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Phase 4 end-term review CIFOR-ICRAF "Knowledge for action to protect tropical forests and enhance rights' 2021-2024"

Produced for CIFOR-ICRAF
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Phase 4 end-term review CIFOR-ICRAF "Knowledge for action to protect tropical forests and enhance rights' 2021-2024"

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Economics | Climate | Environment

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Acronyms

3E – Effective, Efficient and Equitable

APR – Annual progress report

GCSP4 – Global Comparative Study Phase 4

ID-RECCO – International Database on REDD+ projects and programs

IIAP – Research Institute of the Peruvian Amazon

MEDD – Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development (DRC)

MELIA – Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment

MINAM – Ministry of Environment (Peru)

MSC – Most Significant Change

NDC – Nationally Determined Contribution

NICFI – Norwegian Climate and Forest Initiative

Norad – the Norwegian agency for development cooperation

OIL – Outcome influence log

PAG – Policy/Project Advisory Group

PES – Payment for environmental services

PNCB – National Forest Conservation Program

PTF – DRC public-private mining group, Financial and Technical Partners

PUCP – Pontifical Catholic University of Peru

Q4I – Quality for Impact (CIFOR-ICRAF's Results Quality Management (RQM) and Impact Assessment & Acceleration (IAA) team)

RMM – Results measurement matrix

SERNANP – National Service of Natural Protected Areas by the State (Peru)

SoC – Story of Change

SPD – Science Policy Dialogue

SBSTA – Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

ToC – Theory of Change

UNFCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WP – Work Package

Executive Summary

This Executive Summary is designed to be read together with the Country Impact Summaries in section 4. Consequently, this information is not repeated here.

Background

This report provides an external end-term review of the current last phase (Phase 4) of the Global Comparative Study (GCS) for achieving effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ results (GCSP4), "Knowledge for action to protect tropical forests and enhance rights". The project operates in Peru, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Indonesia, with a global comparative aspect.

Context

As CIFOR-ICRAF is a scientific research organization, the change making levers center on knowledge and information through producing and brokering knowledge as well as making it available, compelling and used. Consequently, GCS was designed to encourage interest in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) policies, informing the formation of 3E (Effective, Efficient, Equitable) policies, encouraging implementation of 3E policies.

The 'target group' for the GCS is broad and encompasses global, national and subnational levels, but includes "policymakers (also outside of the forest sector) and practitioners (e.g., civil society and grassroots rightsholder organizations, NICFI grantees, private sector actors, media and multilateral initiatives on REDD+), research organizations and financiers/donors." A feature of the GCS is engagement with and involvement of the target group throughout the development of knowledge, research and policies, helping to build capacity and influence the values and interests of the target group. GCS is not an advocacy group, but the use of co-production is intended to influence actors in the same way as lobbying and advocacy would.

Method and approach

Literature review: The team conducted a thorough review of relevant documents provided at the beginning of the project.

Design and data collection instruments: Interviews were conducted with key project staff to gather an understanding of the project history and evolution, as well as the specific work packages (WPs). The CIFOR-ICRAF Quality for Impact (Q4I) team also participated in a preliminary review of the project's existing overarching and country level theories of change (ToC) and progress markers, developed by the CIFOR-ICRAF / REDD team.

It was clear from initial meetings with CIFOR-ICRAF that this review should not be conducted in the same way as a formal evaluation.

Data collection and analysis: Alongside the analysis and collection of review data, a series of 64 interviews were conducted with national and international stakeholders.

Review and project limitations: Factors outside of CIFOR-ICRAF's control and relevant to this review included a heavily reduced budget, COVID, an earlier than expected finish to the project, and fluctuating political and institutional contexts in Peru and Indonesia.

In addition, the additional extension to December 2024 during this review meant that project outputs are still ongoing and so could not be included in this report. Also, these final outputs are generally unknown to the stakeholders and are likely to have contributed to some of the comments from interviewees relating to availability of information.

Main findings and conclusions

Key strengths and areas of effectiveness

The research carried out by GCSP4 addressed current and emerging issues aiding implementation of national REDD+ strategies. Overall, the knowledge developed by the project provided a solid basis to support reforms of REDD+ policies in all countries.

CIFOR-ICRAF retains its prestige as a solid institution for research. This allows access and attention from state and non-state actors, especially policy makers, REDD+ project implementers and those who support or seek to influence policy making. Personal and professional relationships were seen as being important factors in contributing to project achievements.

Project staff and stakeholders consistently identified their in-country networks as being very important to achieving project outcomes. The networks of decision makers formed and maintained by country coordinators, and through events, as well as the co-creation of knowledge, seem to be instrumental to encouraging key decision makers to use the knowledge that CIFOR-ICRAF produce to support policies aligned with project outcomes.

The Science Policy Dialogues (SPDs) were seen as being a very effective mechanism. There was good organization of the analysis and discussion groups in all four countries. CIFOR-ICRAF was seen as having convened groups that are truly diverse and knowledgeable about the issues addressed within GCSP4. In-country dissemination of results and advocacy was able to effectively reach policy makers and REDD+ implementers.

A flexible approach both from the project team as well as the donor was a project strength. For example, this flexibility enabled the project to meet the political challenges and institutional changes in Peru and Indonesia.

The CIFOR-ICRAF database ID-RECCO is seen as particularly effective for those who are aware of it, albeit with some criticisms on useability and navigability[1]. In all, over 2,000 downloads and 84 publications have referenced the database.

The communications team competently produce engaging material that is consumed by their target audiences and is impactful.

The ideas and knowledge from GCS appear to exceed outreach awareness of the existence of GCS, or even CIFOR-ICRAF, particularly at the global level – e.g., as the knowledge emanating from the project gets more widely disseminated and repackaged by non-project users, the understanding of where the knowledge was obtained tends to get lost.

Key Limitations

The two main factors that restricted the project achievements were felt to be limited resources together with the limited time of the project implementation.

The dynamic nature of the market and regulatory environment highlighted the importance of continuous updates and adaptation. One concern is how can CIFOR-ICRAF and their partners ensure that the work in this domain continues so that they combat the risk that impacts are only short-term. The project effectively managed this challenge during its time frame, but sustained efforts will be crucial for maintaining relevance and impact in the long term.

Stakeholders noted that there was a lot of engagement during the early stages of REDD+, when there was a massive lack of evidence-based research. As REDD+ has moved to implementation and the realization of result-based payments, this visibility of CIFOR-ICRAF on REDD+ on the global stage appears to have diminished.

There is a broad strength in communications but there appears to be a gap between the effectiveness of a network group and the perception of the effectiveness of the project communications. Taking the global and country combined interviews together, there is a sentiment that the project communications could be more effective in some areas.

Has GCS Phase 4 (GCSP4) achieved its intended outcomes?

Overall, the findings indicate that the evidence does show knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+. Most interviewees felt there was evidence to show that knowledge creation and co-learning products were developed by GCSP4 to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+. The project outcomes for all WPs have broadly been met.

The indicators for the NICFI specific outcomes were met. Outcomes 1 and 2 were felt by the senior project team to have been the most achieved.

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[1] Please note that CIFROR-ICRAF have fully re-branded and updated the GCS website and the ID-RECCO website since this review was conducted.

The Theory of Change was appropriate and was felt to be well used at the project outset.

The main contributing factors to achieving or limiting the project's intended outcomes

The development of the diagnostic framework appears to have been successful, so it can be assumed that the design of WPs 1 to 3 feeding into the diagnostic framework was an effective research design.

The project tried to ensure that it addressed country needs primarily through the use of good local networks of stakeholders able to meet local needs, through which to disseminate findings, and with which to engage in co-creative processes.

Stakeholders stated the importance of specific key partners and a well-targeted stakeholder engagement. For example, in Peru, Brazil, and DRC, the relationship with a specific university was flagged as important.

GCS has had a larger and longer presence in Peru and Indonesia, and it is in these two countries that the actual influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team was more easily evidenced.

In Peru it was recognized that there has been a good outreach at the national level, but that a greater involvement with subnational governments was needed.

The Brazilian stakeholder interviews showed that the project was perceived to have helped the development of a REDD+ culture in Brazil.

In DRC, although many key decision makers were perceived to have been reached, it was also felt that there were some gaps exacerbated by an insufficient level of dissemination and inclusion within the project processes.

In Indonesia the project helped bridge the gap between international research and local policy needs, translating global knowledge into context-specific recommendations for Indonesian policymakers. Although successful in engaging with government and some project implementers, the research had limited reach with high-level policymakers and the private sector e.g. in the carbon market sector.

Learnings from translating research to policy and/or practice change

Strengths were identified as the effective targeting of research to relevant knowledge gaps for the country, the quality of the scientific research, the importance of establishing good personal relationships and maintaining good contact with government officials.

Limitations included the difficulty in then translating increased knowledge into take up of outputs into policy.

The use of stakeholder forums such as the SPDs were frequently mentioned throughout the review and by the interviewees. Enabling a forum where decision makers are able to speak directly to other stakeholders was seen as highly important and effective.

Direct communication with high level policymakers was felt to be crucial.

Were key stakeholders and beneficiaries equipped by the project's knowledge processes and products?

International/regional/country policy priorities were generally timely and well targeted for the project as it was designed. There are some visible successes as well as limitations in this area as outlined in the country perspectives.

The stakeholders that felt equipped by the project varied according to the country and the type of stakeholder concerned making it difficult to provide global answers on this issue.

How the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and/or subnational levels

It was largely felt by stakeholders that CIFOR-ICRAF had a moderate or mixed influence on REDD+ policy.

It was frequently noted that attribution of any change in REDD+ policy or impact is very hard to attribute to this project due to REDD+ landscape. Despite this, 27 interviewees were definitive in their positive appraisal of the project's overall impact on REDD+. Three specifically mentioned the international level, six the national level, and three the subnational.

As in other review areas, the overall sentiment on this issue was that CIFOR-ICRAF had a clearer, stronger influence on REDD+ policy in Peru and Indonesia where the GCS has had a longer involvement and more resources. This also followed regarding filling gaps in existing interventions.

Sustainability of GCSP4 Results

Out of 45 total responses, 14 interviewees said that learnings and results are or would be sustained through future projects, although seven noted that effective use of results in future would depend on sufficient resources for CIFOR-ICRAF and donor interest.

25 interviewees spoke of the academic quality of the outputs and how these results would continue to have an impact through normal academic dissemination of publications, or continued use by government, civil society and other stakeholders.

In addition to the knowledge products themselves, the SPDs were frequently mentioned as an approach that will be continued and, in some cases, have already been implemented in other areas of work. This indicates the effectiveness of this approach.

Legacy projects were identified within CIFOR-ICRAF but no evidence could be found of specific projects as yet among the country stakeholders.

Future Guidance/Recommendations

No recommendations were required in the ToR but during this review a number of potential areas for improvement were noted and included in the report.

In addition, areas recommended for consideration for future work included:

- Stable forests including the likely impact of carbon fluxes and the net source of carbon to the atmosphere rather than as a carbon sink.

- Apply knowledge gained from the forest sector into different sectors

- Countries are coming forward with requests for financing of their own work in REDD+. Specific research support is needed here.

- Finance-based actors e.g. green finance lending institutions are also in need of robust research that can be tailored as needed.

- Carbon "insetting" where companies are investing in nature protection in their supply chains.

- To target the operational side on implementing REDD+.

- Knowledge transfer - an expansion of knowledge transfer from GCS applying learnings to new countries or geographies

- Biodiversity credit market

1. Introduction

On 17th April 2024 Efeca commenced an external end-term review of the current last phase (Phase 4) of the Global Comparative Study for achieving effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ results (GCSP4), "Knowledge for action to protect tropical forests and enhance rights". The project operates in Peru, Brazil, DRC, Indonesia, with a global comparative aspect.

The main goal of the GCSP4 is to produce knowledge products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ policies and projects. The GCS works with research partners and stakeholders:

- to ensure that REDD+ policy makers and practitioner communities have access to and use the information, analysis and tools needed to design and implement REDD+;
- to create enabling conditions; and
- to assess to what degree REDD+ has delivered effective, cost-efficient and equitable carbon and non-carbon benefits.

Phase 4 was originally planned to run from 2021-2025, with two funding periods, one covering 2021-2023, and one covering 2024-25. The second round of funding was not delivered so a no-cost extension was agreed between CIFOR-ICRAF and NORAD.[2]

GCSP4 began in January 2021 and at the start of this review was scheduled to end in June 2024 after an initial 6 month no-cost extension from NICFI (Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative). During the period of this review the no-cost project extension was further extended to the end of 2024.

It was anticipated that final reports and related information would be available from June and could be included in this review, however these outputs will now only be available after the end of this review. This means that not all outcomes can be attributed to within this report.

In order to provide relevant context for the remainder of the report, section 4 provides two-page standalone impact summaries for the project as a whole and for each of the four GCSP4 implementing countries. Please note that some of the information in this section is repeated piecemeal elsewhere in the report.

This report next assesses the extent that GCSP4 achieved its intended outcomes (effectiveness). This overview is followed by an analysis of the aspects relating to relevance (is the intervention doing the right things?), coherence (how well does the intervention fit?), impact (what difference does the intervention make?) and sustainability (will the benefits last?).

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[2] The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF) merged in 2019. The project was initiated by CIFOR prior to the merger, but for the sake of consistency this report refers to the organization's current name (CIFOR-ICRAF) throughout.

The final section of the report assesses what future directions the GCS could take to enable CIFOR-ICRAF to maintain their role and the relevance of the GCS/REDD+ work in a rapidly expanding space; both from a policy perspective and a private/finance sector growth.

2. Method and approach

This section of the report details the methodological approach within each distinct phase of the project. The end-term review has focused on key questions identified in conjunction with CIFOR-ICRAF as well as those on elements developed from the initial literature review. These key review questions are detailed in Annex C.

2.1 Design and planning

2.1.1 Literature review

The team conducted a thorough review of relevant documents provided at the beginning of the project which was sufficient to enable the core team to understand how best to address the key review questions. This included identifying how existing information could be utilized in addressing the review questions and to assess where any knowledge gaps were. Additional documentation was requested to address these. Reference to these documents is made throughout this report where appropriate. Some of the literature review documents that were assessed included:

- Annual reports for 2021, 2022 and 2023 (as requested by Norad, the 2023 annual report was brief and focused on the NICFI outcomes)

- Implementation plans

- List of key contacts

- Top 3 most impactful outcomes for each country and WP (Work Package) according to country and WP leads

- Other reports and communication products submitted to NICFI and Norad, e.g. report on NICFI outcomes, blogs, podcasts, etc.

- Key research publications, tailored communication products and press releases,

- MELIA (Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment) specific outputs and tools:

    - Melia Plan

    - Results measurement matrix

    - Outreach tracker (lists of blogs, podcasts, videos, events and publications)

    - Project advisory groups survey

    - Event and training evaluations

    - Science Policy Dialogue (SPD) Feedback Surveys

    - Outcome influence log (OIL)

    - Three stories of change (SoC)

        - In draft: Ensuring REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanisms and safeguards in Indonesia are informed and effective.

- Finalized: Catalyzing policy for the conservation of Amazonian peatlands in Peru
- Finalized: ID-RECCO – the international database on REDD+ projects and programs. Unlocking REDD+ project knowledge for informed environmental action.

2.1.2 Design and data collection instruments

Interviews were conducted with key project staff to gather an understanding of the project history and evolution, as well as the specific WPs. The CIFOR-ICRAF Quality for Impact (Q4I) team also participated in a preliminary review of the project's existing overarching and country level theories of change (ToC) and progress markers, developed by the CIFOR-ICRAF / REDD team. These meetings helped to develop the interview questions as detailed in Annex D.

It was clear from initial meetings with CIFOR-ICRAF that this review should not be conducted in the same way as a formal evaluation. For example, questions on efficiency were not required.

2.1.3 Data collection and analysis

Alongside the analysis and collection of review data, a series of interviews were conducted with national and international stakeholders. A list of stakeholders was provided by CIFOR-ICRAF for the interviews, which were narrowed down according to the relevant following criteria:

- Participation in multiple Project Advisory Groups;
- Recommendations from national consultants within each country;
- Confirmed engagement status in the project;
- Organizations with NICFI grantee status;
- Representation of a cross-section of stakeholders and organizations;
- Interviews of relevant CIFOR-ICRAF / REDD+ team members at international as well as at country level in Indonesia, Peru, Brazil and DRC;
- Interviews of the Norwegian Embassies in Indonesia, Peru, Brazil and DRC to understand their perspective on the work carried out by GCSP4 and the links to the NICFI outcomes; and
- Consultations with international key actors including the Green Climate Fund.

2.1.3.1 Interviews

A total of 64 stakeholders were consulted, which is broken down as seen in Figure 1 and as below.

Peru: 10 stakeholders were interviewed, in addition to a Norwegian embassy representative.

Brazil: 10 interviews with local stakeholders, as well as a Norwegian embassy representative.

DRC: 10 stakeholders interviewed. Norwegian embassy staff were contacted but did not respond.

Indonesia: 9 local stakeholders were interviewed, as well as 2 Norwegian embassy representatives (1 local staff member and 1 Special Envoy from Norway).

International: The remaining 25 interviews were held with international stakeholders and actors. This includes 9 WP module leaders and CIFOR-ICRAF staff, 4 country coordinators, and a further 12 international stakeholders (including NICFI and Norad, FAO, and the Green Climate Fund, for example). This number also includes the Norwegian embassy staff mentioned above as they had a holistic view of the project. As most of their evidence was provided from the perspective of their country of focus, however, this has also been considered in the country analysis.
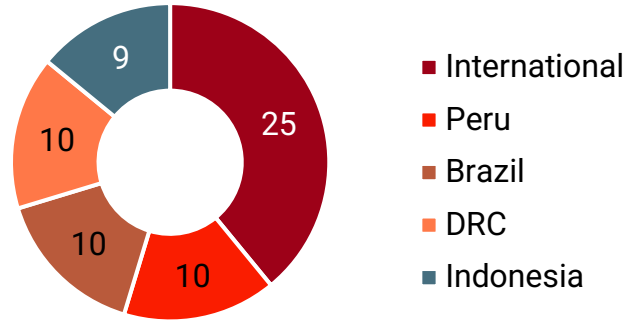
Figure 1 Stakeholders interviewed

All information gathered from the interviews, as well as that from annual project reports, implementation plans, and outcome tracking data was compiled and analyzed to agreed frameworks.

2.1.3.1.1   Interview numbering

In order to anonymize all responses, each interview was randomly assigned a code which identified their country or international perspective only. These were created using the first three letters of each country name (or acronym in the case of DRC) and a two-digit number (e.g. PER01, PER02). Global interview numbers start with INT.

In certain cases, respondents were assigned an international as well as country specific code to ensure that the individual would not be identified. This is a result of an overlap in multiple question sets which were used in these interviews to cater to different perspectives. CIFOR-ICRAF country coordinators, for example, were asked questions from both a project perspective and a country perspective. The use of different question sets for different interview perspectives means that certain questions were not asked of each interviewee, which is why there is a different number of respondents for each question. External stakeholders not involved in the project implementation were not, for example, asked questions about the success of the project at meeting its outcomes.

2.1.4 Analysis and Reporting

The findings of the desk-based literature review and the interviews were analyzed as agreed with CIFOR-ICRAF during the inception phase.

A preliminary findings meeting was held with key project staff, WP leads and country coordinators as part of the analysis, and as outlined in the inception report, to sense-check the findings and receive feedback before finalizing the report.

Analysis of the interview data has been included throughout the report with key points, and quantitative analysis where possible.

The report is closely structured around the key review questions as shown in Annex C. The IEA (Independent Evaluation Arrangement of the CGIAR) Guidance Note G5 on Evaluation Reports has been used to guide the writing of the report.

2.1.5 Review limitations

The latest available annual progress report was for 2023, which has limited the assessment of the project outcomes.

The granting of an additional no-cost extension to Phase 4 during the review has meant that outputs expected to have been finalized by June were unavailable to use during this end-term review.

Attribution of outputs has made assessment of CIFOR-ICRAF's influence a challenge due to limited stakeholder awareness of CIFOR-ICRAF's work within GCSP4 – they were often aware of the work but not necessarily aware that was part of this project or from CIFOR-ICRAF.

3. GCS purpose and design

3.1 Role of GCS, target audience and high-level mechanism for change

According to the project documents, as CIFOR-ICRAF is a scientific research organization, the change making levers center on knowledge and information through producing and brokering knowledge as well as making it available, compelling and used. Consequently, GCS was designed to encourage interest in REDD+ policies, informing the formation of 3E (Effective, Efficient, Equitable) policies, encouraging implementation of 3E policies.

The 'target group' for the GCS is broad and encompasses global, national and subnational levels, but includes "policymakers (also outside of the forest sector) and practitioners (e.g., civil society and grassroots rightsholder organizations, NICFI grantees, private sector actors, media and multilateral initiatives on REDD+), research organizations and financiers/donors." A feature of the GCS is engagement with and involvement of the target group throughout the development of knowledge, research and policies, helping to build capacity and influence the values and interests of the target group. GCS is not an advocacy group, but the use of co-production is intended to influence actors in the same way as lobbying and advocacy would.

There are five work programs (WPs). The first three WPs support the fourth WP, while the fifth WP is on communication and collaboration across the project. The titles of the WPs provide a direction of the work and outcomes planned for each of them.

- **WP1: Achieving transparency and accountability**
- **WP2: Tracking and assessing actions**
- **WP3: Bringing out the politics**
- **WP4: Linking science, policy and politics for forest-based climate action science policy platforms**
- **WP5: Engagement, communications, collaboration across the other 4 WPs**

As reflected in the individual country ToC (Theory of Change), Brazil was considered a tier 2 country and did not include all WPs as shown in the diagram below:

Table 1: Project specific outcomes

Project-specific outcomes	Global	Brazil	DRC	Indonesia	Peru
1.1. Archetypes of tropical deforestation and degradation	X	X	X	X	X
1.2. Data generation to support the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) and the UNFCCC TACCC (Transparency, Accuracy, Completeness, Comparability, Consistency) principles	X		X	X	X
2.1. Context-intervention matrix to inform policies and actions to reduce deforestation and forest degradation	X	X	X	X	X
2.2. Mapping and assessing REDD+ finance and benefit-sharing mechanisms	X	X	X	X	X
3.1. Analysis of the politics of continued deforestation and forest degradation	X		X	X	X
3.2. Rights-based approaches and safeguards to support transformational change	X		X	X	X
4.1. Diagnostic framework	X	X	X	X	X
4.2. Scenario building	X	X	X	X	X
4.3. Science-policy platforms	X	X	X	X	X
5.1. Communications and outreach for impact	X	X	X	X	X

4. Impact Summaries

These summaries from each of the four project countries, as well as a global assessment, include the key findings regarding impacts. This section can be read as a standalone section. Some of the information in this section is repeated in the rest of the report, where appropriate.

4.1 Global/cross-cutting impact summary

These impacts and findings apply to all four countries.

4.1.1 Global Strengths/Achievements

- The research carried out by GCSP4 addressed current and emerging issues aiding implementation of national REDD+ strategies.
- The knowledge developed by the project provided a solid basis to support reforms of REDD+ policies in all countries.
  - The CIFOR-ICRAF database (ID-RECCO) is seen as particularly effective for those who are aware of it, albeit with some criticisms on useability and navigability. It should be noted that CIFOR-ICRAF fully re-branded and updated the GCS website and the ID-RECCO website since this review was conducted so it is unknown whether these criticisms are still valid.
  - According to the Story of Change (SoC)[3], ID-RECCO facilitates academic research as well as informing policy making and advancements in REDD+ project development both at national and global levels. The platform's neutral, reliable and comprehensive data was highly rated. In all, over 2,000 downloads and 84 publications have referenced the database.
- CIFOR-ICRAF's retains its prestige as a solid institution for research. This allows access and attention from state and non-state actors, especially policy makers, REDD+ project implementers and those who support or seek to influence policy making.
- Good organization of the analysis and discussion groups in all four countries. CIFOR-ICRAF was seen as having convened groups that are truly diverse and knowledgeable about the issues addressed within GCSP4.
- In-country dissemination of results and advocacy was able to effectively reach policy makers and REDD+ implementers.
  - The communications team competently produced engaging material that is consumed by their target audiences and is impactful. Digital material such as blogs and flyers were included by CIFOR-ICRAF members in their lists of top three outputs and were featured in the in-county interviews. There were also interviewees who wanted to see more informal outputs, such as blogs or other grey literature specifically targeted towards REDD+ related policy or finance – i.e., expanding communications further in this

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[3] Monteiro et al. 2024: https://doi.org/10.17528/cifor-icraf/009238

direction with specific audience focused outputs and messaging in terms of type of media used and content.

4.1.2 Global Limitations

- Factors outside of CIFOR-ICRAF's control included: heavily reduced budget, COVID, an earlier than expected finish to the project, and fluctuating political contexts, such as political regime changes.
    - o Project outputs are still ongoing – and these are generally unknown to the stakeholders.

- The dynamic nature of the market and regulatory environment highlighted the importance of continuous updates and adaptation. The rapidly evolving nature of REDD+ implementation means that some insights reflect past circumstances rather than the current state of affairs.
    - o The concern is how can CIFOR-ICRAF and their partners ensure that the work in this domain continues so that they combat the risk that impacts are only short-term. The project effectively managed this challenge during its time frame, but sustained efforts will be crucial for maintaining relevance and impact in the long term.

