through the National Platform for Forest and Landscape Restoration made it easier for policies to be validated and elaborated. Just as importantly, however, without these successes, policies and other outputs would not have addressed the priorities of all relevant stakeholders. In the Central African Republic, policies would not have addressed the diverse priorities of everyone affected by FLR if the TRI team had not brought together the various stakeholders in the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector.

The second most common success factor was **the interest and willingness of stakeholders**. In many cases, the stakeholders refer to national and regional officials responsible for implementing FLR policies. This was the case in China, Cameroon, CAR and Kenya ASAL. In China, for example, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration's (NFGA) willingness to collaborate and implement sustainable forest management and FLR reforms was critical for successfully including TRI China's recommendations in national policy guidelines and implementation plans. In other cases, stakeholder interest and willingness were instrumental in multi-stakeholder platforms and stakeholder consultations, where stakeholder participation was necessary to be effective. This was crucial in Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau, DRC and São Tomé and Príncipe. In Tanzania, for instance, where a cross-sectoral national working group to promote sector integration and coordinate the implementation of sustainable

landscape restoration (SLR) programmes was established, the participation of stakeholders was key for the working group to be functional. An outlier case was Kenya Tana Delta, where interest and enthusiasm enabled community groups to be trained to lobby decision-makers.

The final most common success factor was **the technical input by experts and partners and methodology trainings**. Methodology trainings were essential in the first phase of the policy cycle as they primarily assisted with knowledge creation (Pakistan, CAR) or helped with agenda setting (Kenya Tana Delta). For example, the trainings offered by TRI Pakistan to professionals and key stakeholders on the ROAM methodology played a critical role in ensuring that the ROAM assessments were conducted correctly and that the process was inclusive and effective in identifying restoration opportunities and priority interventions to be included in the forest management plans. In one case (DRC), help from experts assisted with policy development itself, i.e. in a later stage in the policy cycle. Technical input by TRI, external experts or stakeholders was a crucial success factor in Tanzania, Guinea-Bissau, China, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Cameroon. In Cameroon, the policy and scientific notes developed by TRI, which provided specific information on particular aspects of restoration, were a crucial tool to increase the awareness around FLR policies amongst government officials, who were then able to take part in the writing of national policies and endorse them.

Impacts and Lessons Learned

These success factors enabled the TRI programme to achieve the creation or elaboration of policy, regulatory and legal frameworks that prioritise restoration and set clear targets as well as mechanisms for how to fulfil them – the primary impact of the programme. This was the main impact found across **all TRI countries**. Crucially, these frameworks have allowed participating countries to not only play a big part in getting closer to the final goals of the programme (ão Tomé and Príncipe, China, DRC) but also to contribute to global goals and restoration targets (Tanzania, Cameroon, Kenya Tana Delta).

LESSONS LEARNED

The implementation of a wide range of project activities across the policy influencing strategies has provided the TRI programme with critical lessons, in particular, that:

a. Participatory processes can generate significant original insights and can better facilitate policy development (Pakistan, Tanzania, DRC, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya ASAL, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cameroon, Kenya Tana Delta);

b. ROAM processes, in particular, can generate important insights on FLR opportunities and options, such as which restoration interventions should be prioritised, what the priority restorations are, what the finance and investment options for restoration are and more (DRC, Pakistan, Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau); and

c. Policy reviews and safeguard assessments are a useful tool to enhance regulatory frameworks and safeguard strategies through the identification of policy gaps that need to be addressed (São Tomé and Príncipe, Tanzania, China, Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, CAR).

PART 2:
PANORAMA SOLUTIONS

Strengthening the FLR Policy Landscape, Cameroon

Solution Provider	Fogoh Muafor (IUCN), Rene Kaam (INBAR), IUCN, Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text:	TRI Cameroon successfully strengthened the country's policy commitments, improved national legislative and regulatory frameworks to support FLR and built knowledge of restoration opportunities and interventions among government and community stakeholders. TRI Cameroon contributed to the Harmonised Action Plan for the Restoration of Degraded Land and Forest Landscapes in Cameroon (2020-2030) and the "Modalities for the Circulation of Non-Timber Forest Products from Plantations" legal decision. This legal decision defined modalities for managing NTFP and reinforced processes for registering private NTFP plantations. One of the key challenges in Cameroon was that many key stakeholders, particularly government officials, did not have a robust understanding of the principles of restoration. In response, TRI implemented participatory ROAM processes, reviewed existing policies that support restoration, and facilitated the uptake and integration of policy recommendations. Through this, the TRI increased the understanding of restoration opportunities and interventions among government and community stakeholders.
Location	Cameroon
Organisations Involved	Cameroonian Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF); Cameroonian Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection; Global Environment Facility (GEF); International Bamboo and Rattan Organization

Impacts:

- Major policy tools in support of sustainable land and forest management, like the Harmonised Action Plan for the Restoration of Degraded Land and Forest Landscapes in Cameroon (2020-2030), mark a significant step towards the country's ultimate restoration goals and development pledges, including the commitment to restore 12.06 million hectares in the Bonn Challenge and AFR100 restoration initiatives.
- Contributed to a legal decision that defined the modalities of management, exploitation, and trade of NTFPs harvested from plantations.
- Supported the creation of an Agroforestry Notebook; a tool that allows farmers to register their plots with the local forestry administration as private properties and legally harvest various tree products. In 2023, 11 best-managed bamboo and NFTPs plantations were registered, and the Agroforestry Notebook was handed over to farmers by the MINFOF to attest to private ownership. By 2024, at least 150 best-managed plantations were registered, and 150 Agroforestry Notebooks are now in the process of being attributed to farmers. MINFOF plans to hand over further Agroforestry Notebooks to their owners in the coming years.
- Removed administrative barriers for establishing NTFP plantations.
- Prioritised local communities in trainings and outreach in restoration activities.

Building Blocks:

1. Identifying high-priority restoration opportunities and interventions through participatory ROAM processes

TRI in Cameroon conducted ROAM assessments in three pilot sub-national landscapes, Waza, Mbalmayo, and Douala-Edea, involving local and national stakeholders. Comprehensive stakeholder consultation meetings were held, which included traditional chiefs, heads of community development institutions, local council representatives, women and youth associations, and individual innovators. These meetings addressed restoration needs, best uses of local knowledge, existing experience gaps, and ongoing restoration activities.

