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OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Project evaluation series

Mid-term evaluation of the Forest and Farm Facility programme

COUNTRY CASE REPORTS

July 2016

PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES

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**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF EVALUATION**

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Office of Evaluation (OED)

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACOFOP	Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén
ANR	Agriculture and Natural Resources
ANFOC	Alianza Nacional de Organizaciones Forestales Comunitarias
ASDS	Agriculture Sector Development Strategy
CBO	Community based organization
CEO	Chief executive officer
CF	Community forest
CFA	Community Forest Association
CFC	Community forest committees
CFI	Community forestry instructions
CFMC	Community forest management concept
CFNWG	Community Forestry National Working Group
CFPPA	Community Forest Product Producers Association
CFUG	Community forest user group
CLEARR	Project For Coastal Livelihood And Environmental Assets Restoration In Rakhine
COFO	FAO Committee on Forestry
CONAP	Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas
COP	Conference of Parties
COP21	21st Annual Conference of the Parties
CPC	Commune People's Committee
CRR	Central River Region
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DfID	Department for International Development
ECCDI	Ecosystem Conservation and Community Development Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FD	Forest Department
FEDECOVERA	Federación de Cooperativas de las Verapaces
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FFPO	Forest and Farm Producers Organization
FF-SPAK	Farm Forestry Smallholder Producers Association of Kenya
FI	Financial institution
FLEGT	Forest law enforcement, governance and trade
FREDA	Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association
FSWG	Food Security Working Group
ICRAF	International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
ID	Impact driver
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
INAB	Instituto Nacional de Bosques
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IR	Intermediate result
IS	Intermediate state
IUCN	The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
LIFT	Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund

LoA	Letter of agreement
KFS	Kenya Forest Service
MA&D	Market analysis and development
MAGA	Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación
MARN	Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales
MCS	Myanmar Ceramic Society
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MERN	Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation-Conservation Network
MFI	Microfinance institution
MHDO	Myanmar's Heart Development Organization
M&LS	Monitoring and learning system
MoECAF	The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
NACO	Natural Resources Consulting
NEA	National Environment Agency
NFP	National Forest Programme
NFPG	National Farmers' Platform of the Gambia
NGOs	Non-governemental organizations
NMSC	National Multi Stakeholder Steering Committee
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
NVCARD	North Vietnam College of Agricultural and Rural Development
OCRET	Oficina de control de reservas territoriales
PROFOR	Program on Forests
PFN	Programa Nacional Forestal (National Forest Programme)
PINFOR	Programa de Incentivos Forestales
PINPEP	Programa de incentivos forestales para poseedores de pequeñas extensiones de tierra de vocación forestal o agroforestal
PROBOSQUE	Programa de fomento al establecimiento, recuperación, restauración, manejo, producción y protección de bosques en Guatemala
PROFOR	Program on Forests
RECOFTC	The Center for People and Forests
REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
ROPFA	Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SO	FAO Strategic Objective
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNREDD	The United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
URR	Upper River Region
USD	United States dollar
VCD	Value chain development
VNFU	Vietnam Farmers' Union
WG	Working group

1. Introduction

The Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) was one of the first “umbrella programmes” within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The FFF receives funding through a multi-donor trust fund, from donors including Sweden, Finland, United States, AgriCord (through its Farmers Fighting Poverty Programme) and Germany (under the Carlowitz project). The World Bank’s Program on Forests (PROFOR) also provided startup funds through two of the main partners: the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the International Union for Conservation (IUCN). Though the Programme was established with a target budget of USD 50 million for five years, only USD 12.5 million dollars were secured by FAO as of June 2016.

The FFF was designed under a partnership co-managed by IIED, IUCN and AgriCord, with inputs from major alliances of forest and farm producer organizations including representatives from the International Family Forest Alliance, the Global Alliance for Community Forestry and the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests. The FFF was implemented through a participatory multi-stakeholder process and informed by scoping studies, resulting in a multi-year work plan that is country and context specific, and designed to improve the Country Programming Framework and to catalyze and leverage existing initiatives. The FFF was set up for a duration of five years, running from December 2012 to December 2017. However, the first significant funding was only received in August 2013, and a decision was made to launch in-country activities in six paired pilot countries during 2013: Guatemala and Nicaragua (Latin America), The Gambia and Liberia (Africa), and Nepal and Myanmar (Asia).

Beginning in November 2013, four more countries were selected (Bolivia, Kenya, Zambia and Vietnam) through a comprehensive selection process; work began in the second half of 2014 and the beginning of 2015. Expressions of interest were received in various forms from over 44 countries and 70 forest and farm producer organizations, indicating unmet demand.

The project has a monitoring and learning system (M&LS) to monitor progress on a range of indicators under each of the outputs described in the programme theory of change (ToC). An annual aggregated report on the FFF’s M&LS is presented to the Steering Committee each February, summarizing country level achievements and lessons learned.

FFF activities are currently underway across the 10 countries, albeit at different stages of intervention; Gambia is one of those countries. The interventions of the project include work by apex level producer organizations supported through partnership agreements, small grants to producer organizations to support enterprise and other organizational needs, multi-sectoral platforms led by government actors at national and sub-national levels, exchange visits and capacity building.

This MTE was conducted in accordance with the agreements signed with donors. With 1.5 years left in the current project, this evaluation provides an opportunity to improve implementation and to envisage its future after December 2017.

Purpose of the evaluation

As mentioned above, the mid-term evaluation is programmed in the FFF project document and financing agreements. The purpose of the MTE is to inform the Project Steering Committee, the Programme Management Team, the Donor Support Group and other stakeholders about the project’s progress and performance toward attaining the expected outputs and outcomes. The intention is therefore to evaluate the programme for planning purposes as well as to inform the multi donor fund of progress to date. The mid-term evaluation is expected to bring valuable external reflections to help strengthen the programme, and to validate and complement the M&L system of the project.

The MTE draws specific conclusions and formulates recommendations for necessary further action by the Steering Committee, the Project Management Team and other international

and in-country FFF stakeholders. It also identifies good practices and lessons learned for the formulation and execution of other similar projects that address forestry governance and/or utilizing a small grant scheme.

Intended users of the evaluation findings

The intended users of the results of this MTE include the FFF Steering Committee, the Donor Support Group, the Project Management Team the FFF national facilitators, implementing partners, FAO country office staff, government stakeholders, and other international and in-country FFF parties.

Scope and objective of the evaluation

Scope: This MTE evaluates the results achieved from the inception of FFF in December 2012 until December 2015, bearing in mind that activities did not start until mid- to late-2013. The evaluation assesses all key elements of the programme across its interventions as outlined in the ToC, with a representative set of forest and farmer producer organizations (FFPOs) and government partners in the selected five countries, and at the regional and global levels. Additionally, the management and governance structure of the project were assessed as well as the linkages between the project and other in-country and global initiatives in the context of FAO's Strategic Objectives (in this case SO3 Output 1.1 and SO2 Output 2.2).

Objectives and evaluation questions

The FFF mid-term evaluation had the following objectives:

- a. Assess progress made toward achieving project results; and
- b. Identify design and implementation issues that should be addressed in order to achieve the project's intended results.

In order to achieve these objectives, the evaluation sought to deliver findings under the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, partnerships and coordination, normative values, sustainability, and coherence and synergies. In this regard, the evaluation was guided by the below preliminary evaluation questions respective to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, partnership and coordination, sustainability, and FAO's normative values. In the course of the work, the MTE added a question on the "Likelihood of Impact of the Project" to capture the project's crucial early effects which were not recorded by its M&LS.¹

Relevance

- Evaluation question 1: How relevant is the FFF's primary focus and logic in terms of its stated mission, in relation to the target countries' contexts, broader sustainable development initiatives, and smallholder farmers' needs?
- Evaluation question 2: How and to what extent does the project contribute to the broader strategic FAO objectives? Sub-questions: (2.1) How coherent is FFF in terms of how it fits in with the policies, programmes and projects undertaken by the governments, FAO and other development partners? (2.2) To what extent has the FFF integrated its programme with other technical teams within the Forestry Department; with FAO's internal priorities, building on Country Programming Frameworks and regional initiatives; and especially by linking with the Strategic Objectives (in this case SO3 Output 1.1 and SO2 Output 2.2)? (2.3) Is FFF coherent with other forestry initiatives operating within the target countries?
- Evaluation question 3: Was the project design appropriate for achieving the mission, vision and outcomes?

Effectiveness

- Evaluation question 4: To what extent is the FFF on track to achieving outcomes across the three pillars, and what changes are attributable to the FFF's interventions which are directly linked to the FFF's main objectives? Sub-questions: (4.1) To what extent were

¹ In order to avoid repetition in the presentation of the findings, some questions from the Evaluation Terms of Reference have been reclassified as sub-questions here in the final evaluation report where it was appropriate.

producer organizations strengthened for business development and engagement in policy dialogue? (4.2) Did FFF Catalyze multi-sectoral policy platforms? (4.3) Did FFF link local voices to global processes?

Efficiency

- Evaluation question 5: To what extent is the current operational modality contributing to the efficient achievement of the program outcomes?

Likelihood of impact

- Evaluation question 6: To what extent is FFF contributing to progress toward the expected outcomes and impact?

Partnership and coordination

- Evaluation question 7: Was FFF successful at engaging other partners in the FFF-supported processes?

Sustainability

- Evaluation question 8: How sustainable is the FFF concept of investing in the organizational capacity of forest farm producer organizations – and how might this be enhanced?

Normative values

- Evaluation question 9: To what extent have gender and human rights been taken into account in the design of the FFF and during the implementation?

Methodology

The MTE adopted a consultative and transparent approach with FFF internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. The triangulation of evidence and information gathered underpins its validation and analysis, and supports the conclusions and recommendations.

To assess the contribution of the project toward its stated outcomes and expected impact, five participating countries were visited. In each country, national and sub-national stakeholders were interviewed and field visits were carried out to meet directly with FFF-targeted FFPOs. A sixth mission was planned for Nicaragua, but this was cancelled due to timing and logistical constraints. The five visited countries were The Gambia, Kenya, Guatemala, Myanmar and Vietnam. While these five countries were the primary focus countries for the evaluation, the MTE team also conducted desk reviews of the FFF activities carried out in the other five countries in order to corroborate the findings from the primary evaluation missions.

Desk reviews and consultative interviews with the FFF team at FAO headquarters constitute an important aspect of the evaluation approach, primarily in relation to questions of programme management, coherence and synergies. Interviews were also conducted with staff of IUCN and IIED, the two main FFF partners.

To answer the above evaluation questions, the MTE's approach is based on mixed methods and triangulation of information. This approach was selected to ensure that the evaluation findings fully respond to the purpose of the evaluation. The methods used included the following:

- Review of existing documentation on FFF;
- Analysis of FFF self-reported information, in particular the 2014 and 2015 annual reports;
- Semi-structured interviews with key informants, stakeholders and participants, supported by the questions listed in the evaluation matrix;
- Targeted FFPOs discussion and direct observation during field visits in the focus countries;
- Validation of MTE mission observations through debriefing discussions with key stakeholders at country and FAO headquarters level.

In order to answer evaluation questions 1 and 3 on relevance, country visits and key informant interviews were conducted with in-country stakeholders and beneficiaries. To answer question 2 on the coherence and consistency of FFF with FAO's strategic objectives and other FAO initiatives, the evaluation team conducted interviews with key informants at FAO headquarters and country level, as well as a desk review. For questions 4 and 9, the MTE used different analytical approaches for assessing progress and impact under each FFF pillar. In assessing progress towards Outcome 1, Pillar 1, the analysis was based on four levels for influencing forest and farm related policies (adapted from Keck and Sikkink, 1998²), as follows:

- Getting issues on the political agenda;
- Encouraging discursive commitment from government;
- Securing procedural change at national level;
- Influencing behavioral change in key actors.

In assessing the effectiveness of activities under Outcome 2, the MTE analyzed progress made by FFF in supporting interventions aimed at improving forest and farm based value chain governance³ as well as the upgrading⁴ trajectories followed by FFPOs. On value chains governance, three analytical lenses were used:

- Analyzing support to policy and institutional improvements of the environment in which value chains operate;
- Analyzing support to new laws and regulations governing value chains;
- Analyzing the facilitation offered to the negotiation of trade relationships between FFPOs and downstream value chain operators.
- To analyze the upgrading strategies, three analytical lenses were used:
- Analyzing value chain upgrading strategies used by FFPOs with the support of FFF in different countries;
- Analyzing market access models practiced by FFPOs;
- Analyzing the outcomes for FFPOs and their member households.

The evaluation also analyzed why some FFPOs derived greater benefits from their participation in value chains. For Question 6 on the project's expected impact on forest and farm livelihoods, the achievements under each pillar were framed in terms of the assets and capitals identified in the sustainable livelihood approach (i.e. human capital, social capital, political capital, natural assets, physical assets and financial assets).

2 Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998). *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press.

3 Value chain governance is understood as the power to control, influence, and set the modes and rules of interaction in the value chain.

4 Value chain upgrading refers to the acquisition of capabilities and market linkages that enable enterprises to improve their competitiveness and move into higher-value activities.

2. Gambia country case report

Context of the Gambia FFF programme

In the context of the Gambia, FFF is the follow-up of the National Forest Programme Facility (NFP) which was launched in 2009 with the objective of empowering communities to sustainably manage natural resources, implement rehabilitation systems, conserve biodiversity and halt environmental degradation and desertification. To accomplish this objective, the country created a National Multi-stakeholders Steering Committee (NMSC) which met regularly to discuss and forward the country's National Forest Programme (NFP) activities.

The main achievements of the NFPF support are:

- Further consolidation and development of community forests through training and elaboration of a community Forestry Field Manual;
- Providing further trainings for enterprise development in Community forests;
- Launching of the "All Gambia Forestry Platform" with the aim to strengthen stakeholder capacity and coordinate stakeholder efforts toward successful implementation of the Gambian NFP;
- Communication efforts on better understanding the Gambia's national forest programme;
- Establishing the National Multi-stakeholder Steering committee of the Gambian NFP.

At the start of the implementation of FFF, The Gambia was one of the six pilot countries selected by the FFF steering committee in the meeting held on 10 – 11 January 2013. A scoping mission was conducted to launch the Facility from 11 to 13 March 2013. The objectives of the launching workshop was to present and discuss the relevance of the FFF with Government institutions, partners and farmer organizations in The Gambia and to identify initial activities to get the FFF started. Based on the outcome of the launching workshop, the following findings surfaced:

- The focus on strengthening local forest and farm organizations was well received by both Government and the local forest and farmers' organizations;
- The links between forestry, food security, poverty reduction and socio-economic development were recognized by all stakeholders and the need for more cross/sectoral integration of the forest sector and strengthening of local producer organizations were the main issues discussed during the launching;
- Existing Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy adopted in 2009, created an interface between Agriculture and Natural Resources sectors represented by a Working Group which needs to be broaden to include farmer organizations;
- The need to revive Community Forestry programme in the country in order to contribute to the attainment of Forest Policy 2009- 19 objectives were emphasized;
- All actors of the forestry and the stakeholders attributed the causes of deforestation to increase in farming activities, bushfire, illegal logging, use of wood for domestic energy where by 95% of domestic energy rely on fuel wood and charcoal;
- Key challenges confronting Forest and Farm Producer Organizations were inadequate awareness of policy related programs (ANR policy), lack of capacity on landscape management, unclear tenure agreements, difficulty to access to bank loans (credit unions and community banks), need for training and training of trainers on sustainable forest landscape management.

These findings have contributed to contextualizing and giving shape to FFF programme in Gambia.

The Theory of Change

FFF developed a generic ToC that links development results at FFPOs level (organization capacity, access to technologies, and access to markets) with voice and participation in policy processes at national and global levels, in order to achieve the intended Impact. The strategies to achieve the Impact are arranged under three Pillars, four Outcomes and seven Outputs as presented in Figure 1. The MTE found that on this basis, the internal logic of the project is largely sound between the Outputs and Outcomes level. However, a close analysis shows that it does not express the conditions that should be in place to allow development results to reach impact. The ToC lacks important building blocks in terms of Assumptions and Impact Drivers⁵, between Outcomes level and Impacts level.

It should be recalled that it is between the levels of Outcomes and Impacts that the design should express the main changes that are expected to take place as “Intermediate States (IS)”, as the stepping-stones to Impacts in the respective pathways. It is therefore important to indicate explicitly in the ToC what are the required assumptions allowing Outcomes to lead to intermediate results (IR), and from there to planned impacts. The MTE reconstructed the ToC based on the original one in order to include the missing building blocks (Assumptions and Impact Drivers); this provides a framework that more clearly articulates the conditions that are required to reach the expected impact. The reconstructed ToC does not modify the Outputs, Outcomes, Impact and Vision. Rather it places them together with Intermediate Results (the current Pillars), Assumptions and Impact Drivers into a graphic representation of the FFF.

The different FFF ToC building blocks are illustrated as shown in Figure 2. The original ToC blocks are illustrated in green color and connecting black arrows, and are unchanged. Dashed black arrows are added to show the actual connectedness from the Project implementation experience to date. Other colors indicate the blocks that are missing in the original ToC: blue for the Assumptions, and dark orange for Impact Drivers.

During the country visits, the MTE Team discussed with National Facilitators and their key partners the conditions that were necessary to reach impact. The information obtained was used to identify factors and conditions that influence (or may influence) progress to impact. The reconstructed ToC shows that to reach the FFF Impact, three Intermediary States (IS) that correspond to the 3 Pillars must be achieved; these are:

- i) IS-1: FFPOs capacity for doing business is enhanced and they engage in policy decision;
- ii) IS-2: Multi-sectoral stakeholders policy platforms are catalyzed;
- iii) IS-3: Local voices are linked to global processes.

To achieve IS1, FFF enhances the FFPOs capacity for doing business and for engaging in policy decision processes. The MTE found that despite the considerable progress made in implementing related Outputs at FFPOs level (as demonstrated later in this report), the real changes for sustainable results can take place if two important Assumptions are met:

- i) Governments put in place conditions enabling FFPOs to engage in business and policy formation;
- ii) Partnerships with Financial Institutions (FIs) and Micro-Financial Institutions (MFIs) can be mobilized to address FFPOs finance issues.

5 Distinct from assumptions, impact drivers are factors that project/programme management can influence to a certain extent.



Figure 1: Gambia FFF results framework

To achieve IS-2, FFF intends to catalyze multi-sectoral policy platforms. However, this highly political objective can be reached only if, as above, the Assumption that "Governments put in place conditions enabling FFPOs to engage in business and policy formation" is met.

To achieve IS-3, FFF intends to link local voices to global processes. This can be achieved if the Assumption the "avenues for exchange at regional and global levels are offered" is met.

The Vision is stated as "Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes". It is understood from this articulation that it relates to 10 participating countries, which is an understatement because Pillar 3 of the Project leads arguably to important regional and global impacts. FFF needs therefore to integrate these impacts in the formulation of the Vision. This is why the MTE added a plain black arrow linking the Intermediary State "Local voices are linked to global processes" to the Vision, while the arrow link to Impact is dashed.

The Impact is stated as «Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' groups have improved income and food security from sustainable forest and farm management". This is also an understatement of the impacts. With the importance that the Vision attaches to livelihoods improvement, the FFF should articulate the impact accordingly in order to cover the potential livelihoods related impacts and not a subset of those impacts (income and food security). Given the wide regional and country scope of Project implementation, the livelihoods related impacts should be defined in terms of improved human, social, political, natural and physical capitals.

At the Impact level, FFF intends to contribute to improving income and food security of smallholders, communities and indigenous people groups, from sustainable forest and farm management. This formulation is not wide enough to be at the level of the Vision which emphasizes improving livelihoods of smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' organizations and their decision-making over forest and farm landscapes. In addition to income and food security (financial capital and resilience), important impacts can be expected in terms of improved human capital, social capital, political capital, natural capital and physical capital.

Evaluation questions: key findings

This section presents the findings which are based on the desk review of the FFF documents, interviews with FFF Team, visit in the Gambia, and interviews with target FFPOs at grassroots level and key program stakeholders in the country.

Evaluation question 1: How relevant is FFF primary focus and logic in terms of its stated mission, in relation to the target countries' contexts, to broader sustainable development initiatives, and to smallholder farmers' needs?

FFF approach is highly relevant to national policies of The Gambia. The FFF country programme is in line with the Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy 2009-2015 (ANR), which was launched in 2012, and which supports development towards an integrated approach in managing landscape resources. It was well received, most notably for strengthening the experience gained in the country by the NFP Facility in further supporting Community Forests.

Evaluation question 2: Consistency with FAO's strategic objectives: How and to what extent does the project contribute to the broader FAO strategic objectives?

FFF is aligned to FAO's Strategic Objective 2 (SO2), «Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner». It is particularly aligned with FAO's Strategic Objective 3 (SO3), "Reduce rural poverty", to which it strongly contributes. Under SO3, FAO recognizes that rural poverty is mostly concentrated among households of small-scale subsistence producers and family farmers, among others. It further recognizes that women are often amongst the most marginalized and need strengthened rights to the natural resources on which they depend.

Under SO3, FAO's focus is on a holistic approach to rural development and poverty reduction. Likewise, FFF Gambia program emphasizes integrated approaches in which forests and other farm components are considered functionally interdependent components of the same rural landscapes that must be sustainably managed and used to improve the livelihoods of their users. FFF also focuses on opportunities that strengthen linkages between forests, crops and animal production, for sustainability reasons.

More specifically, the FFF is aligned to FAO's corporate outcome 3.1: The rural poor have enhanced and equitable access to productive resources, services, organizations and markets, and can manage their resources more sustainably. The output under this outcome to which FFF is contributing most is Output 3.1.1: *Support to strengthen rural organizations and institutions and facilitate empowerment of rural poor*. The FFF objectives under pillars 1 and 2 are closely in line with those of SO3.

Evaluation question 3: Was the project design appropriate for achieving the Outcomes and the Vision?

In the context of the Gambia, the appropriateness of the Project's design for achieving its Outcomes and Vision is unquestionable. Forest and farm smallholders of the county face challenges that include limited organization skills, limited access to markets and market information, to financial capital, smallholder friendly technologies, and limited or no participation in policy formation processes relating to forest and farm landscape management and use. Addressing these challenges is in the realm of FFF's Vision and Outcomes. All key informants interviewed by the MTE Team said that the FFF model is a practical and effective methodology in delivering the support to FFPOs as compared to traditional development projects. It facilitates access to smallholders through these

organizations, with training and other services allowing them to do business and link to markets, and to participate in policy formation processes.

The appropriateness of the FFF model is further evidenced by the strong response it has received from FFPOs receiving grants and training, and other smallholder groups and government agencies responding to capacity building activities. Table 1 provides a list of beneficiaries of capacity building organized by FFF country programme.

Evaluation question 4: To what extent is the FFF on track to achieving outcomes across the three pillars and what changes can be observed that are attributable to the FFF's interventions and are directly linked to the FFF's main objectives?

This section presents the MTE findings with respect to overall achievements per Outcome for each Pillar. Overall, the MTE found substantive evidence that FFF country programme is on track for Outcomes in the three Pillars. Based on interviews with key informants and direct field observations regarding progress toward achieving the project Intermediary States, the MTE findings indicate that FFF has made the considerable progress in relation to the IS-1, "FFPOs capacity for doing business is enhanced and they engage in policy decision processes". With regard to IS-2, "Multi-sectoral stakeholder policy platforms are catalyzed", the Program also made considerable achievements. The government has established cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms for policy formation at national level, and for policy implementation at sub-national levels. With regard to IS-3, "Local voices are linked to global processes", there are important achievements in relation to processes at global level, such as participation of FFPOs delegations in UNFCCC COP21.

Table 1: Gambia FFF target organizations/groups and their characteristics

Organization/group	Capacity development/ organizational area	Number of beneficiaries	Gender	
			Male	Female
National farmers platform of The Gambia (NFPG)	8 new groups (CFCs, TAD, Rice irrigation Group, Livestock owners Association)	30 000	17 500	12 500
NFPG	Facilitated the constitution of 6 regional CF Task force	124	90	34
NFPG	Training of executive members	24	15	9
NFPG	Group management and strengthening topics	119	56	63
NFPG	Strengthening roles and responsibilities of CF Management Committees through training	119	82	37
NFPG	Inauguration of Federation of Cashew Farmers Associations of The Gambia	10 500	8 500	2 000
National Environment Agency (NEA)	2 regional awareness raising meeting on ANR Policy in CRR and URR	60	53	7
NEA	Capacity strengthening programme for ANR Working Group & Platform (ANR WG) on strategic planning, programming and participatory M&E	37	28	9
NEA	ANR WG and Platform meeting review FFF 2015 and identification of priorities 2016	56	43	13
All Gambia Forestry Platform (AGFP)	MA&D Phase 1&2 training in Kartong and Tuman Tenda villages	24	16	8
AGFP	Affiliated 9 CFCs formalized	5 515	2 506	3 009
AGFP	1 Agroforestry Food processors group	43	6	37
NACO	Training on commercial salt production for CFMCs	40	16	24
FFF small grants beneficiary groups				
Aquaculture Fish Farmers	Training on Business Planning for members	20	14	16
REFESSA	Training on food processing for young women	15	0	15
Japanteh Society	Training on rapid compost making for vegetable growers	25	11	14
Bureng Adult Literacy	CF Management Planning for Folonko CF	15	9	6
Rural development organization	Commercial tree nursery training	30	16	14
TOTALS		46 766	28 961	17 805

Pillar 1, “Strengthen smallholder, women, community and indigenous peoples’ producer organizations for business/livelihoods and policy engagement”

With regard to progress to Outcome 1, “Strengthened producer organizations engage in policy dialogue”, FFF programme in Gambia is on track in supporting grassroots FFPOs and their Apex structures to organize for policy dialogue and engagement. FFF is effective in supporting FFPOs to engage in policy dialogue. Table 2 summarizes the progress made in influencing the forest and farm related policy processes. As a basis to analyze this progress, the MTE distinguished 4 levels for assessing policy influence (adapted from Keck and Sikkink, 1998⁶), as follows:

- i) Getting issues on political agenda
- ii) Encouraging discursive commitment from government
- iii) Securing procedural change at national level
- iv) Influencing behavioral change in key actors.

