Performance Story Report

the development and growth of the Bonn Challenge

February 2017

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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 ticulate 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.

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.

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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

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**   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.

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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 th with a ra ir

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, Spain[2]   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.

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leaders in Brazil and the U.K. and communicated to the UNFF Ministerial Dialogu *Restoring the World's Forests* held in May 2005. In 2009, the U.K. gov16(FF.57p Tm[(U)] T tr)6(ees)6(v)4(5-5(n 350.57 Tm[(t)/ F1

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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

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 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 Challenge[5]. 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 520.oi.

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,

luential donor government administrations, within intergovernmental bodies and within developing country

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.

Table 1. KNOWFOR programme results chart

	Performance question	Performance summary at each level	Evidence	Evidence rating / contribution
Reach and relevance outputs	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?	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.		
		Many of the most effective knowledge products have been driven by opportunity. Knowledge gaps have been identified		

| 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

Outcome area 1

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 restorat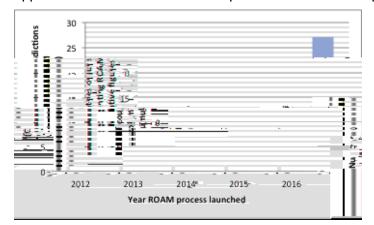ion. The ROAM guidelines[9] best typify this kind of support, which are now widely seen as best practice by agencies supporting FLR efforts at the national and sub-national level (E02). These documents have been translated into French, Spanish, Bahasa-Indonesia, Russian and Portuguese for securing a 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 products[10]. 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,

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

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[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

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undertaking FLR assessments, cost-benefit analyses and other more practical approaches.

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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 addre

in REDD+) through restoration

also members of the GPFLR, increasing opportunities for cross-transfer of ideas.[15] As such, by seeding 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 document[16] was then distributed as an official publication to all attending delegates and used in the high-level segment of the COP meeting.

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

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 (I08).

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 22[22] million hectares – an area larger than Uruguay –*

essential

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).

> *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 i 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 ab
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).
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   -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   -   : 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,   , 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
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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 KEQ1.

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

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
ng the right

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

orks 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 al

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

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.

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Annex 2: Terms of reference

<u>influence on Bonn Challenge development and growth</u>

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 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, langua

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