- The ideas and knowledge from GCS appear to exceed outreach awareness of the existence of GCS, or even CIFOR-ICRAF, particularly at the global level – e.g., as the knowledge emanating from the project gets more widely disseminated and repackaged by non-project users, the understanding of where the knowledge was obtained tends to get lost.
    - o This is a positive impact in terms of reach, but a limitation mainly in relation to attribution.
    - o A consistent issue is low awareness of the existence of GCS, regardless of use of and engagement with GCS activities and outputs. Most interviewees were unfamiliar with the current phase of the GCS REDD+ project.

- In the early stages, everyone, including CIFOR-ICRAF, was looking for references on how to start REDD+. There was a lot of engagement because everyone was collectively looking for answers and solutions. But, by the third phase, when everything had moved to implementation and realization of result-based payments, CIFOR-ICRAF seemed less visible. This is a comment from one of the country interviews which was also echoed by some of the global interviews.

- During the earlier GCS REDD+ phases, the project was wider both geographically and in terms of funding and scope.
    - o Stakeholders noted that there was a lot of engagement during the early stages of REDD+, when there was a massive lack of evidence-based research. As REDD+ has moved to implementation and the realization of result-based payments, this visibility of CIFOR-ICRAF on REDD+ on the global stage appears to have diminished.

4.2 Peru impact summary

4.2.1 Peru REDD+ context

Peru is a country of forests. With an area of almost 68 million hectares by 2022 – the Amazon forests represent more than 60% of the country's territory[4] – and ranks as the fourth country in terms of tropical forest area in the world.[5]

Likewise, the National Ecosystems Map[6] identifies 11 rainforest ecosystems (out of 36 continental ecosystems at the national level). Within these ecosystems, the palm swamps (tropical peatlands) are of great importance, containing "a value close to the total above-ground carbon stock of Peru, but in only 5% of its land area."[7]

At the same time, Peru has an average deforestation rate of 132,000 ha/year, with a peak of 203,272 ha in 2020. The main driver of historical deforestation has been the change in land use for agriculture and cattle ranching, as well as gold mining in the southern jungle.[8] Multiple initiatives have been developed to control and mitigate deforestation, but the deforestation rate continues to rise.

Peru has been a pioneer in the development of REDD+ initiatives since 2006. However, there is still no official registry of these initiatives or of the benefits of the carbon market from them. Several of these initiatives are linked to natural areas protected by the government, the National Service of Natural Protected Areas by the State (SERNANP), and indigenous territories.

Although there is a framework of safeguards defined by the State, there are still challenges to ensure the involvement and effective participation of all key actors in the processes of deforestation and deforestation mitigation.

4.2.2 Peru strengths/achievements

- **There is strong evidence of the contribution to 3E REDD+ (especially in peatlands).**
  - The effective targeting of research to relevant knowledge gaps on peatlands in the SOC[9] including MRV data and improving local capabilities.
- **Evidence of the impact of knowledge from GCSP4 can be found in a range of tools, policies and regulations, including the following:**

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4 https://geobosques.minam.gob.pe/geobosque/view/index.php

5 Ministerio del Ambiente. 2021. Perú. Reino de Bosques. Programa Nacional de Conservación de Bosques y Mitigación del Cambio Climático. Lima, Perú. p. 157

6 Ministerio del Ambiente. 2019. Mapa Nacional de Ecosistemas. Conociendo nuestra biodiversidad. Gobierno del Perú. p. 22

7 Hastie, A., Honorio C., E., Reyna, J. et al. Risks to carbon storage from land-use change revealed by peat thickness maps of Peru. Nat. Geoscience 15, 369–374 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41561-022-00923-4

8 Centro Nacional de Planeamiento Estratégico. 2022. Análisis de la deforestación y pérdida de vegetación a nivel nacional y el impacto a nivel regionales. Lima, Perú. p. 37

9 Gomez et al. 2024: https://doi.org/10.17528/cifor-icraf/009237

- o Establishment of the MINAM (Ministry of Environment) safeguarding information.

- o The enormous contribution of peatlands as carbon reservoirs has now been understood, which has contributed to improve the reference level and contributions to the NDCs.

- o Impacted on the national guidelines for wetlands management: as a direct result of the project, peatlands were included for the first time.

- o The deforestation typology analysis led to a rethinking of the intervention strategy of the National Forest Conservation Program (PNCB) with indigenous communities. The PNCB diversified the investment modalities accepted by the PNCB to include sanitation, electrification or health works.

- o CIFOR-ICRAF collaborated closely with ANECAP, the organization representing indigenous groups co-managing protected areas with the national Protected Areas Service. Together, they developed an adaptive learning tool to support more equitable and effective co-management of Communal Reserves for the benefit of nearby Indigenous populations. Capacity development workshops were organized to train SERNANP staff in using this tool, building on the success of the previously recognized 'Como vamos?' Tool.

- **Good research design**, which is linked to partner institutions – e.g., IIAP (Research Institute of the Peruvian Amazon) and PUCP (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru). The knowledge generated was recognized by all parties and has a high level of credibility.

  - o A perceived added value in the research method was the opportunity for researchers to share their findings in spaces facilitated by PUCP. This enabled an open discussion to be generated with multiple actors, and elements were often adapted or incorporated into the research. *These spaces also functioned as an advocacy mechanism, bringing together both policy makers and stakeholders interested in improving REDD+ regulations*.

4.2.3 Peru limitations

- National and subnational level political instability and the change of policy-making officials was an issue during GCSP4.

  - o A potential mitigation could be to involve more mid-level officials.

- **It was felt that more focus was needed on subnational levels.** In addition, there was an NGO perception that there was a lack of engagement with actors at the subnational level and in some cases at the national level.

  - o The involvement of users of REDD+ projects was seen as being too narrow – e.g., the project could try to include marginal / invisible stakeholders, including "those who deforest" (i.e., farmers, ranchers, miners) and who have their own dynamics, interests and perception of the situation.

  - o Informal and/or illegal actors, who are decision makers in the territory, were left out of the research and discussion meetings. *Working with them requires a different method, time, and a gradual approach*.

- There was a high perception of influence on public policy from interviewees, but few stakeholders could provide specific details on this (see the previous section on the high achievements in this area). This is a limitation only with regards to attribution.

Stakeholder interviews revealed a general lack of knowledge of CIFOR-ICRAF actions during GCSP4.

4.3 Brazil impact summary

4.3.1 Brazil REDD+ context

Brazil is considered one of the world's most biodiverse countries due to its abundance of tropical rainforests, including around 60% of the Amazon rainforest, as well as other significant ecosystems such as the Pantanal wetlands and the Cerrado biome.[10]

As of 2020, Brazil had around 497 million hectares of forests, hosting 12% of the world's forests.[11] The Brazilian Amazon is critical as a source of rainfall, as a home to 28 million people, and as an important exporter of commodities to global markets.[12]

Deforestation and forest degradation are a major problem for Brazil. In 2023 alone, Brazil lost 2.73 million hectares of natural forest and, since 2000, has seen a 13% decrease in tree cover, a loss of 68.9 million hectares.[13] The main driver of historical deforestation was subsistence farming, however, more recently deforestation can be attributed to large landowners and corporations. Due to the severity and rate of deforestation, there are many initiatives aimed at controlling and mitigating deforestation. Despite this, deforestation persists.

Brazil has been involved in REDD+ projects for several years. Funding from REDD+ results-based payments has helped pilot the environmental service incentive program and strengthen Brazil's REDD+ strategy, both contributing to achieving Brazil's NDC.[14] Some conservation efforts based on REDD+ include the Brazil national carbon market law (Project of Law 182/2024), which establishes a legal carbon market to create a Brazilian Emissions Trading system.

REDD+ implementation in Brazil faces challenges due to a lack of support from the previous government, which has resulted in weak enforcement of environmental

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10 Butler, R.A. (2020). Brazil's Forests. [online] WorldRainforests.com. Available at: https://worldrainforests.com/brazil/

11 https://www.fao.org/interactive/state-of-forests/2020/en/

12 Garrett, R.D., Cammelli, F., Ferreira, J., Levy, S.A., Valentim, J. and Vieira, I., (2021). Forests and sustainable development in the Brazilian Amazon: history, trends, and future prospects. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 46(1), pp.625-652.

13 https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/BRA/?location=WyJjb3VudHJ5IiwiQlJBIl0%3D

14 https://unfccc.int/news/forest-protection-in-brazil-boosted-through-redd-plus?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEiSHg1BoniHyCq3LFPr3zPl8prflEvV38JZSgYP9yojmeYkzfwiQyhoC64gQAvD_BwE

legislation and weak forest resource governance.[15] Progress from national initiatives has been restricted due to repeated government failures and land tenure problems.[16] This has limited the practical implementation of REDD+ projects in Brazil, particularly at the national/federal level.

Brazil was a Tier 2 country in the GCSP4 with the other countries as Tier 1.

4.3.2 Brazil strengths/achievements

- In general terms, the GCSP4 project in Brazil was **perceived as successful** by following the past phases strategy: a combination of research, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

    o CIFOR-ICRAF's capability in connecting academic and research results with policy makers was highlighted by the stakeholder interviewees.

- The GCSP4 **development strategy was positively viewed by stakeholders**. As an international institution, CIFOR-ICRAF alone would not have the same level of reach if without an effective national partner.

    o The partnership with the Federal University of Minas Gerais, that facilitated knowledge exchange and capacity building, was instrumental in ensuring the project's impacts.

- The project's outputs, such as the **deforestation and carbon emission simulators** that were made available through an online platform, generated high-quality tools to better understand deforestation trends, drivers, and impacts in Brazil. It was **instrumental in informing policy development and decision-making processes**, as highlighted by many of the interviewees.
- **By providing policy makers with actionable insights, GCSP4 contributed to the advancement of Brazil's NDC** (Nationally Determined Contribution, in accordance with Article 4, paragraph 12 of the Paris Agreement) and the overall goal of reducing deforestation.

4.3.3 Brazil limitations

- The Brazilian Amazon states have made substantial progress in developing robust frameworks, **but the absence of a comprehensive federal law hindered the creation of a unified national approach to REDD+.**

    o **At state-level, reaching and engaging with individual landowners remains a considerable hurdle, limiting the full potential of CIFOR-ICRAF's initiatives**. The project's achievements could have been amplified with a more supportive regulatory framework, especially at the federal level.

- The project's specific scope and limitations in modelling capabilities (e.g., deforestation simulation) restricted its capacity to fully capture the complexity of

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15 P., G., A., B. and T., M. (2020). REDD+ achievements and challenges in Brazil: Perceptions over time (2015-2019).

16 May, P., Fernanda, M., Luiza, G., De, M., Maytê, B., Rizek, B. and Millikan, B. (2016). OCCASIONAL PAPER The context of REDD+ in Brazil Drivers, actors and institutions -3rd Edition. CIFOR generated material

the issue. Expanding the project's scope and enhancing modelling capacities would have significantly enhanced its ability to inform policy and decision-making.

- The project's communication approach prioritized engagement with key decision-makers before broader public dissemination. This approach ensured accurate and nuanced communication of complex information, minimizing the risk of misinterpretation. **However, it could have been further enhanced by including general society.**

The project could have **engaged with media outlets more strategically by tailoring messages to specific audiences**. This would amplify CIFOR-ICRAF's influence and contribute to broader public awareness and support for REDD+ initiatives.

4.4 DRC impact summary

4.4.1 DRC REDD+ context

The DRC is known for its dense tropical forests. Its tropical forest covers more than 130 million hectares, and it is home to 60% of Congo Basin forests.[17] The DRC is the third largest tropical country in terms of forest loss after Brazil and Indonesia, having lost 14.6 million hectares between 2001 and 2019. Deforestation in the DRC can be attributed to poverty and a growing population who require land and forest products for income-generating activities, such as agriculture and livestock husbandry.[18] Deforestation is decreasing productivity which is worsening poverty and food insecurity.

Since 2012, DRC has implemented a national REDD+ framework strategy to combat deforestation and forest degradation, while improving the living conditions of local communities and indigenous peoples. Having only adopted a national REDD+ framework strategy in 2012, compared to other countries, such as Brazil and Peru, the DRC is less developed in terms of REDD+ networks and experience in REDD+ implementation. The implementation of this strategy, which is part of a sectoral and integrated approach, requires sufficient knowledge to guide decision-making due to the complexity of the process. This is the gap that GCSP4 aimed to fill.

4.4.2 DRC strengths/achievements

- The stakeholders interviewed affirmed that **the knowledge developed by the project constitutes a solid basis to support reforms of REDD+ policies and practices in DRC.**
  - o The research carried out addressed various current and emerging issues making it possible to contribute to the implementation of the national REDD+ strategy (e.g., on peatlands, mining, benefit sharing, forest governance).

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[17] https://www.cafi.org/countries/democratic-republic-congo

[18] https://www.fao.org/in-action/forest-landscape-restoration-mechanism/our-work/countries/democratic-republic-of-congo/zh/

- GSCP4 research was perceived by interviewees as being **innovative, well designed and targeted**. Specific areas of research included:
  - Peatland management (mapping): the development of the peatland mapping methodology and the production of a map of peatlands around Mbandaka, and the strengthening of the technical capacities of Government MEDD agents (central and provincial), constituted a laudable intervention, having contributed to knowledge transfer (DRC02 and DRC04).
  - Benefit sharing mechanisms and modalities to protect the rights of local communities.
  - Assessing the impact of mining expansion and logging (industrial and artisanal).
  - Climate finance mapping: the study on the mapping of financing for REDD+ projects in the Congo basin was a major achievement (DRC07), particularly enlightened the DRC decision-makers.
  - Carbon market.
  - Social inclusion.
  - Forest governance.
- Stakeholders understood that research constitutes an opportunity that contributes to a better understanding of the issues and challenges of implementing the REDD+ process.
- The synergy between universities (Kinshasa, Kisangani) and scientists with decision-makers and civil society has contributed to strengthening the links between science and politics.
- The four science and policy dialogues (SPDs) were seen as very valuable in strengthening the local capacity of stakeholders, and in sharing experience throughout the tropical basin. **The knowledge acquired was seen as an effective way to inform stakeholders in their actions, and to promote informed decisions based on scientific data.**
  - The establishment of this dialogue framework was appreciated by all the interviewed stakeholders. They also wanted this type of process to be expanded by CIFOR-ICRAF in the future, to continue to promote knowledge transfer and exchanges in thematic sub-workshops.

4.4.3 DRC limitations

- The DRC is one of the most infrastructure challenged countries in the world.[19] Ground transportation is difficult and the country's vast geography, low population density, extensive forests and crisscrossing rivers make it difficult for projects such as GCSP4 to be effective, considering the scale of the intervention. There is also a history of conflict.

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19 ICED Facility: http://www.icedfacility.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CDD-Infra-Overview-DRC.pdf

- Although stakeholders wanted to have more information about the project and the knowledge produced (in addition to the dialogues), opinions divided among the interviewees regarding the effectiveness of the project intervention.
- Some interviewees (DRC01, DRC07, DRC08, DRC09) suggested that the results of the project are insufficiently known by key stakeholders (e.g., policy makers, practitioners) due to a perceived lack of communication.
  - o Despite this, 67% of interviewees acknowledged having acquired knowledge on various issues related to forests and the climate, allowing them to act effectively.
- There was an impression from some stakeholder interviewees that more in-country expertise (including at management level) could have been used in the project.
- In addition to the policy dialogues, the knowledge produced was also disseminated through social networks, but mainly archived on the CIFOR-ICRAF website. **However, most actors in the DRC rarely use websites such as CIFOR-ICRAF's to obtain information**.
  - o In the DRC, policy makers and practitioners rarely use international research sites such as CIFOR-ICRAF's. Their preference is to share the reports in soft copy. (It was not mentioned in the interviews, but an e-newsletter format may also be effective in DRC).
- The stakeholders interviewed noted the communication deficit because most of them had insufficient knowledge of the project – the dialogues being the only means by which they were informed of the knowledge produced by the project.

There is a need to **review the communication strategy for future projects**, involving key stakeholders from the design, start-up phase, implementation and monitoring of the project to ensure their ownership.

4.5 Indonesia impact summary

4.5.1 Indonesia REDD+ context

Indonesia has been at the forefront of REDD+ implementation since its inception, with the country's vast tropical forests playing a crucial role in global climate change mitigation efforts.

GCS impacts have been shaped by contextual factors including:

- Political shifts: changes in administration and policy priorities, such as the emphasis on economic growth and land use policy in the Job Creation Law, have influenced REDD+ implementation;
- Institutional changes: reorganization of forestry and research institutions in Indonesia affected the project's engagement pathways; and
- Transition in REDD+ focus: as Indonesia moves from result-based payments towards carbon market engagement, new knowledge and policy needs are emerging.

Despite successes, REDD+ implementation in Indonesia faces challenges, including, for example, low disbursement rates in relation to result-based payments. This is

attributed to challenges in proposal submissions from local governments, highlighting the need for capacity building at the subnational level.

As Indonesia moves forward with its REDD+ strategy, it faces the challenge of balancing its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) commitments with emerging carbon market opportunities.

There is a growing need for analysis on how to effectively manage this transition. In this context, CIFOR-ICRAF's ongoing research, and the lessons learned from projects such as Katingan Mentaya and the Bio Carbon Fund (BioCF) in Jambi, is crucial in shaping Indonesia's future REDD+ strategies, and their alignment with the country's broader climate goals.

4.5.2 Indonesia strengths/achievements

- **GCSP4 has contributed significantly to knowledge creation and co-learning products.** The project has played a crucial role in informing the implementation of 3E (effective, efficient, and equitable) REDD+ in Indonesia.

  o However, the impact and visibility of these contributions have varied over time and across different stakeholder groups.

- Technical capacity building: the project made substantial contributions to improving Indonesia's capacity for accurate emission calculations and monitoring, particularly for mangroves, wetlands, and forest fires. **This enhanced the country's ability to meet international reporting standards.**

- **CIFOR-ICRAF's research continues to inform and be highly appreciated for its project-level implementations and policy discussions at national and subnational levels.**

  o A key achievement has been CIFOR-ICRAF's role in preparing local governments to access REDD+ funding, particularly for result-based payments. This included assistance with developing Forest Reference Emission Levels (FREL), action plans, and proposal writing skills.

  o The focus on building capacity at the subnational level was seen as crucial by stakeholders interviewed.

  o The long-term engagement with initiatives such as the Katingan Mentaya Project provided valuable insights into practical REDD+ implementation at the project scale.

- **CIFOR-ICRAF's research outputs have been directly utilized to improve in-country operations** – e.g., community engagement and benefit-sharing.

  o CIFOR-ICRAF's research and inputs on safeguards and benefit-sharing mechanisms have informed policy development and project implementation at both national and subnational levels.

  o Collaborative research and knowledge creation has contributed to the project's effectiveness.

- **The project's contribution to improving technical capacity, particularly in emission calculations and monitoring, has been significant.**

- Knowledge creation and dissemination: the project produced comprehensive country profiles and analyses that have been widely used by both national and international stakeholders to understand REDD+ dynamics in Indonesia.
- Policy-research interface: the project helped bridge the gap between international research and local policy needs, translating global knowledge into context-specific recommendations for Indonesian policy makers.

4.5.3 Indonesia limitations

- The **complex institutional landscape in Indonesia** has posed challenges to achieving the envisioned integrated approach.
- CIFOR-ICRAF's earlier work was highly valued, and there is a demand for more recent, targeted research to address current challenges in REDD+ implementation. This is impacted by the early finish of the project and the outputs that are still in production.

    o **Diminishing visibility**: as REDD+ implementation has progressed, CIFOR-ICRAF's visibility in the implementation phases has somewhat decreased.

- Adaptation to evolving needs: more recently, **the project has been slower to respond to emerging priorities, such as carbon market engagement**. The rapidly changing nature of REDD+ implementation in Indonesia posed challenges to the project's ability to remain relevant.

    o Adaptability to the evolving REDD+ landscape and a broader stakeholder engagement could be more effective. While the project has contributed to policy development, implementation remains a challenge, suggesting difficulties in translating research into effective policy implementation.

- Stakeholder engagement: while successful in engaging with government and some project implementers, the research **had limited reach with high-level policy makers and the private sector**.

    o Good engagement but could still be improved and made more effective.

Non-carbon benefits: there is a perceived **gap in addressing non-carbon benefits of REDD+**, an area of growing importance in implementation.

5. To what extent has GCS Phase 4 (GCSP4) achieved its intended outcomes?

Summary Findings: Has GCS Phase 4 (GCSP4) achieved its intended outcomes?

- Overall, the findings from the stakeholder interviews and the narratives available in the project documents indicate that the evidence does show knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+.

- The vast majority of interviewees felt there was evidence to show that knowledge creation and co-learning products were developed by GCSP4 to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+.

- The project outcomes for all Work Packages (WPs) have broadly been met. Given the context of the project limitations, including a truncated implementation period, it is unsurprising that the WPs that could be finished earlier have most clearly met all designed targets. The project was also extended during the review period by six months until the end of 2024.

  - Multiple activities were delayed due to the COVID pandemic impact: challenges in field work and stakeholder consultation delayed the start of the main output of WP1.1, as well as outputs from WP4.1, 2.1.1, 3.1.2, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3.

- The indicators for the NICFI specific outcomes were met. Outcome 1 and 2 were felt to have been the most achieved.

- A flexible approach enabled the project to meet the political challenges and institutional changes in Peru and Indonesia.

- The Theory of Change was appropriate and was felt to be well used at the project outset.

- The MELIA tools are structured to try to get attribution on elements that are difficult to capture. It is rarely possible to pinpoint one specific instigator on this type of change and these tools have made a good effort to achieve this.

  - The main limitation was that the tools were generally inconsistently used by all the countries, despite training being delivered to the implementation team in 2021 on the MELIA toolkit and how to use the different tools.

There are two levels of outcomes as shown in the ToCs; the project outcomes and the higher level NICFI outcomes. The project outcomes are examined in section 5.1 and the NICFI outcomes are examined in section 5.2.

5.1 Does the evidence show knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+?

According to the GCSP4 implementation plan, the benchmark for quality outcomes is referred to as 3E (Effective, Efficient, Equitable). The aim was to increase funding to sequester carbon in forests and champion rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and ensure that the policies to support these activities use a 3E approach.

As noted above there was a limitation for this review due to the unavailability of an annual report for 2024 as a result of the additional project extension.

Section 5.1.1 provides analysis on the results of the interviews and assesses the project as a whole with section 5.1.2 assessing the evidence for each WP as found in the project documents.

Overall, the findings from the stakeholder interviews and the narratives available in the project documents indicate that the evidence does show knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+.

An assessment of the Results Measurement Matrix (RMM) indicators as shown in Table 2 in section 5.1.2 below provides a more mixed perspective. It is noted that indicators marked n/a in the RMM either do not apply to that particular country/level, or that a proxy was used (for instance, the high turnover within national PAGs (Policy/Project Advisory Groups) led the project team to consider SPDs' (Science Policy Dialogue) feedback surveys as proxies for knowledge gains and willingness to use new tools/ approaches/ findings), or that there is still lack of evidence of effective use by policy-makers. Consequently, the quantitative data has been viewed within the context of the additional qualitative evidence and insights from the additional data collected through the review interviews to assess progress towards expected project outcomes.

Consequently:

- WP 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1 met the required indicators
- WP 2.2, 3.2, 4.1 and 4.2 partially met the required indicators.
- WP4.3 and WP5 are marked as n/a so no quantitative indicators can be measured for these two WPs.

It is anticipated that most of the incomplete WPs will be finished by the end of the 2024 no-cost extension.

5.1.1 Global evidence showing knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+

The evidence presented in this section is where the GCSP4 is assessed as a whole and cannot be subdivided into the specific WP outcomes. This section includes relevant findings from the 64 stakeholder interviews carried out by the Efeca review team. Note that interviewees were asked only questions relevant to their context, and therefore not all interviewees were asked every question. For the full list of questions, see Annex D.

In the global interviews, seven of 11 interviewees who responded to the question **"*To what extent has the project (Phase 4) achieved its intended outcomes?*"** were positive about the GCS overall impact, one was slightly negative, and the others gave a mixed picture, with one interviewee stating that results will not be known until more time has passed. Three respondents noted that the impact of the GCS may be small considering the scale of REDD+ in relation to the size of other stakeholders involved, volumes of money and vested interests at play. The science policy dialogues were referenced by four interviewees as being particularly effective for project outcomes, and the role of country networks were referred to by five people.

Combined global and country interviews, from a total of 50 respondents to the question **"*Do you have any evidence that there are, in your area of work on this project, knowledge creation and co-learning products that did inform effective, efficient, and equitable REDD+?*"**: 37 interviewees described some evidence or agreed that GCS had produced products that informed 3E (Effective, Efficient, Equitable) REDD+ (see figure 2). 12 noted that GCS outputs have been used to inform REDD+ policies (and nine indicated that outputs are expected to be used in future), for example,

- yes
- somewhat
- limited
- no

Figure 2: Stakeholder views on GCSP4 informing 3E REDD+

including peatlands strategy in DRC and wetlands law in Peru, FREL in Peru, Peatlands work in Indonesia, safeguards and benefits sharing guidance to be used for example by World Bank.