Getting issues on political agenda. Under Output 1.1, “Dispersed local producers are organized into effective and gender inclusive groups”, FFF’s approach of targeting smallholders through FFPOs as the vehicle to transfer knowledge and skills for getting organized has led to increased awareness of the many advantages of working together. The farmers’ apex organizations play an increasing role in getting issues regarding smallholders concerns on political agendas.

With regard to Output 1.2, “Producer groups work together with government and private sector to improve policy”, the MTE noted that there is a strong interaction between farmers apex organizations, those of FFPOs included, and the government on policy improvement discussions. For example, FFF played a broker role in facilitating dialogue between FFPOs representatives, Minister responsible of Forestry and Parliamentarians.

Encouraging discursive commitment from government. FFF country programme organized training of FFPOs in “law literacy” to influence behavioral change, so that with the information on existing laws and regulations of interest to their activities, they can engage with the Government and parliamentarians on issues related to their interests as far as access to and use of forest resources are concerned. FFF also facilitated a multi-actor dialogue to revive the country’s community forestry programme and to discuss forest tenure transfers to local communities. Because of this effort, there is a favorable discursive commitment of government authorities, which led to profound change as far as forest tenure is concerned. In 2015, the Government transferred 77 community forest areas covering 5,335 hectares to local communities across the country. This transfer had an overwhelming effect on the prospects of rural development in the country, in general, and on the structuring of FFPOs in particular. This is arguably one of the noteworthy successes of FFF advocacy effort in the country.

Securing procedural change at national level and influencing behavioral change in key actors. The FFF country programme played a broker role that led the Government to open spaces were allowing apex FFPOs to participate in inter-institutional policy platforms and working groups.

Influencing behavioral change in key actors. The FFF country programme influenced the decision-makers to enforce the Forest Act (in relation to transfer of forest ownership to communities) and the implementation of the Natural Resource and agricultural Policy.

6 Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998). *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press.

Table 2: Progress made by Gambia FFF in influencing forest and farm related policies (Pillar 1 & 2)

Results levels	Examples of results obtained with FFF support
Getting issues on political agenda	The ANR Working Group and Platform engaged with FFPOs on many issues, including those relevant to the Rio conventions and on the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.
Encouraging discursive commitment from state	There is a particular influence of the work of FFF on the government policy discourses at national and sub-national levels as far as rural development strategies are concerned.
Securing procedural change at national level	Spaces were opened to allow Apex FFPOs organizations to participate in inter-institutional policy platforms and working groups.
Influencing behavioral change in key actors	FFF influenced the decision-makers to enforce the Forest Act (in relation to transfer of forest ownership to communities) and the implementation of the Natural Resource and agricultural Policy.

With regard to Outcome 2, “Local communities and producers are organized and thereby have the capacity to invest in sustainable forest and farm management and integrate into the market”, the FFF Gambia programme is achieving progress in strengthening producer organizations’ capacity to engage in business. Through Output 2.1 “Local forest and farms organizations have knowledge about business development”, Outcome 2 is the key focus of FFF in the country as far as meeting grassroots priority support needs is concerned. The trainings organized by the programme have focused on the knowledge that smallholder farmers need to add value to their productions and to link to markets.

Poor forests and Farms producers often struggle to gain market integration because they lack knowledge of market requirements or the skills to meet those requirements. Furthermore, weak or lack of access to information, together with other obstacles in value chains prevent FFPOs from getting the benefits that entering into national and global markets can offer. The existing Value Chain Development experiences achieved by the target FFPOs through MA&D trainings are essential to deepen the integration of smallholder farmers into the market.

For these reasons, the MTE put the analysis of VCD progress made by the FFF country programme at the heart of the assessment of Outcome 2. To this end, the MTE analyzed progress made by FFF in supporting interventions aimed at improving forest and farm based value chain governance as well as the upgrading trajectories followed by FFPOs.

Emerging experience in value chain governance. In the country visit, the MTE mission found interesting emerging experiences in value chain governance in Gambia. The FFF programme played a key advocacy role in the Government’s decision on the transfer of forest tenure to local communities, in implementation of its policy and enforcement of its Forest Act. As a result, local communities countrywide can clearly improve the use of management of the forest resources, and participate profitably in the forest-based value chains development processes. An MA&D training conducted in 2015 led to the identification of six main value chains for forest and farm producers in The Gambia: ecotourism, handicraft making, beekeeping, nursery production, timber production, and firewood production. These are the focus of FFF, although support is also given to other value chains such as cashew, horticulture, food processing and aquaculture.

FFF is also generating encouraging experience in the area of application of laws and regulations in the country. At the national level, FFF supported the Federation of Gambia Cashew Farmers Associations (which has 15 000 members from eight associations) which successfully lobbied the government to reduce the informal cross-border trade of cashew, which was affecting both the quality and prices. The Farmers also got a quintupling of cashew price which passed from 13 Dalasi to 65 dalasi per kilogram.

With regard to experiences in facilitating negotiation between FFPOs and downstream value chain operators, FFF facilitated the convening of contact and collaboration fairs for producers and other actors on the product value chains. This initiative has proven effective in stimulating dialogue and forging alliances among FFPOs and other actors.

Emerging experience in value chain upgrading. The MTE found that FFF implicitly supports value chains upgrading through the activities aimed at value addition. It identified the following upgrading trajectories: products upgrading⁷, process upgrading⁸, functional upgrading⁹ and inter-chain (or inter-sector) upgrading¹⁰. Table 3 presents examples of emerging experiences that target FFPOs have achieved in value chain upgrading with the FFF support.

Product upgrading. There are interesting results in product upgrading in the country. The country programme support implicitly enhances products upgrading activities that raise the forest and farm producers' awareness on the standards and quality that attract consumers. Products upgrading goes hand in hand with process upgrading because improving product quality often involves improving production processes. With products upgrading through packaging of processed products and process upgrading, FFF is transforming forest and farm economics in target communities. New livelihoods opportunities are created for the beneficiaries and smallholders are helped to build up technological skills and are stimulated to participate in value chains and engage in business. Favorable factors influencing product upgrading include a good link of the chains to national markets.

Examples of successful cases include: Pakalinding Women Food Processors and Nyangen Women Group Processors (packaging and hygiene standards), many honey processing organizations (packaging), Aquaculture Fish Farmers Association (smoking and salting fish), FFPOs producing nursery seedlings (use of improved seeds).

Functional upgrading. With regard to functional upgrading, the FFPOs which get FFF support for value addition through processing of their productions are also involved in marketing activities.

Table 3: Gambia FFF-supported FFPOs' Emerging experiences in value chain upgrading strategies

Type of upgrading	Example of FFPOs supported by FFF
Product upgrading	Pakalinding Women Food Processors and Nyangen Women Group Processors: packaging and hygiene standards Many honey processing organizations: packaging Aquaculture Fish Farmers Association: smoking and salting fish FFPOs producing nursery seedlings: use of improved seeds.
Functional upgrading	Many FFPOs which process their productions are also involved in marketing activities.
Inter-chain upgrading	Tumani Tenda Ecotourism Camp: produces and packages honey, and collects oyster, and has developed an important eco-tourism activity.

Inter-chain upgrading. The FFPO Tumani Tenda Ecotourism Camp produces and packages honey, collects oyster, and has developed an important eco-tourism activity.

FFF experiences in helping FFPOs to know business and access markets. With the training activities targeting FFPOs' members, FFF country programme has been effective in the implementation of Output 2.1. The application of the acquired knowledge has further motivated the beneficiaries to orient their production systems to commercialization. In Table 4, the MTE summarizes FFF experiences in The Gambia to date in helping FFPOs to know business and access to markets. From the information available, five main business models have been identified as fit for FFF-targeted groups: (i) Farm gate, roadside, or local market place driven; (ii) Trader-driven; (iii) Buyer company-driven; (iv) FFPOs-driven; (v) Public institution procurement driven.

7 Products upgrading: where a chain actor engages in the production of more sophisticated products in order to increase unit value.

8 Process upgrading: where a chain actor increases the efficiency of internal processes (production, new technologies, storages, distribution, logistics).

9 Functional upgrading: where a chain actor changes the mix of functions performed by producer organizations, by working in more than one node of a value chain.

10 Inter-chain upgrading: where a chain actor introduces value-adding processes from other chains to offer new products or services.

Table 4 shows that all the five business models are practiced in Gambia, which illustrated not only a good integration of forests and farm activities, but also the diversity of sources of livelihoods supported by FFF in that country. It also reflects the challenge that FFF faces in providing trainings for business skills that are adapted to the requirements of each business model.

One of the business models with which FFF is having interesting results is the FFPO-driven model. Based on field observations, this model is most likely to give higher and more sustainable benefits to FFPOs and their members. It reflects not only higher internal organization (like with Tumani Tenda Ecotourism Camp), but also entrepreneurship skills. Buyer company-driven model and public institution driven model are interesting because they provide incentives to FFPOs to maximize their production efficiency and reliability as far as product quality and respect of standards are concerned.

Access to finance is considered by many FFPOs visited by the MTE missions as an important barrier as far as strengthening their business development is concerned. They consider that without bank loans they cannot buy the equipment and material that processing activities require. FFF has not yet developed approaches to address this problem.

FFF country programme further strengthened FFPOs' capacity to know business and access to markets through Output 2.2 and Output 2.3. Under Output 2.2, "Establishment of services in support of small forest business", FFF programme has been effective in establishing services to support small forest and farm based business. This has been done for example by getting the government services involved in training and advising FFPO committee members in seedling production.

Table 4: Main business models driving Gambia FFF supported FFPOs' business

Type of business model	Examples of FFF targeted FFPOs
Farm gate, roadside, local market place	Pakalinding Women Food Processors sell products processed from NTFPs (mango juice and jam, Hibiscus and tamarind juice, pepper sauce) partly at roadside; Nyangen Women Group processors who add value to horticultural products.
Trader-driven	Jassobo Community Forest Women Salt Producer; Pakalinding Women Food Processors sell processed food products (pepper sauce and tamarind juice) in bulk to Senegalese traders.
Buyer company-driven	Cashew producers associations sell to buyer companies; Tumani Tenda Ecotourism Camp sell processed honey.
FFPOs-driven	Tumani Tenda Ecotourism Camp sells its services and honey to tourists.
Public institution procurement driven	Aquaculture Fish Farmers Association has contracts to sell fish to Boarding Schools, Army Barracks, Prison, Hospital, in addition to local market.

Under Output 2.3, "Experience sharing between producer organizations in-country". In Gambia, FFF programme has had considerable success in organizing sharing of experience between producer organizations namely through workshops.

Pillar 2: "Catalyze multi-sectoral stakeholder policy platforms with governments and at local and national levels"

With regard to Outcome 3, "Cross-sectoral coordination (...) for sustainable forest and farm management operating at national and sub-national levels", the FFF Gambia programme has made considerable progress in brokering the establishment of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder policy platforms. The MTE noted that farmers' apex organizations are represented in cross-sectoral coordination for policy formation or law formulation processes.

With regard to Output 3.1, "Establishment and coordination of multi-sectoral policy platforms", the government has established a quasi-formal multi-sectoral policy formation mechanism in the

form of a Natural Resource Working Group, co-chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment.

Influencing through official cross-sectoral coordination, on a permanent basis. The broker role played by FFF country programme has allowed FFPOs to be represented in cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms on a permanent basis. Thus they have strengthened their voice and are able to influence policy formation and decision-making processes. The MTE mission observed that in general FFF activities are politically smart, and FFF facilitation was able to influence the Government to bring key private sector and civil society actors, as well as representatives of farmer apex organizations to participate as members of the Natural Resource Working Group, which is a multi-sectoral platform for policy discussion. This platform is fostering the voice of farmer organizations in policy processes, and has been recognized by development actors in the country as an innovative effort. The MTE Mission had an opportunity to participate in a meeting of this Working Group and found it quite effective in making heard the voice of participating sectors and groups.

Pillar 3 “Link local voices and learning to global processes through communication and information dissemination”

With regard to Outcome 4, “National and global agendas and initiatives (...) are informed about knowledge and priorities of smallholders, women, communities and indigenous peoples”, FFF country programme has made good progress on national, regional and global levels. For Outcome 4, FFF delivers at national, regional and global levels. The MTE found that FFF made very good progress at all these levels. At national level, all relevant fora are used to make smallholders priorities known. At regional and global levels, FFF supported farmers’ organization representation in the Africa Farm/Family Forest Producers Organizations Conference that was held in Nairobi 9-11 of June 2015, to prepare African FFPOs representation in the XIV World Forestry Congress.¹¹ FFF also supports the representation of Gambian farmers’ organizations in the Network of West Africa Peasant and Agricultural Producers’ Organizations (ROPFA).

Evaluation question 5: To what extent is the current operational modality contributing to the efficient achievement of the program outcomes?

The MTE also found that FFF country programme management structure is appropriate and provides the necessary expertise required to keep the programme activities on track as far as the planned outputs and outcomes are concerned. The work of the programme Facilitation is highly appreciated by target FFPOs and FFF program partners at national, and subnational and community levels.

To strengthen the efficiency in achieving program outcomes, the program Facilitation has adequately mobilized support to FFPOs by subnational state services of the agricultural and environment departments in particular.

The operational FFF modality is one of the factors for its efficiency. FFF country program can be regarded as being highly efficient in terms of inputs relative to results if account is taken of the relatively limited financial resources invested and duration of implementation so far. Its main delivery mechanisms which include small grants to FFPOs, communications, training and workshops and contact and collaboration fairs are appreciated by target FFPOs and partners at all levels.

Evaluation question 6: What is the likelihood that FFF will contribute to the expected impact?

There is a strong likelihood of reaching the Impact of the Project and contributing to its Vision. Full project impact is normally reached some time or many years after completion of its activities. At this stage, the MTE can only assess the likelihood for reaching that Impact and for contributing to the Vision which is “Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples’ organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes”.

¹¹ The conference outcomes were captured in “Resolution of the Africa Farm/Family Forest Producers Organizations Conference Nairobi 9-11 of June 2015 - An initiative of the International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA)”.

The likelihood of FFF rural poverty impact can be assessed by looking at the main livelihoods “building blocks” as follows:

Human capital. The strongest FFF results are in the fundamental domain of human capital development, in which there are considerable achievements in enhancing the stock of skills in FFPOs members (organizational, managerial, technological, MA&D). The smallholders that the MTE mission met were unanimous in their appreciation of the contribution of training to their performance in production, processing and marketing activities. The MTE also observed many cases at grassroots level of positive effect on the quality of life of women who participated in trainings.

Social capital. The most significant contribution of FFF to this domain has come from the support to FFPOs organizational capacity. Its interventions are increasing the stock of trust that FFPOs members have in the governance of their organizations, and strengthening solidarity in communities. Smallholders are being empowered through raised awareness on the benefits of working together. The FFPOs and their governing committees are effectively contributing to a sense of local ownership of FFF’s results by their members.

Political capital. FFF supported the enhancement of the political capital of its target FFPOs through a diversity of trainings. As a result, FFPO leaders and leaders of their Apex organizations are in regular interaction with state services at national and subnational levels, and with members of parliament on matters relating to forest and farm management. Apex organizations take part in policy-making processes and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms and raise issues for discussion through these mechanisms.

Natural assets. FFF’s main focus at the local level is advocacy role in the Government’s decision on the transfer of forest tenure to local communities, and support to sustainable management and use of these resources. With this transfer, communities’ natural assets have expanded, and as a result, local communities countrywide can clearly improve the use of management of the forest resources, and participate profitably in the forest-based value chains development processes.

Physical assets. In general, FFF grants to FFPOs do not cover investment in physical capital. There is therefore likelihood that FFF will have limited impact on FFPOs physical assets.

Financial assets. Due to limited data available, it is not possible to assess the full extent to which FFF is affecting financial assets of households of FFPOs members. From the interviews with FFPOs representatives, the MTE mission found that production and value addition activities supported by FFF grants are positively affecting household income. Working together has allowed men and women to adopt the practice of growing off-season crops by means of small-scale irrigation, which gives them a possibility of getting all year round income, and boosts community resilience. Increased incomes are allowing them to improve home equipment and pay school fees for their children. Women of the horticulture FFPO told the MTE mission that revenue from sales has substantially contributed to household asset accumulation for members. In many poor rural communities, this has strengthened the resilience of the communities in which these FFPOs are based.

Evaluation question 7: Is FFF having success in engaging other partners in the FFF supported processes?

Partnerships have featured prominently in FFF country interventions. They have mainly involved government services at subnational levels in facilitating forest tenure transfer and resolving related conflicts, and NGOs for training FFPOs members. FAO and IIED partnership has also played a key role in coaching the use of M&LS and contextualizing certain indicators to the country’s specificities.

Evaluation question 8: How sustainable is the FFF concept of investing in the organizational capacity of forest farm producer organizations – and how might this be enhanced?

Sustainability is the likelihood of the programme benefits to be delivered for an extended period after its completion. The MTE found that the high political and social ownership of FFF model in the country is a powerful factor of sustainability. The government and its agencies at national and subnational levels have integrated the FFF model (or Triple F under which it is known in the

country) in their rural development discourse, and are sparing no effort to ensure its success. The MTE also found that target FFPOs have been the main advocates of the model, and the steadily increasing social and economic benefits of their members contribute to the likelihood of sustainability of the FFF concept.

Another equally important factor of sustainability is the success of the training activities targeting smallholders through their FFPOs. These activities are transforming farms into businesses and motivating them to move further in commercialization activities.

However, the MTE found that the provision of grants without defined counterpart FFPOs contribution to invest in their project may in certain situations generate an unintended effect of dependency, albeit temporary. Although small grant agreements LoAs have sections on cash or in-kind contributions by the service providers, sustainability may be enhanced if FFPOs in receipt of FFF grants contribute matching funds to their project budgets, either from their own resources, from other partners, or loans from micro-finance institutions.

Crosscutting issues

Evaluation question 9: To what extent have gender and human rights been taken into account in the design of the FFF and during the implementation?

In the context of the country programme, the main cross-cutting issue is gender. The programme supports efforts to address gender equality and empowerment in FFPOs' governance and activities. Gender equality awareness among women and men in target organizations has improved, and trainings supported by FFF have enhanced the capacity of female members of the FFPOs governance committees, and technology skills of female members of those organizations. Women are well represented in the membership and governance structures of targeted FFPOs. There is also an effort to mainstream gender issues in the design of proposals submitted by those organizations to FFF for funding.

The MTE noted FFF's effort in supporting the development of women's leadership skills. In most FFPOs visited in the country, the MTE mission found women are more enthusiastic in their organizations' activities than are men. This enthusiasm is particularly strong in horticulture and NTFPs processing activities.

Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are formulated in the overall MTE report.

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People met

National Environment Agency (NEA)

- 1 Omar Ceesay, Programme Officer/Agriculture and Natural Resource, Secretary to the ANR WG & Platform
- 2 Sheikh Alkinky Sanyang, Assistant Programme Officer/Environmental Education and Communication
- 3 Ajie Binta Jagne Kinteh, Senior Programme Officer/Environmental Education and Communication
- 4 Lamin Komma, Senior Programme Officer, Coastal and Marine Environment, NEA.

National Environment Agency, Natural Resource Working Group meeting for the FFF MTE Mission, 10 March 2016: participants

- 5 Abdoulie Danso, Min. Fish.
- 6 Basadi Gassama, SWMS
- 7 Alkali Javjusey, NACO
- 8 Omar Ceesay,
- 9 Mariama A. Jallow, DCD
- 10 Musa F. Sowe, NaYAFS
- 11 Alh. Ebrina Beyai, Rice farmers
- 12 Bubakary Kinteh, DPWM
- 13 Abubacar Krubally, AGFP
- 14 Lamin Bojang, GTBOARD
- 15 Edrissa Ceesay, GBOS
- 16 Bambandag Kanyi Department of Fisheries
- 17 NgaNsa Touray, FAO
- 18 Amadou Badge, NEA
- 19 Alagie Manyang, Ministry of Environment
- 20 Isatou Yarboe, Ministry of Agriculture
- 21 Sheikh Alkinky, NEA
- 22 Jalamang Camara, NARI
- 23 Bakary KS Sanyang, PSU/DOA
- 24 Saikou Jagne, DPPA
- 25 Anna Mbenga, DOF
- 26 Alhajie Basse Mboge, Farmers Platform
- 27 Lamin Komma, NEA
- 28 Jainaba Badjie, Farmers Platform
- 29 Chermo Gaye., Forestry
- 30 Salmina E. jobe, GCCA

- 31 Mambabou Sowe, TANGO
- 32 Malang Jatte, OP
- 33 Mbassi Sanneh, NDMA
- 34 M. Sock, NEA
- 35 Michelle Njie, NEA.

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- 37 M. Pateh Gayigo, Farmer, small ruminants
- 38 M. Ebrina Camara, Coordinator, AGFP
- 39 M. Muhamadou B. Drammeh, Executive Director, Tumana Association for Development (TAD)
- 40 Ms. Gass Ceesay, Regional President, Farmers Platform
- 41 M. Kausu Conteh, Programme Officer, AFET
- 42 M. Ebriama Biyai, National Treasurer, Farmers Platform
- 43 M. Seku Janko, President, KOMFFORA
- 44 M. Ebrima Jarjou, Secretary, Cashew Federation
- 45 Ms. Mai Sonko, Vice President, Farmers Platform
- 46 Ms. Isatou Sanneh, Regional Women Representative L.R.R., Farmers Platform
- 47 M. Alhajie Basse Mboge, President, Farmers Platform
- 48 Ms. Sima Sonka, Vice President, National Farmers
- 49 M. Wandu Keita, NFP Agric Focal Point
- 50 Ms. Bakoto Mboge, President, WVFFP
- 51 M. Ebrima O. Jallow, President, NLOA
- 52 M. Demba Sanyang, Regional Coordinator, NACO
- 53 M. Haruna Nyass, NFPG Assistant Program Officer
- 54 Abubacar Kubally, President All Gambia Forestry Platform
- 55 Ms. Aja Mai Bojang, Brufut NFPG Regional
- 56 Ms. Jainaba Badjie, RFAG, Women Leader.

Governorate, Lower River

- 57 Abdou Njai, Deputy Governor, Office of the Governor
- 58 Lamin Sawaneh, Regional Forestry Officer, Department of Forestry
- 59 Sillah Manneh, National Farmers Platform
- 60 Alhagy Jatta, Department of Community Development
- 61 Ansumana Njie, Department of Agriculture

Local Government Authority

- 62 Demba Sanyang Head District Chief, Kiang West District

3. Guatemala country case report

Context of the Guatemala FFF programme

The Republic of Guatemala has an area of 108.889 Km². The country's forests cover 3,722,595 ha (34.2% of its total area), of which 50% is located in the North, specifically in the Department of Petén. About 51.0% of the national population is rural and the population that identifies itself as indigenous constitutes 40%. The illiteracy rate is about 16.6%.

Guatemala started its national forest program in 1989 under the name "Forest Action Plan for Guatemala". The country cooperated with FAO in the forest sector under two mechanisms: NFP Facility (2003-09) and Global Forest Partnership (2009-13). These mechanisms have supported the implementation of the national forestry Agenda, of which the National Institute of Forests (INAB) is the focal point. The Forest and Farm Facility began operations in March 2013, with a budget of USD 500'000. It identified two key actors to implement its activities: INAB Institute national of forests of Guatemala, INAB and the National Alliance of Forest Communities and Agroforesters (Alianza). It signed agreements with these two actors with the aim of getting their commitment to promote the visibility and positioning of the forest sector agenda in Government policy agendas.

FFF's beneficiaries in Guatemala are the following:

- 11 second-level organizations (with about 77,000 members managing about 750,000 ha forest) which are members of *Alianza Nacional de Organizaciones Forestales Comunitarias*
- Cross-sectoral Coordination Group: MARN, MAGA, INAB, CONAP
- Technical Committee to support the design and advocacy for the Probosque Law
- INAB / PFN
- Cross-sectoral dialogue platform on energy (Firewood, Forest and Food Security , Forest and Economy)
- 20 Micro, small and medium forest community enterprises forestales comunitarias
- 2 producer's chains (South Petén, Las Verapaces).

With the implementation of the activities aimed at supporting Alianza, it was able to participate in the discussions that led to the adoption of the country's Forest law, PROBOSQUE. Thus Alianza got linked to policy processes on forest related issues through the Inter-Institutional Coordination Group (GCI), composed of the Ministry of agriculture, livestock and food (MAGA), the Ministry of environment and natural resources (MARN), National Forest Service (INAB), and the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP). Alianza links in particular to the cross-sectoral platforms on change climate, indigenous people and climate change, REDD+, and forest landscape restoration.

The reconstructed Theory of Change

FFF developed a generic ToC that links development results at FFPOs level (organization capacity, access to technologies, access to markets) with voice and participation in policy processes at national and global levels, in order to achieve the intended Impact. The strategies to achieve the Impact are arranged under three Pillars, 4 Outcomes and 7 Outputs as presented in Figure 2. The MTE found that on this basis, the internal logic of the project is largely sound between the Outputs and Outcomes level. However, a close analysis shows that it does not express the conditions that should be in place to allow development results to reach impact. The ToC lacks important building blocks in terms of Assumptions and Impact Drivers¹², between Outcomes level and Impacts level.

¹² Distinct from assumptions, impact drivers are factors that project/programme management can influence to a certain extent.