Through the assessments, TRI in Cameroon identified priority restoration areas, prioritised restoration intervention types, estimated the costs and benefits of different restoration types, and determined finance and investment options for restoration. It also identified strategies for addressing major policy and institutional bottlenecks in the three pilot landscapes. The findings of the assessments were presented in a final report in October 2021. This report was discussed and validated in a national workshop with participants from government ministries, international organisations, local representatives, and chiefs.

Upon finalising the report, a leaflet containing the main findings was distributed to stakeholders to ensure that information was quickly disseminated and accessible to those without internet access. These findings presented valuable lessons about how FLR actions could be modified in implementation in the field and provided field data that could be considered in developing policy tools. As one of the first activities undertaken by TRI in Cameroon, the ROAM assessments were part of the learning-by-doing process and provided insight into how the participatory process could be better implemented in other landscapes.

2. Reviewing policies and plans supporting the restoration of degraded lands

TRI in Cameroon identified key recommendations for forest restoration to be incorporated into policy tools by reviewing and analysing existing policies and plans. TRI supported the Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development (MINEPDED) in developing the framework of the National Strategy for Landscape Restoration in Cameroon and a Harmonised Action Plan, which provides a condensed and guiding document for the strategy. TRI also contributed to creating political and scientific notes, which were intended to provide detailed recommendations to government officials. The political note focused on a strategy for multi-partner and intersectoral collaboration in FLR, while the scientific note outlined FLR approaches. These notes can be invaluable in shaping policy tools and offering detailed guidance on successfully executing FLR strategy recommendations.

3. Uptake and integration of policy recommendations

Achieving greater policy commitments and implementing FLR regulatory frameworks involves adopting and seamlessly integrating the policy recommendations identified during comprehensive policy reviews and participatory restoration assessments. These processes enabled TRI in Cameroon to develop the Harmonised Action Plan successfully. This plan integrates recommended restoration activities, including supporting the creation of green infrastructure, promoting agroforestry, and implementing financing mechanisms for degraded landscape initiatives. The plan also lays the groundwork for future, more specific FLR policies. Additionally, the development of legal decisions and use of the Agroforestry Notebook provided a clear direction of action and signifies the adoption of a policy that gives individuals the right to establish and own NTFP plantations, boosting their involvement in restoration activities. Sufficient resources and the political will of MINEPDED and MINFOF enabled the effective development of the Harmonised Action Plan and legal decision. The success of the legal decision and Agroforestry Notebook demonstrate how the uptake of recommendations contributes to a strengthened regulatory system promoting people's involvement in restoration activities.

Increasing commitment to FLR at the national and sub-national levels, Central African Republic

Solution Provider	Adam Maxime Gbaramaetong (FAO), Benjamin DeRidder (FAO), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	TRI in the Central African Republic (CAR) has worked to increase the commitment to FLR at the national and sub-national levels by initiating projects to fill knowledge gaps in restoration opportunities and to develop policy and regulatory frameworks that increasingly promote environmental protection. This has been achieved through collaborative work with various stakeholders, including graduate students who researched to fill the knowledge gaps for more robust policy networks and a technical working group to identify restoration opportunities in the country. Major challenges encountered by CAR included the availability of financial resources and the ability to reflect complex and lengthy processes in final policy documents. However, through increased contact with partners, there has been a greater show of support and enthusiasm in ensuring the inclusive processes have the necessary resources. Participatory approaches have also proven to be vital in representing the numerous complexities in policy.
Location	Central African Republic
Organisations Involved	Global Environment Facility (GEF); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (Central African Republic)

Impacts

- The National Forest and Landscape Restoration Coordination is now operational, which plays an incentivising role in national forest policies and promotes FLR as a pillar of sustainable resource management in line with the UN Decade 2021-2030 goals.
  - A strategic axis dedicated to the sustainable management and development of forests has been included in CAR's 2019-2035 forestry policy. This includes activities such as the creation of community concessions for timber, fuelwood, charcoal, or agroforestry, the collection and development of NTFPs, and the participatory development of management plans for the various community forest resources.
- The 2008 Forest Code is being revised to provide a more appropriate framework for new measures. The aim is to ensure that the areas and themes related to "community forests, artisanal permits, semi-industrial logging, plantation timber, regulation of the domestic market and cross-border markets, and forest taxation" are addressed.
- A performance indicator on the area of deforested and degraded land that has been managed or restored has been included in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance (*UNSDCF - Plan-cadre de coopération des Nations Unies pour le développement durable*) 2023-2027 for CAR, with the target of 750,000 ha to be restored by 2027.
- A specific indicator relating to the surface area (ha) of forests restored or created has been included under Strategic Area 5 (Environmental sustainability and resilience to crises and the effects of climate change) in the National Development Plan (*PND-RCA 2024-2028*).

Building Blocks:

1. Filling knowledge gaps in restoration opportunities and the valuation of ecosystem services

TRI in CAR is working to fill existing knowledge gaps in the valuation of ecosystem services and restoration opportunities to ensure the necessary commitment for FLR from CAR's national and subnational governments and authorities. To do this, TRI in CAR has contracted two graduate students with the Central African Agricultural Research Institute (ICRA) and the Higher Institute for Rural Development (ISDR) to carry out a valuation of ecosystem services. The field research will guide TRI in CAR's technical policy recommendations as the project progresses. TRI has also established a geospatial working group to identify priority areas for restoration. This working group will serve as a basis for informing TRI in CAR's policy recommendations. To facilitate the technical geospatial working group, TRI in CAR conducted training sessions on data collection and analysis. These initiatives have facilitated knowledge generation and built the capacity of participants and local actors to collect and analyse data required to effectively develop the country's policies. Ultimately, they provide valuable technical input and recommendations for national policies related to restoration and sustainable land management.