Fourteen spoke to specific outputs or papers and described how they fit into the relevant local context or academic discourse, or filled knowledge gaps, with two specifically pointing to the ID-RECCO database. Nine spoke to informal evidence, in the form of relationships with stakeholders or knowledge of specific engagement that gave them the impression of or possibility of impact (e.g. "Evidence is that by talking to them, they refer back to some of the things discussed during the meetings, ideas that were there, etc." INT21), and a further nine stakeholders referred to their own use of GCS outputs as evidence in this case.
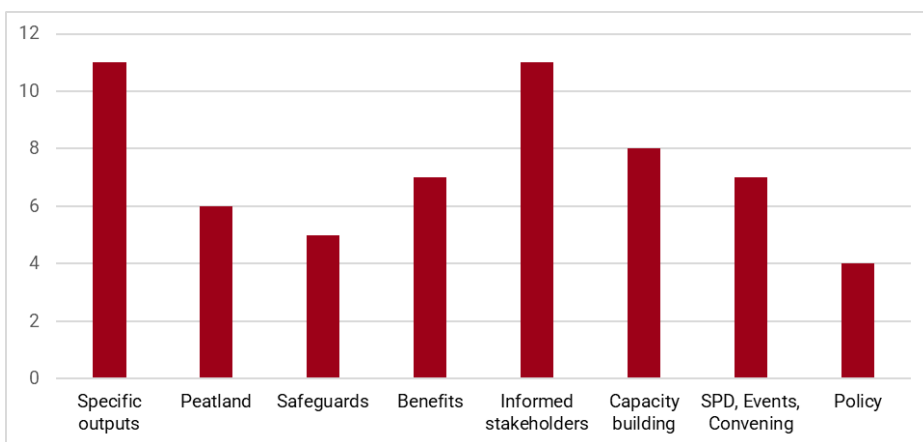
Figure 3: Stakeholder views on the specific areas of impact from GCSP4

Global and national interviewees were asked the question *"What do you think have been the main achievements of the project?"*: 45 total responses were given to this question, and 11 related to informed stakeholders, seen in Figure 3.

Eleven respondents referred to specific outputs as key achievements, with six referring to work on peatlands, five to safeguards, and seven to benefit sharing. Eight referred to capacity building of key stakeholders. The practical meaning of 'capacity building' varied by country - in DRC, interviewees highlighted working with local communities, in Indonesia, interviewees referred to aiding local governments to access Results Based Payments; and in Brazil, this was related to technical training of national government officials. Four spoke about specific policy changes, but the broader feeling was that informing stakeholders was the largest achievement. Informing stakeholders includes keeping REDD+ standards high on international stage and informing discussion on carbon markets (INT05, INT12), scenario building (INT10), or discussions and events (INT15, INT20, and INT21).

As pointed out by some respondents e.g. INT20 and INT15, attribution in this area of work with regards to impact, is very difficult to ascertain. This is unsurprising since GCS is a scientific knowledge-producing project, and the focus is on producing knowledge to inform outcomes. There is also the limitation that final GCSP4 outputs are still being finalized and that many external stakeholders may be unaware of upcoming products.

Overall, it is clear that the vast majority of interviewees felt there was evidence to show that knowledge creation and co-learning products were developed by GCSP4 to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+.

5.1.2 WP specific evidence showing knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+

Table 2 below provides information as to how far WPs show knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform 3E REDD+ according to the project documents. RMM indicators that were marked n/a are not considered in this results assessment.

**Table 2: Assessment of how far specific WPs achieved the planned project outcomes.**

Work Package	Results
WP1.1 **Activity**: Archetypes of tropical deforestation and degradation **Outcome**: Policymakers, practitioners and academia understand and make use of tropical deforestation and forest degradation archetypes to address main drivers.	To facilitate the implementation of these 3E policies and actions, aimed at reducing deforestation and forest degradation, GSCP4 developed a deforestation and forest degradation diagnostic framework. This framework serves as a diagnostic tool for forest policies and is built upon elements such as the classification of deforestation archetypes. Additionally, the project partners are in the process of developing a policy scenario development tool in collaboration with key stakeholders through science-policy platforms. (The paper on archetypes had not been published at the time of this review). The diagnostic framework was designed to bridge the gap between generalized policy recommendations and the diverse national circumstances of each country. After the SPDs were delivered in-country, reception to the archetypes in 2022 was very positive:

	• In **Peru**, 100% of the stakeholders surveyed reported that they had learnt new knowledge on deforestation drivers. • *73% of the stakeholders surveyed in **Brazil** shared that they had learnt a good-to-great deal of new knowledge on challenges for monitoring deforestation and forest degradation in the GCSP4 policy dialogue* • *In **Indonesia**, 100% of the stakeholders surveyed reported that they have learnt new knowledge on deforestation diagnostics and archetypes."* • In **DRC**, 55% of surveyed stakeholders reported that they learnt a great or good deal on political, environmental and legal aspects on deforestation and climate change. **RMM Indicators met? Yes**
WP1.2 **Activity**: Data generation to support the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) and the UNFCCC TACCC (Transparency, Accuracy, Completeness, Comparability, Consistency) principles. **Outcome:** Policymakers, practitioners and researchers are aware and make use of better Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) data and methods and have the capacity to implement TACCC (Transparent, Accurate, Consistent, Complete, Comparable) monitoring approaches to support land-based climate mitigation policies and the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) at all levels of action.	Development of knowledge on carbon stocks including academic research on greenhouse gas inventories. This research supported countries' MRV activities to track progress under the Paris Agreement for mitigation targets outlined in their NDCs, and to develop robust and transparent national forest monitoring systems to track emissions and emissions reductions from Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) –country examples are provided for Peru and Indonesia. There are references to SPDs in Brazil, and research carried out in DRC. **RMM Indicators met? Yes**
WP2.1 **Activity**: Context-intervention matrix to inform policies and actions to reduce deforestation and forest degradation **Outcome**: Policymakers, practitioners, financiers/donors and researchers understand and make use of consolidated evidence on the 3E impacts of different policies and actions, as relevant to the particular context in the country.	In the early stages of the project (2021) there were diverse perceptions of REDD+ amongst policymakers (panacea vs skepticism), especially on how much emissions can actually be absorbed by forests/by REDD+; a review of different estimates of REDD+ absorptions found different methodologies; starting of a systematic review of forest policies and other research published or ongoing on the impact of REDD+ policies. After the dissemination of research findings in policy dialogues in 2022 "About 88% of surveyed stakeholders in Peru and 92% of surveyed (by CIFOR-ICRAF) stakeholders in Indonesia reported that they have learnt a great deal of new knowledge on understanding deforestation via the global typology of public policies. In addition, 76% of stakeholders surveyed in Peru and 74% of stakeholders surveyed in Indonesia shared that they have learnt a great deal of new knowledge on impacts of policies and initiatives to reduce deforestation as well as REDD+ impacts through our policy dialogues. Two of the organizations that took part in Peru policy dialogues also reported that they would use CIFOR-ICRAF's impact evaluation methods to assess REDD+ as well as other forest interventions.

	The training of young researchers and an impact evaluation of East Kalimantan's low carbon emission program used the ID-RECCO database. **RMM Indicators met? Yes**
WP2.2 **Activity**: Mapping and assessing REDD+ finance and benefit-sharing mechanisms **Outcome**: Policymakers, practitioners and academia understand and make use of new REDD+ benefit sharing knowledge products to monitor and assess how current mechanisms share benefits globally.	As noted in WP2.1 there were diverse perceptions of REDD+ amongst policymakers at the project start. In 2022, based on government requests, the project also supported the Peruvian Ministry of Environment (MINAM) and the Kalimantan provincial government in Indonesia in assessing and evaluating policy options for REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms and social safeguards. • The project had a global impact as sharing knowledge with the Vietnamese government directly led a new development by 2023 around the provision of policy guidance for carbon markets in Vietnam. About 66% of stakeholders surveyed in Indonesia (2022) reported that they have learnt new knowledge on how REDD+ projects in Indonesia contribute to the goals of the Paris Agreement through our policy dialogue organized on 25th April 2022 in Indonesia. In Peru, 100% of stakeholders surveyed shared that they have learnt new knowledge on costs and benefits of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 in the Peruvian context through the 2022 policy dialogue. **RMM Indicators met? Yes for one indicator, one indicator incomplete**
WP3.1: **Activity:** Analysis of the politics of continued deforestation and forest degradation **Outcome:** Policymakers and practitioners at all levels are informed on information and analysis on politics, new incentives, discourses, agents and coalitions of change that can enable or hinder transformational change to enlarge the policy space for 3E forest policies.	Examples of relevant 2022 outputs included: • Provision of an overview on Central African countries' international commitments on climate change, the challenges for them to fulfil their promises and what can be done to help them in delivering global and national commitments. • Tracking the progress of global initiatives such as the New York Declaration on Forests (Climate Focus 2022) and drawing out lessons learnt on how to improve forest governance and translate pledges into action. • Proposed approaches to improve REDD+ and combat deforestation in Indonesia. • Alongside stakeholders, emphasizing the potential role of carbon credits outside the forestry sector in mitigating climate change. • Interplay of REDD+ governance in Cameroon (Gakou-Kakeu et al. 2022) • Several DRC specific outputs e.g. the governance of DRC peatlands which determined the outcomes of policy and measures to address deforestation. Also recommendations on how forest governance should be improved for better environmental and social outcomes. o A dedicated national training for DRC researchers and young scientists on new research methods to understand climate change impacts and political economy of drivers of deforestation and degradation was co-organized with University of Kinshasa. More than 69% of the stakeholders that took part in this training reported that they have learnt new knowledge during this training.

	o Presented analysis in country policy dialogues and facilitated information sharing and knowledge exchange on climate change policies and political economy of REDD+ amongst national stakeholders. For example, 81% of stakeholders surveyed in DRC shared that they have learnt a great deal of new knowledge on political, legal and environmental context on deforestation and climate change in DRC due to the GCP4 policy dialogues. • Presented research findings from WP3.1and WP 3.2 at international fora including COP 27 side events and the GLF 2022 in Egypt **RMM Indicators met? Yes**
WP3.2 **Activity**: Rights-based approaches and safeguards to support transformational change **Outcome**: Policymakers, practitioners, grassroots organizations and researchers at all levels understand and make use of information and analysis on how rights-based approaches (RBAs) - including ambitious safeguards standards, grievance mechanisms, equitable benefit sharing arrangements and socially inclusive participation (emphasizing the rights of IPLCs and women) - can be implemented to support transformational change in favor of 3E forest policies	• Research conducted to help increase clarity across safeguards standards, increase awareness on rights based approaches (especially IP and LC land tenure) and draw out lessons learnt from multistakeholder platforms (MSPs) for natural resources governance. • Various publications and events. "Throughout 2022, CIFOR-ICRAF received requests for material to support the organization of equitable MSPs for which they synthesized their findings into a set of 'how to' flyers in 2023 • Supported for safeguard design and implementation by assessing existing laws in Peru, Indonesia and DRC (Brazil not included in WP 3.1 or 3.2) laying the groundwork for setting context-specific pathways to encourage countries, donors and projects to 'do better'. o The research findings on social safeguards and benefit sharing mechanisms are directly used by the World Bank Enable Fund to develop its Social Inclusion Strategy. **RMM Indicators met? Yes for one indicator, one indicator in progress (incomplete)**
WP4.1 **Activity**: Diagnostic framework **Output**: Policymakers, practitioners and researchers at all levels adopt and use a co-produced diagnostic framework to prioritize 3E policy options to tackling deforestation and forest degradation	The diagnostic framework is a decision-making tool that covers deforestation and forest degradation combined with policy scenarios of alternative forest and development pathways. While the diagnostics work analyzes the past and current situation, the scenario building is forward-looking to estimate possible GHG emissions trajectories (including avoided emissions and CO2 removals) based on different policy options in the priority countries' efforts towards meeting their NDCs and future land use change. It was co-produced with national stakeholders through the science-policy platforms held in the four countries, to build factual consensus around the diagnosis, scenarios and policy options. • As an example, 100% stakeholders surveyed in Indonesia shared that they have learnt new knowledge on deforestation diagnostic and archetypes in our policy dialogue organized in 2022. **RMM Indicators met? Yes for one indicator and one indicator in progress (incomplete)**
WP4.2 **Activity:** Scenario building **Outcome:** Policymakers and practitioners at all levels co-develop	This component builds on the outputs of the diagnostic framework, namely the deforestation archetypes and the policy intervention typology, to enhance coherence of the project's outputs. This WP suffered from delays due to political upheaval.

and use scenario-building tools to enhance NDC ambition and take action to meet goals.	• In Brazil, 94% of stakeholders who took part in the policy dialogue in 2022 shared that they have learnt new knowledge on different REDD+ accounting methodologies. • In Peru, 100% of stakeholders surveyed reported that they had learnt some new knowledge on methods for modelling land use change and approach for building scenarios as a result of GCSP4 dialogue organized in 2022. **RMM Indicators met? Yes for one indicator, two indicators in progress (incomplete)**
WP4.3 **Activity:** Science-policy platforms **Outcome:** Policymakers and practitioners at all levels are guided by diagnosis, scenarios and policy options to implement 3E forest-friendly policies and actions.	There were a large number of policy dialogues in 2022 which helped policy makers and practitioners at all levels to be guided by diagnosis, scenarios and policy options. The findings as well as the science-policy platforms produced by this project are highly appreciated by national stakeholders **RMM Indicators met? No indicators to be met as marked as n/a**
WP5.1 **Activity:** Engagement, communications, collaboration across the other four WPs **Outcome:** Co-produced knowledge is owned by policy makers and practitioners engaged in the project and used to inform and engage a broad set of stakeholders.	In close collaboration with CIFOR-ICRAF's Communications, Outreach and Engagement (COE) and Data Management team, three main tools were used to track publications outreach and social media campaign delivered across the project, more specifically through WP 5. These tools are: • Altmetrics – to monitor the social media interaction and degree of popularity • AWStat – for downloads • Follow-up and targeted surveys to assess media campaigns and similar outputs The data collection tool records relevant data on publications, blogs, videos and presentations. Relevant output usage data is then inputted in the Results Measurement Matrix (RMM) and feeds into progress reporting. **There is no indicator assigned to this outcome. Due to the cross-cutting nature of communications and the role of communications in achieving results this is explored further in section 6.5.**

5.2 How well were NICFI's outcomes met?

The GCS is funded by NICFI, via Norad. The four NICFI strategic intervention areas that link into the sustainable land use intermediate outcome in the NICFI Strategic Framework impact pathway[20], are used as intermediate outcomes for the GCSP4 ToC. They are referred to as NICFI Outcome 1,2,3 and 4 in the project.

• **NICFI Outcome 1**. Approved and implemented policies for sustainable forest and land use in tropical forest countries and jurisdictions

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[20] https://www.norad.no/globalassets/filer/nicfi/nicfi-strategic-framework.pdf

- **NICFI Outcome 2**. Improved rights and livelihoods for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in tropical forest countries
- **NICFI Outcome 3**. Effective international incentive structures for reduced deforestation in tropical forest countries
- **NICFI Outcome 4**. Increased transparency in land management, land use, value chains and financing

5.2.1 Global/cross-cutting

Table 3 below provides information on the progress of GCSP4 against the NICFI outcomes and indicators. All indicators were met:

Table 3: Progress of GCSP4 against the NICFI outcomes and indicators

Outcome	Results
NICFI Outcome 1 Approved and implemented policies for sustainable forest and land use in tropical forest countries and jurisdictions. **Indicator**: *Seven approved and implemented policies for sustainable forest and land use in tropical forest countries and jurisdictions*	CIFOR-ICRAF's efforts aimed to inform public policymakers and civil society organizations in Indonesia, Peru, Brazil, and DRC about deforestation and forest degradation patterns and drivers in their respective countries. This knowledge equips them to select and implement effective policies to combat deforestation and forest degradation in various contexts. Specific achievements included - A **scenario tool**[21] to assess scenarios of deforestation and carbon credits in Brazil was completed in 2024. This initiative was a significant step towards shaping sustainable forest and land use policies in Brazil, including contributing to Brazil's national deforestation control planning known as "PPCDAm." These efforts were followed in Peru and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to impact forest conservation and land use policies positively. - In **Indonesia**, CIFOR-ICRAF collaborated with government bodies to enhance Indonesia's institutional capacity to meet the transparency requirements of the Paris Agreement. In 2023, CIFOR-ICRAF played an important role in discussions aimed at crafting an institutional arrangement for the Enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in Indonesia, involving both academic experts and civil society. - In 2023, **Indonesian** officials were trained on the IPCC Wetlands Supplement to the 2006 Guidelines and exposed to the Monte Carlo Simulation method to analyze emission uncertainties by error propagation. The inclusion of peatland fires, non-CO2 gas emissions from peat decomposition and of mangrove soils in the FRL 2022 (updating the 2016 FREL) and the enhanced NDC were additional achievements. These achievements in Indonesia were shared with stakeholders in the DRC, the Republic of the Congo, and Peru through meetings of scientists with the governments and via the (ongoing) International Tropical Peatland Institute (ITPC) platform, hosted by CIFOR-ICRAF in Indonesia. In **Peru**, the government adopted an NDC in 2023 focused on reducing emissions by preventing deforestation in forested peatlands. CIFOR-ICRAF provided support in calculating emission reductions in peatlands and published a training package in 2023 following a 2022 training workshop. Another NDC related to avoided degradation of forested peatlands in national protected areas is under preparation with scientific

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[21] https://www.cifor-icraf.org/gcs/knowledge/toolboxes/deforestation-and-carbon-emission-simulators/

	support from the GCS scientists. Both NDCs are expected to promote sustainable peatland management and conservation in Peru.
	Indicator target reached? *Yes, at least six met*
NICFI Outcome 2 Improved rights and livelihoods for indigenous peoples and local communities in tropical forest countries **Indicator**: *Three safeguards or rights-based approach-related policies, programs and/or initiatives at national level or in targeted subnational jurisdictions, designed, implemented, or implemented better than before, that are informed by project.*	• Research findings were used by World Bank to develop its multi-donor trust fund "Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions (EnABLE)" • The project strengthened the voice and presence of IPLCs in global, regional and national events and facilitate collaboration and information exchange between IPLCs and donors, private sector and government agencies in all 4 targeted countries • In **Peru**, CIFOR-ICRAF collaborated closely with ANECAP, the organization representing indigenous groups co-managing protected areas with the national Protected Areas Service. Together, they developed an adaptive learning tool to support more equitable and effective co-management of Communal Reserves for the benefit of nearby Indigenous populations. Capacity development workshops were organized to train SERNANP staff in using this tool, building on the success of the previously recognized 'Como vamos?' Tool. • Overall, CIFOR-ICRAF's work on REDD+ safeguards led to capacity-building activities with Indigenous organizations to enhance their understanding of the system, further empowering these communities. • In **Indonesia**, CIFOR-ICRAF introduced scientific, so-called quasi-experimental methods for policy impact assessment in a provincial-level results-based payment program. **Indicator target reached?** *Yes, at least three achieved*
NICFI Outcome 3 Effective international incentive structures for reduced deforestation in tropical forest countries **Indicator**: *Four international or national incentive structures informed by project.*	CIFOR-ICRAF scientists engaged with various actors in **Peru** and **globally**, focusing on conservation and financial incentives, including safeguards standards for Verified Carbon Markets (VCMs). Their support to Peru's pilot program for REDD+ safeguards aimed to enhance the effectiveness of these mechanisms. CIFOR-ICRAF's research, publications and presentations have also focused on DRC and Indonesia's national contexts. According to the 2023 APR, CIFOR-ICRAF's publications and active participation in technical bodies have been instrumental in promoting effective international incentive structures for reduced deforestation. In May 2023, CIFOR-ICRAF staff presented at Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI) 2023 Plenary "Myths, realities, and solutions towards high-integrity forest carbon credits," providing an introduction on REDD+ credits and carbon markets, presenting meta-study results on the effectiveness of REDD+, and leading a session on new approaches in voluntary carbon standards for achieving high-integrity REDD+ at scale. Similarly, in June 2023 CIFOR-ICRAF participated in Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB58), presenting at side events on high-integrity forest carbon markets, on realizing the promise of high-integrity REDD+ at scale, and on Verra's Consolidated REDD+ methodology for high-integrity forest carbon projects. Previously, CIFOR-ICRAF participated in the 2022 Bonn Climate Change Conference, which aimed to leverage the Glasgow Leader's Declaration on Forests and Land Use to accelerate climate actions, and where CIFOR-ICRAF presented on "REDD+ Financing – more money, more benefits?". This likely built on CIFOR-ICRAF's previous participation and presentation at the UNFCCC COP26 side event on "Fair and equitable REDD+ finance and benefit-sharing mechanisms for climate goals and justice" in November 2021. **Indicator target reached?** *Yes, at least four achieved*

NICFI outcome 4 Increased transparency in land management, land use, value chains and financing **Indicator**: *One policy, program or initiative focused on transparency and accountability in the forest and land use sector influenced by project.*	• Overall scientific research contributed to better understanding of CO_2 reservoirs and being useful for actors such as IPCC. *"CIFOR-ICRAF supported Peru's Ministry for Environment (MINAM) in developing the Registry of Mitigation Actions. This registry will offer a transparent pathway for REDD+ initiatives to register their compliance with Peru's REDD+ mechanism, including baselines and safeguards. The discussions around tools and methods to track deforestation and potential scenarios took place during important Science-Policy dialogues."* • ID-RECCO's neutrality and methodology included the most comprehensive data available and used a verification process to ensure accuracy and objectivity of REDD+ data. **Indicator target reached?** ***Yes, at least one achieved***

Results from the global stakeholder interviews (including NICFI interviews) showed that out of 12 total responses, there were seven positive overall responses to the task of meeting the NICFI outcomes, with three specifically flagging outcome 1, and two specifically flagging outcome 2 as being successful. Two respondents were unsure about outcome 4, and one unsure about outcome 3. No interviewees gave a directly negative appraisal. Note that external stakeholders not involved in project implementation were not asked this question.

These interview responses allowed the Efeca review team to triangulate the above documented information.

5.3 Were any adaptations made or needed during the project?

5.3.1 Global/cross-cutting

Multiple activities were delayed due to the COVID pandemic impact: challenges in field work and stakeholder consultation delayed the start of the main output of WP1.1, as well as outputs from WP4.1, 2.1.1, 3.1.2, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3.

The anticipated second part of project, spanning 2024-2025, in which diagnostics would be piloted, was cancelled due to the decision from Norad to discontinue funding the project.

ID-RECCO grew in size in 2022 as its variables and structure were significantly updated to keep up with the emerging issues.

5.3.1.1 **PAGs** (Policy/Project Advisory Groups)

There were issues with establishing and maintaining the PAGs (the name varied due to sensitivities in some countries).

The PAGs were developed in response to try to widen participatory stakeholder inclusion from an early stage and throughout the GCSP4. Each PAG was supposed to consist of 15-20 key stakeholders, such as national policy makers, practitioners, researchers, NGOs, CSOs, indigenous groups, etc. who were expected to be involved in the science-policy dialogues. The PAGs specify for each country context, in what

respect the project aims to influence these stakeholders' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and relationships and their behavior. But they could also piggyback onto existing policy platforms.

The PAG issues varied according to country, for example, the evolving political environment in Peru and Brazil, where general elections took place in 2022, was a matter of concern as PAG membership needs to be as stable as possible over the life of the project. As a result, the Peru PAG was only established in the first quarter of 2022 and only had a maximum of 10 members. In Brazil, face to face interviews were conducted with a list of possible PAG members to enquire about their willingness, commitment, and interest in joining the Brazil PAG. In reality, the lack of member stability in PAGs was an issue for a range of reasons in all countries.

In DRC, some key stakeholders expressed their concern to be formally associated with a PAG that aims to 'influence' policies, hence alternative ways of communicating the purpose of the PAG were developed but ultimately PAGs were not implemented in DRC.

Although the PAG was primarily seen as a MELIA tool (see section 5.5), ultimately to a large extent, the PAG memberships formed the target audiences and attendance of the Science Policy Dialogue (SPD). In practice, the PAG membership scoping work appears to have functioned as a successful key stakeholder mapping exercise in the early stages of GCSP4.

5.3.2 Country specific

5.3.2.1 Peru adaptations

Adaptation was required on CIFOR's peatland work in Peru due to recent political crises which hindered progress in public policy (SoC). Flexibility in adapting to changes in the context situation was also recognized by the interviewees. Frequent mention was made of the challenge posed by the political instability in Peru in recent years, which has led to frequent changes of officials and the resulting loss of knowledge (PER001, PER002, PER009).

5.3.2.2 Brazil adaptations

Brazil has been involved in REDD+ projects for several years and the funding from REDD+ results-based payments helped to pilot the environmental service incentive program and strengthen Brazil's REDD+ strategy, both contributing to achieving Brazil's NDC (UNFCCC, 2019[22]). Some conservation efforts based on REDD+ include the Brazil national carbon market law, which establishes a legal carbon market to create a Brazilian Emissions Trading system. However, the credibility of such systems remains contested.

The dynamic nature of the carbon market and regulatory environment highlighted the importance of continuous updates and adaptation. Although the project effectively

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[22] https://unfccc.int/news/forest-protection-in-brazil-boosted-through-redd-plus?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwooq3BhB3EiwAYqYoEiSHg1BoniHyCq3LFPr3zPl8prflEvV38JZSgYP9yojmeYkzfwiQyhoC64gQAvD_BwE

managed this challenge during its time frame, sustained efforts will be crucial for maintaining relevance and impact in the long term.

5.3.2.3 DRC adaptations

No specific DRC adaptations were noted.

5.3.2.4 Indonesia adaptations

As in Peru, there was a noted flexibility in adapting to institutional changes in Indonesia's research landscape.

The project's effectiveness in addressing country needs was perceived to have varied over time and across different aspects of REDD+ implementation. For example, as IND01 observed, while CIFOR was highly engaged in the early stages of REDD+ planning, its visibility decreased as implementation progressed. This suggests that the project may have been less successful in adapting to evolving needs as REDD+ moved into more advanced stages. Additionally, as REDD+ implementation progressed, new needs emerged related to carbon market policies that the project may not have fully addressed, as pointed out by IND08 and others.

These observations indicate that while the project was largely successful in identifying and addressing key policy priorities, there were some areas where it could have been more responsive to evolving needs and emerging priorities in the Indonesian REDD+ landscape.

