



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

Peace Forest Initiative

Operational Guidelines

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Peace Forest Initiative



Operational Guidelines

Table of Contents

Foreword	7
Abbreviations	8
Glossary of key definitions	9
References	70

01 Introduction 11

02 Land/ecosystem Degradation and Conflicts 13

2.1	What is land/ecosystem degradation?	13
2.2	What is land/ecosystem restoration?	15
2.3	Land/ecosystem degradation and conflict – what’s the link?	18
2.3.1	Conflict-related drivers of environmental degradation	19
2.3.2	Environmental and natural resources governance causing conflict	20
2.3.3	Climate change as a conflict multiplier	23
2.3.4	Conflict risks related to development policies and projects	23

03 Peace Forest Initiative – Introduction 25

3.1	Summary of PFI	25
3.2	PFI approach, principles, and impact areas	26
3.3	SDG 16 on peace and security	29

04 Conceptual Framework of PFI	31
<hr/>	
4.1 Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and synergies	32
4.2 Environmental peacebuilding	34
4.3 Collaboration on resource management and conservation	36
4.4 Integrated landscape approach	36
4.5 Case studies	37
05 PFI Process Description	45
<hr/>	
5.1 Initial site-specific research	47
5.2 Conceptual development	47
5.3 Stakeholder mapping and engagement	50
5.4 Support for dialogue and consultation	51
5.5 Deployment of confidence-building measures	51
5.6 Co-design a management and action plan	52
5.7 Translate the plan into investable project/programme	52
5.8 PFI project launch	57
5.9 Monitoring, documenting and reporting	57
5.10 Thematic/cross-cutting, conflict-sensitive principles for PFI projects	57
5.11 Theory of change for PFI	60
06 PFI Governance, Partnerships, and Funding Mechanisms	63
<hr/>	
6.1 Governance and partnership arrangements	63
6.2 Funding arrangements	67
07 Risk Management and Safeguards	69
<hr/>	
7.1 Potential risks related to environmental peacebuilding and restoration	69
7.2 Safeguards policy	70



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Foreword

The Peace Forest Initiative (PFI) launched in 2019 under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) addresses the crucial nexus of land, peace, and security.

It builds upon the Land Degradation Neutrality (SDG 15.3) framework and promotes sustainable land and resource management as a tool for peacebuilding through joint action on restoration of land-based resources such as land, soil, water, forest. The primary goal of the PFI is to foster cross-border cooperation on land and ecosystem restoration in conflict-affected and fragile regions by nurturing common approaches to natural resources management and conservation for trust-building and conflict prevention and resolution.

The PFI builds on the potential of sustainable land management as a powerful solution to address the different interconnected climate security concerns, such as natural disasters (flood, drought, slides, sand, and dust storms), food and water security, and environmental degradation and forced migration, among others. Investment in and restoration of land-based resources underpins cooperation and synergies around land, biodiversity, and climate actions as a holistic and inclusive approach, contributing to the resilience, stability, and sustainable development of resource-dependent communities.

The PFI Operational Guidelines provide a structured yet flexible framework for the implementation of the PFI in different contexts. The guidelines reflect the comprehensive approach of the PFI by integrating land and environmental restoration, conflict-sensitive strategies, governance aspects, and peacebuilding efforts. They compile principles, operational processes, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies related to environmental peacebuilding efforts for practitioners to apply at all levels. Given the holistic nature and conceptual approach of the guidelines, their usage goes beyond the implementation of the PFI activities. Ideally, they can serve as a practical guide for all actors involved in environmental and scientific peacebuilding processes.



Louise Baker
Managing Director of
the Global Mechanism

Abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
CBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity	PBF	United Nations Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund
CoP	Conference of the Parties	PFI	Peace Forest Initiative
CSM	Climate Security Mechanism	PR	Partners Roundtable
CSO	Civil Society Organization	REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
EU	European Union	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	SDS	Sand and Dust Storms
FPIC	Free, Prior, Informed Consent	SLM	Sustainable Land Management
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework	TPP	Transformative Projects and Programs
GCF	Green Climate Fund	TSP	Target Setting Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UN	United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute	UN Decade	United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
GGW	Great Green Wall	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH	UN-DPPA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
GM	Global Mechanism	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	WOCAT	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies
IRP	International Resource Panel	WRI	World Resources Institute
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature	WWF	World Wildlife Fund
KFS	Korea Forest Service		
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality		
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation		
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		
NFP	National Focal Point		

Glossary of key definitions

Conflict

A conflict can arise from a situation in which at least two parties have incompatible goals, interests, values, or priorities with each other (Hammill et al., 2009; Ajroud et al., 2017). In the context of PFI, conflict situations do not necessarily involve violence, but they contain a cross-border element.