2. Developing policy and regulatory frameworks to promote restoration, sustainable land management, and emissions reductions

TRI in CAR is actively working to facilitate the development of policy and regulatory frameworks that promote restoration, sustainable land management, the maintenance and enhancement of carbon stocks in forests and other land uses, and emission reductions from land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF) sector and agriculture. This includes initiating discussions with the Ministry of Water, Forests, Hunting, and Fishing on the revision process of CAR's forest policy. TRI in CAR will bring all relevant stakeholders together to define and plan the revision process and provide the ministry with technical input. TRI in CAR is also conducting a documentary analysis of local development plans of five forest communities – Mbata, Mongoumba, Nola, Pissa, and Yobé – and is in discussions with the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Territorial Planning to develop a joint management plan for the southwest territory so the local development plans can be implemented in a broader vision. Additionally, TRI in CAR is helping upgrade the Wood Energy Supply Plan (WISDOM) in Bangui with recommendations developed from research on wood energy production and the market. The success of TRI in CAR relied on the strong commitment of the country's major ministries to improve laws and regulations that support restoration goals. Additionally, the active participation of stakeholders in the LULUCF sector and restoration activities was essential in addressing the diverse priorities of all those affected by FLR.

Establishing a policy framework facilitating FLR and sustainable forest management in state forest farms, China

Solution Provider	Liu Yuting (IUCN), IUCN, Niu Jiayi (PRC-GEF State Forest Farm Project Management Office), Liu Jing (GEF Project Manager), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	In China, TRI has been working to promote implementing and enforcing FLR and sustainable forest management practices in the State Forest Farms (SFF). Traditionally, management of these farms has focused on maximising timber production and planting a few high-yielding tree species. TRI has been collaborating with policy experts to provide recommendations and analysis of forestry policies and subnational regulatory frameworks to the Chinese SFF management. One of the main challenges has been a large number of SFFs in China, totalling over 4,000, which necessitates scaling up sustainable forest management efforts. To address this, TRI China initially provided analyses and recommendations to three pilot provinces before extending its support to other forest farms. This strategy allowed TRI China to aid in the development of policy milestones. These milestones offer guidelines to policymakers for the governance of SFFs that prioritise FLR and sustainable forest management more effectively.
Location	China
Organisations Involved	Global Environment Facility (GEF); Ministry of Ecology and Environment of People's Republic of China; International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Impacts

- Played a significant role in the development of major policies related to land management; for example, *A Green Path to Growth: State Forest Farm Policy Research in China's New Stage of Economic and Social Development* which offers policy analysis and suggestions on incorporating FLR.
- Contributed to the *Implementation Roadmap of Pilot Sustainable Forest Management in China*" which outlines measures for implementing sustainable forest management, as well as the *Guidelines for Development of Innovative FMR (Forest Management and Restoration) Plan in SFFs* which provides suggestions on how SFFs can work towards ecosystem service-based management.
- Created public documents representing the first time the SFF system has had a key objective of enhancing forest ecosystem services and sustainable forest management.

Building Blocks:

1. Ensuring national and subnational forestry policymakers are equipped with information and tools to integrate FLR as a cornerstone of SFFs management

TRI China supported the development of policies and regulatory frameworks incorporating SFFs as a critical component for local FLR implementation. Specifically, TRI shared key information and policy recommendations with national and subnational forestry policymakers. This includes a national policy summary of SFFs to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA). This report provides a review of policies and an analysis of their effects on SFF development and sustainable forest management. This analysis demonstrated which policies promote FLR and which policies need reform to move them towards green development.

TRI also provided recommendations that helped create a special research report on innovative management mechanisms and systems of state-owned forest farms. It aimed to provide a new perspective on SFF management mechanisms to help SFFs better protect forest resources and provide forest ecosystem services. TRI also developed policy suggestions for promoting the green development of SFFs and a research report on the Green Development Strategy of SFFs. The recommendations contributed to multiple policy documents outlining specific actions to be implemented in the three pilot provinces, including improving the ecological compensation system, taking enhanced forest quality as SFFs' primary responsibility, and encouraging the wise use of forestry resources. TRI hosted follow-up policy workshops to convey policy messages and recommendations to key stakeholders. The successful inclusion of policy review and recommendations in national guidelines and implementation plans depended on the collaboration and willingness to implement sustainable forest management and FLR reforms from the NFGA. Input from academia, such as the China Forest Academy, the Planning Institute of the NFGA, and local policymakers, was also crucial for facilitating policy conversations and discussions on development issues and recommendations.

2. Supporting goals of reform and technical tools upgrades in SFFs' governance structures

TRI has developed SFF's governance structures to align with the goals of FLR and support the ongoing transition of SFFs to public benefit organisations and technical tools to upgrade forest resource management planning. TRI provided essential suggestions and facilitated the production of a report on innovative governance and management of SFFs. The report analysed cases from different SFFs that incorporated governance structures focused on restoring and enhancing forest quality and bringing economic and social benefits to surrounding communities. Through this process, TRI China gained critical information on developing national and subnational policies that support FLR-centered management and promote the role of SFFs in providing ecosystem services.

The project also promoted an FLR-based Forest Research Management (FMR) plan developed at the end of 2020, enhancing key forest eco-services. The plan covered 16 SFFs incorporating institutional structures supporting SFF reforms. Analysing governance structures and promoting an FLR-based forest resource management plan also contributed to creating guidelines for developing innovative forest resource management in SFFs. The guidelines provide a detailed way to start working toward ecosystem service-based management.

SOLUTION 4

Establishing an FLR-friendly policy framework in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo

Solution Provider	Floribert Mbolela Lupongo (FAO), Lebeau Laurin Ngoy Mbaya Wa Nyenga (FAO), Benjamin DeRidder (FAO), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	TRI in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) worked to establish policy frameworks that support FLR in the pilot province of South Kivu. First, the team facilitated the development of the Provincial Strategy for the Restoration of Forests and Landscapes. TRI in DRC also assisted in drafting two legal documents, one on bushfire management and another promoting FLR to support the implementation of the strategy. FLR measures have also been integrated into the local development plans of the Kabre and Ngweshe chiefdoms. The provincial FLR strategy, supporting legal documents, and FLR-supporting local development plans will help coordinate various FLR projects and actions and support the local upscaling and management of restoration on the ground. However, political will and capacity remain significant challenges for TRI in DRC. The validation process is time-consuming and presents a major roadblock to FLR policy implementation, as politicians and government agencies must come to a consensus on all aspects of the policy and agree it is worth pursuing. Capacity presents another key challenge to establishing FLR-supportive policies. Local coordinators and provincial bodies need to have the financial, political, and administrative capacity to navigate policy approval and implementation processes.
Location	South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo
Organisations Involved	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development; Global Environment Facility (GEF)