5.4 Were the Theories of Change fit-for-purpose?

The project documents include a MELIA Plan which provides details on the ToC including the narrative of the ToC and an impact pathway as shown in Figure 4 below.

As noted in the ToC narrative, NICFI outcomes 1-4 represent changes in system and practice level. The WPs 1-5 project outcome descriptions specify how phase 4 aims at contributing to these NICFI outcomes.
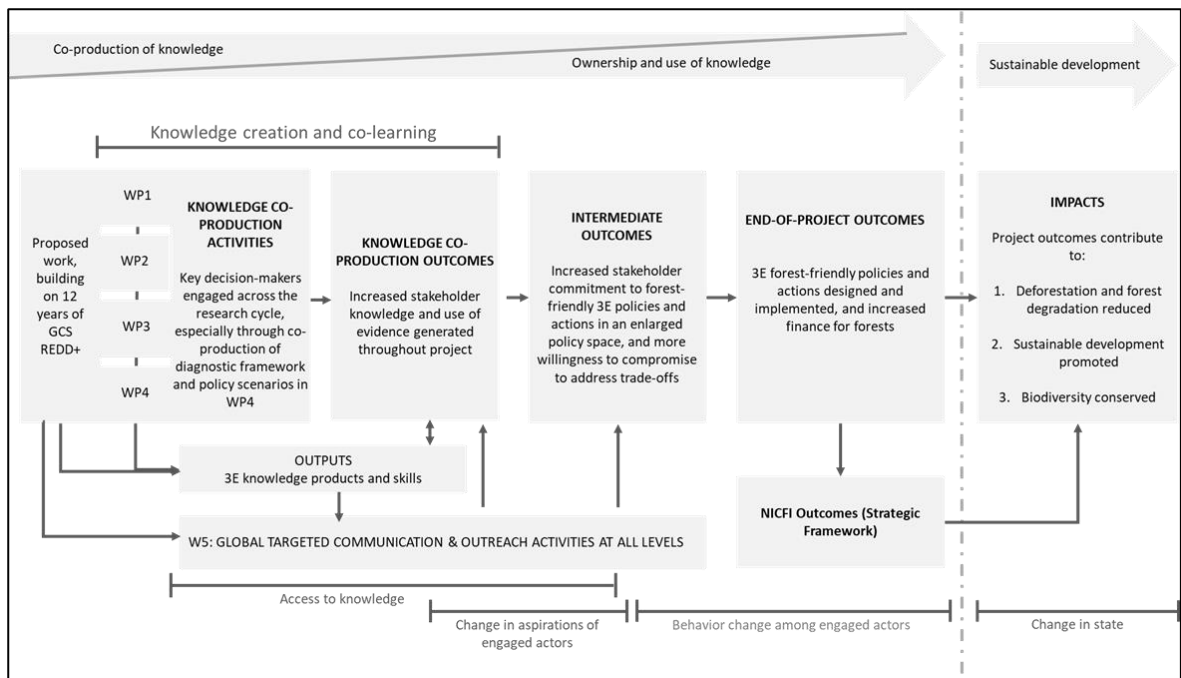
Figure 4: ToC Impact Pathway

There are five separate Theory of Changes (ToCs): one global ToC and four country ToCs covering Brazil, DRC, Indonesia and Peru. These ToCs utilize the same format in terms of impact, NICFI outcomes, project outcomes and outputs. The five WPs are integrated into the ToCs making it clear what areas each country has been working on as there are differences for each country context

The project and NICFI outcomes alongside the relevant indicators, are listed above in sections 5.1 and 5.2:

- WP1 – Achieving Transparency and accountability

- WP2 – Tracking and assessing actions

- WP3 – Bringing out the politics

- WP4 – Linking science, policy and politics for forest-based climate action

- WP5 – Sharing evidence and experiences

The horizontal and vertical logic of the ToCs are clear, particularly when used in conjunction with the five-stage impact pathway for the project. It can be broadly understood how the outputs feed into outcomes feed into impacts.

The relationships between WP1-4 (the four research modules) make sense and are reflected in how the project operated, as the Science Policy Dialogues and other WP4 outputs are a main conduit for research to translate to action. The way that WP1-3 feed into WP 4 are also logical. The use of WP 5 (the knowledge-sharing module) as a cross-cutting mechanism which also feeds into WP1-4 is clear.

In the global interviews seven of the 13 responses given to the question *"Were the Theory of Change(s) fit for purpose?"* stated that the ToC was useful in their work with GCS, with the process of crafting the ToC for each country being mentioned as particularly useful, though two stated it was overly complex and could be simplified. Additionally, five stated they referred to the ToC through the implementation of the project, and three stated that it wasn't used at all or used much.

The interviews with the senior project team also indicated that the development of the ToC using Miro was an extremely valuable exercise for the project teams as well as the Q4I. This allowed the building of stronger global impact as a result of having a shared understanding between the different country teams and WP leads.

Possible improvements:

Suggestions to improve the ToC include integrating communications from the start, or reframing the document as a living, project management document, as opposed to a static framework, that can be adapted to changing political or operational contexts.

5.4.1 An updated Theory of Change

The ToC has not been adapted or changed for this phase since the early stages of the project in October 2021; although it did change from the initial ToC submitted to Norad in May 2021. Since the original vision was for a 3-year plus 2-year extension, it is pertinent to mention that an (unused) updated ToC impact pathway covering the period 2024-2025 was developed in January 2023.

This updated impact pathway (see Figure 5) indicates how CIFOR-ICRAF anticipated that the project would have evolved if the Norad funding had not been curtailed due to a change in their funding objectives.

Figure 5: Proposed (but not used) updated theory of change 2024-2025

5.5 Were the MELIA outcome tracking tools fit-for-purpose?

The focus on evidencing outcome level changes (the purpose of the MELIA plan) was affected by the decreased funding, shortened timeframe and delays in delivering as discussed elsewhere in this report. There were also some difficulties in collecting data from the GoI (Government of Indonesia).

5.5.1 The MELIA toolkit

The MELIA toolkit at outcome level includes five tools, as summarized in Table 4 and in the MELIA plan. Each tool is analyzed in the following sections.

Table 4: Melia toolkit

Outcome tracking tools	Main purpose
1. Event & training evaluations (online & in-person)	Captures how effectively new knowledge & capacity is being transferred to targeted participants – assessment of knowledge gains & how to improve learning (lessons learned) – possible follow-up semi-structured interviews.
2. Policy Advisory Group survey	Keeps track of how research outputs are effectively used by key stakeholders (uptakes) – carried out at baseline and endline.
3. Outcome influence log (OIL)	Records observations and evidence on outcome level that indicate (1) who (individuals and organizations) is influenced by the project and how, (2) whether this influence is eventually successful (outcome manifestation) - starting point for identification of a SoC and assessment of long-term impact.
4. Story of Change (SoC)	Short (3-4 pages) narrative illustrations of how an (research) intervention facilitated change towards its overarching project goals. SoCs use a theory-driven approach (ToC) to assess whether the intervention's logic and assumptions were valid
5. Results measurement matrix (RMM) (outcome level)	Keeps track of outcome indicators – the RMM is updated twice a year with indicators' measurement and self-assessment of progress (narrative) – informs strategic decision-making.

Improvements from phase 3 lesson learning included the development of country-specific ToCs that helped brainstorm and articulate how to influence change in different contexts, training the team on the toolkit, the toolkit was flexible enough to be adjusted over time to accommodate team's feedback (e.g., OIL) and addressing challenges to set up national PAGs (e.g., SPDs feedback surveys). Additionally, 2 SoCs were published on country and global level to highlight examples of change in practice and policy that the research contributed to.

Despite the training that was provided on the MELIA outcome tracking tools including the specific whole project implementation team training in October 2021, it is important to note that they were used in an inconsistent manner across the four countries and generally inconsistently over the course of the project. Therefore, it is useful to consider the MELIA outcome tracking tools both as they were used in this project as well as the utility of the mechanism itself.

In addition, some of these tools were not used by some of the country leads whose responsibility it was to complete these elements. From the global interviews with the WP leads and country leads, everyone was able to discuss using the MELIA tools, but in certain cases they were found to be too time-consuming to be used consistently considering the limited time available. However the SoC seemed to have strong approval by all who mentioned them, and they are seen as a valuable MELIA output.

5.5.1.1 Event & training evaluations (online & in-person)

Almost all available event or training evaluation surveys, bar one, relate to SPDs. A total of 14 SPD surveys were carried out by CIFOR-ICRAF plus one other event survey.

In general, these surveys show the impact of events on participants, in terms of disseminating knowledge and maintaining interest in the GCS project. It is reflected in interviews that GCS-run events were well-attended and productive. There is some indication that other smaller events would be good - or that momentum is lost between SPD events.

Most PAG members who participated in during phase 3 shared their views on the topics covered at the SPDs.

These surveys are limited in evaluating the impact of project beyond these snapshots of participant sentiment immediately after events – where interest in and knowledge uptake from the GCS project may be unrepresentatively high.

5.5.1.2   Policy Advisory Group survey

According to the MELIA Plan, a key approach of the MELIA system was to monitor progress made at output and outcome level through the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) in each country of action (ref. WP4). The rationale behind this was that the project aims to achieve change at system level by influencing the behavior of key actors.

The expectation was that these PAGs would be surveyed initially to provide a baseline and then to monitor progress annually on project outputs and outcomes. As discussed in section 5.3, these PAGs were ultimately more active in the early stages of the project. Only one example could be found of a PAG survey and this was from Indonesian PAG in December 2023. It shows a snapshot of the sentiments of a set of 12 stakeholders and provides some useful insights. In this example, it was widely agreed that CIFOR-ICRAF planned outputs would be useful across all work packages and shows a strong buy-in to the project from the stakeholders at an early stage.

It would have been a useful form of measurement had the PAG surveys been able to be used as originally envisaged by Q4I. Due to the later than planned establishment, local sensitivities and high member turnover, the PAGs did not turn out as expected. To mitigate this and act as a proxy PAG survey the SPDs feedback surveys were established.

5.5.1.3   Outcome influence log (OIL)

Outcome influence logs (OILs) were tools used to track instances of influence on stakeholders from GCSP4 activities. Excel spreadsheets were used to log instances of email interaction with stakeholders that evidence influence, as well as a dedicated OIL email address and a WhatsApp channel.

The dedicated email address was used for colleagues to share interactions with stakeholders and contributions the project was having on policy processes or showing awareness on key topics. The WhatsApp channel was used for similar conversation; however this was not recorded and does not feed into this review. This additional data was not systematically collected and stored separately which would be advised for future projects.

Excel sheets were compiled for three countries (Peru, Brazil and Indonesia).

OILs were used throughout the project but they were largely only completed in the relevant spreadsheet consistently by Brazil and Indonesia.

The OILs provide examples of how the CIFOR-ICRAF staff influenced stakeholders. Examples from the way in which the OILs are compiled and summarized across the three countries is shown in Annex A.

The significance of the influence is particularly useful as it feeds into the findings to assess the actual influence of CIFOR-ICRAF and the reach of the project (see section 6.6)

5.5.1.4 Story of Change (SoC)

There is no definitive approach, but SoCs use a specific narrative of events and are typically structured with a beginning, middle and end. They focus on the change that has taken place due to the project.

GCSP4 has produced two Stories of Change (SoC) and one InfoBrief, which include:

- In draft InfoBrief: Ensuring REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanisms and safeguards in Indonesia are informed and effective.

- Finalized SOC : Catalyzing policy for the conservation of Amazonian peatlands in Peru[23]

- Finalized: ID-RECCO SOC− the international database on REDD+ projects and programs. Unlocking REDD+ project knowledge for informed environmental action[24]

The content of the SoCs are not detailed in this section but instead are used as a source of triangulation in the findings of the whole report (using the SoC acronym).

When developed in a consistent and thorough manner as shown in GCSP4 then SoC is a very effective approach to include in a MELIA toolkit.

> *"These [Stories of Change] are really where communication can become effective − not just outputs, they show change."* (INT04)

Discussions with the CIFOR-ICRAF communications team revealed that there are plans to further develop these three SoC with a range of media including infographics, videos etc., to showcase the overarching changes and impacts that the GCS project has achieved over the 15 years of the four phases.

Possible SoC evolution

SoC is an adaptable qualitative tool, and it would be useful if a more participatory perspective could be added in to be able to more overtly achieve a wider stakeholder viewpoint. One option could be to include this perspective in the upcoming SoC related outputs that are already planned.

In addition, it would be beneficial if the communications team are involved from the outset so that end use and audience of the SoCs perspective could be included more in the initial design phase.

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[23] Gomez et al. 2024: https://doi.org/10.17528/cifor-icraf/009237

[24] Monteiro et al. 2024: https://doi.org/10.17528/cifor-icraf/009238

5.5.1.5 Results measurement matrix (outcome level)

The Results measurement matrix (RMM) is a standard MELIA tool that typically provides an overall good impression of the project outcomes and is a key tool to monitor the projects indicators.

The most up to date RMM used for this report was from January 2024 so there will be additional outputs that may not have been considered in this report.

Whilst the project outcomes have been tracked, the NICFI outcomes do not appear to have been tracked since year one although there is a word document-based update in the 2023 APR. However, the Efeca reviewers have tried to link these outputs to the required indicators in section 5.2.

Indicators

Overall, the indicators appear to be limited in terms of evidence sources and are largely quantitative with little qualitative data included. One way to expand this could be to draw from the other elements from the MELIA toolkit.

The RMM matrix relies overwhelmingly on two evidence sources – citation and download metrics for blogs and articles, and SPD feedback surveys, in particular, the metrics:

- Average % of surveyed participants reporting that the Dialogue was overall useful in terms of learning
- Average % of surveyed participants reporting that they learned a good or great deal from the topics covered in each Dialogue
- Average % of surveyed participants reporting willingness to use knowledge gained at the Dialogue

Ideally a stronger causal link would be included within the indicator. However, this would require additional resources since the only way this could be tested is if a follow-up assessment was made. i.e. did knowledge recipients actually use the information gained at a Dialogue. One way to achieve this is to follow up with a percentage of the participants but in reality, it is unlikely that many would respond unless they continued to be engaged with other project activities.

5.5.1.6 Assessment of whether MELIA tools were fit-for-purpose

The MELIA tools are structured to try to get attribution on elements that are difficult to capture, such as project direct influence on high level behavioral change, including political stakeholders. It is rarely possible to pinpoint one specific instigator on this type of change and these tools have made a good effort to achieve this.

The main limitation was that the tools were generally inconsistently used by all the countries, despite training being delivered to the implementation team in 2021 on the MELIA toolkit and how to use the different tools. In addition, they seemed to be purely country focused which meant that the global interactions in relation to SoC and the OIL could be missed.

From the 13 global interviews with the WP leads and country leads, five found the outcome tracking tools to be time consuming and/or laborious to use, and three stated they did not use the tools. Although four were positive about the SoCs, four had negative sentiments about the OILs, suggesting they were hard or time

consuming to use, in addition to project work. This was mitigated by the establishment of a dedicated email address which was used by certain people more frequently as this was less time-consuming but aimed to capture the information.

In terms of design, the main tool that could be redesigned is the OIL. While appreciated by some respondents, it is evident that that it was not used as intended throughout the project in all countries. The results are certainly useful, but some redesign is needed to try to encourage better use of the tool. The country leads are the main people who manage the MELIA tools and were often under time constraints.

It was suggested by two interviewees to replace the OIL with a similar tool, such as a simplified engagement log, or alternatively to integrate this into existing reporting, e.g. field reports. Alternatively, a stakeholder/engagement map could be useful for this project. It may be that some aspects of the OIL could be integrated into field reports, event reports, etc. while a regularly updated stakeholder engagement map (possibly either on an annual basis or as new contacts are made) could replace the OIL – this would combine the MELIA function of the OIL with a useful forward-looking implementation tool, thus giving an incentive to fill it out.

6. What have been the main contributing factors to achieving or limiting the project's intended outcomes?

Summary Findings: What have been the main contributing factors to achieving or limiting the project's intended outcomes?

- The development of the diagnostic framework seems to have been successful, so it can be assumed that the design of WPs 1 to 3 feeding into the diagnostic framework was an effective research design.
- Personal and professional relationships were seen as being important factors in contributing to project achievements.
- The two main factors that restricted the project achievements were felt to be limited resources together with the limited time of the project implementation.
- The project tried to ensure that it addressed country needs primarily through the use of good local networks of stakeholders able to meet local needs, through which to disseminate findings, and with which to engage in co-creative processes.
- Stakeholders stated the importance of specific key partners and a well-targeted stakeholder engagement. For example, in Peru, Brazil, and DRC, the relationship with a specific university was flagged as important.
- In Peru it was recognized that there has been a good outreach at the national level, but that a greater involvement with subnational governments was needed.
- The Brazilian stakeholder interviews showed that the project was perceived to have helped the development of a REDD+ culture in Brazil.
- In DRC, although many key decision makers were perceived to have been reached it was also felt that there were some gaps exacerbated by an insufficient level of dissemination and inclusion within the project processes.
- In Indonesia the project helped bridge the gap between international research and local policy needs, translating global knowledge into context-specific recommendations for Indonesian policymakers. Although successful in engaging with government and some project implementers, the research had limited reach with high-level policymakers and the private sector e.g. in the carbon market sector.
- Project staff and stakeholders consistently identified their in-country networks as being very important to achieving project outcomes. The networks of decisions makers formed and maintained by country coordinators, and through events, as well as the co-creation of knowledge, seem to be instrumental to encouraging key decision makers to use the knowledge that CIFOR-ICRAF produce to support policies aligned with project outcomes.
  - Despite the width of the materials produced by CIFOR-ICRAF, interviewees commented that effectiveness could be improved if there were more targeted and less academic outputs that could be more easily understood.
  - There is a broad strength in communications but there appears to be a gap between the effectiveness of a network group and the perception of the effectiveness of the project communications. Taking the global and country combined interviews, there is a strong sentiment that the project communications could be more effective.
- GCS has had a larger and longer presence in Peru and Indonesia and it is in these two countries that the actual influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team was more easily evidenced.

6.1 Research design – how effective was it?

The development of the diagnostic framework seems to have been successful, so it can be assumed that the design of WPs 1 to 3 feeding into the diagnostic framework was an effective research design.

From global and interviews, responses to the question *"Do you think the research design was effective? Why and could anything be improved?"* can be seen in Figure 6). Of 42 responses to this questions, 21 stated that the design was effective, and 26 gave suggestions for research design improvements.

The suggestions for research design were varied, four interviewees spoke of better framing of research to align with emerging trends and appeal to more stakeholders, or better integration with outputs. In general, this meant fewer academic outputs that were more digestible to a wider range of users.

■ Yes ■ Somewhat ■ No

Figure 6: Stakeholder interview results, "Do you think the research design was effective?"

It was clear that blogs were well-received, INT12 also described how a PAG that met more than once per year, or had closer, more informal links, could help the project to be more effective.

6.2 Major factors influencing achievement/non-achievement?

From the global and country interviews, responses to question *"For each of the achievements what do you think were the main contributing factors?"* are shown in Figure 7 below: There were 43 total responses to this question, and 26 emphasized the personal and professional relationships as being important factors in contributing to project achievements.
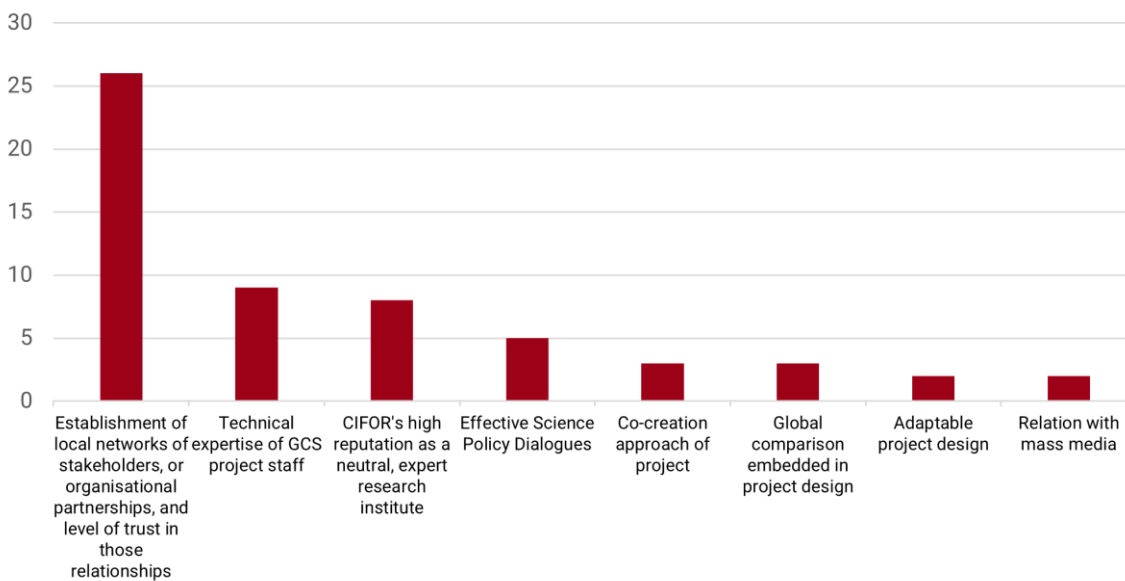
Figure 7: Stakeholder interview results on the main contributing GCSP4 success factors

"The country coordinator is the person who will sell your science in that country. An outlet for someone with a publication for it to be disseminated. Traction was finally achieved due to doors being opened by national coordinators" (INT07).

Nine interviewees referenced the technical expertise of GCS project staff as key to achieving project outcomes, and eight mentioned the reputation of CIFOR-ICRAF as important, as well as the project's global nature (with three specifically referring to the global aspect of the GCS). The perception of CIFOR-ICRAF as an independent entity was seen as particularly important so that researchers are enabled to ask critical, unfiltered questions.

As an international organization, the ability to convene stakeholders and research partners, alongside different country representatives, was seen as a key success factors. The ability of learning about comparative experience as well as the opportunity for benchmarking from other countries was also highly appreciated. Five interviewees flagged the science policy dialogues in particular, with three mentioning the co-creation approach as being key. Two others mentioned the media training and engagement with the media as important, and two mentioned the flexible project design. *"The length of GCS REDD+ provides a depth and background that other projects don't have. Long term interventions of this nature allow you more depth, because of years of networking and research"* (INT06)

Global and country combined interviews responses to question "**Which were the top factors that limited the project achievement?":** As shown in Figure 8, of the 49 responses to this question, 12 referenced a low level of resource, while nine interviewees stated a main factor as the limited time of the project implementation, with two specifically flagging the unexpected curtailment of phase 4. (It should be noted that because of the long duration of the GCS overall, many of the stakeholders were unaware that the GCS phase project was ending earlier than expected.)
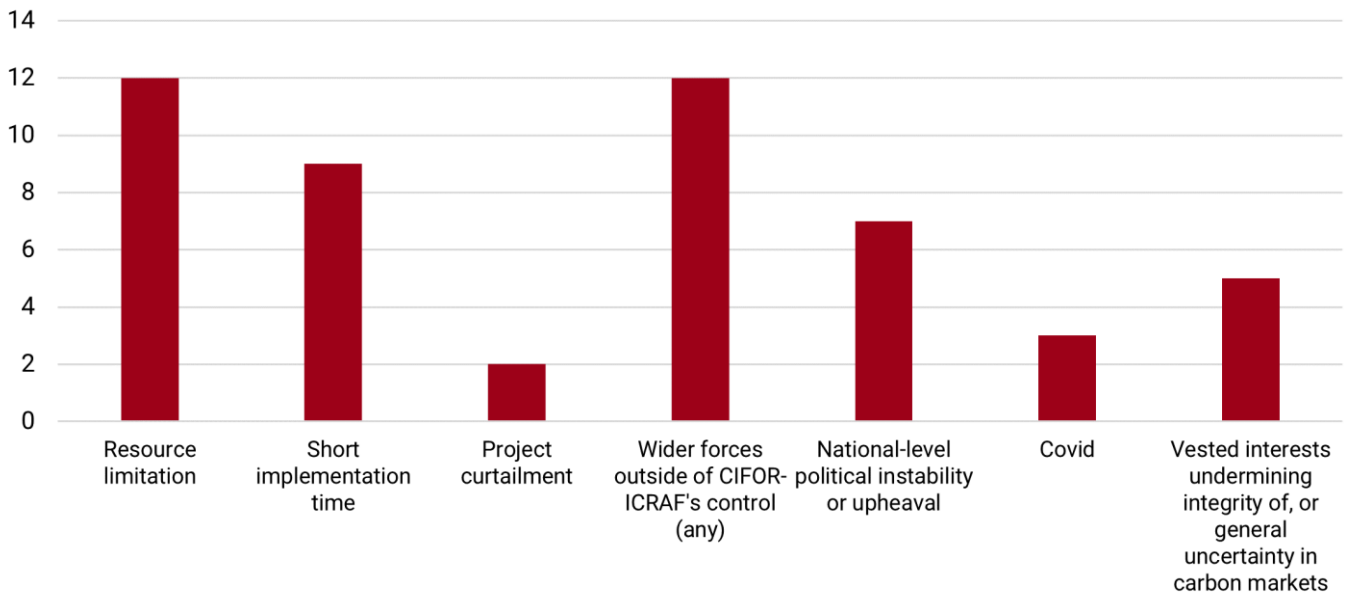

Figure 8: Stakeholder interview results on the main contributing GCSP4 limitation factors

Twelve interviewees pointed to factors outside of CIFOR-ICRAF's control, such as political instability in countries (seven), covid (three), or vested interests and uncertainty in carbon markets (five). Political instability often meant that CIFOR-

ICRAF had to constantly rebuild relationships with stakeholders and retrain them - an issue raised separately by one interviewee due to the fact that national reporting relevant to REDD+ takes place every two years, so consultants are hired each time (that need CIFOR-ICRAF training on REDD+), rather than retaining trained staff. Three mentioned issues with the research design, and four spoke of issues with communications, discussed further in section 6.5 below.