Figure 2: Guatemala FFF results framework

It should be recalled that it is between the levels of Outcomes and Impacts that the design should express the main changes that are expected to take place as “Intermediate States (IS)”, as the stepping-stones to Impacts in the respective pathways. It is therefore important to indicate explicitly in the ToC what are the required assumptions allowing Outcomes to lead to intermediate results (IR), and from there to planned impacts. The MTE reconstructed the ToC based on the original one in order to include the missing building blocks (Assumptions and Impact Drivers); this provides a framework that more clearly articulates the conditions that are required to reach the expected impact. The reconstructed ToC does not modify the Outputs, Outcomes, Impact and Vision. Rather it places them together with Intermediate Results (the current Pillars), Assumptions and Impact Drivers into a graphic representation of the FFF.

The different FFF ToC building blocks are illustrated as shown in Figure 3. The original ToC blocks are illustrated in green color and connecting black arrows, and are unchanged.

Dashed black arrows are added to show the actual connectedness from the Project implementation experience to date. Other colors indicate the blocks that are missing in the original ToC: blue for the Assumptions, and dark orange for Impact Drivers.

Based on information on FFF implementation in Guatemala, the reconstructed ToC (Figure 3) shows that to reach the FFF Impact, three Intermediary States (IS) that correspond to the 3 Pillars must be achieved; these are:

- i) IS-1: FFPOs capacity for doing business is enhanced and they engage in policy decision;
- ii) IS-2: Multi-sectoral stakeholders policy platforms are catalyzed;
- iii) IS-3: Local voices are linked to global processes.

To achieve IS-1, The MTE found that the following conditions must be met:

A: Authorities at all levels create enabling conditions for FFF strengthening

A: Partnerships with Banks extend loans to FFPOs.

ID: FFPOs access to national & export markets improved through VCD.

To achieve IS-2, the MTE also found that the following conditions must be met:

A: Authorities at all levels create enabling conditions for FFPOs strengthening

ID: Lessons and best practices from FFF allow sharing experiences.

To achieve IS-3, the following conditions must be met:

A/ID: Avenues for exchange at regional and global levels are offered

ID: Lessons and best practices from FFF allow sharing experiences

The Vision is stated as “Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples’ organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes» is wider than the context of Guatemala. This is why the MTE added a plain black arrow linking the Intermediary State “Local voices are linked to global processes” to the Vision, while the arrow link to Impact is dashed.

Evaluation questions: key findings

This section presents the findings which are based on the desk review of the FFF documents, interviews with FFF Team, in-country field visits and interviews with target FFPOs at grassroots level.

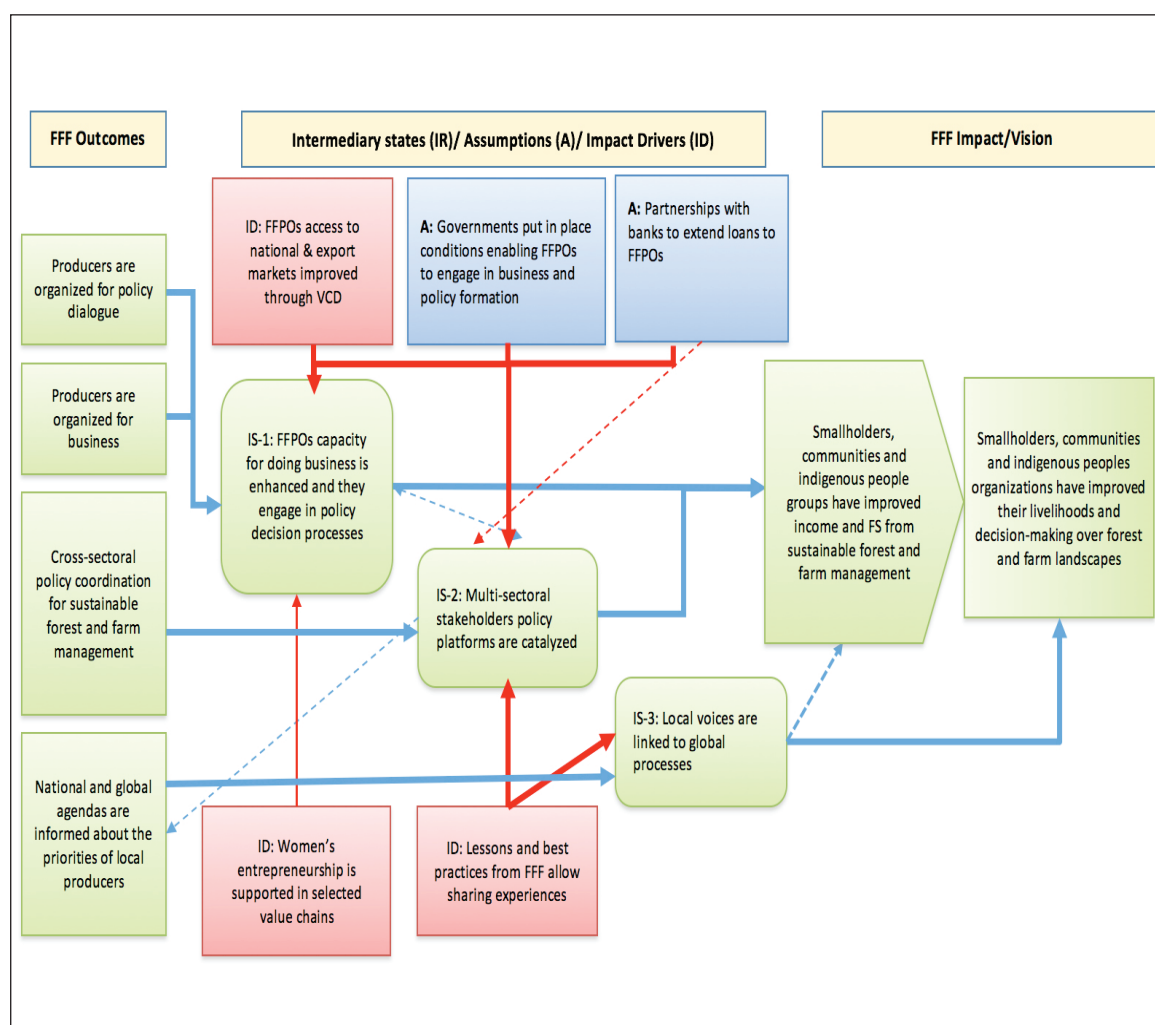


Figure 3: Reconstructed Guatemala FFF Theory of Change

Evaluation question 1: How relevant is FFF primary focus and logic in terms of its stated mission, in relation to the target countries' contexts, to broader sustainable development initiatives, and to smallholder farmers' needs?

The FFF approach of supporting producer organizations for business and policy engagement as an effective strategy for achieving the improvement of their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes is relevant to Guatemala's national policies. The Government welcomed FFF support to its effort in coordinating multi-stakeholder and cross-sector dialogue in forests related agendas, and in the agendas of close sectors such as agriculture, economy, energy, food security, biodiversity and water.

Evaluation question 2: Consistency with FAO's strategic objectives: How and to what extent does the project contribute to the broader FAO strategic objectives?

The project is particularly aligned with FAO's Strategic Objective 3 (SO3), "Reduce rural poverty", to which it strongly contributes. Under SO3, FAO recognizes that rural poverty is mostly concentrated among households of small-scale subsistence producers and family farmers, among others. It further recognizes that women are often amongst the most marginalized and need strengthened rights to the natural resources on which they depend. Like SO3, its focus target groups are also poor smallholders' farmers whose livelihoods are tied to small forests and farm assets.

Under SO3, FAO's focus is on a holistic approach to rural development and poverty reduction. Likewise, FFF in Guatemala emphasizes integrated approaches in which forests and other farm components are considered functionally interdependent components of the same rural landscapes that must be sustainably managed and used to improve the livelihoods of their users. FFF also focuses on opportunities that strengthen linkages between forests and crops and animal for sustainability reasons. In this regard, FFPOs met in the country told the MTE Team that they consider trees on their farms as crops like any other crop.

More specifically, the FFF is aligned to FAO's corporate outcome 3.1: "The rural poor have enhanced and equitable access to productive resources, services, organizations and markets, and can manage their resources more sustainably". The output under this outcome to which FFF is contributing most is Output 3.1.1: Support to strengthen rural organizations and institutions and facilitate empowerment of rural poor. The FFF objectives under pillars 1 and 2 are closely in line with those of SO3. As such, FFF activities may certainly count towards the indicator for output 3.1.1: "Number of countries in which support was provided to create an enabling environment for rural organizations and institutions as well as the empowerment of the rural poor."

At the heart of FFF consistency with FAO's SO3 are principally FFF's Outcomes 1 and 2. Outcome 1 is instrumental in enabling poor rural smallholder farmers to get organized and be able to engage in policy dialogue on forest and farm resource management and use related issues. Outcome 2 is instrumental in enhancing the capacity of the same target groups to invest in forest and farm management to participate in value chains and integrate into the markets.

Evaluation question 3: Was the project design appropriate for achieving the Outcomes and the Vision?

The appropriateness of the Project's design for achieving its Outcomes and Vision is unquestionable. With respect to the appropriateness of FFF's design for achieving the Vision and expected Outcomes, the main strength of the model resides in its having a wide scope for addressing smallholder farmers' challenges, being demand-driven, and supporting with direct grants the proposals submitted by FFPOs for funding. While the ultimate goal is ensuring sustainable management and use of forest and farm landscapes, FFF's niche is in strengthening FFPOs directly, complementing other approaches with focus on rights, legality, payments for environmental services including REDD+ and technical capacity for sustainable forest management. It supports a range of advocacy and policy activities of these organizations, including Indigenous peoples.

The MTE finds that the model further proved to be appropriate in terms of providing concrete grassroots level results that, as will be shown later, offer lessons and good practices for future FFF

action and upscaling in participating countries. In terms of methodology (concept, implementation, M&LS) the Model is replicable, in participating and other countries as well. Of course, FFF's ToC robustness must be strengthened and flexible in order to allow taking adequately into account the diversity of rural situations and political economy contexts of participating countries.

While the FFF Model is largely appropriate, it was found that the Project document and the M&LS make no mention of value chain development¹³ (VCD) approach. This gap is corrected by the fact that the Project built its support around the MA&D trainings which target value chain actions in five separate spheres of interventions: (i) natural resource access, (ii) institutional, legal, (iii) market chains/finance, (iv) social/cultural issues, and (v) technology, research and development. The Model is therefore further strengthened by the degree to which FFF puts the support to FFPOs for their participation in value chains at the core of its work. However, beyond supporting FFPOs to engage with markets, the question is also how to further support enable them in improving the terms of engagement with national, regional and international markets. With the rich experiences that the Project is generating in many countries as the findings of this MTE will show, the VCD will need to be further deepened in this direction in the future.

Evaluation question 4: To what extent is the FFF on track to achieving outcomes across the three pillars and what changes can be observed that are attributable to the FFF's interventions and are directly linked to the FFF's main objectives?

Pillar 1, "Strengthen smallholder, women, community and indigenous peoples' producer organizations for business/livelihoods and policy engagement"

With regarding to progress to Outcome 1, "Strengthened producer organizations engage in policy dialogue", FFF is on track in supporting grassroots FFPOs and their Apex structures to organize for policy dialogue and engagement. FFF is effective in supporting FFPOs to engage in policy dialogue. As a result, the FFPOs performed well in: (i) getting issues on political agenda; (ii) securing procedural change at national level, and (iii) affecting policy content.

Getting issues on political agenda. Under Output 1.1, "Dispersed local producers are organized into effective and gender inclusive groups", FFF's approach of targeting smallholders through FFPOs as the vehicle to transfer knowledge and skills for getting organized has led to increased awareness of the many advantages of working together to engage in policy dialogue. The targeted FFPOs and their apex organizations have played a key role in getting their members' concerns on political agendas. Alianza has developed an agenda for policy advocacy, and this agenda was built on the consensus of its membership. Each member organization brought to the table its main concerns, identified topics of interest and together the organizations prioritized these concerns in order of importance. Alianza's political agenda prioritized issues according to the following topics of interest: implementation of forestry programs (PINFOR and PINPEP), approval of Probosque Law, protection of mangroves, expansion of community rights (extension of Petén forest concessions contracts), land tenure, agrarian debt, revision of environment, social and economic laws or regulations, FLEGT, REDD+, climate change, OCRET and forest landscape restoration Act.

Securing procedural change at national level and influencing behavioral change in key actors. FFF was very successful in facilitating the Forest Law (PROBOSQUE) process and in supporting the FFPOs to influence the outcome of the forest law formulation process. PROBOSQUE provides incentives for forest and landscape restoration to smallholders, indigenous peoples, community forests and the private sector.

Affecting policy content. FFF supported Alianza's participation in the drafting of the country's Forest Law. Its interventions, together with other initiatives for strengthening of *Alianza nacional de organizaciones forestales comunitarias* (ANFOC), have enabled the representation of FFPOs public policy processes which will impact on the country's rural development and sustainability of the forest resource. As mentioned above, the example of such participation is the process leading to the adoption of the forest law PROBOSQUE. Alianza was involved in the dialogue at all stages,

¹³ Value chain development (VCD) is understood as a concerted effort to improve the conditions in the value chain. For FFPOs, VCD implies the improvement of their participation in value chains, enhancement of the benefits they get, and reducing the exposure to risks. Benefits and risks should be understood not only in financial terms but also in relation to the environment, livelihoods improvement and gender equity.

it generated proposals, and continues to monitor and promote results that benefit its member organizations. The Alianza proposed 6 amendments of which 4 were accepted. It has been and remains active in cross-sectoral platforms on climate change, REDD+, and forest landscape restoration issues. With this involvement, Alianza has become a source of policy proposals and is well positioned to make pressure on policy issues relating to the forest sector.

To strengthen its positioning and fulfil duties policy processes, Alianza has developed a communication strategy that defines important aspects to focus on for managing and disseminating information and knowledge generated from member organizations. It implements a communication plan that includes mechanisms to generate contacts with media and to position Alianza as a generator of information of interest in the forestry sector.

Table 5: Progress made by Guatemala FFF in supporting FFPOs to influence forest and farm related policies

Results levels	Examples of results obtained with FFF support
Getting issues on political agenda	FFF supports 3 multi-sectoral platforms at national level (GCI; the Firewood and Energy Platform, and Probosque Committee) and , and 1 regional level in the Petén (MITA).
Securing procedural change at national level	Spaces were opened to allow Apex FFPOs organizations to participate in inter-institutional policy platforms and working groups.
Affecting policy content	The Alianza OFC Guatemala participated in the process for elaboration of the forest law “PROBOSQUE” and submitted 6 amendments. The law was adopted in September 2015; It also influenced the National Congress and the Government to allocate budget to PINPEP.

An other important activity carried out by Alianza’s in the policy content area is to influence Government’s allocation of budget the PINPEP (programme of incentives for small owners of forest lands) and PINFOR (programme of incentives for property owner of forest lands). The advocacy effort and political pressure on the Congress of the Republic, government ministries, in particular the Ministry of public finance to make the allocation of resources to the PINPEP, allowed the allocation of Q.220 million (around 29 million USD) for the fiscal period 2014 and Q.220 million (around 29 million USD) for the fiscal period of 2015.

With regard to Outcome 2, “Local communities and producers are organized and thereby have the capacity to invest in sustainable forest and farm management and integrate into the market”, FFF is achieving notable progress in strengthening producer organizations’ capacity to engage in business. Through Output 2.1 “Local forest and farms organizations have knowledge about business development”, Outcome 2 is the key focus of FFF as far as meeting grassroots priority support needs is concerned. It links directly to the expected project Impact and to the Vision.

FFF got important results in providing support to FFPOs for products upgrading along value chains. FFF’s support implicitly enhances products upgrading activities that raise the awareness of farmers organizations on the standards and quality that attract consumers. Products upgrading goes hand in hand with process upgrading because improving product quality often involves improving production processes. With products upgrading new livelihoods opportunities are created for the beneficiaries, and smallholders are helped to build up technological skills and are stimulated to participate in value chains and engage in business. Favorable factors influencing product upgrading include a good link of the chains to national and export markets. Many cacao producer FFPOs who participate in Global Value Chains are practicing Fair Trade standards. Many members of the National Alliance of Community Forest of Guatemala are working on high value product processing including timber end products (ACOFOP, FEDECOVERA and others).

FFF experiences in helping FFPOs to know business and access markets. With the training activities targeting FFPOs’ members, FFF has been effective in the implementation of Output 2.1. The application of the acquired knowledge has further strengthened the motivation of the beneficiaries to orient their production systems to commercialization. FFF’s support to FFPOs to improve their technical capabilities has enabled them to generate productive business. For

example, through exchanges producers of COACAP in the South of the Department of Petén are implementing new plant grafting techniques to improve cocoa crops, which have a direct impact on the quality of their plantations.

Pillar 2: “Catalyze multi-sectoral stakeholder policy platforms with governments and at local and national levels”

With regard to Outcome 3, “Cross-sectoral coordination (...) for sustainable forest and farm management operating at national and sub-national levels”, countries have made unequal progress in establishing multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder policy platforms. FFF has been effective in supporting the Government to ensure the cross-sectoral coordination and multi-stockholders dialogue, especially on the agendas of forests with related sectors such as agriculture, economy, energy, food security, biodiversity and water. It has had considerable success in facilitating the Government processes of giving voice to FFPOs so that they can influence policy formation processes. As a result, FFPOs participate in cross-sectoral coordination for policy formation or law formulation processes.

Thanks to FFF support, FFPOs are in a position to influence policy processes through official cross-sectoral coordination, on a permanent basis. FFF supports four multi-sectoral platforms. At national level, it supports the Inter-Institutional Coordination Group (GCI); Probosque Law Technical Committee and the Firewood and Energy Platform; and at the regional level (in the Petén), it supports the Inter-sectoral Platform for Land and Environment (MITA). The GCI played an active role in the preparation PROBOSQUE, helped integrate issues such as the REDD National Needs Assessment, and convened a workshop on forest degradation under REDD.

Pillar 3 “Link local voices and learning to global processes through communication and information dissemination”

With regard to Outcome 4, “National and global agendas and initiatives (...) are informed about knowledge and priorities of smallholders, women, communities and indigenous peoples”, FFF delivers adequately at national, regional and global levels in the context of Guatemala. As already shown above, the FFPOs supported by FFF are informing the country’s policy agendas on the basis of their priorities and experiences. At regional and global levels, FFF supported the implementation of initiatives of sub-regional organizations with regard to linking local voices to global agendas on forest and farm issue. At local level, it supported the FFPOs members of the Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests (AMPB) to access relevant information about issues and challenges faced and possible solutions and actions to sub-regional and regional levels.

The members of AMPB in Guatemala got FFF’s support to participate in a sub-regional meeting (Mesoamerica) in Mexico City, in which about 100 representatives of community organizations, indigenous peoples, small-scale producers, NGOs and government organizations from Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua assembled to exchange experiences on community land and territorial management, forest governance, and market linkages. With regard to voice, the participants identified obstacles to public policy improvements for indigenous peoples, local communities and family smallholders, and generated key messages that its members could take to the political leaders of their countries and to the international community via the XIV World Forestry Congress and UNFCCC COP21.

At global level, FFF was effective in making forest and farm messages and voices from Guatemala’s FFPOs delegates heard by the international community via the XIV World Forestry Congress, UNFCCC COP21, and COFO by supporting their participation.

Evaluation question 5: To what extent is the current operational modality contributing to the efficient achievement of the program outcomes?

The MTE found that the FFF’s Steering Committee (PSC) has been very effective across all participating countries in providing guidance and advice to the FFF team with regard to effective and efficient oversight of the operations of the project at all levels of implementation. There is strong mutual esteem between the PSC and the FFF team.

The MTE also found that FFF project management structure is appropriate. The functions within FFF Team provide the necessary expertise required to keep the Project on track as far as the planned outputs and outcomes are concerned. Through interviews with partners and FFF Team members, the MTE found these are fully committed and enthusiastic; they value partnerships, and are convinced that FFF can make a change, and they are quite open to challenges. Their work is well appreciated by all the partners interviewed at FAO HQs and at country level. Despite being stretched by the workload the Team has had a remarkable performance.

FFF provides support to the action of target FFPOs and their Apex for voice and engagement in Guatemala's policy processes. The program Facilitator's dedication has made possible the impressive progress made to date.

Evaluation question 6: What is the likelihood that FFF will contribute to the expected impact?

There is a strong likelihood of reaching the Impact of the Project and contributing to its Vision in Guatemala. Full project impact is normally reached some time or many years after completion of its activities. At this stage, the MTE can only assess the likelihood for reaching that Impact and for contributing to the Vision which is "Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes". To this end, the main livelihoods "building blocks" that are analyzed for likelihood of impact relate to human, social, and political capital, and to natural, financial and physical assets.

Human capital. The strongest potential of impact is the domain of human capital development, in which there are considerable achievements in enhancing the stock of skills in FFPOs members (organizational, managerial, technological, MA&D).

Social capital development at grassroots level. FFF's interventions made a significant contribution to increasing the stock of trust that farmers' organizations have in the governance of Alianza. Alianza itself is sparing no effort to effectively contribute to the sense of its members of FFF's results.

Political capital. This is understood as the increase in the stock of power held by FFPOs and the apex organizations that can be used to achieve the development goals of their members. FFF supported the enhancement of the political capital of Alianza and its membership through a diversity of trainings and participation in policy processes and cross-sectoral dialogue.

Natural assets. FFF's main focus at the local level has been largely to support sustainable forest management and improvement of cocoa plantations. This contributes to increased natural assets particularly in terms of forests. Improvement of cocoa plantations mitigates environmental vulnerability and contributes to forest landscape restoration and protection of ecosystem resources.

Physical assets. In general, FFF grants to FFPOs do not cover investment in physical capital. There is therefore likelihood that FFF will have limited impact on FFPOs physical assets.

Financial assets. The MTE believes that production and value addition activities supported by FFF namely for cocoa production are likely to positively affect household income.

Evaluation question 7: Is FFF having success in engaging other partners in the FFF supported processes?

Partnerships have featured prominently in FFF interventions at all levels of its interventions across all participating countries. Arguably the main strength of FFF across all participating countries is the strong tripartite partnership FAO-IIED-IUCN. This partnership has allowed synergies of the three at international, regional and country levels, as well as avoiding duplication of effort and overlaps. It has significantly contributed to the efficient use of resources in attaining results that could have otherwise cost several times more under more traditional project formulae. IIED developed the M&LS and is involved in overseeing its implementation and in the use of

learning information from its use. It has played a key role in the communication activities and the synthesis of learning information. IUCN has provided support to Guatemala's apex organizations to organize processes allowing to make sure that local forest issues are taken into account in the preparation of the agenda to influence global processes (XIV World Forestry Congress, UNFCCC COP21, and COFO).

Evaluation question 8: How sustainable is the FFF concept of investing in the organizational capacity of forest farm producer organizations – and how might this be enhanced?

Sustainability is the likelihood of the programme benefits to be delivered for an extended period after its completion. The MTE found that the high political and social ownership of FFF model in Guatemala is a powerful factor of sustainability. The Government has put in place mechanisms that allow FFPOs to be represented in cross-sectoral coordination spaces for policy dialogue. The participation of farmers organizations in national policy processes will allow to sustain the effort that FFF has invested in building the capacity of target FFPOs.

Another equally important factor of sustainability is the success of the training activities targeting smallholders through their FFPOs. These activities are transforming forest producers into businesses and motivating them to invest further in commercialization activities.

Crosscutting issues

Evaluation question 9: To what extent have gender and human rights been taken into account in the design of the FFF and during the implementation?

The main cross-cutting issues with respect to the analysis of the FFF design are Gender and the rights of indigenous people. The design mainstreamed gender and indigenous people in the expected Impact, Pillar 1, and Outcome 4, but at its more strategic levels, gender focus is stronger at Outputs level than at Outcomes level. At Outputs level gender is featured in Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3 and 4.1. There is no specific women's empowerment relating Outcome or Output.

The rights of indigenous peoples and women, must be addressed from a comprehensive perspective, which in the case of indigenous peoples should include determining factors such as respect of their worldview, the right to management of their own territory, their models of governance, the implementation of their own production methods, and the right to consultation. In the case of women, the integrality in the intervention is a determining factor also to ensure the participation of women in productive processes and decision-making in their communities and organizations.

From this perspective FFF addresses partially the issue of gender through the involvement of women the activities of the program. Women are members of farmers' organizations and participate the governance structures of these organizations. Among the specific activities that have included women are the exchanges of production experiences made supported by the programme in the Mesoamerica.

With regard to Indigenous groups, FFF supports the Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests.

Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are formulated in the overall MTE report.

Documents consulted

- 1 FAO (2011). Community-based tree and forest product enterprises: Market Analysis and Development (MA&D). The Field Facilitator Guidelines for the implementation of the MA&D approach.

- 2 Forest and Farm Facility. 2012-2017 Programme Document.
- 3 Forest and Farm Facility. Consolidating momentum. Annual Report – 2014. FAO, Rome.
- 4 Forest and Farm Facility (2016). Learning together and leveraging impact. Annual Report – 2015. FAO, Rome.
- 5 Forest and Farm Facility (2016). Deepening Impacts. Work Plan for 2016. FAO, Rome.
- 6 Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganaderia y Alimentacion (2016). Encuentro Regional de Productores de Cacao (Theobroma cacao) - Fomento de la asociatividad entre productores de Cacao de la zona Sur de Petén y Región Lachua, Alta Verapaz.

4. Kenya country case report

Context of the Kenya FFF programme

Kenya strongly supports the development of forest and tree growing on farms. With this support, several Forest Farm Producer associations and groups have been created across the country. To further strengthen the activity of these associations, the Government submitted a competitive proposal for FFF support. The country was admitted into the FFF Programme in mid-2014, and a scoping study was commissioned in September 2014. This study highlighted a wide range of forest–farm producer organizations, including community forestry associations grouped into the National Alliance of Community Forest Associations, farmers groups represented by the Kenya National Farmers Federation, medium-sized tree-grower groups in the Kenya Forest Growers Association, and smallholder equivalents in the Farm Forestry Smallholders Association of Kenya (FF-SPAK).