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Impacts

- Contributed to the *Provincial Strategy for Restoration of Forests and Landscapes* in South Kivu. This is the first provincial strategy in DRC, and represents a significant change from a policy framework without subnational FLR governance to one that will promote FLR and allow for its management at the subnational level.
- Developed a legal document on bushfire management and other legal documents promoting FLR and local development plans. These documents provide additional legal structures that will outline priority actions and aid the implementation of FLR policies on the ground.
- TRI in DRC worked to integrate major policies that promote restoration and sustainable land management into the local development plans of the Kabre and Ngweshe Chiefdoms in South Kivu province, enabling better policy cohesion with wider-reaching subnational policies.

Building Blocks:

1. Developing a provincial forest restoration strategy in South Kivu

TRI in DRC assisted in the elaboration of the Provincial Strategy for the Restoration of Forest and Landscapes in South Kivu, outlining priorities and necessary actions for FLR, such as best practices on watershed protection and sustainable land management practices for subsistence crops. To develop this, TRI in DRC integrated recommendations that were proposed by a national working group of various stakeholders to address gaps and bottlenecks for restoration. The strategy was validated at local and regional levels in April 2022. In April 2024, after adoption by the Environment & Natural Resources Commission of the South Kivu Provincial Assembly, the strategy was validated and promulgated by the Provincial Governor. The enthusiasm of various stakeholders to participate in discussions facilitated the development of the strategy, alongside data used from the participatory ROAM assessments, which ensured that recommendations included local considerations and priorities. This strategy development process taught TRI in DRC how to best convene diverse stakeholders and members of the national technical working group, as well as gain insight into how the strategy could best implement restoration within the local context via the participatory ROAM assessments.

2. Creating legal documents supporting FLR Strategy in South Kivu

TRI in DRC worked to develop two legal documents in collaboration with Rights Empower, an organisation with legal expertise, to further strengthen the provincial strategy adopted in South Kivu. The first document outlines the management of bushfires, including when and how they should be dealt with, whilst the second focuses on sustainable land management and promotion of FLR. After technical validation and adoption by the Environment & Natural Resources Commission of the South Kivu Provincial Assembly, the Provincial Governor promulgated the documents. Through this process, TRI in DRC learnt that supporting policies can accelerate the uptake and implementation of more major FLR policies and provincial strategies.

3. Establishing local development plans incorporating restoration in South-West DRC

TRI in DRC further streamlined FLR implementation by integrating key policies and restoration efforts into the local development plans of the Kabre and Ngweshe Chiefdoms in South Kivu province. This included adding annexes with data from ROAM assessments and restoration guidelines. TRI in DRC has also worked to incorporate the Provincial Strategy for the Restoration of Forest and Landscapes in South Kivu and two related legal documents into these plans to enhance local restoration efforts. Through this process, TRI in DRC learned how to effectively align broader restoration strategies and policies with local needs, build robust FLR legal and regulatory frameworks and adapt restoration measures within existing policies.

Establishing a mangrove restoration strategy, Guinea-Bissau

Solution Provider	Jean Louis Sanka (IUCN), Rui Andrade (IBAP), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	TRI in Guinea-Bissau has strived to establish policies that enhance the restoration of the country's mangrove ecosystems using participatory territorial diagnoses to identify opportunities in three selected regions. TRI Guinea-Bissau team also focused on developing proposals for a National Mangrove Law and National Mangrove Restoration Strategy to fill gaps and strengthen institutions in the country's legal, regulatory, and legislative landscape. However, a key challenge in the project has been achieving a consensus on the interpretation of the law, as progress is hindered if stakeholders have differing views on the policies. TRI's work resulted in a second draft of the National Mangrove Law regulating sustainable management of the country's mangrove ecosystems and a newly drafted National Mangrove Strategy to outline how the law will be implemented. Despite suffering delays throughout the project, expected results have been achieved, and the elaboration and validation of Mangrove Law and National Restoration Strategy has been completed. The Government will adopt the National Mangrove Law and National Mangrove Strategy. The National Assembly will also approve the Law.
Location	Guinea-Bissau
Organisations Involved	Global Environment Facility (GEF); Biodiversity and Protected Areas Institute IBAP, Guinea Bissau

Impacts

- Improved policy and regulatory framework for the restoration of the mangrove ecosystem will strengthen land-use practices and contribute to the ultimate goals of sustainable restoration practices.
- *The National Mangrove Law* regulates and normalises beneficial and sustainable production practices.
- *The National Mangrove Strategy* outlines how to finance sustainable mangrove practices and ensures the law is successfully implemented.

Building Blocks:

1. Identifying mangrove restoration opportunities in three intervention regions

TRI in Guinea-Bissau conducted participatory ROAM assessments in three geographical zones – Cacheu, Quinara, and Tombali – to identify mangrove restoration opportunities in ten sites: five in Cacheu, two in Quinara, and three in Tombali. These assessments confirmed the potential to restore 1,200 hectares of mangrove landscape to be restored during the project's implementation. Between 2020 and 2021, the ROAM processes engaged all community members in discussions to prioritise restoration efforts, particularly addressing the competing needs of rice farming, which directly impacts mangrove areas. This inclusive approach facilitated the identification of intervention zones and kick-started the restoration of both mangrove and rice fields. Moreover, the ROAM assessments played a critical role in developing the National Mangrove Law and National Mangrove Strategy by encouraging stakeholders to adopt a landscape-wide perspective, rather than focusing on isolated sites. Community input was instrumental in shaping these national policies, especially regarding the design of buffer zones that reflect local priorities.