One stakeholder (INT02) mentioned that they felt the comparative lack of students compared to previous phases limited researcher achievements as it is "time consuming to do both solid science and have an impact on policy makers".

6.3 How did the project ensure it addressed country needs? What factors contributed to or hindered the relevance of the research to the priority country contexts?

From all interviews:

Of the 37 responses to the questions "***How did the project ensure that it addressed country needs? What factors contributed to or hindered the relevance of the research to the country contexts?***" 17 referred to the importance of a good local network of stakeholders in meeting local needs, through which to disseminate findings, and with which to engage in co-creative processes. Six specifically referenced engagement with government officials as part of this process. Two also referred to flexibility and broad applicability of project outputs, for example the country platforms, that allow use in a range of needs.

What follows is a summary of answers to the question, ***"What adaptation of activities were made to cater to the country context and emerging events?"***. It is noted that in many other questions interviewees stated the importance of specific partners and well-targeted stakeholder engagement. For example, in Peru, Brazil, and DRC, the relationship with a specific university was flagged as important. The changing of the name of the PAG from policy to project was made in response to concerns about the political connotations of the word advocacy. The theories of change were each adapted to specific local contexts, identifying important stakeholders and government departments, and the indicators for success for each country were adapted slightly in the Results Measurement Matrix (e.g. number of stakeholders engaged). Aside from these, it may be said that a broadly similar approach was taken, with specific changes made to engage with influential stakeholders.

6.4 Effectiveness at engaging decision makers in specific country contexts?

6.4.1.1 Decision maker engagement in Peru

There was a good relationship with key state actors as can be seen by the results of this project. Overall, it is recognized that there has been a good outreach at the national level, but that a greater involvement with subnational governments was needed.

However, there were differences among interviewees on this issue. Six out of 10 interviewees felt that the project did a very good job in linking and engaging policy makers (PER003, PER005, PER006, PER007, PER009 and PER010). One person (PER008) was unable to give an opinion, and the remaining three interviewees considered that the project was not really successful, especially at engaging at the sub-national level.

It is relevant to note that the interviewees who felt more negatively had a more sub national oriented view, and they considered that the project did not have a good engagement at that level (PER001, PER002).

6.4.1.2 Decision maker engagement in Brazil

The Brazilian stakeholder interviews showed that the project was perceived to have helped the development of a REDD+ culture in Brazil. Aside from one interviewee (BRA04), all others responded that the GCSP4 produced evidence which led to an improvement in decision makers' REDD+ knowledge (e.g. BRA01, BRA09). This was felt to be more significant at sub-national rather than national level.

The project prioritized engagement with key decision-makers before broader public dissemination. This approach ensured accurate and nuanced communication of complex information, minimizing the risk of misinterpretation. One interviewee (BRA02) noted that CIFOR's strategy to generate knowledge in partnership with decision makers is very important, as it combines CIFOR's global recognition with national professionals who are locally influential.

GCSP4 had a specific scope in modelling capabilities, such as deforestation simulation. Expanding the project's scope and enhancing modelling capacities could significantly enhance its ability to inform policy and decision-making.

6.4.1.3 Decision maker engagement in DRC

From the perspective of the interviewed stakeholders, the GCSP4 team primarily involved decision-makers at the local and provincial level, who actively participated in various meetings organized by the project. At the national level, it is more the sectoral ministries such as MEDD (Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development), the presidency through the Environmental Advisor, the judiciary which were involved during the political dialogues, as well as civil society.

The SPDs enabled stakeholders to improve their REDD+ knowledge through exchanges of experiences and case studies at the national level and in three tropical basins. As reported during the interviews, the actors were mainly impacted on aspects linked to the legal framework for forest management, the rights of communities and indigenous peoples (benefit-sharing) the impact of mining expansion on deforestation, payment for environmental services (PES), carbon credits, governance of natural resources. This information was an asset for guiding sectoral policies and decision-making. The place given to community rights in research and debates aroused the interest of stakeholders (especially decision-makers) to take into account their needs and priorities in any initiative linked to REDD+.

For example, DRC06, was able to capitalize on all REDD+ information by providing informed advice to the relevant government authorities on issues of deforestation and carbon credit mechanisms to protect the rights of local communities and

indigenous peoples. Some of the information has constituted a basis for guiding civil society advocacy actions in favor of local communities (DRCO1).

In addition, the holding of SPDs has particularly promoted the influence of the University of Kinshasa and increased its influence among stakeholders, having made it possible to establish synergy between decision-makers, practitioners, researchers, as well as students on REDD+ issues.

Conversely the perceived lack of sharing of the deliverables of the various project products with certain key decision-makers (e.g. sectoral ministries, civil society and the public-private mining group Financial and Technical Partners (PTF)), limited their take-up (DRC02, DRC03, DR07, DRC09).

6.4.1.4 Decision maker engagement Indonesia

The project helped bridge the gap between international research and local policy needs, translating global knowledge into context-specific recommendations for Indonesian policymakers.

GCSP4's effectiveness in engaging decision-makers appears to have been mixed. At the subnational level, engagement seems to have been strong. IND08 notes the project's contribution to the Benefit Sharing Plan (BSP): "*The most substantial input was actually on our BSP. At the time of the seminar, our BSP document wasn't complete yet. CIFOR provided inputs, and we noted them.*"

While successful in engaging with government and some project implementers, the research had limited reach with high-level policymakers and the private sector e.g. in the carbon market sector (IND01, IND03). As REDD+ implementation in Indonesia has progressed, there's a need for the research design to adapt more quickly to emerging challenges.

Outside of the control of GCSP4, a lack of proper benefit-sharing mechanisms in Indonesia was identified as one of the main barriers to fulfil REDD+ implementation (SoC).

6.5 Achieving results? Effectiveness of project communications strategies and engaging stakeholders?

6.5.1 Project Advisory Group (PAG)

The PAG was perceived to be a significant tool to engage local stakeholders, even though there was not as much awareness of the PAG among the stakeholders as might have been expected given this conclusion. There were 37 total responses to question *"How effective was the Project Advisory Group (PAG)?"* (see Figure 9), 25 did not have enough awareness of the PAG to give an answer. From those who could answer the question, six stated that it was effective or very effective (three in Brazil, two in Peru, one in Indonesia) and six said its impact was somewhat effective or limited (one in Brazil, two in Peru, one in Indonesia, one in
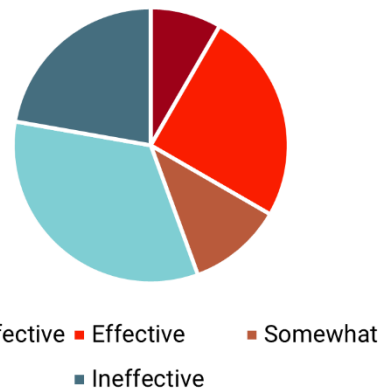

■ Very effective ■ Effective ■ Somewhat
■ Limited ■ Ineffective

Figure 9: Stakeholder responses on the effectiveness of the PAG

DRC, and one global stakeholder). It was stated by three that the PAG was limited by difficulties in arranging face-to-face meetings.

It is important to note that a PAG was not formally established in DRC even though the initial groundwork was carried out.

6.5.2 Communications

6.5.2.1 Communications Data

At the time of writing this report GCSP4 produced: 212 publications with 224,010 downloads; participated in or led 149 meetings, conferences and events; managed two websites with 61,000 views; released 197 blogs with 153,887 views; reached 5,341,651 people on social media with 205,026 engagements; and reached 454,107,539 people with 128 media articles.

The communications team have a comprehensive tracking system for CIFOR-ICRAF media coverage. Table 5 shows the data in relation to media reach[25] of CIFOR-ICRAF outputs. The reach is measured as a proportion of the highest one. From these metrics, it is clear that Indonesia has the highest reach per article followed by the UK and Japan.

Although 26 countries are listed in the full data, it is important to note that DRC and Peru media sources are not included. This appears to be due to a lack of monitoring rather than a lack of media coverage given that a quick internet search for media mentions in Peru and DRC provides some media coverage examples. In Peru interviewees also mentioned the positive media coverage obtained by GCSP4.

Given the gaps for Peru and DRC it is suggested that for future projects it is important to ensure that the media tracking system covers all the required countries.

Table 5: Media reach of CIFOR-ICRAF outputs

Country	Total media mentions per country	Total reach per country	Normalized reach per country	Reach per article per country	Normalized reach per country per article
Indonesia	19	285,413,233	1	15,021,749	1.00
United Kingdom	10	101,929,800	0.36	10,192,980	0.68
Japan	1	8,382,804	0.03	8,382,804	0.56
Brazil	3	22,408,452	0.08	7,469,484	0.50
Spain	2	2,998,531	0.01	1,499,266	0.10
Germany	22	19,449,824	0.07	884,083	0.06

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[25] The CIFOR-ICRAF communications team indicated that Meltwater (news monitoring service) reach is an estimate of potential viewership of any particular article based on the number of visitors to the specific source (news outlet) on both desktop and mobile

Taiwan	2	1,523,459	0.01	761,730	0.05

Figure 10 shows communications material categorized for each material type, broken down by proportion of that material that was specific to that country/globally (where possible). Under 'global', for media articles, four countries featured prominently: USA followed by Germany, UK and then South Africa.
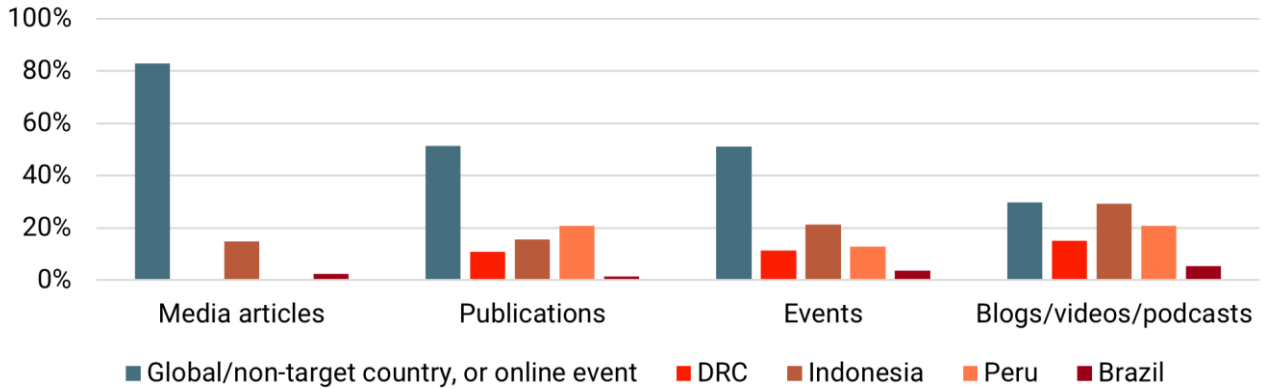
Figure 10: Communications material by country

Under 'global' for events, 54 were hosted online (38% of all events). Given that GCSP4 was negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic, the number of in-person events is relatively high.

6.5.2.2 Communications effectiveness

A key finding is that staff and stakeholders consistently identified their in-country networks as being very important to achieving project outcomes. The networks of decisions makers formed and maintained by country coordinators, and through events, as well as the co-creation of knowledge, seem to be instrumental to encouraging key decisions makers to use the knowledge that CIFOR-ICRAF produce to support policies aligned with project outcomes. The production of informal communications materials (blogs, videos, updated webpages) in addition to scientific outputs is important for this, giving CIFOR-ICRAF a presence, as are the well-organized events. Through these materials and the emphasis on the impact of events the effectiveness of WP5 can be seen.

Despite the width of the materials produced by CIFOR-ICRAF, interviewees commented that effectiveness could be improved if there were more targeted (to a specific audience) and less academic outputs that could be more easily understood (see section 7.1).

Despite this broad strength, there appears to be a gap between the effectiveness of a network group and the perception of the effectiveness of the project communications. The country interviews carried out in this review consistently reported a low level of awareness of the project. Taking the global and country combined interviews, there is a strong sentiment that the project communications could be more effective.

To bridge this perceived gap, it may be that the strong focus on co-creation should be more closely matched with co-dissemination. Alternatively, dissemination activities could be included in an expanded role for the GCSP4 country lead and / or more communication could be integrated within WP1 – 4.

Typically, communication appears to have been designed to amplify the impact of outputs, so they were developed when outputs were complete or nearing completion (INT06). It is understood that the CIFOR-ICRAF COE team is engaged from an early stage, but that communications outputs are limited to internal and SPD circulation until the final stages.

Therefore, a strong communications engagement alongside a judicious dissemination campaign throughout the production of an output may aid impact and recognition. Likewise, a distinct identity for this work could be combined with this approach so that those engaged by CIFOR-ICRAF in similar future work know that it is CIFOR-ICRAF or GCS that they are engaging with (there is a possibility that the multiple roles that non-CIFOR-ICRAF WP and country leads are involved can lead to a more opaque CIFOR-ICRAF role).

It may be that as CIFOR-ICRAF and others focus on the implementation of REDD+ going forward, part of this implementation engagement includes the marketing of CIFOR-ICRAF's established ideas on best practice with decision makers on national, regional and global levels.

6.6 Actual influence of CIFOR–ICRAF team on key project outcomes?

6.6.1 Global perspectives

Only global interviewees were asked this question on the influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team on key project outcomes as it was not expected that national stakeholders would have sufficient project knowledge to be able to give well-informed responses. In all, as shown in Figure 11, 10 interviewees responded to this question, with seven claiming either a reasonable or high influence. However, of those seven, five gave a mixed picture, pointing to CIFOR-ICRAF being influential in some aspects but not others, and three stated the difficulty of attribution in this project.

Figure 11: Global stakeholder interview results on CIFOR-ICRAF influence on project outcomes, "What do you think the actual influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team was on the key project outcomes?"

More specifically, respondents found that CIFOR-ICRAF's position of trust resulted in an engaged audience, and the long-term nature of the collaboration with national governments and with partners was key to their role.

Two respondents referred to the larger impacts as being broadly out of control of the CIFOR-ICRAF project. For example, INT01 pointed to specific changes of policy related to safeguards in other organizations, but described how trends in the wider carbon market are poor. Additionally, in some cases it is difficult to attribute the outcomes to the CIFOR-ICRAF team, such as the Brazilian government's shift in focus, although they did participate in a lot of the discussions.
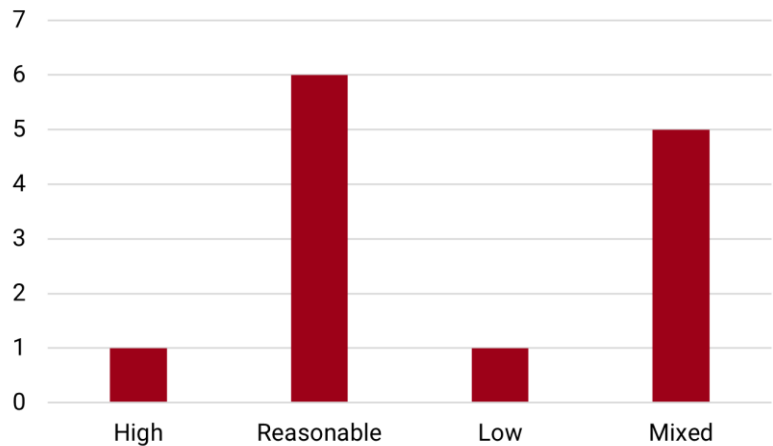
Only one interviewee suggested a low influence, partially due to some members of the team no longer being closely connected to REDD+ if also sitting in other organizations such as universities, and as a result of a smaller budget, people are being pulled in many directions which affects the overall deliverability, and visibility of the project work.

6.6.1.1 ID-RECCO

ID-RECCO provides a quality-checked, standardized, free-access database of REDD+ research. ID-RECCO user data and the SoC provide good insights into the influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team on key project outcomes. Prior to the development of ID-RECCO, good quality research on REDD+ was fragmented, complex, hard to compare, issues with bias towards certain standards, or towards publication of results only from successful projects. Consequently, it was difficult to provide good evidence to inform REDD+-related decisions for policymakers

ID-RECCO started in 2014, came under CIFOR-ICRAF operation in 2018, and has increased in complexity and in the requirement of expertise to manage it over time. Although guided by highly experienced academics with practical research experience running REDD+ projects, much of the legwork in sorting through papers has been done by student internships over the years. Going forward it is suggested that the ID-RECCO management could be more informed by knowledge management specialists to ensure maximum useability and smooth running of the systems.

REDD+ project personnel report making extensive use and learning a lot from the ID-RECCO database. ID-RECCO being run, used and maintained by academics carrying out REDD+ research, and managers of/personnel in REDD+ projects give it good quality feedback loops to ensure its sustained utility. Over a period of nine years, ID-RECCO has been used for data analysis in 32 papers and in all, 52 papers have cited ID-RECCO. Professors give strong positive feedback, as do graduates of the student traineeships. Users include REDD+ projects managers, as well as journalists, and donors. However, there are indications that there is still work to be done to publicize the database more widely among stakeholders and increase the outputs using ID-RECCO.

6.6.2 Country perspectives

There is some overlap between the findings in this section and those in sections 7 and 8 below. Overall, this is a metric which is difficult to measure and tends to be very subjective in nature.

As shown in the ID-RECCO information above, the influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team on key project outcomes is more easily identified from the SoC. This also shows the efficacy of using SoC within a MELIA approach. As noted above, GCSP4 developed one SoC each for Peru[26] and ID-RECCO[27] as well as an Infobrief for Indonesia.

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[26] Gomez et al. 2024: https://doi.org/10.17528/cifor-icraf/009237

[27] Monteiro et al. 2024: https://doi.org/10.17528/cifor-icraf/009238

Peru

The Peru SoC implies strong influence of CIFOR-ICRAF team on capacity building and agenda setting amongst key stakeholders, particularly at the national level for understanding & protecting peatlands.

Based on interview findings, the dissemination and political advocacy carried out over the last 10 years have shown that it was possible to influence the various ministers and vice-ministers regarding the importance of the conservation of tropical peatlands. This knowledge gave them consistency and a foundation that allowed them to argue and sustain technical as well as political positions on REDD+ (PER008).

The interviews also illustrated that a limitation in Peru at the subnational level was the availability of GCSP4 technicians alongside the rapid rotation of government staff, making it hard to keep a clear line and scope of work with subnational partners.

Due to the high turnover of officials at sub-national but also national level, interviewees commented that it is important to work not only with policy decision-makers, but also with mid-level officials whose replacement due to political issues is much lower and who, once equipped by the project, inform and influence policy decision-makers when they take up a position or role. (PER001, PER004).

Brazil

Few specific examples were identified of actual (attributable) influence of CIFOR-ICRAF team on key project outcomes in Brazil. However, one interviewee (BRA02) observed that CIFOR-ICRAF's strategy of generating knowledge in partnership with decision makers is very important and strong, as it combines CIFOR's global recognition with national and local influence professionals.

Four stakeholders (BRA02, BRA03, BRA04 and BRA10) mentioned the importance of the involvement of different decision-making layers in Brazil, the critical mass formed from the project. In addition, one of the project team (Raoni Rajao) was invited to lead the federal government team that is in charge of the deforestation agenda.

DRC

The GCS has been present in DRC for a shorter period than in the other countries in Phase 4 and respondents generally felt that it was difficult to deduce the way in which the project (or the team specifically) has influenced REDD+ policy and practices in the country.

Indonesia

Although the safeguards are at an early stage of development, the SoC indicates that CIFOR-ICRAF activities have increased stakeholder understanding of the key relevant issues, setting good groundwork for positive impact in terms of new policies. The need for continued investment in GCS (or at least a project in this domain) is emphasized, to ensure that benefits of knowledge and capacity building are realized.

Several interviewees commented that there has been a perceived decline in CIFOR's visibility during later GCS implementation stages. This indicates that the pathways

for sustained engagement and influence may not have been fully realized as originally envisioned.

6.7 Were there any positive or negative unexpected outcomes, and if so, why and how did they affect project's expected results?

Overall, 17 interviewees described the difficulty of linking GCS activities with specific outcomes and impacts. It was also noted by six interviewees that insufficient time had passed to know the impacts of the project, particularly since some of the main outputs such as the archetypes paper were still in the final phase of development with publication expected before the end of 2024.

Adaptations that were needed to the project design are assessed in section 5.3 of this report. But these adaptations did not perceptively lead to unexpected outcomes.

The unexpected outcomes that could be identified are explained below.

6.7.1 Positive unexpected outcomes

Peru: None identified

Brazil: The project contribution to the public policy debate related to deforestation, improving the Brazilian Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), in accordance with Article 4, paragraph 12 of the Paris Agreement. (BRA03)

DRC: As previously mentioned in section 6.4., the SPDs particularly promoted the influence of the University of Kinshasa and increased its influence among stakeholders in the REDD+ domain.

Indonesia: While the project primarily focused on government and community stakeholders, it unexpectedly reached and influenced private sector actors in terms of reforestation and deforestation in CIFOR's publications. The project also contributed to wider discussion on forest governance beyond REDD+ as emphasized by IND06.

6.7.2 Negative unexpected outcomes

Peru: None identified

Brazil: None identified

DRC: None identified

Indonesia: The declining visibility in the later stages of GCS REDD+ (IND01) and perceived declining output (IND04). These may be attributed to the later stages of the REDD+, the evolution of the REDD+, the excitement over carbon market and in terms of research output and reorganization within CIFOR-ICRAF.

7. Learnings from translating research to policy and/or practice change?

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Summary Findings: Learnings from translating research to policy and/or practice change

- Strengths were identified as the effective targeting of research to relevant knowledge gaps for the country, the quality of the scientific research, the importance of establishing good personal relationships and maintaining good contact with government officials.
- Limitations included the difficulty in then translating increased knowledge into take up of outputs into policy.
- Despite communications being seen as a strength in other areas, overall identified weaknesses included the communications approach and outputs from the project. For example, two spoke about how the approach could be improved by ensuring that outputs can have strong advocacy or promotion built into them from a project management or design perspective. i.e. by ensuring that some outputs are ready to be promoted earlier in the project or integrating communications outputs.
    - The conflicting views on the role of communications in translating research to policy and/or practice change partly seem to reflect the areas of strength for the project as a whole and the type of stakeholder that was responding to the question. This suggests that an increased amount of nuance may be needed in relation to communications and the different types of stakeholder
- The use of stakeholder forums such as the SPDs were frequently mentioned throughout the review and by the interviewees. Enabling a forum where decision makers are able to speak directly to other stakeholders was seen as highly important and effective.
- Direct communication with high level policymakers was felt to be crucial.
- There is a high level of investment required, in time and resources, to work harder with policy and decision makers to achieve results.

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7.1 Identified strengths and weaknesses of approaches used.

Global and country combined interviews, responses to question ***"Can you identify any strengths or weaknesses of the approaches used?"*** *are shown in Figure 12.* There were 36 responses to this question as not all interviewees felt able to answer this question. All interviewees were asked this question, however there were only three responses from the project team, with most responses from international and national stakeholders not involved in the project implementation. Ten stakeholders spoke about the effective targeting of research to relevant knowledge gaps for the country (for example, peatlands in Peru), and six referred to the quality of the scientific research carried out as a strength. Seven focused on a strength being the importance of establishing good personal relationships and maintaining good contact with government officials, so that research can be brought directly to decision makers, but also spoke about the difficulty in then translating increased knowledge into take up of outputs into policy.
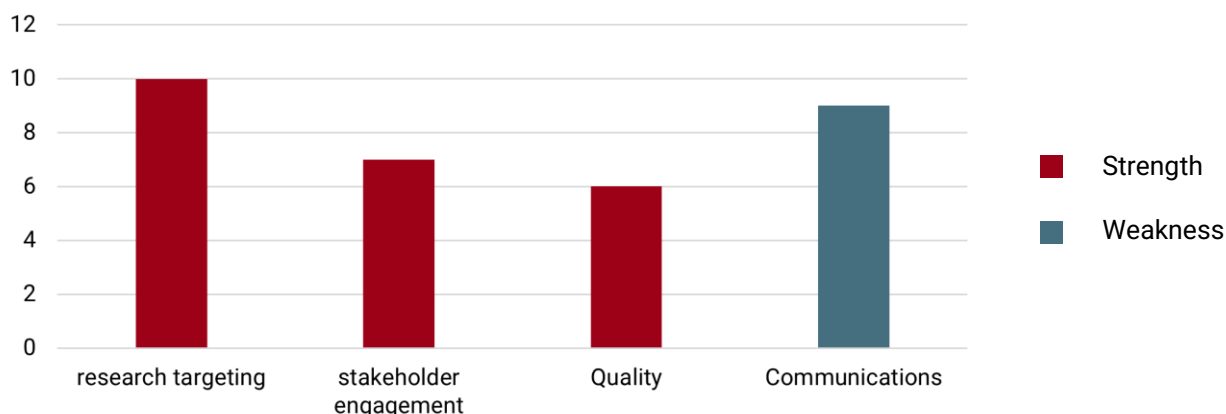
Figure 12: stakeholder interview results on GCSP4 strengths and weaknesses.

In relation to weaknesses, nine interviewees referred to the communications approach and outputs from the project. For example, two spoke about how the approach could be improved by ensuring that outputs can have strong advocacy or promotion built into them from a project management or design perspective. i.e. by ensuring that some outputs are ready to be promoted earlier in the project, or integrating communications outputs more into the other WPs 1-4 at the stage of developing the ToC.