The scoping study recommended that the FFF supports the establishment of a national multi-sectoral platform that brings together apex smallholder producer organizations with the aim of strengthening those apex organizations, promoting the delivery of effective extension service through the training of trainers and partnerships, providing support to revitalize tree improvement programmes for enhanced access to certified and affordable seed/seedlings, supporting bio-enterprises among community forestry associations, including development of business plans, providing market support, and promoting ownership rights and access for minority and marginalized Indigenous communities to their sacred and customary territories¹⁴.

FFF in Kenya was officially launched in November 2014. Two counties, Nakuru and Laikipia, were selected to pilot the implementation of FFF in the country. On 6 November 2014, a launch workshop in which more than 68 representatives from diverse stakeholder groups participated strongly was organized. The main outputs of the Workshop were a strong endorsement of the need for FFF engagement, a clear guidance on priorities for FFF support, and initial discussions on partner forest–farm producer organizations and partner government institutions.

On 7 November 2014, follow-on meetings led to, among other things, to determining by key stakeholders concerned that FFF's core team in Kenya would comprise the Kenya Forest Service (secretariat); FAO Kenya (facilitator); a representative of FF-SPAK; and a representative of the Forest Action Network. It was also agreed that there should be regular advisory committee meetings comprising a broader range of institutions.

In 2015, scoping studies for the implementation of FFF, baseline studies in the two target counties, and stakeholder mapping were carried out. Stakeholder capacity-building assessment was undertaken in collaboration with the NGO We Effect. In the same year, there was also an effort in strengthening FF SPAK's membership base and its capacity to organize and to provide business services to its members effectively. In December 2014, the FFF core team and the FFF global management team prepared an initial workplan as well as letters of agreement with forest–farm producer organizations such as FF- SPAK.

Theory of Change

FFF developed a generic ToC that links development results at FFPOs level (organization capacity, access to technologies, and access to markets) with voice and participation in policy processes at national and global levels, in order to achieve the intended Impact. The strategies to achieve the Impact are arranged under three Pillars, four Outcomes and seven Outputs as presented in Figure 4. The MTE found that on this basis, the internal logic of the project is largely sound between the Outputs and Outcomes level. However, a close analysis shows that it does not express the conditions that should be in place to allow development results to reach

14 Forest & Farm Facility (2014). Consolidating momentum : Annual Report – 2014.

impact. The ToC lacks important building blocks in terms of Assumptions and Impact Drivers¹⁵, between Outcomes level and Impacts level.

It should be recalled that it is between the levels of Outcomes and Impacts that the design should express the main changes that are expected to take place as “Intermediate States (IS)”, as the stepping-stones to Impacts in the respective pathways. It is therefore important to indicate explicitly in the ToC what are the required assumptions allowing Outcomes to lead to intermediate results (IR), and from there to planned impacts. The MTE reconstructed the ToC based on the original one in order to include the missing building blocks (Assumptions and Impact Drivers); this provides a framework that more clearly articulates the conditions that are required to reach the expected impact. The reconstructed ToC does not modify the Outputs, Outcomes, Impact and Vision. Rather it places them together with Intermediate Results (the current Pillars), Assumptions and Impact Drivers into a graphic representation of the FFF.

The different FFF ToC building blocks are illustrated as shown in Figure 5. The original ToC blocks are illustrated in green color and connecting black arrows, and are unchanged. Dashed black arrows are added to show the actual connectedness from the Project implementation experience to date. Other colors indicate the blocks that are missing in the original ToC: blue for the Assumptions, and dark orange for Impact Drivers.

During the visit in Kenya, the MTE Team discussed with National Facilitator and key FFF partners (KFS and FF-SPAK) the conditions that were necessary to reach impact. The information obtained was used to reconstruct a ToC for FFF in the context of its work in the country. The reconstructed ToC (Figure 5) shows that to reach the FFF Impact, three Intermediary States (IS) that correspond to the 3 Pillars must be achieved; these are:

- i) IS-1: FFPOs capacity for doing business is enhanced and they engage in policy decision;
- ii) IS-2: Multi-sectoral stakeholders policy platforms are catalyzed;
- iii) IS-3: Local voices are linked to global processes.

To achieve IS-1, The MTE found that the following conditions must be met:

A/ID-1: County governments use contextualized FFF ToC in their rural development agendas”.

A/ID-2: Partnerships with micro-finance institutions (MFI) allow to extend loans to FFPOs

ID-1: FFPOs access to national & export markets improved.

ID-2: Women’s organizations entrepreneurship supported in selected value chains

¹⁵ Distinct from assumptions, impact drivers are factors that project/programme management can influence to a certain extent.



Figure 4: Kenya FFF results framework

To achieve IS-2, the MTE also found that the following conditions must be met:

A/ID-1: As above, County governments use contextualized FFF ToC in their rural development agendas”.

ID-3: Lessons and best practices from FFF allow sharing experiences.

To achieve IS-3, the following conditions must be met:

A/ID-3: Avenues for exchange at regional and global levels are offered

ID-3: Lessons and best practices from FFF allow sharing experiences

The Vision is stated as “Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples’ organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes» is wider than the context of Kenya. This is why the MTE added a plain black arrow linking the Intermediary State “Local voices are linked to global processes” to the Vision, while the arrow link to Impact is dashed.

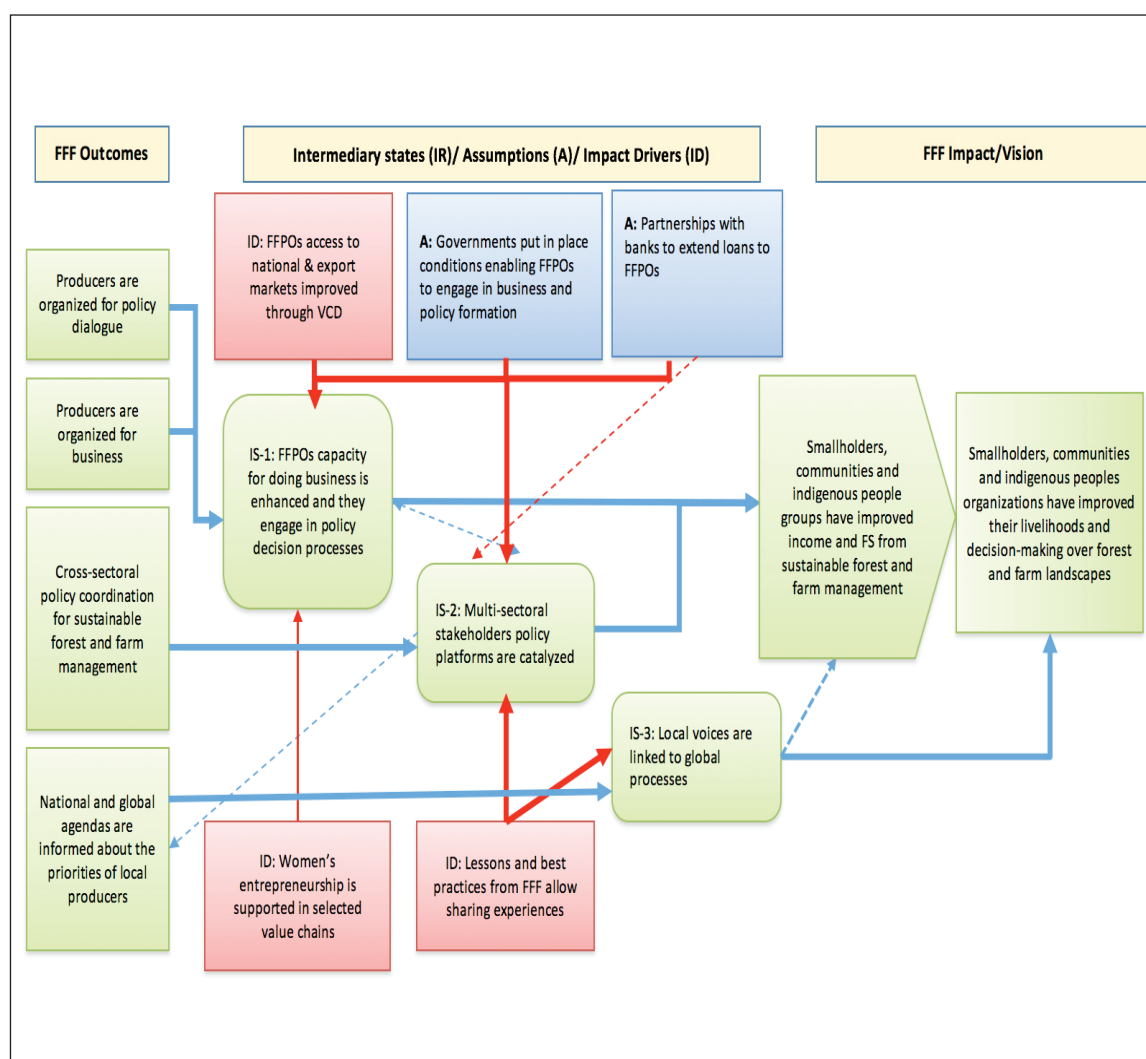


Figure 5: Reconstructed Kenya FFF Theory of Change

Evaluation questions: key findings

This section presents the findings which are based on the desk review of the FFF documents, interviews with FFF Team, country visit (Kenya) and interviews with target FFPOs at grassroots level.

Evaluation question 1: How relevant is FFF primary focus and logic in terms of its stated mission, in relation to the target countries' contexts, to broader sustainable development initiatives, and to smallholder farmers' needs?

FFF is relevant to the strategies of the Government of Kenya Government and those of the Nakuru and Laikipia Counties Governments for the development of the rural sector. In particular, it is relevant to the Country's Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010 - 2020 (ASDS) which is aimed at reducing rural poverty through commercialization of the agricultural sector. Foremost, FFF is relevant to the new Constitution 2010 and Vision 2030, which provide a target of recovering 10 percent forest cover in an effort to reduce deforestation and degradation

and to create a foundation for addressing the national wood supply deficit.¹⁶ In the context of changes in the governance and administrative structure brought about by Kenya's new Constitution, Farm Forestry is under the responsibility of County governments. FFF contributes to the consolidation of the devolution of rural development governance of the agricultural and forestry services to the governments of Nakuru and Laikipia Counties.

Evaluation question 2: How and to what extent does the project contribute to the broader FAO strategic objectives?

The Project is particularly aligned with FAO's Strategic Objective 3 (SO3), "Reduce rural poverty", to which it strongly contributes. Under SO3, FAO recognizes that rural poverty is mostly concentrated among households of small-scale subsistence producers and family farmers, among others. It further recognizes that women are often amongst the most marginalized and need strengthened rights to the natural resources on which they depend. Like SO3, its focus target groups are also poor smallholders' farmers whose livelihoods are tied to small forests and farm assets.

Under SO3, FAO's focus is on a holistic approach to rural development and poverty reduction. Likewise, FFF in Kenya emphasizes integrated approaches in which forests and other farm components are considered functionally interdependent components of the same rural landscapes that must be sustainably managed and used to improve the livelihoods of their users. FFF also focuses on opportunities that strengthen linkages between forests, crops and animal production, for sustainability reasons. In this regard, FFPOs met in the country told the MTE Team that they consider trees on their farms as crops like any other crop.

More specifically, the FFF is aligned to FAO's corporate outcome 3.1: The rural poor have enhanced and equitable access to productive resources, services, organizations and markets, and can manage their resources more sustainably. The output under this outcome to which FFF is contributing most is Output 3.1.1: Support to strengthen rural organizations and institutions and facilitate empowerment of rural poor. The FFF objectives under pillars 1 and 2 are closely in line with those of SO3. As such, FFF activities may certainly count towards the indicator for output 3.1.1: "Number of countries in which support was provided to create an enabling environment for rural organizations and institutions as well as the empowerment of the rural poor."

At the heart of FFF consistency with FAO's SO3 are principally FFF's Outcomes 1 and 2. Outcome 1 is instrumental in enabling poor rural smallholder farmers to get organized and be able to engage in policy dialogue on forest and farm resource management and use related issues. Outcome 2 is instrumental in enhancing the capacity of the same target groups to invest in forest and farm management to participate in value chains and integrate into the markets.

The priorities for FAO in its cooperation with Kenya are laid out in the Country Program Framework 2014-2017. FFF is relevant to all the five outcomes of its focus, in particular to Outcome 2, in Kenya "Productivity of medium- and small-scale agricultural producers increased, diversified and aligned to markets". Under this Outcome, FAO supports the country's priorities of ensuring that there is a reduction in the country's production costs, improved value addition and mechanization. The focus is on enhancing the productive capacity of medium- and small-scale producers, promoting diversification and inclusiveness, improving value addition while maintaining nutrition quality and ensuring that production meets market demand. A particular emphasis is put on the empowerment of women and youth and persons with special needs in all activities to improve their income and livelihoods.

16 The Constitution of Kenya (GoK 2010) aims to have tree cover of at least 10% of the land area of Kenya (Article 69(1) (b)). To achieve this target the government has developed policies and strategies to encourage communities and private land owners to invest in forestry. Under the new National Forest Policy, 2015. The Government intends to:

- (a) promote partnerships with land owners to increase on-farm tree cover and to reduce pressure on reserved forests.
- (b) promote investment in farm forestry through provision of economic and non-economic incentives.
- (c) promote on-farm species diversification.
- (d) promote development of forest based enterprises.
- (e) promote processing and marketing of farm forestry products.
- (f) promote forestry development through irrigation.
- (g) promote forestry extension and technical services.

Evaluation question 3: Was the project design appropriate for achieving the Outcomes and the Vision?

The appropriateness of the Project's design for achieving its Outcomes and Vision is unquestionable. Forest and farm smallholders of developing countries face challenges that include limited organization skills, limited access to markets and market information, to financial capital, smallholder friendly technologies, and limited or no participation in policy formation processes relating to forest and farm landscape management and use. Addressing these challenges is in the realm of FFF's Vision and Outcomes. All key informants interviewed by the MTE Team in the country said that the FFF model is a practical and effective methodology in delivering the support to FFPOs as compared to traditional development projects. It facilitates access to smallholders through these organizations, with training and other services allowing them to do business and link to markets, and to participate in policy formation processes. The main strength of the model resides in its having a wide scope for addressing smallholder farmers' challenges, being demand-driven, and supporting with direct grants the proposals submitted by FFPOs for funding.

The MTE found that although it is still early as FFF is starting the implementation of activities at grassroots level, the model has a potential to lead to expected results in terms of providing concrete grassroots to poor stallholders in the counties of Nakuru and Laikipia. In terms of methodology (concept, implementation, M&LS) the Model is replicable, in participating and other countries as well. The MTE noted that political economy assessments were missing from the initial baseline assessments in the two FFF focus counties. Such analysis, if conducted in a systematic methodical manner, might help to understand the key agents of change in the country in general, and in Nakuru and Laikipia counties in particular.

The appropriateness of the FFF model is further evidenced by the strong response it has received from FFPOs in response to the call for proposals. Table 6 provides a list of target FFPOs, with respective. The elaborated their proposals themselves on the basis of the FFF Model, a proof that they found it appropriate in meeting their development priorities.

Table 6: Characteristics of FFF's target producer organizations in Kenya

Organization/group	Registration status	Number of members			Type of production
		Males	Females	Total	
Nakuru County					
Tumaini Mwangaza Investment	Self help group	7	8	15	Timber
Community Food and Environment Group	Community based organization	40	62	102	Fruit tree nursery agroforestry
Menengai Crater Bee Keepers	Self help group	7	11	25	Honey/poultry
Beyond 1 B Trees Mau Women CBO	Community based organization	7	14	21	Tree nursery/ poultry
Lake Elementaita Group	Self help group	20	23	43	Tree nursery/ poultry
Junction Bamboo Tree Nursery and Conservation Group	Community based organization	17	11	28	Bamboo/tree nursery
Laikipia County					
Nettle World	Self Help Group	21	16	37	Stinging nettle/ agroforestry
Marura Environment Conservation Group	Community based organization	8	12	20	Tree nursery/ poultry
Yaaku Cultural Group	Community based organization	9	11	20	Honey/agroforestry
Laikipia Livestock Marketing Association	Community based organization	36	16	52	Honey/hay
Lariak CFA	Community forest association	22	18	40	Fruit tree nursery
Shamanek CFA	Community forest association	33	29	62	Tree nursery
Membership totals		225	231	456	

While the FFF Model is largely appropriate, the value chain development¹⁷ (VCD) approach was not used to identify actions to be supported or partnerships to be mobilized along the value chain. It was noted for example that the FFF project document and the M&LS make no mention of value chains. In Kenya, the small grants agreements included a component on market access and linkages, but deeper value chain analysis is needed to fully reach the potential and identify unequal power relationships within the value chain.

Evaluation question 4: To what extent is the FFF on track to achieving outcomes across the three pillars and what changes can be observed that are attributable to the FFF's interventions and are directly linked to the FFF's main objectives?

Pillar 1, "Strengthen smallholder, women, community and indigenous peoples' producer organizations for business/livelihoods and policy engagement"

With regarding to progress to Outcome 1, "Strengthened producer organizations engage in policy dialogue", FFF has a good start in supporting grassroots FFPOs and their Apex structure, FF-SPAK, but it has not yet fully started the activities aiming at supporting the organization FFPOs to effectively engage in policy dialogue. Table 2 summarizes progress made so far in supporting FFPOs to influence forest and farm related policies. The MTE distinguished 4 levels for assessing policy influence (adapted from Keck and Sikkink, 1998¹⁸), as follows:

- i) Getting issues on political agenda
- ii) Encouraging discursive commitment from government
- iii) Securing procedural change at national level
- iv) Influencing behavioral change in key actors.

The MTE noted early encouraging progress on (i) and (ii) as follows.

Getting issues on political agenda. Under Output 1.1, "Dispersed local producers are organized into effective and gender inclusive groups", although cross-sectoral platforms have not yet been established, KFS organized two stakeholder workshops to develop rules for the registration of private forest owners. FF SPAK attends fora where issues relevant to farm forestry are discussed.

With regard to Output 1.2, "Producer groups work together with government and private sector to improve policy", the interaction for policy improvement between FFPOs, county governments and the private sector have not yet taken place in the form of multi-stakeholders platforms. However, FFF contributed to strengthening the capacity of the apex forest and farm producer organization, FF-SPAK, so that it can help FFPOs to have voice and influence getting issues on the political agenda.

Encouraging discursive commitment from government. There is a particular influence of the work of FFF on the state policy discourses at national and sub-national levels as far as rural development strategies are concerned.

With regard to Outcome 2, "Local communities and producers are organized and thereby have the capacity to invest in sustainable forest and farm management and integrate into the market", at this stage of the Programme start, the support consists in training to increase production quantity, and to strengthen managerial abilities of members of FFPOs committees, and in market analysis. Knowledge from these training activities will certainly contribute to improved productions and higher incomes. In some of the visited FFPOs that do value additions, like Nettle World in Laikipia County, there is a potential of further income increases through links to urban, regional and export markets. However, exploiting that potential requires envisaging value chain development approach from the very start of the support provided to FFPOs.

¹⁷ Value chain development (VCD) is understood as a concerted effort to improve the conditions in the value chain. For FFPOs, VCD implies the improvement of their participation in value chains, enhancement of the benefits they get, and reducing the exposure to risks. Benefits and risks should be understood not only in financial terms but also in relation to the environment, livelihoods improvement and gender equity.

¹⁸ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998). *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Cornell University Press.

Table 7: Progress made by FFF in influencing forest and farm related policies (Pillar 1 & 2)

Results level	Examples of results obtained with FFF support
Getting issues on political agenda	Although cross-sectoral platforms have not yet been established, KFS organized two stakeholder workshops to develop rules for the registration of private forest owners. FF SPAK attends fora where issues relevant to farm forestry are discussed.
Encouraging discursive commitment from state	There is a particular influence of the work of FFF on the state policy discourses at national and sub-national levels as far as rural development strategies are concerned.

The MTE learnt from field visits that before FFF started training the members of FFPOs committees, the management skills were inadequate even for small-scale production. Still in most cases, building up management skills will be a long process and the organizations are demanding more training, and their members are motivated. The lack of entrepreneurship skills remains an important constraint as far as effective organization of the groups is concerned. This can be illustrated by the case of Elementaita Group, in Nakuru County. It is well placed near the main road, and it is involved in a diversity of productions including tree seedlings, fruit tree seedlings, flowers, and poultry. However, it lacks an approach of how to optimize production for each type of products. For marketing, it relies on random customers passing by, farmers in its neighborhood, and some institutional customers in the area. Its committee members recognize the lack of an approach to get information on the markets and to inform potential buyers. One of the consequence is that there are many overgrown seedlings in the Group's nursery.

Under Output 2.1, it can be implicitly understood that if knowing about business for FFPOs means that they can participate in forest and farm based value chains and have access to rural finance. It is therefore important that in the support provided to FFPOs, FFF addresses the main constraints affecting smallholders participation in value chains, and training for them focuses on required knowledge to upgrading of smallholder farmers beyond local markets into urban, regional and exports.

At the stage of the implementation of FFF in Kenya, it is not yet possible to assess how the knowledge that FFPOs will get will help them participate in value chains for their produce and link with markets. However, the MTE notes that while support to FFPOs' business capacity and access to markets is an important dimension of FFF, there is no mention of forest and farm based "value chains" in the Program Document or the FFF Monitoring and Learning System document.

As mentioned, FFF is only at the start in Kenya. However, impressions from the field visits and discussions with stakeholders is that the grants support to FFPOs' proposals focus primarily the upstream end of forest and farm productions, particularly tree seedlings and poultry. There also some target FFPOs who add value to their production, for example in honey or herbal medicines production. In these particular cases, the value chain approach is envisaged in a fragmented way that may not allow linking smallholder farmers within FFPOs to national and export markets. The scope of the grant, not only in amount and duration (7 months) but also in aspects that are funded may not address the key constraints for access to urban and export market. The MTE visited an interesting case, the Nettle World, where there is a good potential to link to urban and export markets. However, the current funding approach that does not cover certain the key constraints such as equipment, storage infrastructure and exploration of linkages to export markets may not allow full development of such a value chain. There will therefore be a need to explore ways for access to additional finance.

FFF is achieving notable progress in strengthening producer organizations' capacity to engage in business. Through Output 2.1 "Local forest and farms organizations have knowledge about business development", Outcome 2 is the key focus of FFF as far as meeting grassroots priority support needs is concerned. It links directly to the expected project Impact and to the Vision. It can be implicitly understood from its formulation that knowing about business for FFPOs means that they can access successfully forest and farm-based value chains and rural finance. It is therefore important that in the support provided to FFPOs, FFF addresses the main constraints affecting smallholders' access to value chains. In this regard, the trainings organized by the Project in different countries have focused on the knowledge that smallholder farmers need to add value to their productions and to link to markets.

Poor forests and Farms producers often struggle to gain market integration because they lack knowledge of market requirements or the skills to meet those requirements. Furthermore, weak or lack of access to information, together with other obstacles in value chains prevent FFPOs from getting

the benefits that entering into national and global markets can offer. Value Chain Development (VCD) is essential for the integration of smallholder farmers into the market, and it can be applied to a broad range of other FFF impact areas such as women and indigenous groups' empowerment, sustainable forest and farm landscapes management, food security and poverty reduction.

Emerging experience in value chain upgrading. The MTE found that FFF implicitly supports value chains upgrading through following trajectories: products upgrading¹⁹, process upgrading²⁰, and functional upgrading²¹. Table 8 presents examples of emerging experiences in these trajectories.

Product upgrading. There are emerging experiences in nursery seedling production and medicinal product packaging. Nursery producers are producing tree seedlings from good quality seeds, and they intend to accede to quality certification with the support from KFS. The FFPO Nettle World (located in Laikipia County) is having interesting experience in packaging and labelling of nettle root and sandalwood powder.

Process upgrading. With regard to Process upgrading FFPOs which manage nurseries and produce fruit tree seedlings are trained to link to input markets for graft material and seeds, and to output markets.

Functional upgrading. For functional upgrading the FFPO Nettle World MENTIONED ABOVE is engaged in post-harvest conditioning of its nettle production before passing to processing for value addition, and to marketing.

Table 8: Emerging experiences in value chain upgrading in FFF-supported FFPOs in Kenya

Type of upgrading	Example of FFPOs supported by FFF
Product upgrading	Nursery producers are producing tree seedlings from good quality seeds, and who intend to accede to quality certification from KFS. Nettle World (located in Laikipia County): packaging and label of nettle root and sandalwood powder.
Process upgrading	FFPOs which manage nurseries and produce fruit tree seedlings: linking to input markets for graft material and seeds, and to output markets.
Functional upgrading	Nettle World is engaged in post-harvest conditioning of its nettle production before passing to processing for value addition, and to marketing.

FFF experiences in helping FFPOs to know business and access markets. With the training activities targeting FFPOs' members, FFF has been effective in the implementation of Output 2.1. The application of the acquired knowledge has further motivated the beneficiaries to orient their production systems to commercialization. In Table 9, the MTE summarizes FFF experiences to date in helping FFPOs to know business and access to markets. From the information available, two main business models are practiced by FFF-target groups: (i) Farm gate and/or roadside driven; (ii) Public institution procurement driven. The examples are given in Table 9.

Table 9: Examples of business models applied by FFF supported organizations

Type of business model	Examples of FFF targeted FFPOs
Farm gate, roadside, local market place	Many FFPOs producing seedlings sell part of production at nursery sites.
Public institution procurement driven	Many FFPOs producing seedlings plan to sell to counties governments for their planting programs.

FFF further strengthened FFPOs' capacity to know business and access to markets through Output 2.2 and Output 2.3. Under Output 2.2, "Establishment of services in support of small forest business", FFF has been effective in establishing services to support small forest and farm based business. The partnership between FFF, Kenya Forest Service (KFS), the Farm Forestry Smallholder Producers

19 Products upgrading: where a chain actor engages in the production of more sophisticated products in order to increase unit value.