To conduct these assessments and ensure their effectiveness, TRI gave theoretical training in participatory territorial diagnosis tools to technicians to guarantee that the teams were properly informed on the ROAM methodology. The ROAM assessments provided valuable lessons, highlighting the importance of understanding restoration opportunities and village priorities across the three landscapes. The participatory approach also underscored the need for carefully designed buffer zones in the National Mangrove Law and Strategy, acknowledging the necessary balance between rice production and mangrove restoration. This approach enabled stakeholders to adopt a comprehensive landscape perspective, integrating mangrove and rice field rehabilitation into the national restoration strategy. Ultimately, the ROAM tools empowered stakeholders to shift their focus from individual sites to a holistic landscape approach, ensuring that restoration efforts are sustainable, community-driven, and aligned with environmental and local needs.

2. Improving strategic and regulatory frameworks for mangrove restoration

To further develop a restoration strategy in Guinea-Bissau, the TRI team focused on improving the regulatory frameworks by supporting the development of the National Mangrove Law and the National Mangrove Strategy. Initially, a draft of the mangrove law created in 2016 was unsuccessful due to limited resources. In response, TRI in Guinea-Bissau enlisted the help of jurist and socio-anthropologist experts to create a new draft incorporating key insights from the participatory assessment phase of mangrove restoration. The revised draft was then presented to members of PLANTA, the National Platform for Mangrove Restoration, established by TRI Guinea-Bissau in 2021. PLANTA includes national and international partners involved in mangrove landscapes, such as the Institute for Biodiversity and Protected Areas, the Directorate General for Forest and Fauna, and the Ministry of Agriculture. After receiving feedback, the TRI Guinea-Bissau team produced a second draft in July 2023.

More recently, expected results have been achieved as the elaboration and validation of the Mangrove Law and National Restoration Strategy have been completed. The active participation and technical contributions of PLANTA members have enabled the successful drafting of these mangrove policies. Without the involvement of national stakeholders, the policies would lack the necessary robustness and struggle to pass through the approval process. In addition to technical support, international NGOs like Bosque Communidad and Wetlands International provided essential financial assistance, allowing TRI to hire consultants and refine the draft policies. TRI in Guinea-Bissau has gathered valuable information on the existing gaps in mangrove management and ensured the involvement of various stakeholders to complete a robust and sustainable policy framework.

Strengthening national and county level policy and regulatory frameworks to support FLR restoration, Kenya - ASAL

Solution Provider
Meshack Muga (FAO), Patrick Mugi (FAO), Elijah Mboko (FAO), Philip Kisoyan (FAO), Benjamin DeRidder (FAO), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)

Summary Text
TRI in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) region has assisted in strengthening policies and regulatory frameworks by contributing to the Forest and Landscape Restoration Implementation Action Plan (FOLAREP) – a national FLR strategy with a roadmap and a monitoring framework created to bridge existing gaps in policy. The TRI Kenya ASAL team has also played a key role in integrating FLR and national natural resource management policies at the county and local levels by helping develop various county policies, including County Environment Action Plans and the Policy Influence Plan of FOLAREP. Additionally, TRI has developed a national strategy and action plan for the sustainable commercialisation of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and services, as well as Forest Equitable Benefit Sharing Regulations. Two significant issues faced by TRI Kenya ASAL's team were the lengthy policy processes and the vulnerability of these policies to political changes. First, the policy development process is often prolonged, taking years to finalise as it involves multiple drafts, national working group discussions, public consultations, and validation workshops before reaching the signing and approval stage. Second, this extended timeline makes policies particularly vulnerable to political shifts, such as elections, where new leadership may introduce different visions and priorities that could derail or alter existing policy initiatives. Despite these challenges, TRI's FLR policies have continued to progress and receive support from various officials, even amidst recent electoral changes in Kenya.

Location
Kenya

Local:
Marsabit, Isiolo, and Laikipia counties

Organisations Involved
National Government of Kenya; Kenya Forest Research Institute; Kenya Forest Service (KFS); Kenya Agricultural Research Organization; National Museum of Kenya; Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya; Nature Kenya; The Nature Conservancy; World Resources Institute; World Wildlife Fund (WWF); UNEP; Global Environment Facility (GEF)

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Impacts

- Robust and regulatory framework for FLR, with policy milestones including the finalisation of the *Forest and Landscape Restoration Implementation Action Plan (FOLAREP), national NTFPs Strategy* and *Action Plan on the sustainable commercialisation of NTFPs*, and the development of the *Forest Equitable Benefits Sharing Regulations*. These have contributed to a significant difference from previous practice and a step towards the project's final goals.
- Enhancement of resilient socio-economic development, improved ecological functioning and contributions to national and international commitments such as climate change mitigation, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and the Bonn Challenge.

Building Blocks:

1. Developing a Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) Implementation Action Plan and Monitoring Framework

TRI's in Kenya ASAL team supported the development of the Forest and Landscape Restoration Implementation Plan (FOLAREP) by formulating a multi-stakeholder consultation process that comprised experts from national institutions, the Council of Governors, County Governments, and non-state actors. Subsequently, The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) created a diverse technical working group (TWG) in 2019 to develop FOLAREP. The draft was then subjected to public participation in seven clusters involving key stakeholders before being validated in a national stakeholders forum. FOLAREP ensures the sustainable restoration of targeted landscapes and outlines key activities to be carried out. Additionally, the TRI in Kenya ASAL team's monitoring and enforcement officer played a critical role in developing an M&E framework to track outcomes on policy and regulatory frameworks. Throughout the project, successful preparation enabled a more structured process. In developing FOLAREP, it was highlighted how the participatory process better facilitated the creation of FLR-based policies. The participatory process also highlighted county priorities, provided information about how the policy could be more effectively implemented, and enhanced local communities' participation and ownership of FOLAREP.

2. Facilitating the integration of natural resources management and FLR policies at the county and local levels

To integrate natural resource management and FLR policies at county and local levels, TRI in Kenya ASAL has facilitated the development of multiple county policies. To achieve this, TRI assisted with the creation of a Policy Influence Plan (PIP) to mainstream FOLAREP within county units and enable effective integrated restoration. Kenya ASAL team has also provided technical input and logistical support for creating three County Environmental Action Plans in Marsabit, Isiolo, and Laikipia counties, with final action plans drafted for validation workshops and subsequently passed through the County Assembly for approval. These policies aim to enable the implementation of FOLAREP and further promote FLR with greater local context in these three counties. Furthermore, Isiolo County has developed a County Climate Change Policy, which is currently undergoing reviews at the County Assembly, and a County Rangeland management bill, which is undergoing reviews in the County Cabinet. Both are expected to be published by the end of 2024. Overall, TRI in Kenya ASAL was able to learn lessons around how county policies can be better suited to effectively integrate FLR in natural resource management and implement national FLR policies.