7.1.1 Country Perspectives

Peru

For PER002 the design was very academic: good for peer-to-peer communication, but not very effective with mid-level gov officers and decision-makers. Similarly, there was a lack of work with REDD+ practitioners and forest users. For PER009, "The modelling part had not yet clear impacts. It has not been completed. In this aspect (modelling) the design was not so efficient".

Brazil

Most of the stakeholders pointed out strengths of the used approaches such as data generated for decision making (BRA02, BRA03, BRA07 and BRA08). Only one interviewee from an international organization (BRA02) mentioned that the information made available is still too empirical to be used everywhere in Brazil.

DRC

The project's intervention strategy presents a certain number of advantages, as was also reported by those interviewed. This concerns the quality of the scientists who carried out the research having solid skills and experience, as well as research themes which were at the same time explicit, adapted and relevant to the concerns of the country. The SPDs constitute a framework for exchanges that have favored the inclusion of stakeholders (decision-makers, practitioners, researchers, students, financial and technical partners etc.) and the sharing of experiences at the level of three tropical basins as well as the strengthening of abilities.

The weaknesses of the intervention approaches were noted differently by the actors interviewed. Firstly, there is the lack of communication noted by all stakeholders from the design of the project, the achievements not being known to a large number

of stakeholders (activity reports not made available). Some key stakeholders felt that they did not know enough about the project to be able to comment on this aspect of GCSP4.

One interviewee felt that the work relating to the mining areas target did not take into account potential provinces (DRC02).

There was also an impression that there was an overreliance on international expertise despite the skills available in-country. It was felt that a more national anchoring of the project would have led to greater impact.

Indonesia

It was noted that CIFOR has improved in using various social media channels for dissemination but suggested to further strengthen outreach to potential future decision-makers.

7.2 To what extent were research outputs disseminated to relevant stakeholders? How effectively were they utilized?

Global Level: While there is not an equivalent of the Science Policy Dialogues at the global level, participation with CIFOR-ICRAF partners in major global events is one of the main channels for collaboration and global dissemination. In total the program led or participated in 149 events. In addition, for dissemination of CIFOR-ICRAF's learnings globally, their findings have been covered by Forest News reaching 153,887 people, and all content and tools are available on their website. Also, learnings from GCS REDD+ were co-created and disseminated globally through joint work such as:

- Co-developed guidance for results-based payments in the forest sector under the Paris Agreement together with the German Environment Agency (UBA)[28]

- Scientists co-developed sectoral guides with the Green Climate Fund on forest and land-use, as well as ecosystems[29]

- GCS REDD+ scientists co-developed guidelines on transformational change with FAO[30].

National Level: This is a difficult aspect to assess but at a national level, this is a key part of the role of the national coordinator so this is a major limitation in countries without a CIFOR-ICRAF country lead.

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[28] https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/publikationen/potentials-for-results-based-payments-in-the-forest

[29] https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/sectoral-guide-forests-and-land-use and https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/sectoral-guide-ecosystems-and-ecosystem-services

[30] https://www.cifor-icraf.org/knowledge/publication/8270/

Peru

Interviewees in Peru commented that they felt that CIFOR-ICRAF produced excellent dissemination documents. In particular, the InfoBriefs are considered to be effective and efficient in reaching technical audiences - from the Government and REDD+ practitioners - as well as press releases (forest news) and scientific technical papers. This opinion is also shared by all interviewees.

The notion of effective use varies according to the type of actor. Those who were previously high-level public officials (PER002, PER003) and are now in implementation or policy advocacy feel little impact (effective use) of the dissemination of research results. The level of knowledge of the issues, which different actors may have, affects the notion of usefulness (those who are more up-to-date on REDD+ benefits, safeguards or reference levels of deforestation, for example, feel the research results are less useful).

For those who have a role closer to REDD+ implementation, there was a better use of the research, as they received new information (PER001, PER003, PER010). Achieving the "conviction" of different actors based on the information disclosed is an important achievement; seeing in the official discourse of the government officers that research has been taken into account is valuable (PER005, PER006, PER009). In this sense, they were effectively used.

Brazil: No relevant findings were made here.

DRC

The research results produced were mainly disseminated through conferences (science and policy dialogues, COP on climate), as well as online on the CIFOR website and in social networks. In total, 4 SPDs were organized, one online and three others in hybrid modes (face-to-face and online) in Kinshasa.

However, as indicated by all the actors interviewed, it is difficult to assess whether the knowledge acquired has been used effectively by key stakeholders.

Indonesia

Direct communication with policymakers was felt to be crucial: IND03 emphasized the importance of direct communication with high-level policymakers *"… must come directly to convey to policymakers whether it's to the Director General, if possible to the Minister … to convey … the findings of gaps for the implementation of REDD+ at the subnational level*." The same stakeholder said: *"…sometimes these policymakers … are not aware of going there* [to the workshop or event organized by CIFOR].

7.3 Overall lessons learned about translating research to policy or practice change

In the global and combined country interviews: ***What have you learned about translating research to policy and/or practice change from this project?"*** 34 responses were given to this question. Six interviewees highlighted the importance of stakeholder forums both in bringing research to stakeholders, but also bringing stakeholders together.

The use of stakeholder forums such as the SPDs were frequently mentioned in various contexts by the interviewees and is mentioned below in various contexts

within lessons learned. Enabling a forum where decision makers are able to speak directly to other stakeholders was seen as highly important. One interviewee (INT21) noted that making the personal connections with the researchers and the policy makers in the SPDs was perceived as being very valuable i.e. in one example a researcher from Costa Rica presenting research on the beneficiary plan on REDD+ in Peru, and the conversation continued after the forum between the Minister of Environment officer in Peru, and the Costa Rican researcher. In this way, the SPDs can provide a launch for new and further direct interactions within a global perspective.

There is a high level of investment required, in time and resources, to work harder with policy and decision makers. For most interviewees this is not a new discovery, and something that they already know from their personal experience – but it is worth repeating here as a lesson learned. *"Translating research results into regulations requires a different approach, not just the generation of information. It is useful but requires more action to bring about policy change" (PER003)*

One to one meetings between institutions were also mentioned as having an important function in supporting a first arrival in the SPDs in both Peru and Indonesia.

Different actors could offer different lessons to learn. For those closer to academia, the main learning is the method and process: to generate information, share and discuss it throughout the process with policy makers and other actors and disseminate the results through a policy brief (PEROO9). To ensure throughout the process that interactions are transparent, open and objective.

Three interviewees highlighted as a learning, the influence of powerful vested interests in carbon markets, and their impact on policy that affects work on the ground. This is in comparison with the comparatively small budget and influence of projects such as the GCS meaning that there is in effect a competitive environment when it comes to implementation and informing policy makers.

Finally, two interviewees highlighted the flexibility of the GCS project and Norad as an important learning - the ability to respond to changing trends and interests.

Country specific learnings are as follows:

Peru

The advocacy work for the case of peatlands i.e., which was done both by the project and Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonía Peruana (IIAP) itself, is highly valued. Perseverance and insistence is necessary to achieve advocacy, but only if the research provides solid, timely and politically relevant information and is supported by other actors who help to push it forward.

For NGOs working at the national level including support to state institutions (PER003 and PER005), the learning comes from the previous GCS phases, with the SPDs now applied to advocacy, and it has the same base as the previously mentioned learnings: the need to encourage, share and build knowledge and science between different types of stakeholder.

Whilst the outputs were appreciated, two stakeholders stated that only research, policy briefs and some dissemination meetings are insufficient to generate impacts on decision and policy makers (PER002, PER003).

Brazil

Nearly all stakeholders felt that it is important to link research with policy or practice goals. One example mentioned by BRA05 is the national FREL (National Forest Emissions Reference Level) as construction of reference reports for public policies.

Only one interviewee was a little more pessimistic about the connection between research and policy making (BRA06) but also commented that it was really too soon to be able to comment on lessons learned.

DRC

The interviews with the various stakeholders, as well as the project documents, show that scientific research is a lever which must support and inform all decision-making at different levels of intervention, for policies to combat against deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the protection of community rights.

The research results promote a better understanding and awareness of the issues and challenges linked to the REDD+ process, thus making it possible to envisage solutions adapted to each context. This evidence was provided by the actors met, with the exception of DRC01 and DRC09, who felt that they were unable to draw lessons learned.

Indonesia

It is necessary to focus on capacity building at the subnational level (IND03, IND02). There is also a need to address institutional and regulatory issues: Both IND03 and IND04 highlighted the need to address institutional and regulatory challenges, particularly in the context of result-based payments.

Overall, political economy factors have influence in translating research into policy and practice. For example there have been political shifts from the previous regime into the current one, where development priorities continue to emphasize economic growth, often at the expense of environmental conservation.

The political sensitivities in Indonesia were highlighted by one interviewee: *"The Indonesian government, especially KLHK, is being very cautious... Everything must go through KLHK and follow their roadmap." This highlights the need for research to consider political sensitivities and power dynamics in policy recommendations, especially given different priorities between MoEF/KLHK (NDC) and The Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (Carbon Market). "The challenge now is balancing NDC commitments with carbon market opportunities"* (IND01)

8. How and under what conditions were key stakeholders and beneficiaries equipped by the project's knowledge processes and products?

Summary Findings: How and under what conditions were key stakeholders and beneficiaries equipped by the project's knowledge processes and products

- It appears that the international/regional/country policy priorities were generally timely and well targeted for project as it was designed.

- However, there were clear recommendations from a wide range of interviewees that going forward, new directions should be focused on for future research endeavors in the REDD+ domain to ensure that the demands from rapidly changing audience for the research can be (visibly) met i.e. some evolution is needed in the identification and targeting processes.

- There are some visible successes as well as limitations in this area as outlined in the country perspectives

- As in section 6, the stakeholders that felt equipped by the project varied according to the country and the type of stakeholder concerned making it difficult to provide global answers on this issue.

8.1 Were international/regional/country policy priorities correctly identified?

From all interviews, there were 17 total responses. 14 in total were positive in some way, with the largest group positive the national level (nine interviewees). It should be noted that data for this question for DRC is not included in this question as it was not gathered in the same way as the other three countries.
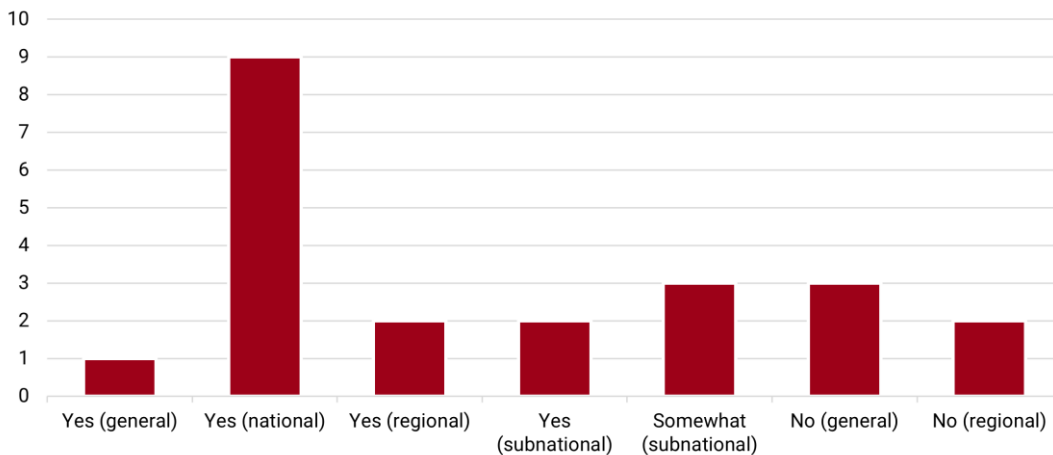

Figure 13: Stakeholder interview results on the correct identification of GCSP4 priorities.

From the interviews out of a total of 19 responses, 18 interviewees felt that the research was timely and well targeted. The remaining respondent was unsure.

However, when these responses are triangulated with the future direction discussion in section 11, the situation becomes more complex. It appears that the international/regional/country policy priorities were timely and well targeted for project as it was designed. However, there were clear recommendations from a wide range of interviewees that going forward, new directions should be focused on for future research endeavors in the REDD+ domain to ensure that the demands from rapidly changing audience for the research can be (visibly) met i.e. some evolution is needed in the identification and targeting processes.

Were the structures appropriate to deliver activities? From all interviews, there were 26 responses, with 19 yes, five no, and the remainder unclear. The main doubts appeared to emanate from the DRC with caution advised in that adaptations would be needed going forward due to rapid changes in the REDD+ landscape and that capacity building and more work on skills transfer is needed. There is also a specific limitation of the infrastructure and context of DRC.

8.2 Country Perspectives

Peru

The overall feedback is that those who made the best use of the learning from the processes and results were the representatives of the indigenous peoples and the first level government officers (ministers, vice-ministers) and then medium level officers who support, from their position and role, the technical or political positions adopted by their hierarchical superiors (PER006, PER008, PERO 009). The national level was better equipped than the subnational level.

However, four interviewees (PER002, PER003, PER004 and PER007) considered that either there was little or even no equipment from the project, or that it is simply impossible to identify which capacity building is due to the intervention of CIFOR-ICRAF or to interventions and experiences with other cooperation actors.

Brazil

In general terms, the interviews pointed out that the research was timely and well targeted and was able to provide, at least partially, key stakeholders with relevant processes and products. The long-term nature of this work was also highlighted.

In terms of identifying international / regional / country policy priorities, the answers were heterogeneous as some interviewees (BRA01 and BRA04) affirmed that mainly local level priorities were identified, others (BRA06 and BRA08) affirmed that there was a lack of more interaction at the local level as the project focused more at the country level. BRA08 highlighted that it is quite difficult to identify local needs, as Brazil is such a big country with a high number of scenarios.

DRC

The SPDs have largely contributed to capacity building and knowledge acquisition on the part of key stakeholders, which has enabled them to have a better understanding and perception of the REDD+ process. Nearly 67% of respondents acknowledged having acquired knowledge on various issues related to forests and the climate,

allowing them to act effectively. The remainder of the interviewees felt they had insufficient information to comment on this issue.

Analysis of the results framework, the knowledge produced, as well as the results from the interviews show that especially national priorities were well taken into account by the project. The information provided on peatlands will help the country to consolidate them to develop the national strategy.

All the interviewees felt that the themes were well targeted in relation to the needs of the country and to emerging and current issues (peatlands, tax carbon, forest policy, etc.).

Indonesia

The GCS REDD+ project equipped key stakeholders and beneficiaries with knowledge and products through various mechanisms. IND03 highlighted CIFOR's role in preparing local governments for result-based payments, while IND01 noted the continued use of CIFOR's country profiles for Indonesia. IND02 emphasized CIFOR's contribution to improving emission calculations, particularly for mangroves, wetlands, and forest fires.

However, the effectiveness of these knowledge processes and products was influenced by several conditions, as pointed out by the interviewees. IND01 noted the changing policy landscape, with a shift from policy development to implementation affecting the uptake of CIFOR's research. IND03 mentioned institutional changes in Indonesia's forestry bureaucratic and research structure, which affected CIFOR's engagement with government stakeholders. Both IND01 and IND04 highlighted the evolving focus of REDD+, transitioning from result-based payments to carbon markets, creating new knowledge needs. IND03 and IND02 pointed out communication challenges in effectively reaching high-level policymakers. Lastly, IND04 comments suggested that varying levels of government readiness affected the effectiveness of knowledge transfer between national and subnational levels.

At the international level, the project aligned with global climate goals. Regionally, IND08 pointed out that the project facilitated comparative studies between countries, addressing the priority of regional learning. At the national level, IND02 emphasized the project's contribution to improving emission calculations, while IND03 highlighted its focus on subnational REDD+ implementation. IND04 also noted CIFOR's role in building local government capacity to access REDD+ funding.

However, the project showed some areas of misalignment or delayed response to emerging priorities. While the project was largely successful in identifying and addressing key policy priorities, there were some areas where it could have been more responsive to evolving needs and emerging priorities in the REDD+ landscape e.g. carbon markets.

8.3 Most innovative research outputs

The senior members of the GCSP4 team were asked to specify which three knowledge products that they felt had been most innovative. These findings are shown in Annex E.

Whilst many of the identified outputs had a global focus, those which looked at Peru, and more specifically, the Peruvian Amazon, were the most noted, with two of the

journal articles mentioned twice. Innovative research outputs from the Peruvian Amazon were noted six times, across four different outputs, suggesting significant impact in this geographical area.

There is a wide range of output types identified, including blogs, online tools and stakeholder events, although the majority of these outputs are journal articles.

9. How has the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and/or subnational levels?

> **Summary Findings: How the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and/or subnational levels**
>
> - It was largely felt by stakeholders that CIFOR-ICRAF had a moderate or mixed influence on REDD+ policy.
>
> - It was frequently noted that attribution of any change in REDD+ policy or impact is very hard to attribute to this project due to REDD+ landscape. Despite this 27 interviewees were definitive in their positive appraisal of the project's overall impact on REDD+. Three specifically mentioned the international level, six the national level, and three the subnational.
>
> - As in other review areas, the overall sentiment on this issue was that CIFOR-ICRAF had a clearer, stronger influence on REDD+ policy in Peru and Indonesia where the GCS has had a longer involvement and more resources. This also followed with regard to filling gaps in existing interventions.

This section also overlaps with section 7 in some areas and this information is not repeated here.

9.1 Has the project influenced REDD+ processes at international, national and/or subnational levels?

Global and country combined interviews: "***Do you think the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and/or subnational levels?***" As shown in Figure 14, there were 34 responses to this question, nine of which believed that CIFOR-ICRAF had a moderate or mixed influence on REDD+ policy. Seven interviewees that gave this moderate appraisal mentioned that attribution of any change in REDD+ policy or impact is very hard to attribute to the project. 27 were definitive in their positive appraisal of the project's overall impact on REDD+, three specifically mentioning the international level, six the national level, and three the subnational.
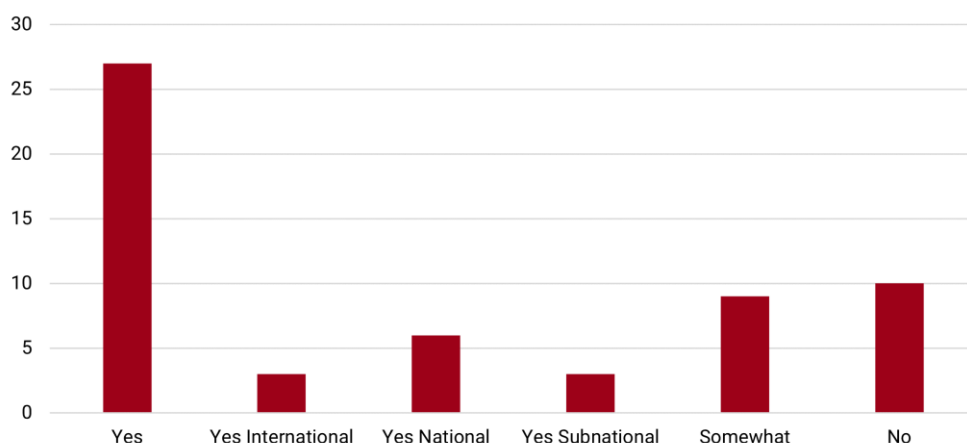
Figure 14: Stakeholder perception on whether the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and/or subnational levels

9.1.1 Country Perspectives

Peru

All interviewees considered the project to have influenced the national and - in some cases - the subnational policy and practice of REDD+, but at same time, it is not easy to point out a concrete example, mainly because GCS is not the only one project working on improve REDD+ development in Peru. Practitioners, such as CIMA, CI, DRIS[31], ACCA[32], BOAM[33], PUR[34] and AIDER[35] among others, also have activities with indigenous communities and its organizations, with subnational and national officers, etc. sometimes, these efforts take the info generated for other actors, in other cases, is info from their institutional experience.

With 13 REDD+ projects active in Peru (Cubas, Baez & Sills, 2024[36]), for most interviewees, the main influence of the project has been through government officials who have accessed and assimilated the information generated and discussed the project. This has given it a special value because of its objective and impartial nature, and which becomes part of their arguments and technical support, thus influencing REDD+ policies and practices.

Examples of these are the tools for promote, evaluate and include participation of all actors, especially those traditionally invisible ("Cómo vamos" used in SERNANP since GCS Phase 3 (PER003). In the same direction, the Module for Citizen Attention

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[31] DRIS: Desarrollo Rural Sustentable, a Peruvian NGO working actively in REDD+ and Indigenous People.

[32] ACCA: Asociacion para la Conservación Amazónica

[33] BOAM: Bosques Amazonicos. Peruvian company leading the Brazil Nut REDD+ project in Madre de Dios, south.

[34] PUR Project is a French non-profit organization active in Peru

[35] AIDER: Asociación de Investigacion y Desarrollo Rural: NGO working REDD+ in National Protected Areas.

[36] Cubas-Baez A., Sills E.O. (2024) Impacts of REDD+ through a local lens: Perspectives on well-being in the Peruvian Amazon. Environmental Science, Sociology

in MINAM (operating) as well as the Safeguard Information System (not yet operating but in final stage of validation) has been influenced by GCS project activities and products (PER006, PER007, PER009) and the diversification in the type of investment that PNCB[37] agree with indigenous communities receiving payments for avoided deforestation, where the analysis of types of deforestation led to change the way the PNCB agrees the spending of avoided deforestation payments with the native communities users of that project (PER010).

Brazil

Based on the interviews, it is possible to say that the projects influenced the REDD+ environment in Brazil in general terms, such as CIFOR's mentions in technical discussions and researchers (BRA06, BRA08 and BRA09) but not specifically in relation to policies (in terms of visible evidence).

One important aspect mentioned by BRA10 was the data organization (through the online platform), that can help any REDD+ initiatives in Brazil, both public and private. On the other hand, BRA01 and BRA05 mentioned that the project is still much too recent to influence national policies.

DRC

At the current stage, it is a little difficult to deduce the way in which the project has influenced REDD+ policy and practices. At least, 46% of respondents think that the knowledge produced by the project such as the mechanisms and modalities for sharing the benefits of REDD+, the mapping of peatlands, sustainable agricultural models could contribute to or be capitalized on in the national REDD+ process. On the other hand, 44% felt that it is difficult to assess this influence due to a lack of convincing information.

Indonesia

At the international level, the project has contributed significantly to the global knowledge base on REDD+ implementation. IND02 highlighted CIFOR's comprehensive database and its contribution to improving the accuracy of emission calculations in Indonesia. This suggests that the project has influenced international practice by providing robust methodologies that can be referenced by other countries implementing REDD+.

At the national level, the project has played a crucial role in bridging scientific research and policy formulation. IND06 emphasized how the project helped translate international research into policy recommendations tailored for the Indonesian context. This indicates that the project has influenced national policy development by adapting global knowledge to local needs.

The project's influence is particularly evident at the subnational level. IND05 noted CIFOR's role in preparing local governments to submit proposals for result-based payments, including assistance with Forest Reference Emission Levels (FREL) and

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[37] Programa Nacional de Conservación de Bosques – forest conservation national programme. A national programme paying to avoid deforestation in indigenous communities' forest

action plans. This demonstrates the project's significant impact on building local capacity for REDD+ implementation.

At the project level, the GCS REDD+ has influenced how REDD+ initiatives monitor and report their impacts. IND07 mentioned gaining insights from GCS reports for presenting data on community contributions.

9.2   What gaps in the range of existing interventions did the project address?

Global and combined interviews to the question **"What gaps in the range of existing interventions did the project address?"** are shown in Figure 15 below. There were 34 responses, with many highlighting specific knowledge gaps.
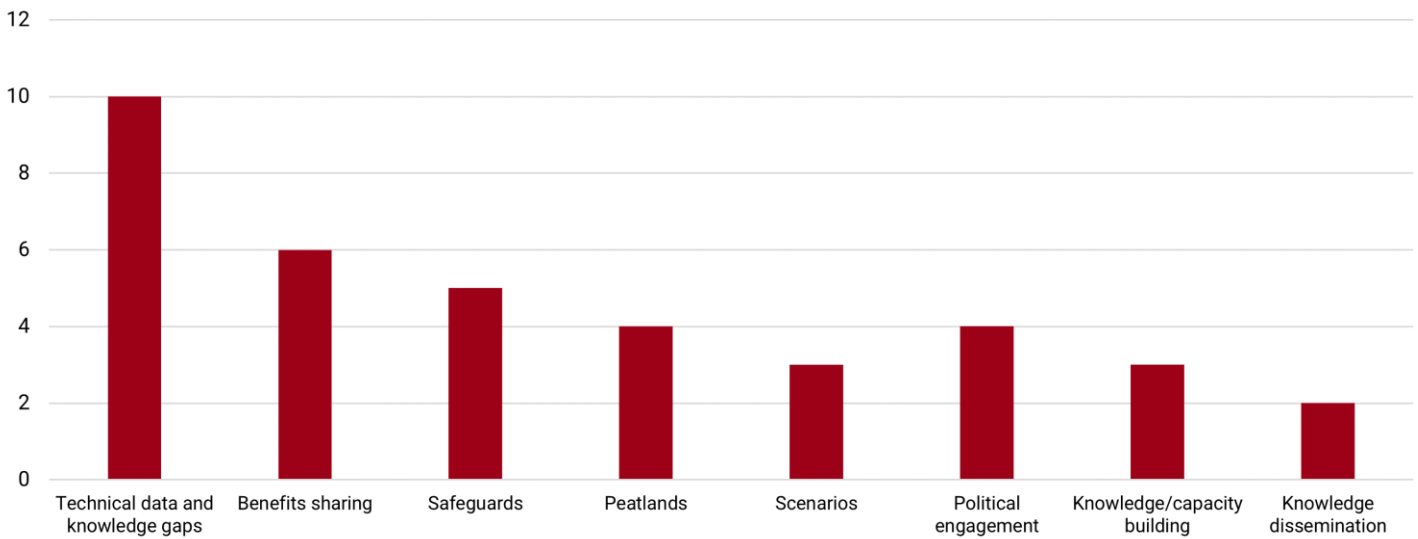
Figure 15: Stakeholder perception on the gaps in the range of existing interventions addressed by the project

9.2.1   Country Perspectives

Peru

The project identified, and solved efficiently, key needs, such as deforestation typology and safeguards. However, an issue that was not developed in such depth but had a great impact was the distribution of benefits generated by REDD+ projects (PER001).