20 Process upgrading: where a chain actor increases the efficiency of internal processes (production, new technologies, storages, distribution, logistics).

21 Functional upgrading: where a chain actor changes the mix of functions performed by producer organizations, by working in more than one node of a value chain.

Association of Kenya (FF-SPAK) and county government services allows extension officers at all county administration levels to play an increased role in training and advising target FFPOs.

Pillar 2: “Catalyze multi-sectoral stakeholder policy platforms with governments and at local and national levels”

The MTE note that there are efforts by government to consult FF-Kenya on forest and farm related issues and to invite it to participate in policy discussion meetings. However, cross-sectoral platforms are not yet established. Policy dialogue takes place through ad hoc mechanisms such as stakeholders’ workshops. FFF has signed a letter of Agreement (LoA) with KFS to support cross-sectoral platforms, among others. It is also worth to mention that by virtue of the strong partnership between FFF and KFS, the Project has been effective in engaging decision-makers at national and counties governments levels on issues relating to forest and farm development. To this end, FFF is influencing dialogue between counties government and forest and farm organizations.

Pillar 3 “Link local voices and learning to global processes through communication and information dissemination”

With regard to Outcome 4, “National and global agendas and initiatives (...) are informed about knowledge and priorities of smallholders, women, communities and indigenous peoples”, FFF supported the organization of the Africa Farm/Family Forest Producers Organizations Conference that was held in Nairobi 9-11 of June 2015, to prepare African FFPOs representation in the XIV World Forestry Congress.²²

Evaluation question 5: To what extent is the current operational modality contributing to the efficient achievement of the program outcomes?

Though FFF is at the start of its field level activities in Kenya, its operations are very in terms of inputs relative to results if account is taken of the relatively limited financial resources invested. However, the start of the operations has been as was expected because disbursements have been carried out with considerable delays. This implied a certain rush to start activities in order to abide to the duration of FFPOs’ LoAs of only 6 months. One of the consequences of the delay in the disbursements is that trainings are also shortened or rushed, leaving little time for coaching visits.

The Monitoring and Learning System is allowing learning by an upward flux of information that feeds into the communication effort of the three partners (FAO, IIED, IUCN). However, there is scope yet to improve feedback to stakeholders and the general public at country level and county governments level.

Evaluation question 6: What is the likelihood that FFF will contribute to the expected impact?

There is a strong likelihood of reaching the Impact of the Project and contributing to its Vision in Kenya. Full project impact is normally reached some time or many years after completion of its activities. At this stage, the MTE can only assess the likelihood for reaching that Impact and for contributing to the Vision which is “Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes”. To this end, the main livelihoods “building blocks” that are analyzed for likelihood of impact relate to human, social, and political capital, and to natural, financial and physical assets.

Human capital. The strongest potential of impact is the domain of human capital development, in which there are considerable achievements in enhancing the stock of skills in FFPOs members (organizational, managerial, technological, MA&D). The smallholders that the MTE Team met were unanimous in their appreciation of the contribution of training to their performance in production, processing and marketing activities.

Social capital development at grassroots level. The most significant contribution of FFF to this domain is coming from the support to FFPOs organizational capacity. Its interventions are increasing the stock of trust that FFPOs members have in the governance of their organizations, and strengthening

22 The conference outcomes were captured in “Resolution of the Africa Farm/Family Forest Producers Organizations Conference Nairobi 9-11 of June 2015 - An initiative of the International Family Forestry Alliance (IFFA)”.

solidarity in communities. Smallholders are being empowered through raised awareness on the benefits of working together. The FFPOs and their governing committees are effectively contributing to a sense of local ownership of FFF's results by their members.

Political capital. This is understood as the increase in the stock of power held by FFPOs and the apex organizations that can be used to achieve the development goals of their members. FFF supports the enhancement of the political capital of its target FFPOs through a diversity of trainings, as well as the support given to FF-SPAK. This Apex organization takes part in policy-making consultations with government.

Natural assets. FFF's main focus at the local level has been largely to support tree seedling production. This will contribute to increase natural assets in terms of plantations to be created and fruit trees to be planted.

Physical assets. In general, FFF grants to FFPOs do not cover investment in physical capital. There is therefore likelihood that FFF will have limited impact on FFPOs physical assets.

Financial assets. Due to limited data available, it is not possible to assess the full extent to which FFF is affecting financial assets of households of FFPOs members. From the interviews with FFPOs representatives in the visited countries, the MTE Team believes that production and value addition activities supported by FFF grants are likely to positively affect household income.

Evaluation question 7: Is FFF having success in engaging other partners in the FFF supported processes?

Partnerships have featured prominently in FFF interventions in Kenya. The project is working in partnership with KFS, FF-SPAK, and We Effect to strengthen the capacity and organization of forest and farm producer organizations. In 2015, FFF collaborated with We Effect for stakeholder capacity-building assessment. In addition to this, We Effect collaborates in administering small grants proposals together with FF-SPAK, KFS and county governments, and in strengthening the internal capacities of FFPOs. It should also be underlined that the partnership between FFF and We Effect offers an opportunity for resource mobilization for funding similar programs in the country. In Kenya, this has led to possibility of scaling up of FFF activities to an additional ten counties with German funding, with about USD 12 million.

Evaluation question 8: How sustainable is the FFF concept of investing in the organizational capacity of forest farm producer organizations – and how might this be enhanced?

Sustainability is the likelihood of the programme benefits to be delivered for an extended period after its completion. The MTE found that the high political and social ownership of FFF model is a powerful factor of sustainability. KFS and Counties governments have integrated the FFF model in rural development discourse. The MTE also found that target FFPOs have been the main advocates of the model, and the likelihood of social and economic benefits of their members will contribute to the likelihood of sustainability of the FFF concept.

Another equally important factor is the success of the training activities targeting smallholders through their FFPOs. These activities have a potential of transforming farms into businesses and motivating them to move further in commercialization activities.

However, the MTE found that the provision of grants without defined counterpart FFPOs contribution to invest in their project may in certain situations generate an unintended effect of dependency, albeit temporary. Sustainability may therefore be enhanced if FFPOs in receipt of FFF grants contribute matching funds to their project budgets, either from their own resources, from other partners, or from bank loans.

The Forest Conservation and Management Bill, 201 Article 28 (1), proposes the establishment Forest Conservation and Management Trust Fund. The objects of the Trust Fund shall be to nurture, promote and inspire innovations in forest conservation and shall be used for the following purposes; promotion of commercial forest plantations; development of national community forestry programmes; establishment of nurseries and production of seeds and seedlings among others. FFF programme

is supporting Kenya Forest Service (KFS) in operationalization of Forest Management Conservation Trust Fund which will focus in financing farm forestry especially for smallholders.

The level of ownership at the country level is quite high, and sustainability seems highly likely given that even at a starting stage there is already commitment by the government and its partners to scale up the FFF model

Crosscutting issues

Evaluation question 9: To what extent have gender and human rights been taken into account in the design of the FFF and during the implementation?

In the context of the areas of FFF action in Kenya, the main cross-cutting issue with respect to the analysis of the FFF design is Gender. FFF support to FFPOs through grants and trainings pays attention to gender equality and empowerment. In FFPOs that the MTE visited, women are well represented as members and in the governance positions. They benefit training as men members do. There is also an effort to mainstream gender issues in the design of proposals submitted by those organizations to FFF for funding, and to address women's specific priorities at grassroots level, such as poultry production.

Despite the important attention it pays to gender and to addressing certain women's priorities such as poultry production, FFF lacks a more affirmative approach in designing and implementing interventions that aim specifically at developing women's entrepreneurship in the on- and off-farm forest and farm based value chains, for example in the nodes of processing and commercialization.

An important crosscutting issue which deserves special attention is youth. It is not given focus in the design of FFPOs proposals. In view of the demographic weight of the youth and their responsibility in sustainable landscape management in the future, the design and implementation of interventions should deliberately address their needs as far as access to/use of natural resources are concerned.

Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are formulated in the overall MTE report.

Documents consulted

- 1 FAO (2011). Community-based tree and forest product enterprises: Market Analysis and Development (MA&D). The Field Facilitator Guidelines for the implementation of the MA&D approach.
- 2 FAO (2014). FAO Country Programming Framework for Kenya 2013-2017.
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People met

Name	Role/title	Institution
Philip Kisoyan	FFF facilitator	FAO Kenya
Francisco Carranza	head of Sector, Land and Natural Resource Management	FAO Kenya
Jose Lopez	Resilience Coordinator	FAO Kenya
Oscar Simanto	Head Forest Extension Management	Kenya Forest Service
Patrick M. Kariuki	Deputy Director Forest Extension Services	Kenya Forest Service
Mercy Korir	Accounts Assistant	FF-SPAK
Zipporah Matumbi	Treasurer	FF-SPAK
Geoffrey Wanyama	Executive officer	FF-SPAK
Boaz Kiboi	Chairman	FF-SPAK
Edwin Kamau	Programme Officer	FF-SPAK
George Onyango	Programme Coordinator	We Effect
Faith Mutuko	Programme Officer, Rural Development	We Effect
Peter Githukia	Bahati Chair	Lake Elementaita Self Help Group
Izack Kariuki Maima	Rongai Chair	Lake Elementaita Self Help Group
Benson Njoroge Ilanyoro	Secretary NCTNA	Lake Elementaita Self Help Group
Korir Evans	Environmental Scientist (Volunteer)	Lake Elementaita Self Help Group
Joseph Gaitho Mwaura	member	Lake Elementaita Self Help Group
Ann Njoki Kinutha	Treasurer	Nakuru Country Tree Nursery Association
Hjoneje Hdevitu	Secretary/FF-SPAK focal point	Cofeg FA, Molo
Lydia Odiyo okwengu	Member	Cofeg FA, Molo
David Muchai	Member	Cofeg FA, Molo
Hellen	Treasurer	Cofeg FA, Molo
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john Musioke	Member	Cofeg FA, Molo
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Paul M. Nyutu	Chairman	Lariak Forest Association
Joseph Maina Mwanki	Vice Secretary	Lariak Forest Association
Ann Mwihaki Mugo	Treasurer	Lariak Forest Association
Willy Kiplangat	Marginalised Groups representative	Lariak Forest Association
Maina Kibe	Vice Charman	Lariak Forest Association
Lucy Wangari Munuhe	Gender focal point	Lariak Forest Association
Julius Maina	Secretary	Lariak Forest Association
Francis Njuguna Kimani	Nursery Manager	Lariak Forest Association
David Kiruki	Chairman	Nettle World Self-Help Group
Joseph Thekeri	Vice-Chairman	Nettle World Self-Help Group
Charles Nyingi	Committee Member	Nettle World Self-Help Group
Mary Kimotho	Chairperson	Laikipia East Marura Group

Evaluation mission schedule, 29 February–04 March 2016

Date	Activity	Purpose, issues to discuss	Participants
28 February	Arrival		
Monday 29th February			
09:00 11:00 15:00 – 17:30	Visit Tumaini Timber Group Visit Nakuru Tree Nursery Association Meeting with 6 implementing producer organizations (PO) of Nakuru and Farm Forestry Smallholder Producer Association (FF SPAK) country chapter. The PO will be participating in a training on organizational analysis delivered by FF SPAK with technical support of We Effect	- To assess in-situ the implementation of the FFF at the producer organization level - To assess the implementation of the Small Grants Agreement (SGA) with the POs	Evaluation mission Philip Kisoyan Oscar Simanto
Tuesday 1 March			
08:00 – 09:30 10:00 14:00 – 17:30	- Meeting with Nakuru County government officials Travel to Laikipia County - Visit to Marura Group - Visit Nettle World	- To assess the implementation of the FFF in coordination with the county government - To assess in-situ the implementation of the FFF at the producer organization level	Evaluation mission Philip Kisoyan Oscar Simanto
Wednesday 2 March			
08:30 10:00 – 12:30 14:30	- Meeting with Laikipia county government officials Meeting with 6 implementing producer organizations (PO) of Laikipia and FF SPAK country chapter. The PO will be participating in a training on Organizational Analysis delivered by FF SPAK with technical support of We Effect - Travel to Nairobi	- To assess the implementation of the FFF in coordination with the county government - To assess the implementation of the Small Grants Agreement (SGA) with the POs	Evaluation mission Philip Kisoyan Oscar Simanto
Thursday 3 March			
08:30 10:30 – 12:30 14:00 – 17:00	Meeting with Kenya Forestry Service (KFS) Meeting with We Effect Meeting with the board of FF SPAK	- To assess the implementation of the FFF in Kenya - To assess the implementation of FFF in Kenya working together with We Effect - To assess the implementation of the FF in Kenya and the facilitation of FF SPAK	Evaluation mission Philip Kisoyan Oscar Simanto
Friday 4 March			
08:30 -10:00 11:00	Meeting with FAO Representative in Kenya Wrap up meeting with the FFF Kenya core group		Evaluation mission Philip Kisoyan Oscar Simanto

5. Myanmar country case report

Context of the Myanmar FFF programme

Forests cover more than 31,000,000 hectares or 47% of total land area in Myanmar²³. Deforestation is estimated at 0.9% per year while illegal logging is estimated at 80% of the total and has been linked to organized crime and conflict in ethnic areas.²⁴ In 1992 the new Forest Law – followed by the 1995 Myanmar Forest Policy – laid out targets for expanding the permanent forest estate. They also introduced the idea of community participation in forest management, which is further elaborated in the 1995 Community Forestry Instructions (CFI).²⁵ The emphasis on community forestry came about due to the fears over future timber supply and the consequent need to create incentives for forest restoration. Community Forestry has been increasingly recognized as an important means to protect forest land in Myanmar, and prevent unsustainable deforestation, such that the government's 2001 Forest Master Plan set a target to establish 918,000 ha under community forest management by 2030.

More recently, attention has shifted towards a 'market led' approach to community forestry as a means of incentivizing communities to delimit, restore and sustainably use forests. This approach was developed following a stakeholder workshop on community forestry in 2009, organized by FAO, UNDP, the Food Security Working Group (FSWG) and the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MoECAF). The Pyoe Pin Programme, funded by DfID, SIDA and DANIDA, subsequently supported a review of Community Forestry in Myanmar, leading to a national workshop on the market led approach to community forestry, in collaboration with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). In 2013, RECOFTC supported the Government of Myanmar to help establish a Community Forestry National Working Group (CFNWG), while a Community Forestry Unit has been created within the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry. The 1995 Community Forestry Instructions (CFI) are currently being revised, and these will prioritize a market-led approach to community forestry, enabling forest user groups to make commercial use of timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) thereby incentivizing forest management and restoration. The 1992 Forest Law is also under revision, and the new forest law is expected to be finalized in 2016.

The Steering Committee of the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) selected Myanmar as one of six pilot countries in 2013 in which it aimed to strengthen forest-farm producer organization and their engagement with more coordinated cross-sectorial policy processes. The FFF approach in Myanmar is centered on community forestry (CF), and the empowerment of Community Forestry groups (user groups and producer associations).

A launch mission in 2013 was followed by a call for proposals. Small grants were awarded to six civil society organizations in December 2013 to strengthen business development within community forest user groups and develop marketing associations at township levels in Chin, Rakhine and Shan States and to link these groups to national policy processes. A second phase of grants was issued in 2015, through which regional-level producer associations were created in Rakhine and Southern Shan States. The FFF has also provided financial support to the CFNWG in 2015.

The Theory of Change

FFF developed a generic ToC that links development results at FFPOs level (organizational capacity, access to technologies and access to markets) with voice and participation in policy processes at national and global levels, in order to achieve the intended impact. The strategies to achieve impact are arranged under three Pillars, four outcomes and seven outputs, as presented in Figure 6. The MTE found that on this basis the internal logic of the project is largely sound between the outputs and outcomes level. However, a close analysis shows that it does not express the conditions required to translate development results into impact. The ToC lacks important building blocks in terms of assumptions and impact drivers²⁶ between the outcomes and impact level.

23 Macqueen (2016), <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G04020.pdf>? Also, Macqueen 2012, 2013, 2015... <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/G04020.pdf>

24 DFID (2014) Burma Forests: Research and Analysis, DFID, FCO and UKT&I Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/burma-forests/burma-forests>

25 Tint et al, 2014. <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/13571IIED.pdf>

26 Distinct from assumptions, impact drivers are factors that project/programme management can influence to a certain extent.

Between the levels of outcomes and impacts, the project design should express the main changes expected to take place as “intermediate states (IS)”, as the stepping-stones to impacts in the respective pathways. It is therefore important to indicate explicitly in the ToC the assumptions required to transform outcomes into intermediate results, and from there to planned impacts. The MTE reconstructed the ToC based on the original in order to include the missing building blocks (Assumptions and Impact Drivers); this provides a framework that more clearly articulates the conditions that are required to reach the expected impact. The reconstructed ToC does not modify the outputs, outcomes, impact and vision. Rather it places them together with Intermediate Results (the current Pillars), Assumptions and Impact Drivers into a graphic representation of the FFF.

The FFF ToC building blocks are illustrated in Figure 2. The original ToC blocks are illustrated in green with connecting black arrows, and are unchanged. Dashed black arrows were added to show the connectedness based on the project implementation experience to date. Other colors indicate the blocks that are missing in the original ToC: blue for the Assumptions, and dark orange for Impact Drivers.

During the country visits, the MTE team discussed with National Facilitators and their key partners the conditions necessary to achieve impact. The information obtained was used to identify factors and conditions that influence (or may influence) progress to impact. The reconstructed ToC shows that to achieve FFF impact, the following three Intermediary States (IS) that correspond to the three Pillars must be achieved:

- i) IS-1: FFPOs’ capacity for doing business is enhanced and they engage in policy decisions;
- ii) IS-2: Multi-sectoral stakeholders’ policy platforms are catalyzed;
- iii) IS-3: Local voices are linked to global processes.

To achieve IS1, FFF enhances the FFPOs’ capacity for doing business and engaging in policy decision processes. The MTE found that despite the considerable progress made in implementing related outputs at the FFPO level (as demonstrated later in this report), the real changes for sustainable results can take place if two important Assumptions are met:



Figure 6: Myanmar FFF results framework

- 1 Governments put in place conditions enabling FFPOs to engage in business and policy formation;
- 2 Partnerships with Financial Institutions (FIs) and Micro-Financial Institutions (MFIs) can be mobilized to address FFPOs' finance issues.

To achieve IS-2, FFF intends to catalyze multi-sectoral policy platforms. However, this highly political objective can be reached only if, as above, the Assumption that "Governments put in place conditions enabling FFPOs to engage in business and policy formation" is met.

To achieve IS-3, FFF intends to link local voices to global processes. This can be achieved if the Assumption that "avenues for exchange at regional and global levels are offered" is met.

The vision is stated as "Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes". This relates to 10 participating countries, which is an understatement because Pillar 3 of the project arguably leads to important regional and global impacts. FFF should integrate these impacts into the formulation of the vision. The MTE therefore added a plain black arrow linking the Intermediary State "Local voices are linked to global processes" to the vision, while the arrow link to impact is dashed.

The impact is stated as "Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' groups have improved income and food security from sustainable forest and farm management". This is also an understatement of the impact. Considering the importance that the vision attaches to livelihood improvement, the FFF should articulate the impact accordingly in order to cover the potential livelihood-related impacts and not a subset of those impacts (e.g. income and food security). Given the wide regional and country scope of project implementation, the livelihood-related impacts should be defined in terms of improved human, social, political, natural and physical capitals.

At the impact level, FFF intends to contribute to improving the income and food security of smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' groups through sustainable forest and farm management. This formulation is not wide enough to achieve the level of the vision, which emphasizes improving the livelihoods of smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' organizations and their decision-making over forest and farm landscapes. In addition to income and food security (financial capital and resilience), important impacts can be expected in terms of improved human capital, social capital, political capital, natural capital and physical capital.

Evaluation questions: key findings

This section presents the evaluation team's findings which were based on a desk review of FFF documents, interviews with the FFF team, a country visit, interviews with target FFPOs at grassroots level, and key programme stakeholders

Evaluation question 1: How relevant is the FFF's primary focus and logic in terms of its stated mission, in relation to the target countries' contexts, broader sustainable development initiatives, and smallholder farmers' needs?

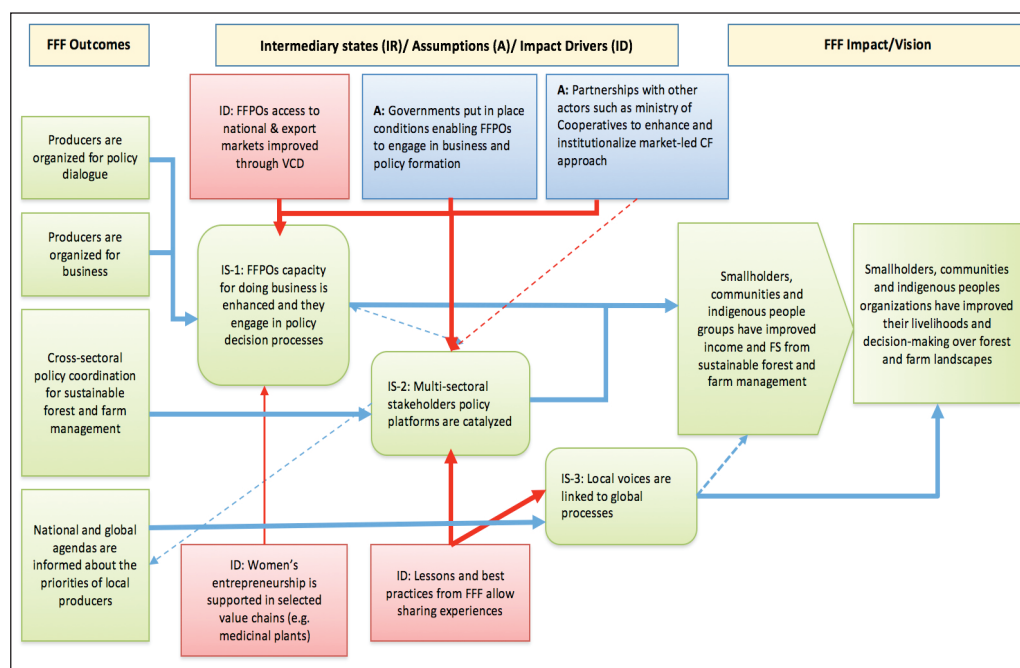


Figure 7: Reconstructed Myanmar FFF Theory of Change

The FFF approach of building on developments in the area of community forestry development is very relevant. The rate of deforestation in Myanmar is increasing, and is currently estimated at 0.9% in some areas. Community Forestry has been identified as a way for communities to protect and conserve forests, while benefiting from ecosystem services and livelihood opportunities. One of the greatest threats to community forests is weak legislation and a lack of enforcement of regulations, leading to encroachment by cronies and land grabbing. The FFF approach aims to give community forest users a greater voice at regional and national levels, such that they may be able to better ensure accountable governance to protect natural resources.

The FFF in Myanmar is building on the successes of earlier initiatives to develop community forestry, including the support by RECOFTC to the creation of the CFNWG, the DfID-funded Pyoe Pin project, and at the field level, projects including the UNDP watershed project in Southern Shan in 2005 and the Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Assets Restoration in Rakhine (CLEAR) project.²⁷ Pillar 1 of the FFF framework aligns strongly with the market-led approach to Community Forestry that has become more prevalent in recent years in Myanmar and has been given explicit focus in the revised community Forestry Instructions (CFI), 2016.

Evaluation question 2: Consistency with FAO's strategic objectives: How and to what extent does the project contribute to the broader FAO strategic objectives?

The project is aligned to FAO's Strategic Objective 2 (SO2), "Increase and improve the provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner". FFF has played an important role in the evolution of a community of practice group within FAO on cross-sectoral policy processes, and its publications on this issue stimulated considerable internal interest.

FFF is particularly well aligned with FAO's Strategic Objective 3 (SO3), "Reduce rural poverty", to which it contributes significantly. Under SO3, FAO recognizes that rural poverty is mostly concentrated among households of small-scale subsistence producers and family farmers. It further recognizes that women are often amongst the most marginalized, and therefore need to strengthen their right to the natural resources on which they depend. Though FFF started its activities slightly before FAO's current strategic objectives were adopted, its design was based on the same analysis of the factors of rural poverty. Its focus target groups are also poor

²⁷ Funded through the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) - a multi-donor fund established in 2009 to improve the lives and prospects of smallholder farmers and landless people in rural Myanmar.

smallholder farmers whose livelihoods are tied to small forests and farm assets. FFF design also took into account the marginalization of women in smallholder communities, and the streamlining of gender equity into its ToC.

Under SO3, FAO's focus is on a holistic approach to rural development and poverty reduction. Likewise, FFF emphasizes integrated approaches in which forests and other farm components are considered functionally interdependent components of the same rural landscapes, which must be sustainably managed and used to improve the livelihoods of their users. FFF also focuses on opportunities that strengthen linkages between forests, crops and animal production to improve sustainability. In this regard, members of FFF who supported FFPOs in Kenya told the MTE team that they consider trees on their farms as crops.

More specifically, the FFF is aligned to FAO's corporate Outcome 3.1: The rural poor have enhanced and equitable access to productive resources, services, organizations and markets, and can manage their resources more sustainably. The output under this outcome to which FFF is contributing most is Output 3.1.1: Support to strengthen rural organizations and institutions and facilitate empowerment of the rural poor. The FFF objectives under pillars 1 and 2 are closely in line with those of SO3. As such, FFF activities support the indicator for Output 3.1.1: Number of countries in which support was provided to create an enabling environment for rural organizations and institutions as well as the empowerment of the rural poor.

Regarding the support to national and local stakeholders, SO3 advocates providing policy tools to identify the critical conditioning factors that would enable sustainable rural development and poverty reduction. FFF contributes to this strategy because in its country level implementation it utilizes approaches and tools that enable sustainable rural development. Examples include the trainings given to smallholder farmers on MA&D, and being empowered to engage in business and to participate in the policy formation process, as well as in forest and farm-based value chains.