3. Developing a policy framework for the sustainable commercialisation of non-timber forest products and services

TRI in Kenya ASAL has supported the development of a policy framework for managing and utilising non-timber forest products (NTFPs) by creating the First National Strategy and Action Plan for the Sustainable Commercialisation of NTFPs and Services in Kenya. This strategy aims to promote sustainable production, extraction, market development, and access to finance for NTFP value chains in the country. The framework was developed through a multi-stakeholder consultative process involving a Technical Working Group (TWG), which included TRI's National Project Coordinator, a specialist in NTFPs. After drafting the strategy with Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), several review meetings were held, followed by public participation across seven clusters nationwide. Additionally, the TRI in Kenya ASAL team has assisted in enhancing the 2016 forest regulation on equitable benefit sharing under the Forest Conservation and Management Act, conducting sensitisation workshops, and providing recommendations to ensure the fair distribution of NTFP benefits. Lessons from this work include combining science-based information with broad consultations to develop more robust policies. TRI in Kenya ASAL underscored the value of evidence-based measures in restoration efforts by identifying key NTFPs and potential interventions, such as establishing local tree nurseries and certifying medicinal plants. Furthermore, promoting equitable benefit sharing taught the TRI project team the significance of effective communication with local communities, ensuring that policies address local needs and fairly distribute the benefits within the forestry sector.


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Establishing policy and regulatory frameworks to support equitable FLR and sustainable land management, Kenya – Tana Delta

Solution Provider	Paul Matiky (Nature Kenya), Rudolf Makhanu (Nature Kenya), Emily Mateche (Nature Kenya), UNEP, Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	TRI in Kenya Tana Delta has supported the development of policy, governance, and regulatory frameworks for coordinated and equitable FLR and sustainable land management. TRI in Kenya Tana Delta advised nearly 20 policies, with eight approved in both Tana River and Lamu counties. To achieve the approval of these policies, TRI in Kenya Tana Delta developed a robust communications and advocacy strategy at the national and county levels to amass public support, engaged with lobbying and advocacy efforts to mainstream FLR into county budgetary processes. It helped elaborate plans like the Lamu and Tana River County Integrated Development Plans to integrate FLR and sustainable land management into policies and planning processes. The new policy framework has ultimately brought in greater funding and pushed Kenya towards meeting its restoration goals. The major challenge faced by the Tana Delta project team was the unwillingness of governments to prioritise FLR funding to promote activities, especially in the context of local officials' desire to invest in voter-friendly policies and priorities of new governments in charge.
Location	Kenya Tana Delta
Organisations	Involved Global Environment Facility (GEF); UN Environment, Nature Kenya

Impacts

- Implementation of policy and governance frameworks that support equitable FLR and sustainable land management.
- Establishment of FLR-based policies have ensured that counties meet the World Bank's Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) programmes' financing requirement, allowing for greater capacity for further policy development.
- Promote greater uptake of policies prioritising FLR and sustainable land management.

Building Blocks:

1. Enhancing public support for landscape restoration and sustainable management at the county level

TRI in Kenya Tana Delta has developed a robust communication plan that included the innovative use of radio, banners and outreach to garner public support for proposed FLR and sustainable land management policies. Within the scope of this communications plan, the TRI in Kenya Tana Delta team engaged in partnerships with local radio stations that provided Swahili translations to ameliorate their outreach to rural villages, as well as printed banners that highlighted the importance of restoration-based policies. Other forms of advocacy included convening meetings and trainings, creation of a YouTube channel to incept a more far-reaching social media presence by collaborating with local communities and through communicating directly with locals. Overall, these actions have been highly successful in enhancing policy messages, helping aid enforcement, sensitising members of the public, and calling for action. For TRI in Kenya Tana Delta, one key takeaway from this successful communications strategy has been the power of strategies that target communities using local champions, local languages, and local channels to influence mindsets, habits and practices.

2. Mainstreaming landscape restoration and sustainable land management into county budgetary processes

TRI in Kenya Tana Delta team has actively worked to integrate landscape restoration and sustainable land management into county budgets by training members of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) to advocate and lobby for the prioritisation of FLR in county budgets. Through efforts such as submitting a memorandum via the Tana Delta Conservation Network, TRI in Kenya Tana Delta successfully influenced Tana River County's fiscal strategy papers. Lamu county also set higher restoration targets in its budget. The project plans to further train CFA members to promote FLR in county budgets through community participation. TRI in Kenya Tana Delta learned that empowering local leaders to lobby the government and engaging in consistent advocacy enables counties to prioritise restoration in their budgets and pursue higher restoration targets.

3. Integrating landscape restoration and sustainable land management into policies and planning processes to enhance conservation and sustainable production

TRI in Kenya Tana Delta has also worked on integrating restoration into county policies, helping develop the four participatory forest management plans (PFMPS) at the county level, outlining forest management priorities, their implementation, and the roles of different stakeholders. Forest and Landscape Restoration Implementation Action Plan (FOLAREP), a central national policy that will advance FLR in Kenya, has been aided by TRI in Kenya Tana Delta, which funded the participation of stakeholders in consultations hosted by the Kenya Forest Service. These consultations and workshops have been essential in gathering information from diverse stakeholders, including local leaders and national agencies, and allowed TRI to contribute significantly to FLR-focused and -supportive frameworks. Through the integration of FLR into policies at the sub-national level, the TRI in Kenya Tana Delta team has further grown their understanding of the ways restoration and sustainable land management can fit into the various legal and regulatory frameworks that exist and are continuously evolving.