Other important topics were tropical peatlands, on which the generation of very detailed information was supported.

Three out of 10 interviewees consider that the information generated and shared on benefit sharing generated by REDD+ and the characterization (typology) of deforestation and degradation are the topics where the greatest and best contribution was made by filling the existing information gaps. Two interviewees (PER008 and PER009) considered Amazonian peatlands as the most important topic and two more considered that the work done on safeguards helped to fill an important gap.

For government officers, the support to the design of the Citizen Service Module on REDD+ and the support for the National Safeguards Information System (still in a testing stage) were the most important topics that contributed to closing gaps (PER006 and PER007).

Brazil

According to stakeholders, the main gap that the project identified was the generation of public scientific data. Six stakeholders recognized that CIFOR-ICRAF influenced the research carried out on REDD+, providing maturity to the topic, although it was noted that there is still a need for further data to be generated in this space.

DRC

The REDD+ process is seen as being complex and new in DRC. Consequently, there are various challenges requiring a mass of information to enlighten stakeholders and guide decision-making. All interviewees recognized that the knowledge produced by the project contributed to providing certain deficit information that will help the country in terms of REDD+. This is particularly the case for the mapping of peatlands (DRC02, DRC04, DRC09), the REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms (DRC03, DRC05), the mapping of financing for REDD+ projects in the three tropical basins and in particular, in the Congo Basin where the DRC holds the lead.

Indonesia

The GCS REDD+ project addressed several crucial gaps in existing REDD+ interventions in Indonesia, with varying degrees of impact. The project significantly contributed to filling knowledge gaps, particularly in improving emission calculations and building technical capacity in the early stages of REDD+ implementation.

A major gap addressed was the lack of capacity at the subnational level to engage with REDD+ mechanisms. IND05 emphasized CIFOR's role in preparing local governments for Results-Based Payment (RBP) proposals, indicating significant progress in this area.

The project contributed to addressing gaps in understanding and implementing benefit-sharing mechanisms and safeguards.

The project addressed gaps in monitoring and reporting practices, particularly regarding community benefits. IND07 mentioned using insights from GCS reports for presenting data on community contributions, indicating some impact at the project level.

The project worked to bridge the gap between research and policy. IND06 discussed the translation of research into regulatory policy, suggesting some success in this area, though the impact may have varied over time.

10. Sustainability of GCSP4 Results

10.1 To what extent will the results achieved, or lessons learnt, be sustained or replicated within CIFOR-ICRAF, the project partners or external stakeholder organizations?

Summary Findings: Sustainability of GCSP4 Results

- Out of 45 total responses, 14 interviewees said that learnings and results are or would be sustained through future projects, although seven noted that effective use of results in future would depend on sufficient resources for CIFOR-ICRAF and donor interest. 25 interviewees spoke of the academic quality of the outputs and how these results would continue to have an impact through normal academic dissemination of publications, or continued use by government, civil society and other stakeholders.

- In addition to the knowledge products themselves, the SPDs were frequently mentioned as an approach that will be continued and, in some cases, have already been implemented in other areas of work. This indicates the effectiveness of this approach.

- Legacy projects were identified within CIFOR-ICRAF but no evidence could be found of specific projects as yet among the country stakeholders.

Global and country combined interview responses to question ***"To what extent will the results achieved in this project, or lessons learnt be sustained or replicated within your organization (or other organizations)?"*** *are shown in Figure 16*: 45 total responses to this question, 14 of which said that learnings and results are or would be sustained through future projects, although seven note that effective use of results in future would depend on sufficient resources for CIFOR-ICRAF and donor interest. 25 interviewees spoke of the academic quality of the outputs and how these results would continue to have an impact through normal academic dissemination of publications, or continued use by government, civil society and other stakeholders: INT02 "*It will be a legacy in terms of intellectual contributions. Ideas have consequences. Academic papers can change the narratives*." Six interviewees noted that the individual relationships that were formed in the project could lead to future use of project achievements. INT09 said that they "*often had to start from scratch with new government officials, but even when staff move out of government, networks remain*, they contact her from an NGO etc. asking for info".
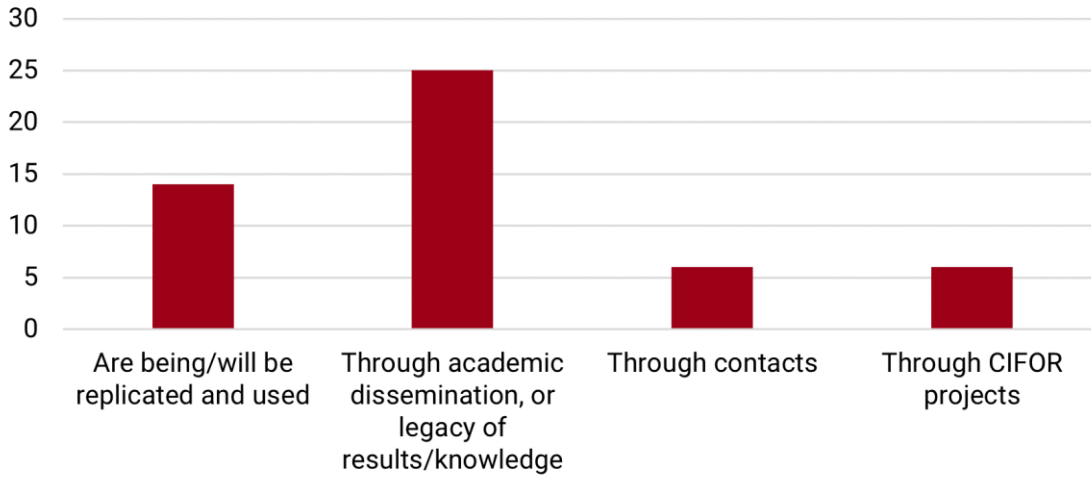
Figure 16: Stakeholder perception on how the results achieved in GCSP4 will be sustained

10.1.1 Country Perspectives

Peru

The most relevant learning has been the method of conducting and adjusting research and socializing its results: the multi-stakeholder forums (SPDs). There is consensus from interviewees on their value and usefulness. Stakeholders intend to use this model for their own purposes. In some cases, such as SERNANP, it is already an institutionally adopted tool to involve local stakeholders in particular (PER003).

Interviewees that represent public institutions or who are not subject specialists felt that the knowledge generated is an input in itself and will be used as an element of consideration in the initiatives that they will generate later or those that are already underway.

Brazil

It was a consensus among all stakeholders that there will be a legacy emanating from the development of GCSP4 knowledge creation and co-learning products. BRA02 and BRA07 emphasized that in their opinions, the work needs to be continued in order to guarantee its legacy.

BRA01 and BRA03 mentioned that data and information will be crucial to promote this ongoing engagement process, however BRA02 and BRA06 mentioned that they don't see any ongoing process, that is why it is so important to continue the work.

DRC

The prospects for perpetuating the project's achievements vary from one actor to another depending on the level of intervention in the process. For example, DRC02, DRC04 and DRC09 affirmed that the information and lessons learned on peatland mapping and benefit sharing will be capitalized at the national level to feed reflections on the REDD+ process and the development of the national strategy on peatlands but also in the mapping of peatlands in other areas.

DRC08 indicated that the project's achievements will contribute to strengthening their interventions on governance issues by providing support to local communities and indigenous peoples within the framework of community forestry. For DRC05, this

knowledge will be used for advocacy and negotiation in favor of indigenous peoples with decision-makers and donors.

A particular initiative was noted by DRC03, which has already integrated certain information into environmental law courses at the University of Kinshasa but, also, certain students who exploit certain results in their dissertation work.

Indonesia

The interviews did not reveal much about replication within organizations. However, as mentioned above, IND08 referred inputs on benefit sharing plan as the most substantial contribution for his organization. IND02 noted that CIFOR insights were used to understand changes in key legislation due to Omnibus Law in Jobs Creation.

10.2 Are/will there be any legacy projects emanating from the development of GCS REDD+ Phase 4 knowledge creation and co-learning products?

Global and country responses to question *"Will there be any legacy projects emanating from the development of GCSP4 knowledge creation and co-learning products?":* There were 40 total responses to this point, three interviewees pointed to projects in development by international institutions such as the World Bank, FAO and EFI that could be seen as heavily dependent on or legacy to GCS. Five interviewees spoke of projects at the national or local level that could take place developing from GCS outputs or activities.

■ Yes ■ Somewhat/possibly ■ No
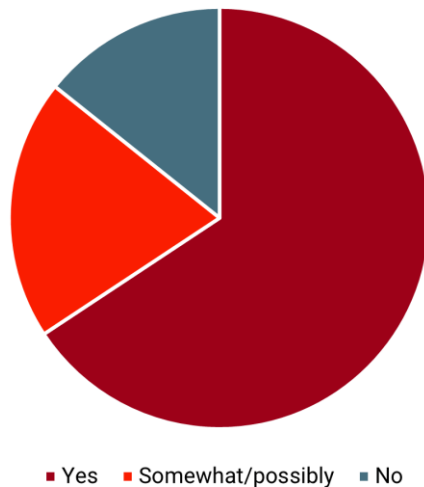
Figure 17: Stakeholder expectation of legacy projects emanating from the development of GCSP4 knowledge creation and co-learning products

10.2.1 Evidence of Legacy Projects

10.2.1.1   Internal CIFOR-ICRAF Projects

According to the CIFOR-ICRAF files there are three legacy projects that have directly emanated from GCSP4 (rather than the GCS as a whole) these include:

- Private sector (Amazon.com) funded small scale project on Institutional Setting for REDD+ and Nature Based Solutions in Vietnam. This project was implemented and completed in 2021.

- CARE Canada funded project (USD 2.3m) focused on enabling a high-quality forestry carbon market in Vietnam (Carbon4Good)

- USAID funded project (USD 500,000) within an ongoing partnership agreement. The research project areas include wetland conservation and restoration for climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable landscapes and livelihoods, soil health with a focus on soils' ability to sequester carbon, store and regulate water and nutrients, and provide ecosystem services. The fourth area is forest and landscape restoration, which develops the evidence, tools, and analysis countries need to help landscapes recover and thrive. The project runs from 2023 to 2027.

The two projects in Vietnam lead directly from WP2.2 (see section 5.1.2).

Additionally, GCS project staff have been working with the Enable Fund (World Bank) building on work done on safeguards.[38]

Country Based Legacy Projects

Peru

It is difficult to assess "legacy" but again, the tools and methods are the most impactful learning with potential for replication and appropriation, especially research with spaces for socialization before, during and at the end of the process, to discuss, analyze and learn with a broad and diverse group of specialists and project users. This was mentioned, in different terms, by PER001, PER005, PER008, PERO 009 and PER010. One interviewee (PER002) mentions that the use of new methodologies for measuring deforestation and carbon stocks has been left as a legacy for future actions, although, if there is no follow-up and monitoring for at least a couple more years, it could be lost.

Brazil: No specific legacy based projects were identified by the stakeholders

DRC

Interviewee opinions were divided on the legacy as some felt it was too difficult to know with the information they had. Others felt that it was likely that peatlands mapping was likely to be followed up on. One respondent felt that the knowledge gained from GCSP4 can contribute to the process of sectoral reforms and initiatives to promote the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples, as well as the development of human capital.

Indonesia

The interviews did not reveal any legacy projects. However, many highlight the need to investigate more on carbon market policy as well as the political economy surrounding carbon market and NDC.

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[38] World Bank, 2015, https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/9bc6ede4c4feabd3ca484f7bb5bf01f2-0020072021/original/77102-Enable-8pager-Sep15.pdf

10.3 What mechanisms or ongoing engagement processes are there in place to achieve this at national and/or international levels?

Global and country combined interviews - There were 31 total responses to this question. Seven emphasized the importance of networks between stakeholders in countries, which CIFOR-ICRAF helped to develop through SPDs etc., that may persist after the end of the project. Five mentioned the longevity of scientific outputs, for example, the accessible online data that CIFOR-ICRAF hosts, the online country scenario platforms, and scientific methodologies developed by CIFOR-ICRAF. Six said that the topics that CIFOR-ICRAF promoted in national policy agendas, for example, the national peatland strategy in DRC, will persist beyond the project. Three interviewees said that there were no mechanisms they were aware of.

10.3.1 Country Perspectives

Peru

There is the great challenge of taking all that has been achieved within a jurisdictional system, which is in process and the project has contributed, with its lessons from this and previous stages (PER001, PER002, PER005). In this process, the technology to incorporate new data has been accepted and remains (PER002). Likewise, for SERNANP (PER003) all REDD+ projects carried out in Protected Areas must use the multi-stakeholder forum method (*Cómo vamos*?).

Brazil: No specific mechanisms were identified by the stakeholders.

DRC

Various processes already initiated by the DRC have been reported that could promote the capitalization of the project's achievements as reported by 78% of respondents, including the implementation of the CDN, the SDGs, the realization of the 30x30 vision on the global framework of the biodiversity, the process of developing the national strategy on peatlands, political and sectoral reforms (forest, land, land use planning, energy, carbon market) and the legal framework (approval text, etc.). On the other hand, 22% indicated that they had no information on the processes in progress.

Indonesia: No specific mechanisms were identified by the stakeholders

11.Current Focus and Future Directions

11.1 Stakeholder perceptions on gaps and opportunities

Global and national interviews revealed that it would be important to develop a section on what CIFOR-ICRAF is/has been working on in REDD+ sector and what stakeholders would like to see in future. Once the interviews started, comments on perceived knowledge gaps, outside of the design of GCSP4 started to come up unprompted in both the global and national interviews. Therefore, the Efeca reviewers began to purposefully ask questions on future directions in the global interviews.

In addition, it was made clear by Norad and NICFI that a Norad funded GCS Phase 5 is not anticipated. Also, that this is not a reflection on CIFOR-ICRAF performance or program management but more a matter of global and national changes in approach and focus from Norway.

Therefore, it was felt that some guidance considering all the global interviews on what the potential audience (and funders) i.e. the demand for evidence base research, may be looking for going forwards and would be useful for both CIFOR-ICRAF and Norad.

The perceived gaps emanating from the stakeholders are partly due to a lack of knowledge of existing or planned CIFOR-ICRAF as well as upcoming GCSP4 outputs. It is understood by the Efeca reviewers that many of the perceived gaps are being addressed by CIFOR-ICRAF but perhaps it is useful to understand the user/stakeholder perceptions and link that into future communications strategies.

Feedback that was recorded in the stakeholder interviews is summarized below in Table 6 to give an idea of the wider stakeholder perception of what people thought would be most useful for CIFOR-ICRAF to focus on going forward:

Table 6: Stakeholder interview perceptions of existing gaps and future opportunities for CIFOR-ICRAF

Perceived current gaps	Possible future direction/opportunities
• To reframe the project within the larger climate change work that's been happening (3) • Large-scale, high-level publications where CIFOR-ICRAF excelled in the past (big framing publications and the things that shifted the narrative, based on data and empirical evidence (1) • CIFOR-ICRAF have data that they could use for strategic publications going forward; they could meet with	• Stable forests including the likely impact of carbon fluxes and the net source of carbon to the atmosphere rather than as a carbon sink (1) • Apply knowledge gained from the forest sector into different sectors i.e. which asset classes in nature we should be investing in (2) • More discussions around the small island developing states that are outside of Indonesia or any larger basin (1) • To widen the pool of donors e.g. philanthropy, green finance (2) • To apply knowledge gained on carbon credits to biodiversity credits (2) • To reformulate the concepts and target the operational side of REDD+. To include data development and capacity building people at

the UNFCCC secretariat more, and sit more in the negotiations at SUBSTAs on article 6, be in the conversations on operationalization. • To more clearly see the 'value added' that CIFOR-ICRAF can bring in existing work (2) • Facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange between tropical forest countries (1)	a national level who are knowledgeable about different kinds of ecosystems that can support governments as reporting frequency goes up (2) • Work needed on incentives and article 6 associated issues from a REDD+ perspective (3) • Explore non carbon-based forest and climate benefits (2) • To (continue to) act as an advisor to governments and supplier of analytical work (1) • Empirical on-the-ground research (2)

To summarize these findings on stakeholder future directions:

- A stronger focus on the audience and a more demand led approach (while not compromising on independent, good quality research)

- Expanding the scope and enhancing modelling capacities to significantly enhance CIFOR-ICRAF's ability to inform policy and decision-making.

- More on the ground empirical research to analyze REDD+ impacts locally and how it has evolved.

- Systematic research to validate on the ground impacts and whether principles are actually working.

- To support via research the transition from result-based payments to carbon markets. There is a growing need for analysis on how to effectively manage this transition and how to engage with the carbon market *"The emergence of voluntary carbon markets and the way these are taking shape and informing policy and dialogues are categorically different from traditional REDD and results based payment schemes"* (INT23)

- Jurisdictional REDD+: need to engage with decision makers and donors to finance research e.g. could be a global project designed to protect forests for example.

The stakeholder viewpoints in Table 6 and above suggest that a practical next step could be a more in-depth and deliberate study to assess CIFOR-ICRAF's audience and effectively the user requirements and where they source their REDD+ related research from. It is important not to compromise the integrity and independence of CIFOR-ICRAFs evidence-based research approach. However, there is now considerable competition for REDD+ related research provision and newer market actors such as from the green finance sector who may not be as familiar with CIFOR-ICRAF as previous, more traditional stakeholders have been.

To give an idea of scale in the new initiatives related to green finance, Indonesia's President-elect Prabowo Subianto plans to launch a green economy fund by selling

carbon emission credits from projects such as rainforest preservation, aiming to raise USD 65 billion by 2028[39].

11.2 Possible Future Directions

Taking the stakeholder perceptions and assessing it against the GCSP4 outputs it is possible to come to some tentative conclusions on what the possible future directions could look like.

All the suggested trends and new or extended areas in Table 7 below would help enable CIFOR-ICRAF to maintain their role and the relevance of the GCS/REDD+ work in a rapidly expanding space; both from a policy perspective and a private/finance sector growth. How do lessons from GCS take center stage and stay relevant?

This is not an in-depth study and should be considered as indicative only.

Table 7: Possible new direction for GCS

What are the suggested new or expanded directions	Comments
Stable forests including the likely impact of carbon fluxes and the net source of carbon to the atmosphere rather than as a carbon sink.	There is a policy shift on "who owns the carbon" which is coming into the voluntary carbon markets with governments limiting the sale of volume carbon credits to meet their NDCs and national targets. Are there lessons to be shared for this policy change/shift? As carbon markets gain traction?
Apply knowledge gained from the forest sector into different sectors i.e. which asset classes in nature we should be investing in.	Very little transferred from learnings of REDD+ to these new areas. Large scale initiatives, such as the UK Forest Governance Markets and Climate (Phase 2) which starts in 2025, are moving to going beyond the traditional timber-based focus and expanding to include biodiversity and carbon in relation to forest governance, livelihoods/local communities, etc.
Countries are coming forward with requests for financing of their own work in REDD+. Specific research support is needed here.	This expands on the GCSP4 work
Finance-based actors e.g. green finance lending institutions are also in need of robust research	There are a lot of initiatives that are relevant in this domain e.g. Science Based Targets initiative, Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) This area of work could build on existing GCSP4 work in terms of increasing adaptability and flexibility of use in outputs e.g. WP1 and WP4.

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[39] Exclusive: Indonesia's Prabowo plans $65 bln green fund from selling carbon credits | Reuters

that can be tailored as needed.	
Carbon "insetting"[40] where companies are investing in nature protection in their supply chains, and may step this up in response to the trends above and laws below.	This overlaps with the above area There are regulations that are coming into force in the EU and elsewhere such as: • CSDDD (Corporate sustainability due diligence directive) • CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive). • EUDR (EU Deforestation Regulation)
To target the operational side on implementing REDD+.	Includes Article 6 related issues from a REDD+ perspective. Article 6 of the Paris agreement enables the use of carbon markets to meet NDCs, which was finalized and agreed in Glasgow at COP26 in 2021, meaning that as time goes on more and more money will be sunk into removals by states to meet NDCs. To achieve high integrity carbon there is a need to update on the ground validation to see which principles are working. As well as increase work with local stakeholders to ensure benefits are shared.
Knowledge transfer - an expansion of knowledge transfer from GCS applying learnings to new countries or geographies	Could increase the transfer of learnings from REDD+ in the forest sector to other sectors and contexts. Could facilitate South-South cooperation to help collaboration in partner and neighboring countries to strengthen links (including regional). The Broader Market Recognition Coalition (BMRC) is one mechanism by which this is done - the BMRC is a coalition of timber producer countries seeking to align on definitions on legal and sustainable – however this is already feeding into FACT Dialogue. Consider increasing direct links to UNFCC with regard to Article 6. UNCTAD is developing a framework to measure and give more visibility to South-South cooperation
Biodiversity credit market.	Biodiversity credits will be launched at COP16 in December 2024 focusing on biodiversity loss; an opportunity to work in a new space and utilize previous work from carbon credits. There are also schemes emerging to sell biodiversity credits e.g. Plan Vivo[41]

The preliminary review feedback meeting to discuss the findings in this report highlighted the following caveats and questions in relation to new directions of work:

• Does the GCS have a lack of research, or is there a lack of broader research on politics and power in REDD+?

• Should GCS explore power dynamics of knowledge generation – who controls the definitions of 'best practice'? - *The link between knowledge production and data – what data is selected, how it is measured etc. informs knowledge production*

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[40] https://www.wbcsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Insetting-and-Scope-3-climate-action.pdf

[41] https://www.planvivo.org/news/plan-vivo-launch-biodiversity-standard

- Are there biases in the GCS and therefore in our evaluation? *To be aware of positionality and bias as authors*

- CIFOR-ICRAF is an information provider, so must balance the current asymmetry in abilities of groups to access and generate information, mobilize knowledge of different types of stakeholder – *how does CIFOR-ICRAF distribute their knowledge – does this exclude certain groups? E.g. the production of reports/scholarly articles will exclude indigenous communities with limited access which inherently marginalizes them*

- How can CIFOR-ICRAF build capacity of community groups to access the enormous climate finance that is now flowing (is GCS aiding the right audiences? Governments or communities?

12. Conclusions

This section should be read in conjunction with the country impact summaries in section 4.

Factors outside of CIFOR-ICRAF's control and relevant to this review included a heavily reduced budget, COVID, an earlier than expected finish to the project, and fluctuating political and institutional contexts in Peru and Indonesia.

In addition, the additional extension to December 2024 during this review meant that project outputs are still ongoing and so could not be included in this report. Also, these final outputs are generally unknown to the stakeholders and are likely to have contributed to some of the comments from interviewees relating to availability of information.

12.1 Key strengths and areas of effectiveness

The research carried out by GCSP4 addressed current and emerging issues aiding implementation of national REDD+ strategies. Overall, the knowledge developed by the project provided a solid basis to support reforms of REDD+ policies in all countries.

CIFOR-ICRAF's retains its prestige as a solid institution for research. This allows access and attention from state and non-state actors, especially policy makers, REDD+ project implementers and those who support or seek to influence policy making. Personal and professional relationships were seen as being important factors in contributing to project achievements.

Project staff and stakeholders consistently identified their in-country networks as being very important to achieving project outcomes. The networks of decision makers formed and maintained by country coordinators, and through events, as well as the co-creation of knowledge, seem to be instrumental to encouraging key decision makers to use the knowledge that CIFOR-ICRAF produce to support policies aligned with project outcomes.

The SPDs were seen as being a very effective mechanism. There was good organization of the analysis and discussion groups in all four countries. CIFOR-ICRAF was seen as having convened groups that are truly diverse and knowledgeable about the issues addressed within GCSP4. In-country dissemination of results and advocacy was able to effectively reach policy makers and REDD+ implementers.

A flexible approach both from the project team as well as the donor was a project strength. For example, this flexibility enabled the project to meet the political challenges and institutional changes in Peru and Indonesia.

The CIFOR-ICRAF database (ID-RECCO) is seen as particularly effective for those who are aware of it, albeit with some criticisms on useability and navigability[42]. It is understood that it is in the process of being updated to increase its functionality. According to the SoC, ID-RECCO facilitates academic research as well as informing policy making and advancements in REDD+ project development both at national and global levels. The platform's neutral, reliable and comprehensive data was highly rated. In all, over 2,000 downloads and 84 publications have referenced the database.

The communications team competently produce engaging material that is consumed by their target audiences and is impactful.

The ideas and knowledge from GCS appear to exceed outreach awareness of the existence of GCS, or even CIFOR-ICRAF, particularly at the global level – e.g., as the knowledge emanating from the project gets more widely disseminated and repackaged by non-project users, the understanding of where the knowledge was obtained tends to get lost. This is a positive impact in terms of reach, but a limitation in relation to attribution.

12.2 Key Limitations

The two main factors that restricted the project achievements were felt to be limited resources together with the limited time of the project implementation.