At the heart of FFF consistency with FAO's SO3 are FFF's Outcomes 1 and 2. Outcome 1 is instrumental in enabling poor rural smallholder farmers to engage in policy dialogue on forest and farm resource management and use-related issues. Outcome 2 is instrumental in enhancing the capacity of the same target groups to invest in forest and farm management to participate in value chains and integrate into the markets.

Evaluation question 3: Was the project design appropriate for achieving the outcomes and the vision?

The FFF approach is strongly centered on the market-led approach to CF development, as advocated for by ECCDI, MERN, IIED and the Pyoe Pin programme. Overall, the FFF approach in Myanmar of prioritizing community forestry is deemed appropriate and offers much needed support to existing initiatives. Enterprise development was seen to be a critical need for many of the communities that were visited by the evaluation team. The market training provided through the FFF is very much appreciated. In Southern Shan State, the training delivered by ECCDI was contextualized to the specific needs of individual groups and villages.

Many groups have income-generating activities outside of the CF area, such as rice production, tea production or avocado production. For these groups, the primary objective of the community forest certification was conservation and protection of the forest area. The development of enterprises based on CF products may be less relevant for these non-commercial groups, and the FFF could expand its market training to include crops and products that are grown outside the CF area. This approach was observed in Kenya, where FFF beneficiaries were supported not only for tree-nursery establishment, but also for poultry production as a complementary source of income. Similarly, the FFF and partners should continue to ensure that non-commercial groups are adequately represented in the CF network as the focus shifts towards a market-led approach.

In terms of the delivery mechanisms, at present, small grants are disbursed to NGOs who then support the establishment and strengthening of village-level Community forest producer associations. In other FFF focus countries, the grants are disbursed directly to the producer

organizations. Although it would be ideal to support the producer associations directly, as a first step, the NGOs can provide much-needed support to producer associations in developing business plans and training on specific value chain activities. Some groups have only been formed under the FFF project and therefore disbursement of small grants directly was not possible. The capacity of groups to handle the small grants may vary considerably.

Evaluation question 4: To what extent is the FFF on track to achieving outcomes across the three pillars, and what changes can be observed that are attributable to the FFF's interventions and are directly linked to the FFF's main objectives?

Output 1.1 Dispersed local producers are organized into effective and gender inclusive groups

FFF is supporting over 132 CF user groups in more than seven townships across four states in Myanmar. The support is delivered through local NGOs who provide assistance in the formulation of CF producer associations as well as provide training on CF enterprise development. The first phase of FFF in Myanmar focused on strengthening village-level producer associations, or on upgrading CF user groups to producer associations. Now however, the FFF is focusing on developing township-level producer associations and has already formed two state-level CF producer groups in Southern Shan State and in Rakhine State.

Table 10: Number of groups supported by Myanmar FFF partner NGOs

NGO	Number of organizations	Total	Men	Women
Friends of Wildlife	1	95	46	49
Social Vision Services	13	250	114	136
Myanmar Ceramics Society	4	77	55	25
Swanyee Development Fund	22	151	93	58
Myanmar's Heart Development Organization (MHDO)	5	248	136	122
Ecosystem Conservation and Community Development Initiative (ECCDI)	35 (30 village level + 5 township level)	3515	3143	372
Rakhine Coastal Regional Conservation Association (RCA)	45 (44 village level + 1 township level)	2102	1685	417
Ar Yone Oo	(not yet reported)	*	*	*
Total	132			

One of the most successful outcomes of forming CF producer associations is the dramatic increase in land tenure rights. CF User groups have tenure rights for three years, while producer associations have tenure rights over CF land for thirty years.

Inclusion of women on executive committees of CF Producer associations is low overall. The below table shows male/female membership of CF groups supported by ECCDI and is illustrative of the low level of representation by women on CF user group committees.

The revised CFI will reportedly include mandatory gender quotas for women on executive committees of CF groups, which will at least increase the numbers of women on management committees.

In Southern Shan state, FFF has supported ECCDI to form township level CFPPAs. The leaders of these township level associations have formed a Shan State Community Forestry Product Producers Association (CFPPA). In Rakhine, FFF has supported a local NGO called Rakhine Coastal Regional Conservation Association (RCA) and ECCDI to organize 42 existing Community Forest User Groups into a Rakhine State Community Forestry Product Producers Association (CFPPA).

Table 11: CF groups supported by ECCDI through Myanmar FFF

Township level CFPPA				Village level CFPPA						
Township	Central executive committee			Village	Executive committee			Number of members		
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Ywangan	8	1	9	Myinkyadote	11	-	11	296	4	300
				Nyaungbinkwa	9	-	9	146	4	150
				Myay Char	9	-	9	76	5	81
				Yay Win	8	-	8	30	1	31
				Kayin Pwet	5	-	5	10	2	12
				Kaing Su	13	-	13	78	28	106
				Pyay Thar	11	-	11	90	3	93
				Taw Kyal	11	-	11	80	28	108
				Yay Hla	11	-	11	78	2	80
				Kyaukku Ti	5	-	5	153	10	163
Total	8	1	9	Total	93	-	93	1037	87	1124
Pindaya	7	2	9	Pwe Hla	5	2	7	34	3	37
				Pwint Lan	5	-	5	147	33	180
				Paw San Thee	7	-	7	124	6	130
				Kyone	7	-	7	184	-	184
				Myin Mu	11	1	12	255	29	284
Total	7	2	9	Total	35	3	38	734	71	815
Kalaw	9	-	9	In Ni (Thein Gan)	10	-	10	73	8	81
				In Ni (Danu)	7	-	7	36	4	40
				In Ni (Myauk Kone)	8	-	8	24	4	28
				Taung Pat (Ywar Thit)	10	-	10	29	6	35
				Taung Pat (North)	10	-	10	84	11	95
Total	9	-	9	Total	45	-	45	246	33	279
Nyaung Shwe				Lwal Nyeint	7	3	10	105	33	138
				Mine Thout	10	-	10	118	6	206
				Taung Bo Kyee	10	-	10	90	15	138
				Nyaung Wun	12	-	12	169	37	124
				Nar Taung Kya	10	-	10	110	28	105
Total				Total	49	3	52	592	119	711
Pin Laung	10	1	11	Kone Chine	11	-	11	69	9	78
				Lone Kel	6	3	9	77	4	81
				Kan Hla	10	-	10	126	5	131
				Taung Kya	9	-	9	94	7	101
				Lein Le	9	-	9	168	27	195
Total	10	1	11	Total	45	3	48	534	52	586
				Total 5 Townships	267	9	276	3143	372	3515

As yet, an apex/national-level producer association has not been formed, although the CF Practitioner Network is due to be created in 2016. Presently, civil society (e.g. MERN, ECCDI) advocate on behalf of CF groups in discussions with the CFNWG.

Output 1.2 Producer groups work together with government and private sector to improve policy

At the time of the mid-term evaluation mission, the apex National Federation of Community Forest Products Producer Associations (CFPPA) had yet to be created. As such, producer organizations do not have direct representation on the CFNWG. The creation of the national CFPPA remains a goal of the FFF. One of the implementing NGOs (ECCDI) provided inputs to the revised CFI (2014) based on recommendations from producer organizations. However, direct representation by producer organizations on the CFNWG would be more transparent and accountable.

Some links with the private sector have been created, most notably with the bamboo and rattan association. Similarly, in Rakhine, there are intentions to link CF groups with hotels and tourist resorts in Thandwe – at present these links are small, e.g. the sale of brooms made from forest materials. There is potential for further linkages - e.g. for crab production or furniture production - but this has yet to happen.

Producers are more organized for business

Output 2.1: Producer organizations know about business and can access finance

In both states that were visited for the mid-term evaluation (Southern Rakhine and Southern Shan), there was varying progress in terms of business development. The capacities of the implementing NGOs vary considerably. In Ywangan in Southern Shan State, ECCDI has provided value-chain specific training to CF groups based on their needs and on consultation with the CF groups. Different groups have received different training based on the products that they have priorities and in general they are very satisfied with the quality of the trainings received. There was however untapped market potential in these villages – mostly relating to eco-tourism opportunities, and with regard to value chains centered on women's economic activities.

In Nyaungshwe, the evaluation team visited two villages where ceramic production is the primary economic activity. The production and sale of ceramic pots could potentially become a lucrative enterprise, particularly given the increasing popularity of Inle Lake and Nyaungshwe as a tourist destination. As yet however, the tourist market has yet to be tapped. Furthermore, one of the villages was still awaiting certification of the CF land, two years after FFF support began. This delay is mostly due to the fact that the land to be certified is currently zoned as 'bare' land and therefore requires government approval to be rezoned as forest land.

At present, the ceramic groups sell primarily to a small number of wholesale brokers who dictate the price and then resell the pots at a higher value in Aungban. There are potentially lucrative opportunities for exporting decorative pots and pottery crafts, on the back of the strong tourist industry in Inle Lake, for example through the creation of a display shop in Nyaungshwe where tourists could request certain items to be delivered to their home countries. The groups did mention that they have received more exposure to national markets through the support of the Myanmar Ceramics Association (MCS), and there is potential now to sell pots for clients in Yangon. One overlooked aspect of the ceramics case is that most of the crafting work is in fact carried out by women. There is potential to capitalize on this through the creation of a woman's only brand, which may carry favor with international customers. The FFF support has focused primarily on gaining certification for CF land which the group intends to use as a sustainable source of fuel wood (currently one of their biggest expenses). They also wish to use the CF land as a source of clay for the production of ceramics, although this will most likely need to be negotiated in developing the CF Management plan.

In Rakhine, the CF groups had yet to receive the training on market analysis and development at the time of the MTE mission. One of the biggest needs expressed by the groups in Rakhine was that they needed business ideas on how to utilize the CF areas. They had intentions to develop small industries in bamboo and rattan production from the inland CF lands, and small-scale crab and fishery production in the mangrove areas, although they as yet had no clear plan or direction as to how to proceed with this. The CF groups in Rakhine are much newer than those in Southern Shan State. FFF has built on a previous MERN project, Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Assets Restoration in Rakhine (CLEAR), which was a \$3 million project funded by the y Livelihood,

and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT).²⁸ The original goal of the CLEAR project was to create community forest user groups to help restore mangrove areas that had been nearly destroyed by typhoon Nargis in 2007, while also supporting livelihood and food security enhancement in the affected areas. The CLEAR project focused on Gwa and Kyeintali townships, and the FFF is now continuing the support to each of these Townships through the Rakhine Coastal Regional Conservation Association (RCA) and ECCDI.

There are potential markets for CF products in the Thandwe tourist resort. The CF user groups interviewed had intentions to sell rattan furniture and other small crafts to hotels in the tourist areas. Similarly, there may be potential markets for crabs produced in the mangrove areas. However, the CF groups may have to compete with already established large-scale crab producers in Thandwe if they decide to pursue this idea further. ECCDI is also encouraging linkages between CF groups and the Bamboo and Rattan Producers Association, whereby CF groups will produce bamboo and rattan for the Association, and will also develop skills in making furniture and other value-added products from the raw materials.

The market-led CF approach is much stronger in some areas than in others (for example, it is much stronger in Ywar Ngan, Southern Shan State compared to Gwa, Southern Rakhine State). There may be further scope for FFF Myanmar to enhance non-CF livelihood activities of beneficiary groups in tandem to CF activities. Many of the communities that were visited by the evaluation team had other economic activities outside of the CF activities, such as the production of avocado, rice or tea. In other FFF countries (e.g. Kenya), the FFF has supported similar non-forestry related livelihood activities in tandem to forest-related activities as a means to economically empower forest and farm communities.²⁹

Output 2.2: Establishment of services in support of small forest business

At present, the CF groups under FFF are most reliant on NGOs like ECCDI or MCS for small forest business development. Government support at the village and township level through the forestry department is primarily focused on the provision of seedlings and may not have the capacity to adequately deal with the concerns and problems faced by CF groups. The Forest Department at the national level is aware of this gap and it remains to be seen how the CF groups can benefit from business support from government bodies at the township level. One potential option is for the Ministry of Cooperatives to play a greater role on the CFNWG (depending on any restructuring to government ministries and departments under the new government).

The current support offered by NGOs, particularly by ECCDI is seen to be relevant to the needs of the CF groups, although the sustainability of this support may be questionable if government services are not sufficiently empowered to provide this support in the longer term.

Output 2.3: Experience sharing between producer organizations in-country

An in-country exchange workshop was held in Southern Shan in April 2014, as well as a reporting workshop in Yangon. Participants expressed appreciation for the exchange, and some organizations who had less experience in CF received advice from government and other NGOs about how to apply for CF certification during the Shan State exchange.

National Exchange visits are potentially very valuable given the different levels of progress between CF groups in different regions (e.g. between Rakhine and Southern Shan State).

There have also been international exchange visits to Nepal and Vietnam. Participants on these visits come from NGOs, Government, as well as CF user groups, and as such, these exchange visits also present a valuable opportunity for lessons-learning and the sharing of experiences.

28 LIFT is a multi-donor trust fund that improves the lives and prospects of rural poor people in Myanmar, with generous contributions from the United Kingdom, European Union, Australia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States of America. From the private sector, the Mitsubishi Corporation is a donor. To date, the donors have committed more than USD 400 million to LIFT. <http://www.lift-fund.org/>

29 The evaluation team visited groups in Kenya, where poultry production has been supported in tandem with tree nursery development as a complementing livelihood activity.

Catalyzing multi-sectoral policy platforms

Cross-sectoral policy coordination for sustainable forest and farm management

Output 3.1: Establishment and coordination of multi-sectoral policy platforms

The Myanmar Community Forestry National Working Group (CFNWG) was created in 2013 through support from RECOFTC. Members of the working group are representatives of line departments from the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the Ministry of Fisheries, Livestock, and Rural Development, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and Attorneys' General Office. Civil society organizations are also members, including the Myanmar Timber Merchant Association, ECCDI, EcoDev, the Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association (FREDA), the Food Security Working Group, network MERN and Metta Development Foundation. The CEO of MERN (who is also the FFF facilitator) is the current treasurer of the CFNWG.

In 2015, the FFF provided financial support the CFNWG, through a letter of agreement (LoA) with MERN. The FFF initially sought to create a LoA with the Forest Department, but it was soon decided that the existing LoA with MERN would be a more efficient way of channeling the funds for the CFNWG.

At this point the CFNWG does not yet have a producer group representative as a member. Civil society organizations represent CF User Groups (CFUGs), based on consultations with the groups. Therefore, producer associations need to rely on advocacy of civil society representatives on the CFNWG to raise issues to the CFNWG. There are plans to form a CF practitioner Network from the regional CFPPAs that are being formed. The CF Practitioner Network will serve as the direct representative of CF organizations on the CFNWG. However, the CF Practitioner Network has yet to be created.

Successful outcomes of the CFNWG include the revised Community Forest instructions (CFI), and the drafting of the new Forest Law. Both of these have been discussed by the CFNWG, with representatives from government and civil society present.

Many stakeholders consulted by the evaluation team admitted that there are somewhat weak linkages between the Agriculture Ministry and the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry. Agriculture-based livelihoods of CFUGs may therefore be overlooked in some cases. Given that nearly all the communities visited by the evaluation team were also practicing farmers, the CFNWG may benefit from including a representative of the Myanmar Farmers' Federation to represent stallholder farmers, similar to the FFF approach in Vietnam.

Output 3.2: Increased information sharing results in improved understanding and better policies for producer organizations

The CFNWG has already provided a consultative platform for discussing revisions to CF policies in Myanmar. In this regard, ECCDI prepared a draft revised CFI to the CFNWG in 2015. Similarly, discussion on the revision of the Forest Law will likely be on the agenda of the CFNWG. However, at present, CFUGs depend on civil society (such as ECCDI, MERN) to advocate for their needs on the CFNWG. In this regards, linkages between FFF pillar 1 and Pillar 2 remain a challenge in Myanmar.

There is a FFF focal point in the Ministry who communicates with field-level forest department offices regarding CF matters. In theory, it is this person who communicates the learnings from the FFF M&L system back to the field level forest department staff. However, a review of the annual reports finds that there may not be sufficient detail in the M&L reporting system for it to be of use at the field level.

The capacity of government forest department staff at the field-level remains a challenge. At present, township-level offices mostly provide tree-nursery services to CF groups, and the evaluation team was informed that these offices do not have the capacity to solve disputes or deal with other concerns of CF groups.

Linking local voices to global processes

National and global agendas are informed about the priorities of local producers

Output 4.1: Organizations representing local producers influence global processes

The evaluation team did not directly observe evidence of FFFPOS from Myanmar influencing global processes, although several people (from government, civil society and from CF user groups) attended the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in Rome.

Output 4.2: Learning and practices are shared within and between countries and regions, and globally

The Exchange visits to Nepal and Vietnam were very highly appreciated by all stakeholders interviewed in Myanmar who participated. The exchanges are seen to be of particular value in Myanmar given the political and historical context. At the village level, farmers reported learning from the experiences of other farmers/producers in other countries. Meanwhile, representatives from the Forest Department who participated in international exchange visits appreciated the exposure to the different systems in Vietnam and Nepal.

The exchange visits also provide an opportunity for information exchange and learning between the participants, as they consist of representatives from the forest department, CFNWG, NGOs and CFUGs.

Evaluation question 5: To what extent is the current operational modality contributing to the efficient achievement of the program outcomes?

The gap between phases one and two of the project in Myanmar created problems for some communities. One group reportedly lost some CF land to land-grabbers during the gap between FFF phases as they had not secured adequate tenure during the first phase. Similarly, some communities reported a gap of up to 1 year between the project phases. The delay between the phases was due to several factors, including the reporting and reviewing requirements following phase one, as well as administrative delays in the disbursement of funding for phase 2.

The six-month duration of the project phases was considered too short by many stakeholders, both at the community level and also by implementing NGOs, particularly in cases where the initial funds were received late. Nonetheless, where necessary, there was some flexibility in extending the project phase if activities were not completed during the 6 month time-frame.

Programme governance structure

FFF implementation and facilitation is handled by Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN), a national umbrella network for over 21 NGOs.³⁰ The CEO of MERN is the FFF facilitator. FAO Myanmar interacts with the FFF through a national forestry officer, but his workload is already considerably large. As such, given the capacity constraints of the FAO Myanmar office, MERN is taking the lead in terms of coordinating and implementing FFF activities in Myanmar.

Rather than providing small grants directly to CF groups/Producer organizations (as has happened in other FFF focus countries), the grants in Myanmar have been disbursed to local NGOs that are facilitating the emergence of forest-farm producer organizations in Myanmar. The first call for proposals was issued in May 2013, and six NGOs were initially selected for Phase 1. The second call for proposals was issued in December 2014, and small grants were issued to four NGOs. In addition, two agreements were made directly with ECCDI and the Rakhine Coastal Regional Conservation Association (RCA) to facilitate the establishment of state-level producer associations in Southern Shan State and Southern Rakhine State.

30 <http://mernmyanmar.org/mern-governance/#>

MERN and ECCDI are key players in the implementation of FFF in Myanmar. While MERN is the overall facilitator, ECCDI plays a crucial role in providing technical assistance, especially with regard to market training and development. A key agent of change for CF activities in Myanmar, and therefore for the entire FFF approach in Myanmar, is Dr. Kyaw Tint, the chairman of MERN and ECCDI. Dr. Tint is a former Director General of the government Forest Department and as such, both MERN and ECCDI have strong and valuable connections with the Forest Department and the CFNWG. The FFF facilitator is the CEO of MERN, and he has also been nominated as the treasurer of the CFNWG.

While MERN presently plays a crucial role in the coordination, facilitation and promotion of FFF activities in Myanmar, the intention is that the Forest Department will ultimately take over the promotion of market-led CF activities and scale up FFF activities using the achievements under FFF as a model. The creation of the CF Unit in the Forest Department is an encouraging sign that the government is taking CF more seriously, and there is considerable optimism with the recent change in government in March 2016. Nonetheless, there does not to be a concrete 'exit strategy' in place yet as to how this handover of responsibility from MERN to the Forest Department will be handled once FFF support ends. This is a major assumption in the theory of change which requires further consideration by the FFF team in Myanmar. There are some concerns about the long-term sustainability of the role of ECCDI and MERN in facilitating the entire process. At present, there is a strong relationship between the Forest Department (FD) and the NGOs. Sufficient steps may need to be taken or considered by the FFF in terms of providing capacity development to the Forest Department to take over similar activities in order to ensure long-term sustainability. Most worrying is the lack of capacity of township level forest department staff to deal with the problems and concerns of newly created CF groups.

Appropriateness of M&L System for program monitoring and progress reporting

The M&L system consist of annual reports by implementing NGOs which are synthesized by the FFF facilitator in the form of the annual FFF country report. The annual synthesis report does not provide extensive details on field-level activities, but is geared more towards the reporting requirements of the FFF management team at FAO HQ. Many of the reporting questions in the M&L system were not completed, or did not provide in depth information. Similarly, the individual reports from implementing NGOs varied greatly in their quality, with some reports providing extensive detail, while other reports tended to be limited in the quality of information provided.

It is not clear to what extent the results of the FFF M&L system are utilized by stakeholders in country. In theory, the system could be useful for forest department staff as a learning tool, particularly in terms of identifying issues and needs at the township and village levels and in facilitating local Forest Department Staff in understanding the needs of CF groups. However, at present, the reporting style does not contain sufficient detail on the challenges and obstacles faced by CF groups in different regions.

An additional point to consider is the capacity of village and/or township level groups to provide reporting if they are to receive direct grants in the future. CF groups already have a reporting requirement to government, which the evaluation team learned is often misunderstood by the CF groups or sometimes not conducted. Sufficient training on this reporting aspect may need to be conducted if CF groups are to receive direct grants in future through the FFF.

Evaluation question 6: What is the likelihood that FFF will contribute to the expected impact?

There is a strong likelihood of reaching the Impact of the Project and contributing to its Vision. Full project impact is normally reached some time or many years after completion of its activities. At this stage, the MTE can only assess the likelihood for reaching that Impact and for contributing to the Vision which is "Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples' organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes".

The likelihood of FFF rural poverty impact can be assessed by looking at the main livelihoods "building blocks" as follows:

Human capital. The strongest FFF results are in the fundamental domain of human capital development, in which there are considerable achievements in enhancing the stock of skills in FFPOs members (organizational, managerial, technological, MA&D). The smallholders that the MTE mission met were unanimous in their appreciation of the contribution of training to their performance in production, processing and marketing activities. The MTE also observed many cases at grassroots level of positive effect on the quality of life of women who participated in trainings.

Social capital. The most significant contribution of FFF to this domain has come from the support to FFPOs organizational capacity. Its interventions are increasing the stock of trust that FFPOs members have in the governance of their organizations, and strengthening solidarity in communities. Smallholders are being empowered through raised awareness on the benefits of working together. The FFPOs and their governing committees are effectively contributing to a sense of local ownership of FFF's results by their members.

Political capital. FFF supported the enhancement of the political capital of its target FFPOs through a diversity of trainings. As a result, FFPO leaders and leaders of their Apex organizations are in regular interaction with state services at national and subnational levels, and with members of parliament on matters relating to forest and farm management. Apex organizations take part in policy-making processes and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms and raise issues for discussion through these mechanisms.

Natural assets. FFF's main focus at the local level is advocacy role in the Government's decision on the transfer of forest tenure to local communities, and support to sustainable management and use of these resources. With this transfer, communities' natural assets have expanded, and as a result, local communities countrywide can clearly improve the use of management of the forest resources, and participate profitably in the forest-based value chains development processes.

Physical assets. In general, FFF grants to FFPOs do not cover investment in physical capital. There is therefore likelihood that FFF will have limited impact on FFPOs physical assets.

Financial assets. Due to limited data available, it is not possible to assess the full extent to which FFF is affecting financial assets of households of FFPOs members. From the interviews with FFPOs representatives in Myanmar, the MTE Team believes that production and value addition activities supported by FFF trainings are likely to positively affect household income.

Evaluation question 7: Has FFF been successful in engaging other partners in FFF-supported processes?

The FFF has taken advantage of the MERN network of NGOs, a number of which are implementing partners for the FFF. The FFF Myanmar has made formal agreements with the following partners:

- Myanmar Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation Network – to support the Community Forestry National Working Group (CFNWG)
- Ecosystem Conservation and Community Development Initiative (ECCDI) – for support to village-level, township-level and national-level community forestry product producers associations (CFPPAs) in Shan State
- Rakhine Coastal Region Conservation Association with ECCDI and MERN – for support to village-level, township-level and national-level CFPPAs in Rakhine State
- Myanmar Ceramics Society – for the establishment of a township-level association of wood and ceramics producers in Shan State
- Friends of Wildlife – for strengthening the Chin Producer Cooperative Association in Rakhine State
- Ar Yone Oo – for promoting an elephant-foot yam and silk farmer association in Chin State
- Social Vision Services – for facilitating the formation of smallholder producer groups into township-level associations in Ayeyarwady Delta
- RECOTFC – for capacity development to the Forest Department and non-state stakeholders in the assessment and monitoring of extent and effectiveness of community-based forestry in Myanmar

- Myanmar Heart Development Organization - to support the creation of CFPPAs in Ayeyarwady in Phase 1 of the project.

The MERN network is valuable for the direct implementation of FFF activities at community level. Meanwhile, MERN and ECCDI in particular are key partners in liaising with the Forestry Department and the CFNWG, given that the Chairman of MERN and ECCDI is the former Director General of the Forestry Department. ECCDI and MERN have recently developed a new partnership with ICRAF to develop agroforestry techniques for alternatives to shifting cultivation to provide technical assistance alongside the business support offered through the FFF.

However, apart from RECOFTC, there have been no direct partnerships with other regional or international-level partners. Such partnerships could facilitate scaling up and provide further fund-raising opportunities (such as happened in Kenya with We-Effect). As previously mentioned, the FFF has synergies with other initiatives in Myanmar, specifically the Pyoe Pin project funded by DfID, DANIDA and SIDA. Such synergies may provide future opportunities for the scaling up of FFF activities in Myanmar.