Cross-border collaboration

In the context of PFI, this refers to joint land-based resource management and restoration activities of connected ecosystems agreed to and implemented by two or more countries.

Ecosystem restoration

"The process of halting and reversing degradation, resulting in improved ecosystem services and recovered biodiversity. Ecosystem restoration encompasses a wide continuum of practices, depending on local conditions and societal choice" (UNEP, 2021, p.7).

Land

"The terrestrial bio-productive system that comprises soil, vegetation, other biota, and the ecological and hydrological processes that operate within the system" (UNCCD, 2022a, p. 4).

Land degradation

"Reduction or loss, in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rainfed cropland, irrigated cropland, or range, pasture, forest and woodlands resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns, such as: soil erosion caused by wind and/or water; deterioration of the physical, chemical and biological or economic properties of soil; and long-term loss of natural vegetation" (UNCCD, 2022a, p. 4-5).

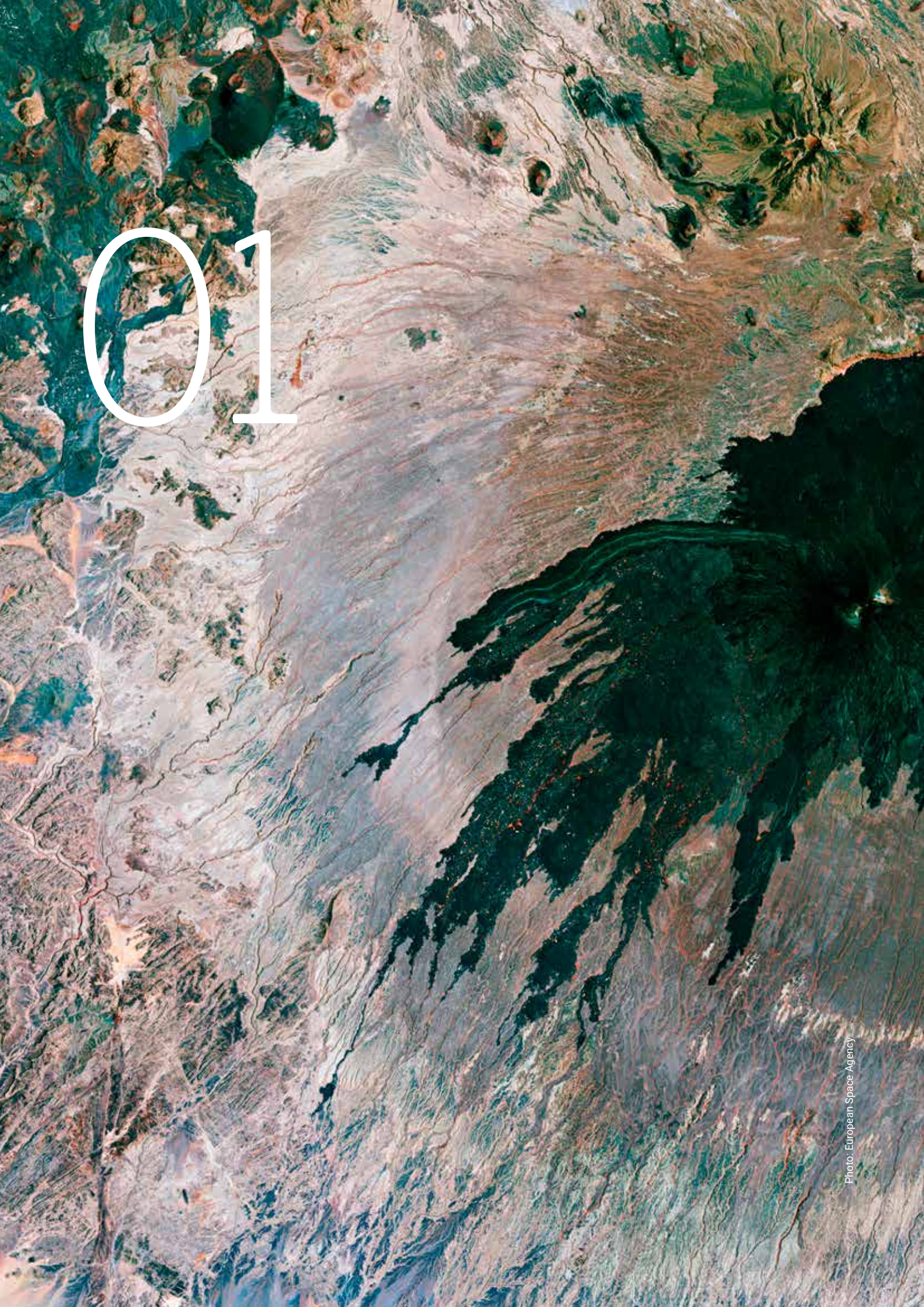
Land degradation neutrality

"Land degradation neutrality is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems" (UNCCD, 2016, p. 9).