Strengthening and implementing national and provincial FLR policies and legal frameworks to maximise sustainable land management in Chilgoza forest ecosystem, Pakistan

Solution Provider	Faizul Bari (FAO), Benjamin DeRidder (FAO), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	TRI in Pakistan has worked to strengthen and implement FLR policies and legal frameworks to maximise sustainable land management of the Chilgoza forest ecosystems. The main goals that were determined were addressing economic issues, biodiversity conservation and concerns over the key current drivers of forest degradation. To achieve these objectives, TRI Pakistan facilitated the development of sustainable forest management and landscape restoration frameworks in the districts of Sherani, Chitral and South Waziristan based on the findings from partipatory ROAM assessments. Additionally, TRI in Pakistan reviewed existing policies and promoted a transition to community-based implementation and innovative sustainable finance mechanisms. Some challenges in achieving these milestones included the vast demand for resources and the lack of political will from the government to implement the FLR policies.
Location	Pakistan South Waziristan and Chitral districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sherani district in Balochistan
Organisations Involved	UNDP; Global Environment Facility (GEF); Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Pakistan

Impacts

- Multiple policy changes, including a transition in implementing forest-related policies, such as the *National Forest Policy* (2015) and the *National Climate Change Policy* (2021) that focus on a community-based approach to forest management.
- Development of *Chilgoza Forest Multi-Functional Management Plans* for the Sherani, Chitral, Southwest and Gilgit Baltistan districts to facilitate the implementation of sustainable land management at the district level.

Building Blocks:

1. Developing forest management and landscape restoration frameworks for Chilgoza Forest ecosystems

To strengthen Pakistan's policies and legal frameworks in support of FLR and sustainable land management, TRI in Pakistan has facilitated the development and restoration frameworks for Chilgoza Forest Ecosystems in the three of the four districts where TRI operates: South Waziristan and Chitral districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sherani district in Balochistan. The progress of plans varies across these districts. While the Chilgoza Forest Multi-Function Management Plan for the Sherani District has been finalised and a draft for South Waziristan Multi-Function Management Plan has been completed, the plans for Chitral are still under development. These plans were drafted by the respective districts' forest departments and aimed to address economic concerns, biodiversity conservation, and the key drivers of degradation. TRI Pakistan's ROAM assessments were crucial in prioritising hotspots and ensuring proper assessment conduct. Key lessons from this pillar of the project include managing restoration efforts locally and prioritising community-focused goals and measures. TRI in Pakistan realised that understanding different local communities' distinct needs and priorities is essential for effective forest management, as highlighted by the variations in goals, interventions, and economic needs identified during the ROAM assessments developed.

2. Reviewing policy and regulatory frameworks to promote the use of innovative and sustainable financial mechanisms

TRI in Pakistan undertook a detailed review of policy and regulatory frameworks to identify innovative financial mechanisms, such as payment for ecosystem services (PES), aimed at supporting restoration and sustainable land management. For this goal, activities consisted of an initial scoping mission, a PES feasibility assessment, and training 26 participants on ecosystem services valuation and incentives. A PES scheme was piloted in Chitral, with a consultant exploring resource generation options for conservation alongside an economic valuation study that demonstrated the significant economic benefits of FLR, prompting government decision-makers to allocate more resources towards forest restoration. Additionally, capacity building workshops were held for hundreds of staff on using fuel-efficient stoves and gasifiers. Overall, this allowed TRI in Pakistan to comprehend more thoroughly the importance of understanding the feasibility and local impact of potential financial mechanisms and interventions, such as PES, in driving restoration efforts. The economic valuation study underscored the value of presenting clear, economic arguments to policymakers, highlighting that quantifying the benefits of restoration can be a powerful tool in influencing policy and securing resources for sustainable land management.

SOLUTION 9

Enhancing national commitment to FLR and establishing a conducive policy framework for restoration and sustainable forest management, São Tomé and Príncipe

Solution Provider	Faustino da Conceição Neto de Oliveira (FAO), Faustine Zoveda (FAO), Meyer Madre de Deus do Rosário António (Directorate of Forests in São Tomé and Príncipe), Marco Pagliani Di Amato (FAO), Benjamin De Ridder (FAO), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	TRI in São Tomé and Príncipe has strengthened national commitment to FLR by establishing the National Platform for Forest and Landscape Restoration (PFLR), which coordinates FLR efforts and includes all key stakeholders. TRI also developed a Forest Landscape Plan to guide sustainable forest management and restoration. Additionally, they drafted a policy influence plan as part of a blueprint for improving FLR policies. This led to a working group focused on enhancing existing policies and adopting new laws, regulations and incentives. Challenges faced include slow inter-institutional dialogues, limited capacity and lack of expertise at senior level and stalemates due to political transitions. In this context, TRI in São Tomé and Príncipe played the double role of mediation and capacity-building, ensuring stakeholder satisfaction and policy continuity amidst elections and leadership shifts while also filling gaps in expertise and support for policy processes.
Location	São Tomé and Príncipe
Organisations Involved	Global Environment Facility (GEF); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, São Tomé and Príncipe

Impacts

- Policy milestones including the establishment of the *National Platform for Forest and Landscape Restoration*, development of the *Forest Landscape Plan*, and creation of the *Policy Influence Plan (PIP)*. These initiatives are geared towards transforming the country's policy and regulatory frameworks to better support conservation, restoration, and sustainable forest management, representing a marked improvement over previous practices.
- Positive outcomes include creating a space for dialogue between various stakeholders and creating a guide through the *National FLR Plan*, helping to push FLR to the forefront of policy and help São Tomé and Príncipe reach its restoration commitments.

Building Blocks:

1. Creating an operational national platform for FLR

TRI in São Tomé and Príncipe established the National Platform for Forest and Landscape Restoration (PFLR) in 2019, comprised of diverse stakeholders, including private sector actors, civil society groups, local communities, and partner projects to advance FLR work in the country. Since the official launch of the platform under four thematic sub-groups in 2020, meetings were held for validation of reports and assessments – including the Policy Influence Plan and the National Capacity Assessment and Community Plan authored by national consultants, as well as FLR plans at national and sub-national (São Tomé North, São Tomé Center, São Tomé South, and Príncipe) levels produced by the Directorate of Forests and Biodiversity (DFB). These plans were shared with the PFLR, and members' input was used to identify gaps, introduce recommendations, and define future priorities. In undertaking this process, TRI has learned the importance of stakeholder collaboration when discussing FLR policies and priorities and how to use members' technical knowledge best to strengthen national and county plans.