Evaluation question 8: How sustainable is the FFF concept of investing in the organizational capacity of forest farm producer organizations – and how might this be enhanced?

There are increasing signs of interest in community forestry development in Myanmar, particularly with the creation of the CF Unit in the Forestry Department. Meanwhile, there is strong optimism that the situation will improve further under the new government.

Ownership by the government is a critical aspect of the sustainability of the FFF concept. While the implementation arrangements with MERN and the NGO network are effective in the short term, there are concerns about the longer term sustainability of this arrangement. There is no clear exit strategy for the eventual handover of coordination to the Forest Department. The FFF theory of change in Myanmar hinges on a big assumption on the capacity and willingness of the government to coordinate and develop community forestry in Myanmar. Similarly, there is a big assumption on the capacity of the yet-to-be-created CF Practitioner Network to adequately represent the needs of CF groups at the national level.

At the time of the evaluation mission, civil society support through MERN and ECCDI is still a critical and much-needed component of CF development in Myanmar. The evaluation strongly supports the continuation of FFF support in Myanmar, particularly under Pillar 2.

At the field level, groups attest that they will continue to keep the CFs active and that they will do so with or without FFF support. A previous UNDP 'watershed' project in 2005 assisted the creation of CF user groups in Southern Shan State; however, the evaluation learned that these groups became inactive following the closure of the UNDP project and these groups did not become active again until FFF activities commenced in 2014. The creation of township level and regional producer associations does provide additional motivation to CF user groups that may have been missing from the UNDP project, and this may prevent the groups from becoming inactive after the project ends, as previously happened. In any case, the guarantee of tenure over CF land for 30 years for CF Producer Associations is a clear indication of sustainability, at least in terms of protection of the CF area.

There are mixed sustainability prospects regarding enterprise development. Some groups (e.g. Ywar Ngan, Southern Shan State) have much stronger prospects of developing and maintaining business ventures, while others (e.g. in Kyeintali, Rakhine) have yet to develop business ideas. There are also challenges of market access for nearly all groups.

The lack of capacity of field-level forest department offices and staff is a concern for the sustainability of the development of CFs in Myanmar. Presently, Forest Department staff do not have the sufficient skills to assist in market-led development of community forests and this aspect is primarily handled by civil society organizations such as ECCDI. Further linkages could be formed with the Ministry of Cooperatives through the CFNWG.

In general, there are high expectations of the newly formed government and government stakeholders are hopeful that there will be increased inter-ministerial collaboration under the new government.

Crosscutting issues

Evaluation question 9: To what extent have gender and human rights been taken into account in the design of the FFF and during the implementation?

Membership of CF groups by women varies between the different groups. In some groups, membership is dominated by men. For example, groups supported by the Rakhine Coastal Region Conservation Association (RCA) reported membership of 80% men to 20% women. Similarly, for the 30 CFPAs supported by ECCDI in Southern Shan State, out of the 3515 members, 3143 are male (89.5%) and 372 are female (10.5%). Meanwhile, out of the 13 groups supported by Social Vision Services in Bogalay Township, the overall proportion of males to females was 45% male, 55% female. In 2014, the FFF annual report states that out of 95 leaders of producer groups supported by the FFF, 25 leaders were women. Meanwhile, out of 47 leaders of producer groups supported by the FFF in Southern Shan State in 2015, 5 leaders are women.

Men were seen to occupy decision-making positions in nearly all CF groups visited by the evaluation team, even in groups where the primary activity of the group revolved around women's livelihood activities (for example, the ceramic groups in Nyaungshwe, where women are mostly responsible for the production of the pots). However, the revised CFI will introduce a set requirement for women's representation on CF management committees which may increase women's representation.

In Southern Shan State, the market training and product-specific trainings received by CF groups may have overlooked certain potentially lucrative activities that are performed solely by women. For example, in Kyauk Ku Lay village, Ywar Ngan Township, the collection of wild medicinal plants in the CF areas is an unexplored value chain that could receive further focus. The evaluation team learned that there is strong demand for certain medicinal plants, particularly from Chinese markets where such plants are important for traditional Chinese medicine. Currently, the women are selling these plants unprocessed, but they are aware that the plant products fetch a much higher price further down the value chain.

In Rakhine, it is not yet clear who will benefit (i.e. men or women) from the FFF training, for example regarding crab production. Similarly, there are no explicit instructions in the market analysis and development training for the identification and development of women's only value chains. The development of women's only brands could potentially be a strong selling point, particularly for groups with opportunities to sell to international markets, such as the ceramic groups in Inle Lake.

Overall, the FFF Myanmar needs to give more **explicit** focus to the particular needs of women with respect to CF activities. This needs to be strengthened at all levels, from the CFNWG at the national level down to the CFUGs at village level.

The FFF has targeted vulnerable ethnic minority groups. For example, in Rakhine State, through FFF support, Friends of Wildlife is assisting a Chin minority ethnic group in attaining CF certification, while providing training on wildlife conservation practices.

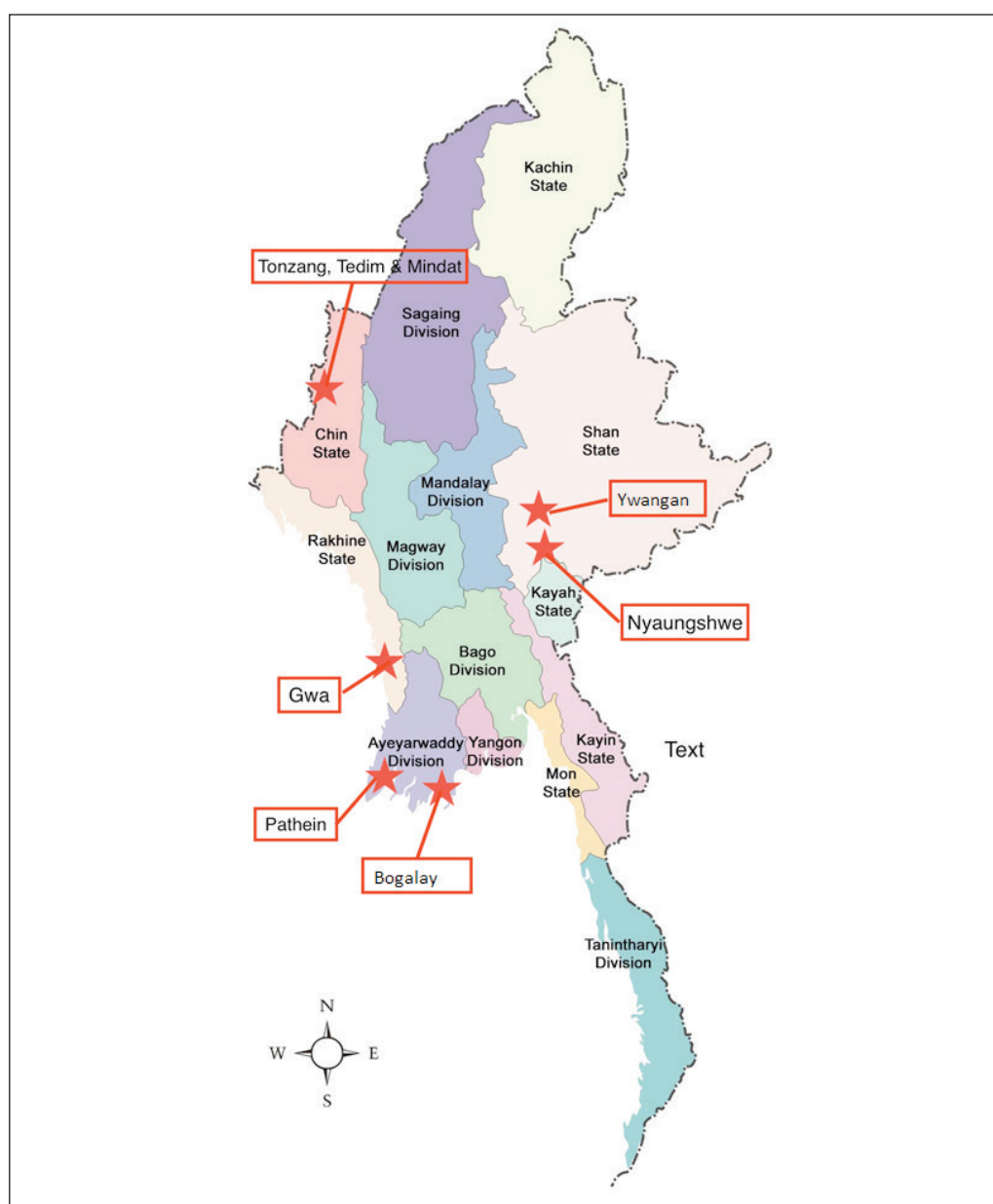


Figure 8: Map of Myanmar showing FFF project sites

Table 12: FFF project sites in Myanmar

S/No.	Project name	Project period	Implementing organization	Region	Township	Remark
1	Promoting Rural Livelihoods through Community Forestry in Chin State of Myanmar	1 November 2015 to 31 March 2016	AYO	Chin State	Tonzang, Tedim & Mindat	On-going project, but able to sign in January 2016
2	Establishment of community forest products producer association and strengthening community forestry enterprises in Southern Shan State	1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015	ECCDI	Southern Shan State	Ywangan, Pindaya, Kalaw, Nyaung Shwe and Pinlaung	Just finished project

S/No.	Project name	Project period	Implementing organization	Region	Township	Remark
3	Ensuring the sustainability of Chin Producer Cooperative Association involving in Sub-regional level CFPPA of Rakhine through forest-farm practices and market-led	1 Dec 2015 to 31 August 2016	FOW	Southern Rakhine State	Gwa	On-going project, but able to sign in January 2016
4	Strengthening Community Forestry National Working Group (CFNWG) for promoting innovative approaches to advance Community Forestry, Improving livelihoods of forest and farm producers	1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016	MERN/CFNWG	(CF Unit, Forest Department)	(CF Unit, Forest Department)	On-going project
5	Establishment of Regional level Community Forest Products Producer Association in Rakhine, Supporting MERN Membership Process for Forest and Farm Producer Groups and Developing an Effective Communication and Engagement Strategy	18 February 2015 to 28 February 2016	RCA-ECCDI-MERN	(MERN) and Southern Rakhine	Gwa and Kyeintali sub-township	About to finish in the end of February 2016
6	Establishment of Township-level Association of Wood and Ceramics Producers' Groups	1st November 2015 to 30 June 2016	MCS	Southern Shan State	Nyaung Shwe	On-going project, but able to sign in January 2016
7	Capacity development to forest department and non-state stakeholders in assessment and monitoring of extent and effectiveness of community based forestry (CBF) in Myanmar	Nov 2015 to 30 June 2016	RECOFTC	FD staffs and FFF IPs	FD staffs and FFF IPs	On-going project
8	Facilitating the formation and strengthening of Smallholder producer groups into Township Level Producers Association in Ayeyarwady Delta forest landscape to contribution livelihood enhancement	1 December 2015 to 31 May 2016	SVS	Ayeyarwady Region	Bogalay	On-going project, but able to sign in January 2016
9	Support to Community Forestry (CF) and Community Forest User Groups (CFUG) from 7 villages in Ywangan Township, Southern Shan State to establish a community forest product-based enterprise contributing to socio-economic development	18 November 2013 to 18 January 2015	ECCDI	Southern Shan State	Ywangan	Project is finished
10	Supporting the livelihood sustainability of a Chin tribe community in Southern Rakhine Yoma, through introducing forest-farm practices	15 November 2013 to 15 January 2015	FOW	Southern Rakhine State	Gwa	Project is finished

S/No.	Project name	Project period	Implementing organization	Region	Township	Remark
11	Facilitate the process of self-organization of Wood-fuel User Groups (WUP) and the Planter and Producer Forester Groups (PPFG) for the establishment of Community Managed and Planted Forestry (CMPF) at Kyauktaing and Naungbo pottery villages in Inle Lake, Shan State	15 November 2013 to 15 January 2015	MCS	Southern Shan State	Nyaung Shwe	Project is finished
12	Support to mangrove forest dependent communities to establish a community enterprise contributing to the improvement to their economic and livelihood conditions in the Udoe and surrounding mangrove forest	15 November 2013 to 15 January 2015	MHDO	Ayeyarwady Region	Pathein	Project is finished
13	Facilitative support to issue a call for proposals for the establishment and strengthening of smallholder producer groups in Myanmar forest landscapes	29 May 2013 to 28 February 2015	NAG	Country wide assessment	Country wide assessment	Project is finished
14	Facilitation the process of formation and strengthening of smallholder producer groups in forest landscapes in Kantbala Chaung, Pyin Bo Lay, Kone Tan Pauk, Kwun Thar Yar villages in Bogalay Township, contributing to enhance their livelihood	16 November 2013 to 16 January 2015	SVS	Ayeyarwady Region	Bogalay	Project is finished
15	Facilitation to the process of self-organization of forest producers from five villages for forming forest user groups in Kadon Kani reserved forest and contributing to sustainable development by balancing the forest protection and livelihood	18 November 2013 to 18 January 2015	SDF	Ayeyarwady Region	Bogalay	Project is finished

People met during Myanmar mission

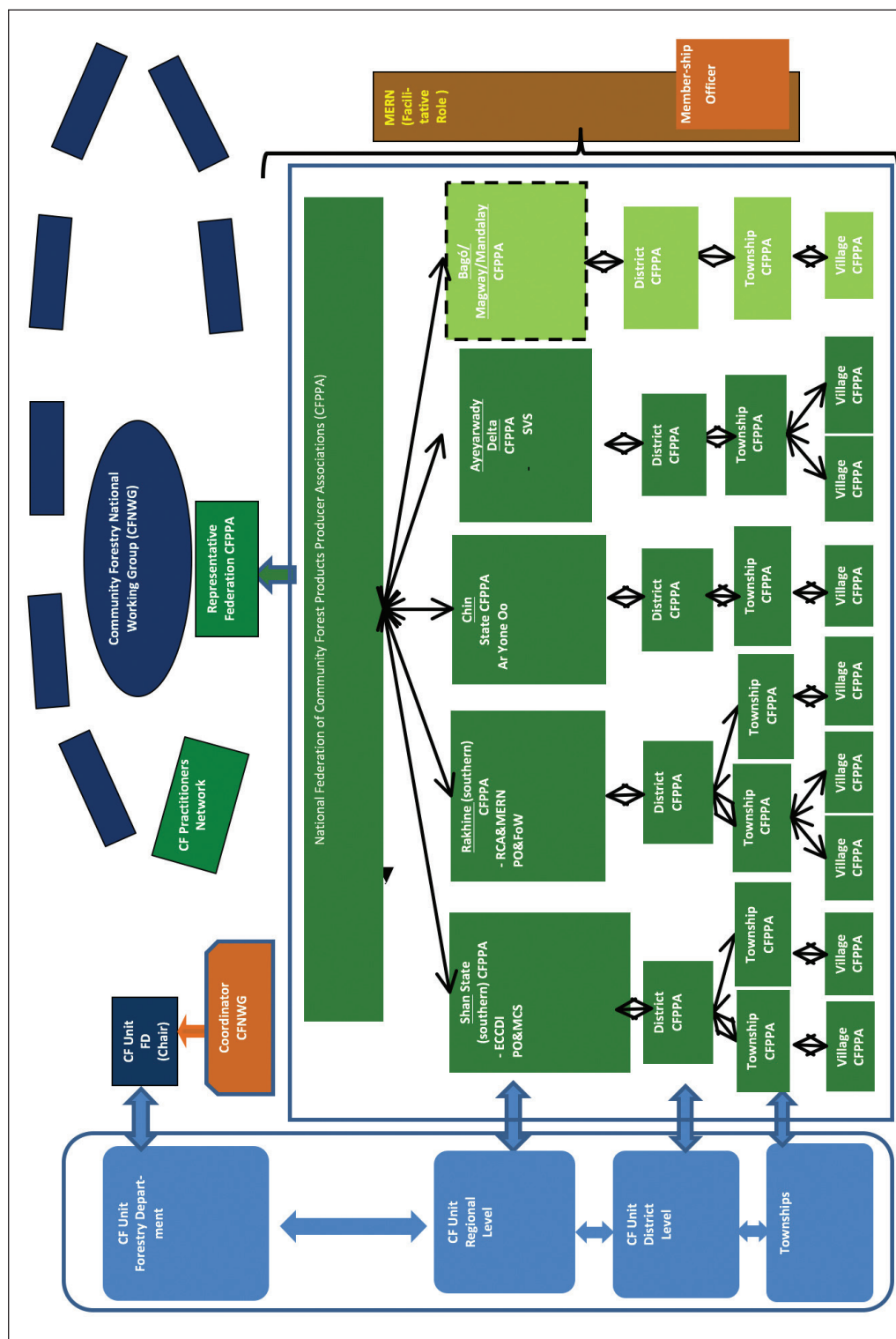
Name	Role/title	Institution
U Paing Htet Thu	Intern	MERN
Dr Kyaw Tint	Chairman	ECCDI/MERN
U Aung Thant Zin	FFF Facilitator/ CEO MERN / Treasurer, CFNWG	MERN
U Phyo Thu	Project staff	ECCDI
U Myat Ko Oo	Asst. Planning and Operations Officer	ECCDI
Prof. Ohn Lwin	Professor	Forest Products Department, University of Forestry (MoECFAF)
U Kyaw Kaw Lin	Deputy Director General	Forest Department, MoECAAF
U Bo Ni	Director/FFF Focal point	Watershed Management Division, Forest Department, MoECAAF
U Tint Swe	Director	Training, Research and Development Division, Forest Department, MoECAAF
U Myo Min	Director	Natural and Plantation Forest Division, Forest Department, MoECAAF
Dr. Ei Ei Shwe Zin	Staff Officer	Forest Research Institute, Forest Department, MoECAAF
U Sein Moe	Staff Officer	CF Unit, Forest Department, MoECAAF
Dr. Maung Maung Than	Country Programme Coordinator	RECOFTC
Ms. Bui Thi Lan	FAO Representative	FAO Myanmar
U Ye Kaung	Forestry officer	FAO Myanmar
U Aung Swe	Assistant FAO Representative (Program)	FAO Myanmar
Daw Thin Thin Mya	Project In-charge	Myanmar Ceramic Society
U Myint Aung	Chairman	Friends of Wildlife
U Naung Zin Latt	Project In-charge	Social Vision Services
U Than Htay	Vice Chairman)	RCA
U Myint Aung	Field Technician)	RCA
Daw Kyu Kyu Than	Admin & Finance Assistant	RCA
U Kyi Soe Lwin	Project Officer	Friends of Wildlife
U Zaw Lin Than	Township FD officer, Gwa	Forest Department, Gwa
U Myint Maung	Secretary	Kyeintali CF Group
U Myin Aung	Chairman	Sundar CF Group
U Win Pe	Chairman, CFUG	A Le Chaung CF Group, Ywarngan
U Khin Maung	CFUG Member	Kyauk Ku Lay Ywar CF Group, Ywar Ngan
Daw Mya Yin	CFUG Member	Kyauk Ku Lay Ywar CF Group, Ywar Ngan
U Kyaw Mya	CFUG Member	Kyauk Taing Village CF Group, Inle, Nyaung Shwe
U Hla Kyaw	CFUG Member	Kyauk Taing Village CF Group, Inle, Nyaung Shwe
U Kyaw Soe	CFUG Member	Kyauk Taing Village CF Group, Inle, Nyaung Shwe
Thazin Oo	CFUG Member	Ywar Ngan
Khin Moe	CFUG Member	Ywar Ngan
Khin Myo	CFUG Member	Ywar Ngan
Zin Min Thant	CFUG Member	Ywar Ngan
Kyaw Win	CFUG Member	Ywar Ngan

Name	Role/title	Institution
Saw Htun	CFUG Member	Ywar Ngan
Ba Saung	CFUG Member	Ywar Ngan
U Myint Hla	CFUG Member	Kyeintali
U Myint Maung	CFUG Member	Kyeintali
U Tin Han	CFUG Member	Kyeintali
Daw Myint Khaing	CFUG Member	Kyeintali
Daw May Myint	CFUG Member	Kyeintali
Daw Khin Toe Yi	CFUG Member	Kyeintali
U Tun Min	Chairman, CFUG	Ywar Thit Kone
U Tin Aung Lay	Treasurer, CFUG	Ywar Thit Kone
U Min Swe	Secretary, CFUG	Ywar Thit Kone
U Myint Win	CFUG Member	Ywar Thit Kone

Itinerary and meetings for FFF mid-term evaluation mission in Myanmar, March 2016

Date	Time	Proposed meeting & trip	Mode of travel/ Meeting venue	Night stop
19.3.2016 Saturday	05:00 09:30-11:30 13:00-19:30	Arrival in Yangon Meeting with FFF Project IPs (ECCDI, FOW, SVS, MCS, MHDO, AYO) Travel to Gwa, Kyeintali Southern Rakhine	By flight MERN meeting room By Car	Kyeintali
20.3.2016 Sunday	08:30-16:00	Meeting with village CFUGs, Township CFPPA and District/Sub-Rakhine CFPPA Visit to project villages	meeting room, Ktl By Car	Kyeintali
21.3.2016 Monday	06:30-14:00 16:00-16:30	Travel back to Yangon Briefing with FAO-Myanmar	By Car	Yangon
22.3.2016 Tuesday	06:45-08:50 09:30-10:30 11:00-16:00	Travel to Heho (Southern Shan State) Travel from Heho – Aungban – Pwehla village Visit to Pwehla village, meeting with village, township and Southern-Shan State CFPPA members Travel to Nyaung Shwe (Southern Shan State) Meeting with FFF-MCS project in-charge	By flight (UB) By car By car By car	Hotel in Nyaung Shwe
23.3.2016 Wednesday	07:00-16:30	Visit to a FFF-MCS project village and meeting with producer members Visit to another a FFF-MCS project village and meeting with producer members	By boat	Nyaung Shwe
24.3.2016 Thursday	07:00-08:30 09:25-10:35 17:30-18:05	Travel from Nyaung Shwe to Heho Airport Heho to Yangon Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw	By car By flight By flight	Nay Pyi Taw
25.3.2016 Friday	09:30-11:30 13:30-14:10 16:00-16:30	Meeting with DG-FD, CFNWG Chairman and members Nay Pyi Taw to Yangon Debriefing at FAO-Myanmar	FD meeting room By flight	Yangon
26.3.2016 Saturday	09:30-11:30 15:20	Meeting with National Consultant and FFF Country Facilitator Depart Yangon	By flight	

Organogram of the FFF support in Myanmar



6. Vietnam country case report

Context of the Vietnam FFF programme

Vietnam is a country in transition from a centrally planned economy to a market oriented economy, with a one-party government. It has a population of around 90 million people of which 75% live in rural areas. It has developed rapidly over the last two decades as a result of economic reforms undertaken since the 1980s. It recorded high growth rates which allowed to reach the middle-income status in 2010. Although poverty reduction over the last two decades has fallen impressively it remains overwhelming in rural areas. The country has transformed the agrarian sector from the one dominated by state-led cooperatives to household-based farms with relatively equal and secured land tenures. A sizable part of the population – mainly ethnic minority and other vulnerable groups – risk stagnating in poverty without access to basic services.

The country is administratively divided into provinces, the provinces into districts and the districts into communes. The communes are governed by Commune Peoples Committees (PC), which is the lowest level of government, and normally covers between six to fifteen villages. Extension services for agriculture, forestry and fishery are provided through the PC at commune or, at least, district, provincial and national levels. Farmers access to marketing, irrigation/drainage, veterinarian services and credit, and others is through various combinations of the state- or private-own commercial enterprises, service providers, banks and sometimes user groups.

Rural Viet Nam is characterized by extensive social networks which may be informal, semi-formal or formal organizations. These organizations are important elements in the country's rural transformation.

While Viet Nam is not a multiparty democracy, there are formal legal and institutional settings which provide local people with a relative high degree of influence on their own situation and the people have several channels of voicing concerns. In rural contexts, these settings may be farmers organizations for example, which play an important role in promoting farmers self-help and cooperation. The ideology of the party emphasizes stability and equality. The Government ensures that the growing inequality does not become a source of dissatisfaction which could pose a threat to stability. For this reason, development assistance to rural areas is a high priority.

The Government of Viet Nam has adopted its ten-year vision (Socio-Economic Development Strategy, SEDS, to 2020) and endorsed its five-year plan, which is equivalent to a PRSP (Socio-Economic Development Plan, SEDP, 2011-2015). The Government continues to focus its efforts on achieving high growth, which is seen as a prerequisite for generating the large number of jobs (around 1.5 million per annum) that are needed to absorb the increasing population and the migration to urban areas. It also emphasizes sustainable development, dealing with climate change, and maintaining social equity. In the short term, the Government's priority is on maintaining macroeconomic stability, improving the business environment, providing support to vulnerable groups and poorer regions, and designing a new social protection system.

FFF in Viet Nam is implemented by Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU). It was launched in August 2014, but implementation started in March 2015. Baseline studies in Bac Kan and Yen Bai Provinces and a planning workshop took place in 2015. Many activities were conducted in 2015, including a facilitation skills training that was organized for 24 Facilitators and heads of FFPOs. The Target FFPOs are located in two Northern Provinces, Bac Kan (Ba Be District: 2 communes) and Yen Bai (Yen Binh District: 1 communes, and Tran Yen District: 1 commune). The characteristics of FFPOs are given in Table 13.