Sustainable land management

"The use of land resources, including soils, water, animals and plants, for the production of goods to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their environmental functions" (WOCAT, n.d.).

01



01

Introduction



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is a legally binding international agreement established in 1994, following the 1992 Rio Conference, working in the nexus of environment, development, and sustainable land management (UNCCD, n.d.). Today, 197 countries and the European Union form Parties to the Convention, supporting the achievement of the SDG 15 and implementation of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) (UNCCD, n.d.).

The UNCCD Secretariat has launched the Peace Forest Initiative (PFI), which works as a strategic framework and a catalyst for transboundary cooperation between countries to address restoration of degraded land-based resources¹ in fragile and conflict-affected locations. Its mission is to provide a platform for concerned parties and communities to co-design, develop and implement conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of natural resources in connected ecosystems as a shared asset to promote sustainable development, resilience, and peacebuilding.

This document sets the operational guidelines for the PFI, including a brief description of the thematic context, and conceptual background, governance structure, and the process of developing PFI partnerships and projects. Information, evidence, good practices, and recommendations are synthesized from

published literature available online, including reports, peer-reviewed journal articles, grey literature, and websites. It is a working document that will be revised and adapted periodically as experiences and lessons emerge over time to ensure PFI's programmatic effectiveness and successful achievement of its objectives.

The document is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a technical overview of land/ecosystem degradation and restoration, and their potential links with conflicts. Section 3 gives a brief introduction to the programmatic basis of the PFI, whereas Section 4 offers a more detailed account of the conceptual framework behind the initiative, as well as selected case studies. Section 5 provides a description of the overall PFI process, while Section 6 focuses on the governance and funding aspects. Finally, Section 7 discusses some aspects around risk management and safeguards considerations.

¹ Despite the direct reference to forests in its name, the PFI is not restricted to forest ecosystems only, but is meant to support the restoration of terrestrial ecosystems at large.



02

Photo: Ken Doerr

Chapter 2

Land/ecosystem Degradation and Conflicts

2.1 What is land/ecosystem degradation?

“Land” is a multifaceted term without a clear, single definition, underscoring its conceptual complexity (UN Habitat, 2018; UNCCD, 2019a). Broadly defined, land constitutes the earth’s surface, and anything fixed to it, including natural resources above and beneath the ground, in addition to any human-made structures (UN Habitat, 2018). Other definitions also point out to the interactions between land and atmosphere, as well as geology (FAO, 2017). UNCCD defines land as follows, covering terrestrial ecosystems integrated into land, but leaving out any human-made attributes:

Definition of land:

“The terrestrial bio-productive system that comprises soil, vegetation, other biota, and the ecological and hydrological processes that operate within the system”

(UNCCD, 2022a, p. 4).

All life fundamentally depends on healthy and productive ecosystems, which are being degraded at an increasing rate (Critchley et al., 2021). All types of land, from forests, grasslands and dry- and wetlands to urban and rural spaces are affected by land degradation, mainly driven by unsustainable human activities of direct

resource extraction, land use change and habitat conversion (UNCCD, 2022b).

To determine the extent and severity of land degradation is subjective and context-specific as it depends on the land-user’s values and objectives – the perceived level of degradation can vary between the different land use needs (Caspari et al., 2014). Generally speaking, however, land degradation is associated with the decrease of the following elements: productivity, soil, vegetation cover, biomass, biodiversity, ecosystem services, and environmental resilience (UNCCD, 2017).

Various definitions for land degradation exist. As can be seen below, land degradation as such does not only refer to the degradation of the land surface or topsoil but covers more holistically the different ecosystems and functions supported by land. In fact, degradation of natural resources can be considered as a type of resource scarcity, as the land’s productivity per unit is decreased (IUCN, 2021).

IPBES (2019) describes the ecosystems services as regulating, material and non-material, many of which are fundamentally important to human life. Examples of regulating services include provision of clean water and air, regulation of climate, sustaining pollinator diversity, formation of fertile soils, maintaining habitat for wildlife and so on. Material



Definitions of land degradation:

"...reduction or loss, in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rainfed cropland, irrigated cropland, or range, pasture, forest and woodlands resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns, such as: soil erosion caused by wind and/or water; deterioration of the physical, chemical and biological or economic properties of soil; and long-term loss of natural vegetation"

(UNCCD, 2022a, p. 4-5).