2. Empowering the production of the National Forest and Landscape Restoration Plan to inform and guide forest management, conservation, and restoration initiatives

In 2020, TRI in São Tomé and Príncipe started to provide technical support to the Directorate of Forests and Biodiversity officials on the development of Forest Landscape Plan. The plan, which was finalised in 2021, integrated comments and suggestions from validation workshops consulting over 1,000 people from almost 100 communities across the country to guide and inform future forest management, conservation, and restoration initiatives. Additionally, the TRI project team facilitated the production of four sub-national FLR plans that operationalise FLR interventions included in the national Forest Landscape Plan by outlining an implementation strategy. Together, the FLR landscape plans and the National Forest Landscape Plan outline the country's FLR work over the next decade. Two important lessons taken out of this process have been the importance of including the priorities of local communities for FLR-based policies, and the pertinence of developing complementary implementation plans at national and sub-national levels.

3. Producing FLR policy improvement recommendations based on a gap analysis of FLR policies, laws and regulations

TRI developed recommendations to enhance FLR policies in São Tomé and Príncipe, based on a gap analysis of existing forest management, conservation, and FLR policies, laws, and regulations. These recommendations were guided by a Policy Influence Plan (PIP) created by a national consultant in early 2021 and validated by the National Platform for Forest and Landscape Restoration in March 2021. The finalised PIP outlined three key policy objectives with related intermediate results, forming the foundation for the project's policy work. The objectives focused on improving inter-institutional collaboration and integration among the National Environmental Council, National Committee on Climate Change, and National Tendering Platforms; amending and harmonising forest and conservation laws; and updating the Forest Fund and the 2018 Forest Management Plan.

Enhancing Tanzania's enabling environment for sustainable landscape restoration, Tanzania

Solution Provider	Doyi Mazenzele (IUCN), Ng'walu Kidayi (IUCN), Dr Damas Mapunda (Vice President's Office), Frank Mtosho (Vice President's Office), Leah Bronstein (IUCN), Adriana Vidal (IUCN)
Summary Text	Tanzania boasts one of the highest levels of forest cover in eastern and southern Africa. However, the country faces severe land degradation due to overgrazing, over-exploitation, deforestation, and poor agricultural practices. These issues are driven by underlying factors such as rapid population growth, insecure land tenure, and poverty. TRI has enhanced national policies, legislations and strategies relevant to sustainable landscape restoration in Tanzania, directly contributing to the National Forest and Landscape Restoration Strategy to define priority actions for FLR. Key challenges in addressing land degradation include conflicting conservation and socio-economic priorities, slow policy reform, and shifting political objectives. The TRI project in Tanzania aims to address these challenges by creating an enduring enabling environment for sustainable land use.
Location	Tanzania
Organisations Involved	United Republic of Tanzania Vice President's Office; Global Environment Facility (GEF); International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Impacts

- Contributions to significant differences in practice relating to restoration goals and actions, marking major steps for the country.
- New frameworks that promote a more integrated approach to bring together stakeholders and different sectoral ministries, CSOs and the private sector. The current frameworks are transformative with more prominent restoration and clear targets and mechanisms on how to deliver Tanzania's restoration agenda. They outline the key drivers of degradation, degradation hotspots and priority restoration interventions, which will inform programming within and outside the government and facilitate the development of measures addressing the key drivers of degradation in the country.
- Enhanced policy and regulatory framework that promotes restoration and sustainable land use, local actors will be better able to pursue restoration activities while securing their livelihoods.
- Four framework policies that will ultimately contribute to the realisation of Tanzania's restoration, biodiversity and climate resilience commitments and targets.

Building Blocks:

1. Reviewing relevant national policies: Identifying gaps and generating recommendations

Baseline data in policy, development plans and legal frameworks were collected and evaluated by TRI Tanzania project team to observe the extent to which they supported SLR, resulting in identifying policy gaps and generating critical recommendations for enhancing the regulatory enabling environment. The proposed high-level policy recommendations are expected to reform regulatory frameworks at the national and local levels. Additionally, in conducting an environmental and social safeguards study across seven districts implementing the project, the report informed the design of the Environmental and Social Management Plan, detailing how to minimise the risks and negative impacts which may arise during the project's implementation. This allowed the TRI Tanzania team to push for priority interventions in its policy development work and avoid undesired impacts. Through this review process, TRI Tanzania learned lessons around where restoration policy and legal frameworks should be strengthened and which existing actions have successfully facilitated restoration, whilst further understanding was developed as to how stakeholders can contribute towards these goals.

2. Establishing cross-sectoral planning mechanisms for sustainable land restoration

To help incorporate cross-sectoral planning, TRI Tanzania has worked to create a national working group to promote sector integration and guide the implementation of SLR programmes. Further, TRI Tanzania established landscape level multi-stakeholder platforms to address competing land use interests, working towards enhanced decision-making and implementation of SLR initiatives that would contribute to Tanzania's efforts to achieve its biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and local livelihoods targets. TRI was able to incorporate cross-sectoral planning mechanisms in SLR policies which relied heavily upon the interest and willingness amongst stakeholders who shared challenges, the desire for a common vision and clearly defined priorities. This process allowed TRI to identify which relationships and partnerships could be established and strengthened, teaching TRI how to best design and operationalise mechanisms that integrate sectoral interests and priorities across different issues.

3. Assessing and strengthening institutional capacity for mainstreaming landscape restoration in sectoral plans

To ensure landscape restoration is adequately popularised in sectoral and local action plans, TRI Tanzania assessed the institutional capacity for mainstreaming restoration in institutions with mandates related to SLR. This aims to identify critical capacity gaps and generate recommendations for enhancing institutional capacity. This assessment targeted sectors most relevant to SLR, such as agriculture, livestock, land and water and revealed that existing policy and legal instruments used in these sectors needed to be reviewed and updated to accommodate emerging environmental issues. Additionally, the low levels of staffing and technical expertise on SLR were highlighted as an area for improvement. The identified gaps and recommendations were used to guide the development of capacity-building modules and programmes to better integrate restoration efforts into cross-sectoral plans. Through this process, TRI Tanzania has found that strengthening institutional capacity – via tailored assessments and trainings –is key to effectively mainstreaming SLR, focusing on both technical capabilities and the relevance of regulatory frameworks.


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