The dynamic nature of the market and regulatory environment highlighted the importance of continuous updates and adaptation. The rapidly evolving nature of REDD+ implementation means that some insights reflect past circumstances rather than the current state of affairs. One concern is how can CIFOR-ICRAF and their partners ensure that the work in this domain continues so that they combat the risk that impacts are only short-term. The project effectively managed this challenge during its time frame, but sustained efforts will be crucial for maintaining relevance and impact in the long term.

During the earlier GCS REDD+ phases, the project was wider both geographically and in terms of funding and scope. A consistent issue is low awareness of the existence of GCS, regardless of use of and engagement with GCSP4 activities and outputs. Most interviewees were unfamiliar with the current phase of the GCS REDD+ project.

Stakeholders noted that there was a lot of engagement during the early stages of REDD+, when there was a massive lack of evidence-based research. As REDD+ has moved to implementation and the realization of result-based payments, this visibility of CIFOR-ICRAF on REDD+ on the global stage appears to have diminished.

There is a broad strength in communications but there appears to be a gap between the effectiveness of a network group and the perception of the effectiveness of the project communications. Taking the global and country combined interviews

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[42] As noted above the GCS website and the ID-RECCO website have been updated since this review was conducted.

together, there is a sentiment that the project communications could be more effective in some areas.

12.3 Has GCS Phase 4 (GCSP4) achieved its intended outcomes?

Overall, the findings indicate that the evidence does show knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+. Most interviewees felt there was evidence to show that knowledge creation and co-learning products were developed by GCSP4 to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+.

The project outcomes for all WPs have broadly been met. Given the context of the project limitations, including a truncated implementation period, it is unsurprising that the WPs that could be finished earlier have most clearly met all designed targets. The project was also extended during the review period by six months until the end of 2024.

The indicators for the NICFI specific outcomes were met. Outcomes 1 and 2 were felt by the senior project team to have been the most achieved.

The Theory of Change was appropriate and was felt to be well used at the project outset.

The MELIA tools are structured to try to get attribution on elements that are difficult to capture. It is rarely possible to pinpoint one specific instigator on this type of change and these tools have made a good effort to achieve this. The main limitation was that the tools were generally inconsistently used by all the countries, despite training being delivered to the implementation team in 2021 on the MELIA toolkit and how to use the different tools.

12.4 The main contributing factors to achieving or limiting the project's intended outcomes

The development of the diagnostic framework appears to have been successful, so it can be assumed that the design of WPs 1 to 3 feeding into the diagnostic framework was an effective research design.

The project tried to ensure that it addressed country needs primarily through the use of good local networks of stakeholders able to meet local needs, through which to disseminate findings, and with which to engage in co-creative processes.

Stakeholders stated the importance of specific key partners and a well-targeted stakeholder engagement. For example, in Peru, Brazil, and DRC, the relationship with a specific university was flagged as important.

In Peru it was recognized that there has been a good outreach at the national level, but that a greater involvement with subnational governments was needed.

The Brazilian stakeholder interviews showed that the project was perceived to have helped the development of a REDD+ culture in Brazil.

In DRC, although many key decision makers were perceived to have been reached, it was also felt that there were some gaps exacerbated by an insufficient level of dissemination and inclusion within the project processes.

In Indonesia the project helped bridge the gap between international research and local policy needs, translating global knowledge into context-specific recommendations for Indonesian policymakers. Although successful in engaging with government and some project implementers, the research had limited reach with high-level policymakers and the private sector e.g. in the carbon market sector.

GCS has had a larger and longer presence in Peru and Indonesia, and it is in these two countries that the actual influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team was more easily evidenced.

12.5 Learnings from translating research to policy and/or practice change

Strengths were identified as the effective targeting of research to relevant knowledge gaps for the country, the quality of the scientific research, the importance of establishing good personal relationships and maintaining good contact with government officials.

Limitations included the difficulty in then translating increased knowledge into take up of outputs into policy.

The use of stakeholder forums such as the SPDs were frequently mentioned throughout the review and by the interviewees. Enabling a forum where decision makers are able to speak directly to other stakeholders was seen as highly important and effective.

Direct communication with high level policymakers was felt to be crucial.

There is a high level of investment required, both in terms of time and resources, to work harder with policy and decision makers to achieve results.

12.6 Were key stakeholders and beneficiaries equipped by the project's knowledge processes and products?

International/regional/country policy priorities were generally timely and well targeted for the project as it was designed. There are some visible successes as well as limitations in this area as outlined in the country perspectives.

The stakeholders that felt equipped by the project varied according to the country and the type of stakeholder concerned making it difficult to provide global answers on this issue.

12.7 How the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and/or subnational levels

It was largely felt by stakeholders that CIFOR-ICRAF had a moderate or mixed influence on REDD+ policy.

It was frequently noted that attribution of any change in REDD+ policy or impact is very hard to attribute to this project due to REDD+ landscape. Despite this, 27 interviewees were definitive in their positive appraisal of the project's overall impact on REDD+. Three specifically mentioned the international level, six the national level, and three the subnational.

As in other review areas, the overall sentiment on this issue was that CIFOR-ICRAF had a clearer, stronger influence on REDD+ policy in Peru and Indonesia where the GCS has had a longer involvement and more resources. This also followed regarding filling gaps in existing interventions.

12.8 Sustainability of GCSP4 Results

Out of 45 total responses, 14 interviewees said that learnings and results are or would be sustained through future projects, although seven noted that effective use of results in future would depend on sufficient resources for CIFOR-ICRAF and donor interest.

25 interviewees spoke of the academic quality of the outputs and how these results would continue to have an impact through normal academic dissemination of publications, or continued use by government, civil society and other stakeholders.

In addition to the knowledge products themselves, the SPDs were frequently mentioned as an approach that will be continued and, in some cases, have already been implemented in other areas of work. This indicates the effectiveness of this approach.

Legacy projects were identified within CIFOR-ICRAF but no evidence could be found of specific projects as yet among the country stakeholders.

12.9 Future Guidance/Recommendations

No recommendations were required in the ToR but during this review a number of potential areas for improvement were noted as follows:

- There were clear recommendations from a wide range of interviewees that going forward, new directions should be focused on for future research endeavors in the REDD+ domain to ensure that the demands from rapidly changing audience for the research can be (visibly) met i.e. some evolution is needed in the identification and targeting processes. These future directions are explored in section 11 of this report.

- To improve the ToC by integrating communications from the start, or reframing the document as a living, project management document, as opposed to a static framework, that can be adapted to changing political or operational contexts.

- To consider trying to further incorporate MELIA tools into ongoing implementation processes so that they are not seen as a separate set of tasks to complete.

- To consider adding a more participatory perspective into the SoCs and to include the COE team from the outset.

- Despite the width of the materials produced by CIFOR-ICRAF, interviewees commented that effectiveness could be improved if there were more targeted and less academic outputs that could be more easily understood. Although digital material such as blogs and flyers were included by CIFOR-ICRAF members in their lists of top three outputs, and were featured in the in-county interviews, there were also interviewees who wanted to see more informal outputs, such as blogs or other grey literature specifically targeted towards REDD+ related policy or finance – i.e., expanding communications further in this direction with specific audience focused outputs and messaging in terms of type of media used and content.

- Despite communications being seen as a strength in many areas, overall identified weaknesses included the communications approach and outputs from the project. The approach could be improved by ensuring that outputs can have strong advocacy or promotion built into them from a project management or design perspective. i.e. by ensuring that some outputs are ready to be promoted earlier in the project or integrating communications outputs.

Peru

- It was felt that more focus was needed on subnational levels. In addition, there was an NGO perception that there was a lack of engagement with actors at the subnational level and in some cases at the national level. The involvement of users of REDD+ projects was seen as being too narrow.

- Due to the high turnover of officials at sub-national but also national level, interviewees commented that it is important to work not only with policy decision-makers, but also with mid-level officials whose replacement due to political issues is much lower and who, once equipped by the project, inform and influence policy decision-makers when they take up a position or role.

Brazil: No country specific recommendations.

DRC

- Stakeholders wanted to have more information about the project and to be more involved in all stages of the project, including design.

- There was an impression from some stakeholder interviewees that more in-country expertise (including at management level) could have been used in the project.

- That certain key decision-makers (e.g. sectoral ministries, civil society and the public-private mining group Financial and Technical Partners (PTF)) should have been involved with the project.

- To extend the project areas to other potential provinces for key issues, e.g. for mining.

- In the DRC, policy makers and practitioners rarely use international research sites such as CIFOR-ICRAF's. Whilst their preference is to share the reports in soft copy, additional methods of dissemination may be needed in DRC.

Indonesia

- To seek to increase CIFOR-ICRAF's visibility in the REDD+ in Indonesia and adapt faster to the rapidly changing environment.
- To increase links with high-level policy makers and the private sector.
- There is a perceived gap in addressing non-carbon benefits of REDD+.
  - It is noted that in 2023 CIFOR-ICRAF published a report on Carbon Market and REDD+. The publication investigates the evolving landscape of carbon markets in Indonesia, emphasizing the integration of REDD+ projects into both domestic and international carbon trading systems. This report not only addresses the technical aspects of carbon trading but also provides practical recommendations for aligning REDD+ initiatives with emerging market demands.[43] However from the stakeholder comments it appears that they may not be aware of this published research.
- To (continue to) consider political sensitivities and power dynamics in policy recommendations, especially given different priorities between MoEF/KLHK (NDC) and The Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (Carbon Market).

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[43] S Nofyanza and others, 'Towards Indonesian Carbon Market: Input from REDD+ Projects' (*CIFOR-ICRAF*, 1 January 2023) https://www.cifor-icraf.org/knowledge/publication/8867/ accessed 5 August 2024.

Annex A – MELIA Toolkit

Outcome Influence Log (OIL) Examples

The OILs provide examples of how the CIFOR-ICRAF staff influenced stakeholders. Examples from the way in which the OILs are compiled and summarized across the three countries is shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Summary table of the method and impact from the project team influence with stakeholders

Description of influence	Medium/circumstance of influence	Significance of influence
Increased interest in or successful promotion of GCS: **eight** instances listed Increased knowledge of stakeholder, or successful dissemination of knowledge: **eight** instances listed Collaboration of non-project personnel with project activities: **one** instance listed	Conversation between project personnel and stakeholders: **six** instances listed Formal meeting or event: **six** instances listed At a conference: **seven** instances listed Incidental or informal (e.g. conversation at a conference): **four** instances listed Intentional: **five** instances listed Other media appearing only once in the OILs included though consumption of project outputs, media articles, blogs, or direct communication between personnel and stakeholders.	Increased awareness of GCS for stakeholders, or developing relationships between GCS and other stakeholders, leading to expanded or strengthened network: **11** instances listed **Stakeholder take-up of GCS knowledge or outputs: three instances listed** **Potential influence on policy process: one instance listed**

Annex B – list of all SPDs

Table 9: Science Policy Dialogues: Sources: APR annexes, 2021, 2022, 2023

Country	2021		2022		2023	
	SPD	Survey	SPD	Survey	SPD	Survey
DRC	Science and Public Policy Platform Dialogue I: REDD+ Implementation in DRC after COP26 and the signing of the second Letter of Intent (LoI): Priorities, legal and policy frameworks and contributions of the GCS-REDD+ project, 14 December 2021. https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/science-and-public-policy-platform-dialogue-i-redd-implementation-in-drc-after-cop26-and-the-signing-of-the-second-letter-of-intent-loi-priorities-legal-and-policy-frameworks-and-contributions-o/	Y	(1) 2nd DRC's science-policy workshop on "Bridging Policy and Science on Addressing Climate Change and Deforestation in Democratic Republic of Congo" in Kinshasa, DRC on 12 December 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and University of Kinshasa: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/bridging-policy-and-science-on-addressing-climate-change-and-deforestation-in-democratic-republic-of-congo/. Around 59 participants attended.	Y	5th Science-Policy Dialogue in DRC on "REDD+ finance and benefit-sharing in Democratic Republic of Congo: Opportunities and challenges" by hybrid on 17 October 2023 in Monekosso Conference Room, University of Kinshasa, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and University of Kinshasa. https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/redd-finance-and-benefit-sharing-in-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-opportunities-and-challenges/. More than 100 participants attended onsite and around 50 participants joined online.	
			(2) 3rd DRC's science-policy workshop on "Learning about climate	Y	6th DRC's science-policy dialogue on "Promote forest protection and the	

			and forest policies: recent knowledge from COP27" in Democratic Republic of Congo on 13 December 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and University of Kinshasa: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/bridging-policy-and-science-on-addressing-climate-change-and-deforestation-in-democratic-republic-of-congo/. Around 102 participants attended.		rights of forest peoples in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Promouvoir la protection des forêts et les droits des peuples forestiers en République Démocratique du Congo)" in Kempinski Fleuve Congo Hotel, Democratic Republic of Congo on 14-15 March 2024, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and University of Kinshasa: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/science-policy-dialogue/. More than 40 participants attended onsite, and more than 125 participants joined online.	
			(3) S4th DRC's science-policy workshop on "Preliminary results of research and new research methods to understand progress of climate policies in DRC" in Democratic Republic of Congo on 14 December 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and University of Kinshasa: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/bridging-policy-and-science-on-addressing-climate-change-and-	Y		

			deforestation-in-democratic-republic-of-congo/. Around 54 participants attended.			
Indonesia	Science and Policy Dialogue I: From COP26 to G20: How research can support aligning forest, finance, and development planning in Indonesia held on 16 December 2021. We presented 3 presentations. https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/from-cop26-to-g20-how-research-can-support-aligning-forest-finance-and-development-planning-in-indonesia/	Y	2nd Indonesia's science-policy workshop on "Improving REDD+ information to advance REDD+ architecture" by online on 25 April 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and RCCC-UI: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/improving-redd-information-to-advance-redd-architecture/. Around 33 participants attended.	Y	GCS REDD+ Workshop - REDD+ social safeguards in Indonesia: opportunities and challenges in CIFOR-ICRAF campus on 16 May 2023, organized by CIFOR and CCSF-UI: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/redd-social-safeguards-in-indonesia-opportunities-and-challenges/. Around 31 participants attended	Y
			3rd Indonesia's science-policy workshop on "How are benefits from REDD+ finance shared?" by online on 4 August 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and RCCC-UI: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/how-are-benefits-from-redd-finance-shared/. Around 28 participants attended.			
			4th Indonesia's science-policy workshop on "Taking Local Context	Y		

			Into Account in REDD+ Policies Implementation" in Bogor, Indonesia on 14 December 2022, organized by CIFOR and RCCC-UI: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/taking-local-context-into-account-in-redd-policies-implementation/. Around 14 participants attended.			
Peru	GCS REDD+ Science and Policy Platform Dialogue I: REDD+ safeguards in Peru: experiences from research, design and implementation, held on 13 December 2021. We gave 5 presentations. https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/science-and-public-policy-platform-dialogue-i-redd-safeguards-experiences-from-research-design-and-implementation/.	Y	(1) 2nd Peru's science-policy workshop on "Building Scenario Narratives for Future Land Use Change in Peru" by online on 26 April 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/building-scenario-narratives-for-future-land-use-change-in-peru/. Around 33 participants attended.	Y	5th session of the Science-Public Policy Dialogue Platform in Peru on "Conserving and Managing Peatlands to Mitigate Climate Change" on 30 March 2023, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF, NICFI, NORAD, CISEPA PUCP, IIAP, SWAMP and University of St. Andrews. https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/conserving-and-managing-peatlands-to-mitigate-climate-change/. Around 33 participants attended.	
			(2) 3rd Peru's science-policy workshop on "Diagnosis of deforestation and		6th session of the Science-Public Policy Dialogue Platform in Peru, "Science and public	

			progress in models and reference levels" in Lima, Peru on 20 September 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and PUCP: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/diagnosis-of-deforestation-advances-on-models-and-reference-levels/. Around 19 participants attended.		policies to mitigate deforestation and climate change: Final meeting of the science and policy platform of the GCS REDD+ Peru" on 19 December 2023, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF, NICFI, NORAD and CISEPA PUCP. https://www.cifor-icraf.org/es/event/ciencia-y-politicas-publicas-para-mitigar-la-deforestacion-y-el-cambio-climatico/. Around 42 participants attended.	
			(3) 4th Peru's science-policy workshop on "How do policies impact forest loss? Global, national and local typologies and evidence of deforestation processes" in Lima, Peru on 05 Dec 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and PUCP: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/how-do-policies-impact-forest-loss-global-national-and-local-typologies-and-evidence-of-deforestation-processes-the-fourth-meeting-of-the-peru-science-public-	Y		

			policy-advisory-group/#new_tab. Around 26 participants attended.			
Brazil	1st: Co-organised with GCF and presented at 1 policy dialogue/workshop in Brazil. This meeting took place on 20 October 2021.	N	2nd Brazil's science-policy workshop on "Bringing together diverging REDD+ methodologies for strengthening Brazil's REDD+ finance potential" in Instituto Nacional de Pesquisa Espacial (INPE), São José dos Campos, Brasil on 3 May 2022, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF and INPE: https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/workshop-on-bringing-together-diverging-redd-methodologies-for-strengthening-brazils-redd-finance-potential/. Around 62 participants attended.	Y	3rd Science-Policy Dialogue in Brazil on "How to organize the distribution of REDD+ resources for effective impacts?: Lessons from the implementation of REDD+ projects in Brazil" by online on 10 March 2023, organized by CIFOR-ICRAF, UFMG, CIT and GCF TaskForce. https://www.cifor-icraf.org/event/how-to-organize-the-distribution-of-redd-resources-for-effective-impacts/. Around 42 participants attended.	

Annex C – Key research questions

Table 10 shows the key research questions and related sub-questions used to structure this review. The interviews and the questions (see Annex D) were based around these key review questions.

Table 10: Key review questions and suggested indicators

Key Review Question	Sub-questions and performance indicators
1. **To what extent has the project (Phase 4) achieved its intended outcomes and contributed to relevant NICFI outcomes?**	• Does the evidence show knowledge creation and co-learning products to inform effective, efficient and equitable REDD+? • Were the Theory of Change(s) fit-for-purpose? • Were the MELIA outcome tracking tools fit-for-purpose? • Were any adaptations made or needed during the project? • How well were NICFI's outcomes met?
2. **What have been the main contributing factors to achieving the project's intended outcomes?**	• Major factors influencing achievement/non-achievement? • Research design – how effective was it? • Actual influence of CIFOR-ICRAF team on key project outcomes?
3. **What have we learned about translating research to policy and / or practice change?**	• Identified strengths and weaknesses of approaches used. • To what extent were research outputs disseminated to relevant stakeholders? How effectively were they utilized? • Overall lessons learned about translating research to policy or practice change
4. **Were there any positive or negative unexpected outcomes, and if so, why and how did they affect project's expected results?**	• Were there any positive or negative unexpected outcomes? • Did these unexpected outcomes positively or negatively affect project results?
5. **How and under what conditions were key stakeholders and beneficiaries equipped by the project's knowledge processes and products?**	• Were international / regional / country policy priorities correctly identified? • Was the research timely and well targeted? • Were the structures appropriate to deliver activities?
6. **How did the project ensure it addressed country needs? What factors contributed to or hindered the relevance of the research to the country contexts?**	• Effectiveness at engaging decision makers in specific country contexts? Achieving results? Effectiveness of project communications strategies?

	• Major factors influencing achievement/non-achievement?
	• What adaptation of activities were made to country contexts and emerging events?
7. **How has the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and / or subnational levels?**	• Has the project influenced REDD+ processes at international, national and / or subnational levels?
	• What gaps in the range of existing interventions did the project address? To what extent?
8. **To what extent will the results achieved or lessons learnt be sustained or replicated within CIFOR-ICRAF, the project partners or external stakeholder organizations?**	• Is there any evidence that this has already been achieved, and if so, to what extent?
9. **Are/will there be any legacy projects emanating from the development of GCS REDD+ Phase 4 knowledge creation and co-learning products?**	• Is there any evidence that this has already been achieved, and if so, to what extent?
	• What mechanisms or ongoing engagement processes are there in place to achieve this at national and / or international levels?

It was clear from initial meetings with CIFOR-ICRAF that this review should not be conducted in the same way as a formal evaluation. For example, questions on efficiency were not required.

Whilst it was hoped that a future Phase 5 could be proposed in 2025 in the next round of NICFI bidding, there could be no assumption that this will happen, and the review was not predicated on this. Nevertheless, two additional questions on sustainability were added into Table 10 above, as this was still an important aspect of the review.

Annex D – Core interview questions

The master question set used to conduct interviews is as below. Note that interviewees were asked only questions relevant to their context, and therefore not all interviewees were asked every question.

1. To what extent has the project (Phase 4) achieved its intended outcomes?
    a. How did you use the Theory of Change(s)? Did you find them useful and have you used them since 2022? Can you suggest any improvements?
    b. How easy/useful did you find the outcome tracking tools to use? Are there any changes you would suggest?
    c. How well were four NICFI's outcomes met?
    d. What do you think the actual influence of the CIFOR-ICRAF team was on the key project outcomes?

2. How did the project ensure that it addressed country needs? What factors contributed to or hindered the relevance of the research to the country contexts?
    • How effective was the project team at engaging decision makers in specific country contexts and achieving results? Who do you wish you had managed to engage with or influence more?
    • How effective was the Project Advisory Group (PAG)?
    • What adaptation of activities were made to cater to the country context and emerging events?
    • How effective were the project communications strategies? Could they be improved?

3. Do you have any evidence that there are, in your area of work on this project, knowledge creation and co-learning products that did inform effective, efficient, and equitable REDD+?
    a. What do you think have been the main achievements of the project?
    b. For each of the achievements what do you think were the main contributing factors
    c. Which were the top factors that limited the project achievement?
    d. Do you think the research design was effective? Why and could anything be improved?

4. What have you learned about translating research to policy and/or practice change from this project?
    a. Can you identify any strengths or weaknesses of the approaches used?
    b. How were research outputs disseminated to relevant stakeholders? Were they then used effectively?
    c. Can you link any scientific outputs of your work to the project?

5. Were there any positive or negative unexpected outcomes, and if so, why and how did they affect project's expected results?

6. How and under what conditions do you feel that key stakeholders and beneficiaries were equipped by the project's knowledge processes and products?

      a.   Were international / regional / country policy priorities correctly identified?

      b.   Was the research timely and well targeted?

      c.   Were the structures appropriate to deliver activities?

7. Do you think the project influenced REDD+ policy and practice at international, national and / or subnational levels?

      a.   What gaps in the range of existing interventions did the project address? To what extent?

8. To what extent will the results achieved in this project, or lessons learnt be sustained or replicated within your organization (or other organizations)?

9. Will there be any legacy projects emanating from the development of GCSP4 knowledge creation and co-learning products?

      a.   What mechanisms or ongoing engagement processes are there in place to achieve this at national and / or international levels

10. Are there any comments you would like to make on the following topics in relation to CIFOR-ICRAF and REDD+:

      a.   ? Policies for sustainable forest and land use in tropical forest countries and jurisdictions

      b.   Improved rights and livelihoods for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in tropical forest countries

      c.   International incentive structures for reduced deforestation in tropical forest countries

      d.   Increased transparency in land management, land use, value chains and financing

11. Can you tell us about NICFI's future areas of interest in this sector?

Annex E – Most impactful outputs

Table 11: Most impactful outputs according to senior GCSP4 staff

Output	Number of times included in top 3	Output Type	Subject Focus	Geographical Focus
Brazil REDD+ platform	1	Online simulation platform	The potential impact of policies on deforestation and GHG emissions	Brazil
Peru Interactive Tool	1	Online simulation platform	Compares the deforestation impact of practices adhering to Peru's Paris agreement pledges with business-as-usual operations	Peru
DRC Interactive Tool	1	Online simulation platform	Predicts where deforestation might occur and the resulting emissions	DRC
Forest disturbance and recovery in the Peruvian Amazon	2	Journal article	The impact of forest disturbance on biomass and biodiversity over time	Peru
Spatial distribution of degradation and deforestation of palm swamp peatland and associated carbon emissions in the Peruvian Amazon	2	Journal article	Mapping palm swamp deforestation and degradation to analyze carbon emissions	Peru
Subnational governments and jurisdictional approaches to REDD+ in Peru	1	Journal article	The impact of subnational governments and jurisdictions on implementing REDD+	Peru
Reclassification of REDD+ costs (not yet published)	1	Journal article	Understanding the cost of implementing REDD+	Global
Introduction and ToC for the Brazil country report	1	Report	Improving impact of current and future initiatives reducing deforestation using prior	Brazil

			knowledge in comparable contexts	
Deforestation diagnostics paper (not yet published)	1	Journal article	Addressing which forest policies and measures are likely to work where	Peru, Brazil, DRC and Indonesia
Degradation increases peat greenhouse gas emissions in undrained tropical peat swamp forests	1	Journal article	Reviewing GHG fluxes in undrained undegraded and degraded peat swamp forests	Global
The performance of global forest governance: three contrasting perspectives	1	Journal article	Analyzing the global forest governance discourse	Global
Knowledge tree on REDD+ benefit sharing	1	Online tool	Helping to design and implement REDD+ payment distribution mechanisms	Global
Paper submitted to World Development building on the Infobrief on DRC and REDD+ in Mai Ndombe (unavailable)	1			
Multi-stakeholder platforms	1	Stakeholder event	Enabling stakeholder coordination to facilitate dialogue and reach agreements	Global
Social inclusion and safeguards publications	1	Web page	Overcoming the challenges of land use strategies	Global
Blog, are REDD+ safeguards supporting community land, resource, and carbon rights?	1	Web page	Supporting community land, resource and carbon rights	Global
Archetypes analysis (not yet published)	1	Study	Understanding the spatio-temporal deforestation patterns and underlying drivers	Global