Table 13: Characteristics of FFF's target producer organizations in Vietnam

FFPO	Registration Status	Number of household members			Number of members/ direct beneficiaries			Type of production
		Headed by male	Headed by female	Total	Males	Females	Total	
Yen Bai province								
Lem acacia cooperation group	Registered with commune authority	9	6	15	21	18	39	Timber and processing
Hop Thinh acacia cooperation group	Registered with commune authority	6	8	12	15	16	31	Timber/ fruit tree
Dao Thinh Cinnamon cooperation group	Registered with commune authority	29	4	33	47	39	86	Non-timber/ bee keeping
Bac Kan province								
May Phay forestry cooperation group	Registered with commune authority	10	7	17	22	21	43	Timber and processing
Khuoi Coong forestry cooperation group	Registered with commune authority	8	4	12	16	13	29	Timber/ poultry
Khuoi Slien forestry cooperation group	Registered with commune authority	5	4	9	11	9	21	Timber
Thach Ngoa Star anise group	Registered with commune authority	8	1	9	14	11	25	Non-timber processing/ forest vegetable
Membership totals		73	34	107	147	127	274	

Reconstruction of a contextualized FFF Theory of Change at country level

FFF developed a generic ToC that links development results at FFPOs level (organization capacity, access to technologies, access to markets) with voice and participation in policy processes at national and global levels, in order to achieve the intended Impact. The strategies to achieve the Impact are arranged under three Pillars, 4 Outcomes and 7 Outputs as presented in Figure 9. The MTE found that on this basis, the internal logic of the project is largely sound between the Outputs and Outcomes level.



Figure 9: Vietnam FFF results framework

However, a close analysis shows that it does not express the conditions that should be in place to allow development results to reach impact. The ToC lacks important building blocks in terms of Assumptions and Impact Drivers³¹, between Outcomes level and Impacts level.

It should be recalled that it is between the levels of Outcomes and Impacts that the design should express the main changes that are expected to take place as "Intermediate States (IS)", as the stepping-stones to Impacts in the respective pathways. It is therefore important to indicate explicitly in the ToC what are the required assumptions allowing Outcomes to lead to intermediate results (IR), and from there to planned impacts. The MTE reconstructed the ToC based on the original one in order to include the missing building blocks (Assumptions and Impact Drivers); this provides a framework that more clearly articulates the conditions that are required to reach the expected impact. The reconstructed ToC does not modify the Outputs, Outcomes, Impact and Vision. Rather it places them together with Intermediate Results (the current Pillars), Assumptions and Impact Drivers into a graphic representation of the FFF.

The different FFF ToC building blocks are illustrated as shown in Figure 10. The original ToC blocks are illustrated in green color and connecting black arrows, and are unchanged. Dashed black arrows are added to show the actual connectedness from the Project implementation experience to date. Other colors indicate the blocks that are missing in the original ToC: blue for the Assumptions, and dark orange for Impact Drivers.

³¹ Distinct from assumptions, impact drivers are factors that project/programme management can influence to a certain extent.

During the visit in Viet Nam, the MTE Team discussed with National Facilitator and key program partners the conditions that were necessary to reach impact. The information obtained was used to reconstruct a ToC for FFF in the context of its work in the country. The reconstructed ToC (Figure 10) shows that to reach the FFF Impact, three Intermediary States (IS) that correspond to the 3 Pillars must be achieved; these are:

- i) IS-1: FFPOs capacity for doing business is enhanced and they engage in policy decision;
- ii) IS-2: Multi-sectoral stakeholders policy platforms are catalyzed;
- iii) IS-3: Local voices are linked to global processes.

To achieve IS-1, The MTE found that the following conditions must be met:

A: Partnerships with Banks extend loans to FFPOs.

ID: FFPOs access to national & export markets improved through VCD.

ID: FFPOs are supported to become cooperatives.

To achieve IS-2, the MTE also found that the following conditions must be met:

A: Authorities at all levels create enabling conditions for FFF strengthening.

ID: Lessons and best practices from FFF allow sharing experiences.

To achieve IS-3, the following conditions must be met:

A: Avenues for exchange at regional and global levels are offered

ID: Lessons and best practices from FFF allow sharing experiences.

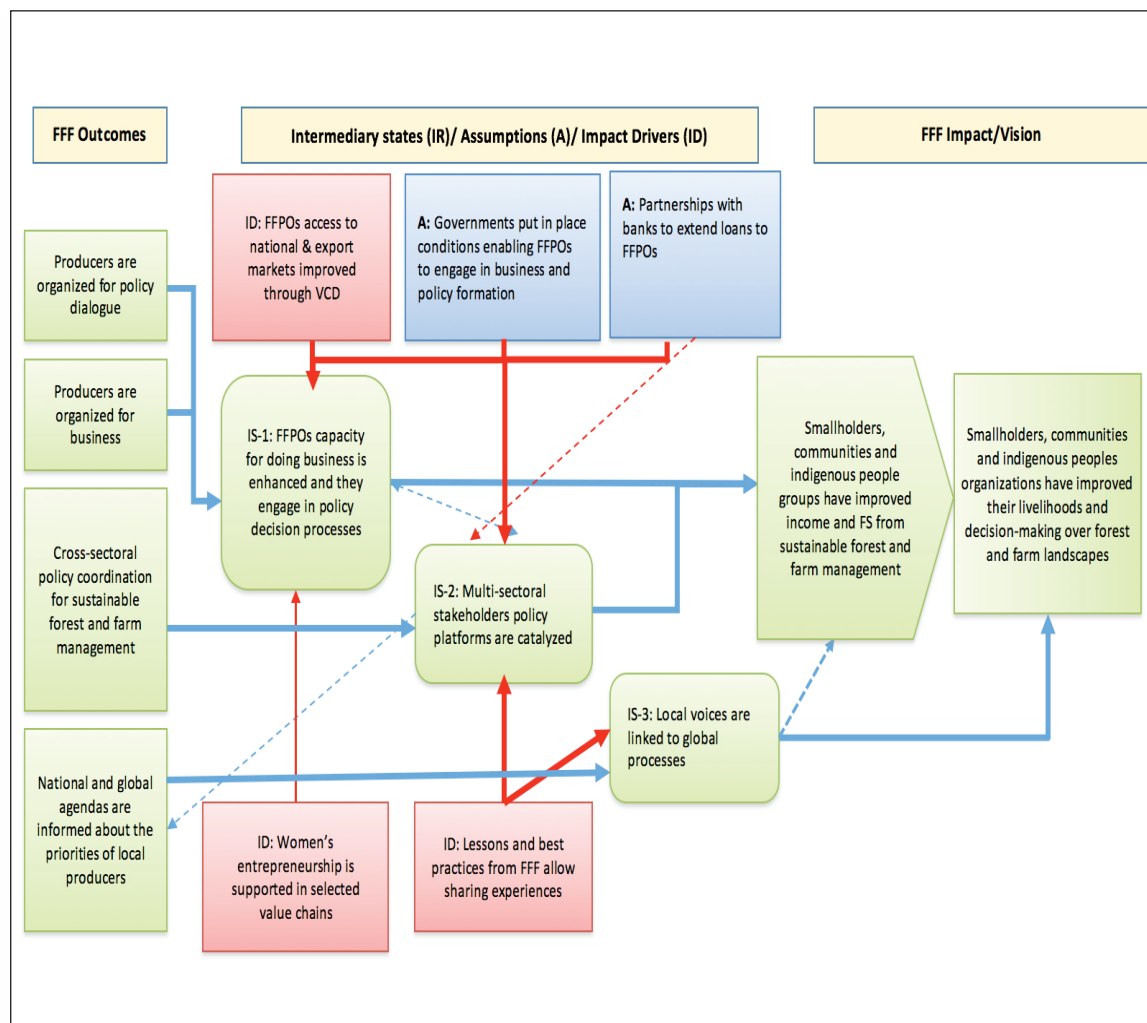


Figure 10: Reconstructed Vietnam FFF Theory of Change

The Vision is stated as “Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples’ organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes» is wider than the context of Viet Nam. This is why the MTE added a plain black arrow linking the Intermediary State “Local voices are linked to global processes” to the Vision, while the arrow link to Impact is dashed.

Evaluation questions: key findings

This section presents the findings which are based on the desk review of the FFF documents, country visit and interviews with FFF Team, target FFPOs at grassroots level and key program stakeholders at provincial, district and communal levels.

Evaluation question 1: How relevant is FFF primary focus and logic in terms of its stated mission, in relation to the target countries’ contexts, to broader sustainable development initiatives, and to smallholder farmers’ needs?

FFF is strongly aligned with the Government policies, strategies and legal frameworks regarding rural social and economic development. In particular, the Prime Minister’s Decision No 673-QĐ/TTg of 2012 enabling VNFU directly to implement and collaborate with ministries in implementing the programs and projects to develop the rural economy, culture and society in the period 2011-2020.

The programme is highly relevant to smallholders’ development needs. According to the FFPOs representatives interviewed by MTE mission, by providing funding directly to FFPOs to support their projects, FFF fills a gap in both donor assistance and government assistance. It narrows this gap by recognizing that FFPOs can elaborate proposals based on the priorities of their members, implement them, and be the drivers of change for their own development if they receive support to address the challenges facing them.

In particular, FFF is strongly relevant to the needs of most smallholder upland and forest farmers. Their livelihoods depend on small farms in forest and farm landscapes. Their production in farming and forest plantation contributes significantly to forestry sector growth and local and national economies. However, many farmer households in upland and mountain areas barely cover their food needs and suffer from poverty during unfavorable seasons. On the other hand, many smallholders can produce some forest and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), but they usually sell their products individually to middlemen and traders at unfavorable prices.

Evaluation question 2: Consistency with FAO’s strategic objectives: How and to what extent does the project contribute to the broader FAO strategic objectives?

FFF’s activities in Viet Nam are aligned to FAO’s Strategic Objective 2 (SO2), «Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner». They are particularly aligned with FAO’s Strategic Objective 3 (SO3), “Reduce rural poverty”, to which they strongly contribute. Under SO3, FAO recognizes that rural poverty is mostly concentrated among households of small-scale subsistence producers and family farmers, among others. It further recognizes that women are often amongst the most marginalized and need strengthened rights to the natural resources on which they depend. Though FFF started its activities slightly before current FAO’s strategic objectives were adopted, its design was based on the same analysis of the factors of rural poverty. Its focus target groups are also poor smallholders’ farmers whose livelihoods are tied to small forests and farm assets.

More specifically, the FFF programme in Viet Nam is aligned to FAO’s corporate outcome 3.1: The rural poor have enhanced and equitable access to productive resources, services, organizations and markets, and can manage their resources more sustainably. The output under this outcome to which FFF is contributing most is Output 3.1.1: Support to strengthen rural organizations and institutions and facilitate empowerment of rural poor.

At the heart of FFF consistency with FAO’s SO3 are principally FFF’s Outcomes 1 and 2. Outcome 1 is instrumental in enabling poor rural smallholder farmers to get organized and be able to engage

in policy dialogue on forest and farm resource management and use related issues. Outcome 2 is instrumental in enhancing the capacity of the same target groups to invest in forest and farm management to participate in value chains and integrate into the markets.

Evaluation question 3: Was the project design appropriate for achieving the Outcomes and the Vision?

In the context of rural development in Viet Nam, the appropriateness of FFF's design for achieving its Outcomes and Vision is unquestionable. The country's Forest and farm smallholders face challenges that include limited organization skills, limited access to national and international markets and market information, to financial capital, smallholder friendly technologies, and limited or no participation in policy formation processes relating to forest and farm landscape management and use. Addressing these challenges is in the realm of FFF's Vision and Outcomes.

The main strength of the FFF model resides in its having a wide scope for addressing smallholder farmers' challenges, being demand-driven, and supporting with direct grants the proposals submitted by FFPOs for funding. While the ultimate goal is ensuring sustainable management and use of forest and farm landscapes, FFF's niche is in strengthening FFPOs directly, complementing other approaches with focus on rights, legality, payments for environmental services including REDD+ and technical capacity for sustainable forest management.

Evaluation question 4: To what extent is the FFF on track to achieving outcomes across the three pillars and what changes can be observed that are attributable to the FFF's interventions and are directly linked to the FFF's main objectives?

This section presents the MTE findings with respect to overall achievements per Outcome for each Pillar. The MTE found substantive evidence that FFF programme in the country is on track for most Outcomes of Pillars 1 and 3.

Pillar 1, "Strengthen smallholder, women, community and indigenous peoples' producer organizations for business/livelihoods and policy engagement"

With regarding to progress to Outcome 1, "Strengthened producer organizations engage in policy dialogue", FFF is on track in supporting grassroots FFPOs. Under Output 1.1, "Dispersed local producers are organized into effective and gender inclusive groups", FFF's approach of targeting smallholders through FFPOs as the vehicle to transfer knowledge and skills for getting organized has led to increased awareness of the many advantages of working together.

With regard to Output 1.2, "Producer groups work together with government and private sector to improve policy", the MTE mission noted that foundations for interaction between FFPOs and local administrations (communal, district and provincial) are quite good. FFF can get issues on local government strategy agenda through roundtable discussions with all stakeholders at all levels. These roundtables are facilitated by VNFU, and agendas focus on how to support FFPOs in production and sustainable forest business by creating a more enabling policy environment.

FFF-supported FFPOs rightly chose to focus their effort on a limited number of main value chains: Magnolia and Star Anise in Bac Kan Province, and Acacia and Cinnamon in Yen Bai Province. There are already interesting early experiences in value chain governance for a programme that started its implementation only in 2015. With regard to improving the institutional environment in which smallholder farmers can organize to manage and use forest and farm landscapes, FFF supported the development of FFPOs and the strengthening of their bargaining power within value chains. There is a high level of attention by VNFU at all levels, and of administrative authorities at provincial, district and communal levels to the activities of FFF aimed at improving the governance of value chains. However, there are still challenges in passing of FFPOs to a higher status such as cooperatives, so that they can engage for example with financial institutions for loans. In the area of application of laws and regulations, FFF is actively lobbying local Districts and Communal authorities in Bac Kan Province for delivering to FFPOs Licenses for timber processing. FFF is currently assembling information on pertinent policies and laws for FFPOs and other potential users.

There is an emerging experience in value chain upgrading in FFF country programme. The MTE found that FFF implicitly supports value chains upgrading through the activities aimed at value addition. It identified the following upgrading trajectories: products upgrading³², process upgrading³³, and inter-chain (or inter-sector) upgrading³⁴. Table 2 presents examples of these emerging experiences.

Products upgrading. FFF's support implicitly enhances products upgrading activities that raise the forest and farm producers' awareness on the standards and quality that attract consumers. Products upgrading goes hand in hand with process upgrading because improving product quality often involves improving production processes. With products upgrading through processed products and process upgrading, FFF is transforming forest and farm economics in target communities. New livelihoods opportunities are created for the beneficiaries and smallholders are helped to build up technological skills and are stimulated to participate in value chains and engage in business. Favorable factors influencing product upgrading include a good link of the chains to national market or to national and export markets.

Process upgrading. With regard to Process upgrading, there are FFPOs which are processing or are intending to process timber, and are organizing harvesting infrastructure and delivery systems for processed products.

Inter-chain upgrading. An FFPO in Yen Bai Province sells Cinnamon bark as the main chain product, and sells logs to sawmills, and branches and leaves to plants that make cinnamon oil.

Table 14: Emerging experiences in value chain upgrading in Vietnam FFF supported FFPOs

Type of upgrading	Example of FFPOs supported by FFF
Product upgrading	An FFPO in Bac Kan Province which has installed a plywood mill; its members have been trained to respect the plywood standards. Timber producing FFPOs in Bac Kan and Yen Bai provinces intend to achieve FSC certification so that they can meet requirements of export markets.
Process upgrading	FFPOs processing timber or intending to process it are organizing harvesting infrastructure and delivery systems for processed products.
Inter-chain upgrading	In Yen Bai Province, of an FFPO sells Cinnamon bark as the main chain product, and sells logs to sawmills, and branches and leaves to plants that make cinnamon oil.

FFF is also having success in helping FFPOs to know business and access markets. With the training activities targeting FFPOs' members, it has been effective in the implementation of Output 2.1. The application of the acquired knowledge has further motivated target FFPOs to improve commercialization of their products. In Table 3, the MTE mission summarizes FFF country programme experiences to date in helping FFPOs to know business and access to markets. From field observations and discussion with target FFPOs, three main business models have been identified as follows: (i) Trader-driven; (ii) Buyer company-driven; (iii) FFPOs-driven.

Table 15: Main business models driving Vietnam FFF supported FFPOs' business

Type of business model	Examples of FFF targeted FFPOs
Trader-driven	In Bac Kan and Yen Bai Provinces FFPOs which have not yet started processing their timber production sell logs to traders.
Buyer company-driven	FFPOs which have started to process timber in Bac Kan and Yen Bai Provinces are selling production to companies.
FFPOs-driven	In perspective: In Bac Kan and Yen Bai Provinces FFPOs which have started processing timber intend to get FSC certification for their forest management in order to link to external markets.

32 Products upgrading: where a chain actor engages in the production of more sophisticated products in order to increase unit value.

33 Process upgrading: where a chain actor increases the efficiency of internal processes (production, new technologies, storages, distribution, logistics).

34 Inter-chain upgrading: where a chain actor introduces value-adding processes from other chains to offer new products or services.

The FFPO-driven model is most likely to give higher and more sustainable benefits to FFPOs and their members. It reflects not only higher internal organization but also entrepreneurship skills. Buyer company-driven model is also interesting because it provides incentives to FFPOs to maximize their production efficiency and reliability as far as product quality and respect of standards are concerned.

Access to finance is considered by many FFPOs visited by the MTE missions as an important barrier as far as strengthening their business development is concerned. They consider that without bank loans they cannot buy the equipment and material that processing activities require. Access to finance is a common problem for agroforestry producers in Vietnam in general and for FFPOs in the FFF program in particular. FFF is trying to support FFPOs to access loans through different methods, for example by involving financial institutions in roundtable meetings at different levels. FU at district and provincial levels have signed regulation for collaboration with the Social Bank and the Bank of Agriculture and Rural development to facilitate farmers and FFPOs gain access to mortgage loans. The FFF is also trying to assist FFPOs to access loans of Fund for Supporting for Farmer.

Under Output 2.3, “Experience sharing between producer organizations in-country”, FFF has had considerable success in organizing sharing of experience between producer organizations. FFPOs representatives in Bac Kan Province told the MTE mission that they used exchange visits in other provinces to learn how to process Magnolia timber to produce veneer, and get high prices. The information from the exchange visits was so interesting to the participants that they organized themselves follow-up exchange visits to their peers to learn more on processing technology. The incentive for this rapid pace of peer-to-peer learning seems to be the prospect of better prices and the possibility of shortening the value chain by connecting to bigger companies to sell their produce and avoid the traders who do not pay well.

Pillar 2: “Catalyze multi-sectoral stakeholder policy platforms with governments and at local and national levels”

The MTE noted the distinctiveness of Pillar 2, which is a highly “political pillar”. It faces challenges in the domain of influencing policy formation processes in the country. These challenges need to be addressed through adequate political economy analysis and recommendations. This applies to Outcome 3, “Cross-sectoral coordination (...) for sustainable forest and farm management operating at national and sub-national levels”, whose achievement depends on appropriate approaches to engage national policy levels.

Although FFF country programme did not make important progress in supporting the enhancement of cross-sectoral coordination for sustainable forest and farm management, VNFU - which implements FFF activities in Viet Nam - facilitates roundtable multi-stakeholder meetings involving the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST), the Viet Nam Academy of Forest Sciences, the provincial governments and other organizations. The meetings focus on how to support FFPOs in production and sustainable forest business by collaborating to create a more enabling working environment.

Influencing policy formation is a long process with unpredictable difficulties and challenges. The outcomes are therefore as unpredictable because they are influenced by many actors. The formulation of Outcome 3 ought to have taken this complexity into account, and recognized that as far as ToC design is concerned, the outcome in influencing policy formation can be realistically achieved at Intermediary State level. Outcome 3 should therefore be formulated to reflect what FFF can achieve and leave what is in the power of decision-makers at the level of Assumptions.

Pillar 3 “Link local voices and learning to global processes through communication and information dissemination”

With regard to Outcome 4, “National and global agendas and initiatives (...) are informed about knowledge and priorities of smallholders, women, communities and indigenous peoples”, FFF programme in Viet Nam has received delegations from Asian countries in which FFF is implemented. These exchanges provided to visiting delegations excellent opportunities for learning and for exchanging ideas amongst themselves.

At global level, FFF country programme has been effective in contributing to the formulation of messages aiming at making forest and farmers voices heard in international fora such as the XIV World Forestry Congress, UNFCCC COP21, and COFO, but also in regional fora.

Evaluation question 5: To what extent is the current operational modality contributing to the efficient achievement of the program outcomes?

The MTE also found that FFF country programme management structure is appropriate. The programme management unit based in VNFU provides the necessary expertise required to keep the programme activities on track as far as the planned outputs and outcomes are concerned. The work of the programme Facilitation is highly appreciated by target FFPOs and FFF program partners at provincial, district and communal levels.

To strengthen the efficiency in achieving program outcomes, the program Facilitation sought state support to FFPOs through mechanisms that include Round Table and Focus Group discussions and annual Multi-Stakeholders meetings at provincial and district level.

The operational FFF modality is one of the factors for its efficiency. FFF country program can be regarded as being highly efficient in terms of inputs relative to results if account is taken of the relatively limited financial resources invested and duration of implementation so far. Its main delivery mechanisms which include small grants to FFPOs, exchange visits, communications and training, are appreciated by target FFPOs and partners at provincial, district and communal levels. Collaborations with IUCN, RECOFTC, NVCARD and UN-REDD at Bac Kan province are among key factors of FFF country program effectiveness and efficiency. The Monitoring and Learning System has allowed an excellent learning by an upward flux of information that feeds into the communication effort of the three partners.

Evaluation question 6: What is the likelihood that FFF will contribute to the expected impact?

There is a strong likelihood of reaching the Impact of the Project and contributing to its Vision. Full project impact is normally reached some time or many years after completion of its activities. At this stage, the MTE can only assess the likelihood for reaching that Impact and for contributing to the Vision which is “Smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples organizations have improved their livelihoods and decision-making over forest and farm landscapes”.

The likelihood of FFF rural poverty impact can be assessed by looking at the extent to which FFF small grants, trainings, and other interventions are likely to contribute to the following livelihoods “building blocks”: human, social, and political capital, and to natural, financial and physical assets.

Human capital. The strongest FFF country program results are in the fundamental domain of human capital development, in which there are considerable achievements in enhancing the stock of skills in FFPOs members (organizational, managerial, technological, MA&D). The smallholders that the MTE mission met were unanimous in their appreciation of the contribution of training to their performance in production, processing and marketing activities.

Social capital development. The most significant contribution of FFF to this domain has come from the support to FFPOs organizational capacity. Its interventions are increasing the stock of trust that FFPOs members have in the governance of their organizations, and strengthening solidarity in communities. Smallholders are being empowered through raised awareness on the benefits of working together. The FFPOs and their governing committees are effectively contributing to a sense of local ownership of FFF’s results by their members.

Political capital. This is understood as the increase in the stock of power held by FFPOs and the apex organizations that can be used to achieve the development goals of their members. The programme supported the enhancement of the political capital of its target FFPOs, and these are effective in interacting with communal authorities in particular.

Natural assets. FFF country programme main focus is to support sustainable forest and farm management for improved supply of forest products, NTFPs, and forest resource services. FFPOs are supported to build capacity for sustainable management and use of their forest resources.

Physical assets. In general, FFF grants to FFPOs do not cover investment in physical capital. However, the programme has leveraged target FFPOs own resources for investment. As a result, there are important FFPOs achievements in terms of physical assets such as sawmills and processing plants.

Financial assets. Due to limited data available, it is not possible to assess the full extent to which FFF is affecting financial assets of households of FFPOs members. From the interviews with FFPOs representatives and field observations, the MTE believes that production and value addition activities supported by FFF grants are positively affecting household income.

Evaluation question 7: Is FFF having success in engaging other partners in the FFF supported processes?

Partnerships have featured prominently in FFF country programme interventions. As shown above, IUCN, NVCARD, RECOFTC, UN-REDD are collaborating in implementation of certain interventions of the program. NVCARD and RECOFTC provides trainers and materials for MA&D training. It collaborates with UN-REDD in Bac Kan in understanding UN-REDD's activities and how to link them with the activities of FFPOs.

Evaluation question 8: How sustainable is the FFF concept of investing in the organizational capacity of forest farm producer organizations – and how might this be enhanced?

Sustainability is the likelihood of the programme benefits to be delivered for an extended period after its completion. The MTE found that the high political ownership of the programme at provincial, district and communal levels and the social ownership of FFF model are powerful factors of sustainability. The MTE also found that target FFPOs are satisfied with the FFF model, and the steadily increasing social and economic benefits of their members will contribute to the likelihood of its sustainability.

Another equally important factor is the success of the training activities targeting smallholders through their FFPOs. These activities are transforming farms into businesses and motivating them to move further in processing and commercialization activities.

Crosscutting issues

Evaluation question 9: To what extent have gender and human rights been taken into account in the design of the FFF and during the implementation?

In the context of FFF programme in Viet Nam, the main cross-cutting issues are Gender and the rights of indigenous people. With regard to Indigenous groups, it is worth to note that all the target FFPOs in Bac Kan Province belong to Indigenous groups.

With regard to gender, FFF country programme supports efforts to address gender equality and empowerment in target FFPOs' governance and activities. Women are equal members of FFPOs and participate equally in the trainings offered by the programme. Gender equality awareness among women and men in target organizations has improved, and trainings supported by FFF have enhanced the capacity of female members of the FFPOs governance committees, and technology skills of female members of those organizations.

The MTE noted FFF country programme's effort in supporting the development of women's leadership skills. A woman who is accountant of an FFPO in Bac Kan Province told the MTE Mission that her increased knowledge from training in leadership organized by FFF has empowered her to more openly discuss in the Committee and make joint decisions with men.

Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are formulated in the overall MTE report.

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- 45 Tran Thi Tuoi, member of Cinnamon Cooperation Group
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- 54 Luong Thi Yen, Member of Lem CG
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