"The reduction in the capacity of the land to provide ecosystem goods and services and assure its functions over a period of time for its beneficiaries"

(Bunning et al., 2011, p. 31).

"...the many human-caused processes that drive the decline or loss in biodiversity, ecosystem functions or ecosystem services in any terrestrial and associated aquatic ecosystems"

(IPBES, 2018, p. 18).

services refer to the different sources of energy, food and animal feed, materials, and medicines, among others, whereas non-material services relate to the more intangible services in the form of cultures, identities and experiences that people derive from nature.

Drivers of land/ecosystem degradation

Highlighting the global scale of environmental change, humans have altered 75% of the world's land surface, including 85% of all wetlands converted globally (IPBES, 2019). According to the second edition of the Global Land Outlook (UNCCD, 2022b), the share of degraded or degrading land varies between 20% and 40% globally. However, global approximations may underestimate the true scale due to the difficulty of assessing the intensity of degradation under different types of land uses (Abhilash, 2021).

Direct human activities driving resource degradation include conversion of natural vegetation into agricultural lands, unsustainable practices in agriculture, forestry and mining, global warming, intensifying urbanization and infrastructure development, among others (IPBES, 2018). More specifically, nutrient depletion and application of excessive amounts of agrochemicals, overgrazing, unsuitable irrigation practices, pollution, quarrying, and other such factors drive different degradation processes (UNCCD, 2017).

The overall process leading to land and ecosystem degradation is, however, more multidimensional. The degradation process can be seen as the sum of contextual and interlinked assemblies of biophysical, institutional, and socio-economic factors (UNCCD, 2019a). Policy responses addressing land degradation therefore require a holistic approach that cuts across different jurisdictions and policy areas and promotes the creation of a long-term enabling environment for

sustainable land management practices (IPBES, 2018).

Impacts of land/ecosystem degradation

Land degradation affects the lives of over 3.2 billion people worldwide, and during 2000-2009 it caused the emissions of 3.6-4.4 billion tons of CO₂ per year (IPBES, 2018). Land degradation also has a significant economic and development impact. Every year, the lost ecological capacity and ecosystem services correspond to a loss of over 10% of the global gross product (IPBES, 2018). Abhilash (2021) provides a numeric annual cost estimate of USD 6.3 trillion. This detrimental development is most pronounced in the least developed countries that exhibit both high abundance and strong dependence on natural resources, but also higher prevalence of conflict and slower economic growth (IPBES, 2019). Resource degradation also exacerbates the impact of natural disasters, such as droughts, sand and dust storms (SDS), and floods (UNCCD, 2022c; Zucca et al., 2022).

Arable land is the basis of human life, 80% of which is subject to some type of degradation (UNEP, 2021). Drylands are particularly susceptible to land degradation due to the combined effects of physical (e.g., drought-related) and demographic (e.g., poverty-related) pressures (UNCCD, 2020). Estimations for 2050 indicate that human population in drylands will reach 4 billion, while the combined effects of land degradation and climate change are expected to drive the migration of 50-700 million people (IPBES, 2018).

In the same vein, global crop harvests are projected to reduce on average by 10% by 2050 due to the combined effects of land degradation and climate change, with up to 50% local reductions possible (IPBES, 2018). In drylands, drastic reductions in rainfall have been associated with an increase in violent conflicts by up to 45%,

Land degradation affects the lives of over 3.2 billion people worldwide, and during 2000-2009 it caused the emissions of 3.6-4.4 billion tons of CO₂ per year

whereas every 5% drop in gross domestic product (GDP), partly driven by land degradation, increases the likelihood of a violent conflict by 12% (IPBES, 2018). The role of land as a conflict driver may increase in the future as land resources become increasingly strained by climate change, growing population, rapid urbanization, and food insecurity (UN Habitat, 2018), making the PFI a very timely initiative.

2.2 What is land/ecosystem restoration?

At the heart of land and ecosystem restoration lie sustainable land management (SLM) practices (Critchley et al., 2021). Depending on the ecosystem type, such activities can include conservation agriculture, agroforestry, organic farming, increased vegetation and grass cover, control of alien species and promoted use of indigenous plants, improved water harvesting, protection of riparian forests, traditional terracing of slopes, and many others (Critchley et al., 2021).

Land restoration can positively contribute to food and water security, improved employment and livelihoods, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and gender equality, while also mitigating conflict and migration (IPBES, 2018). Sustainable land management is, nevertheless, highly contextual and there is no single approach that is appropriate to all situations and environments (IPBES, 2018). Figure 1 il-

Definition of ecosystem restoration:

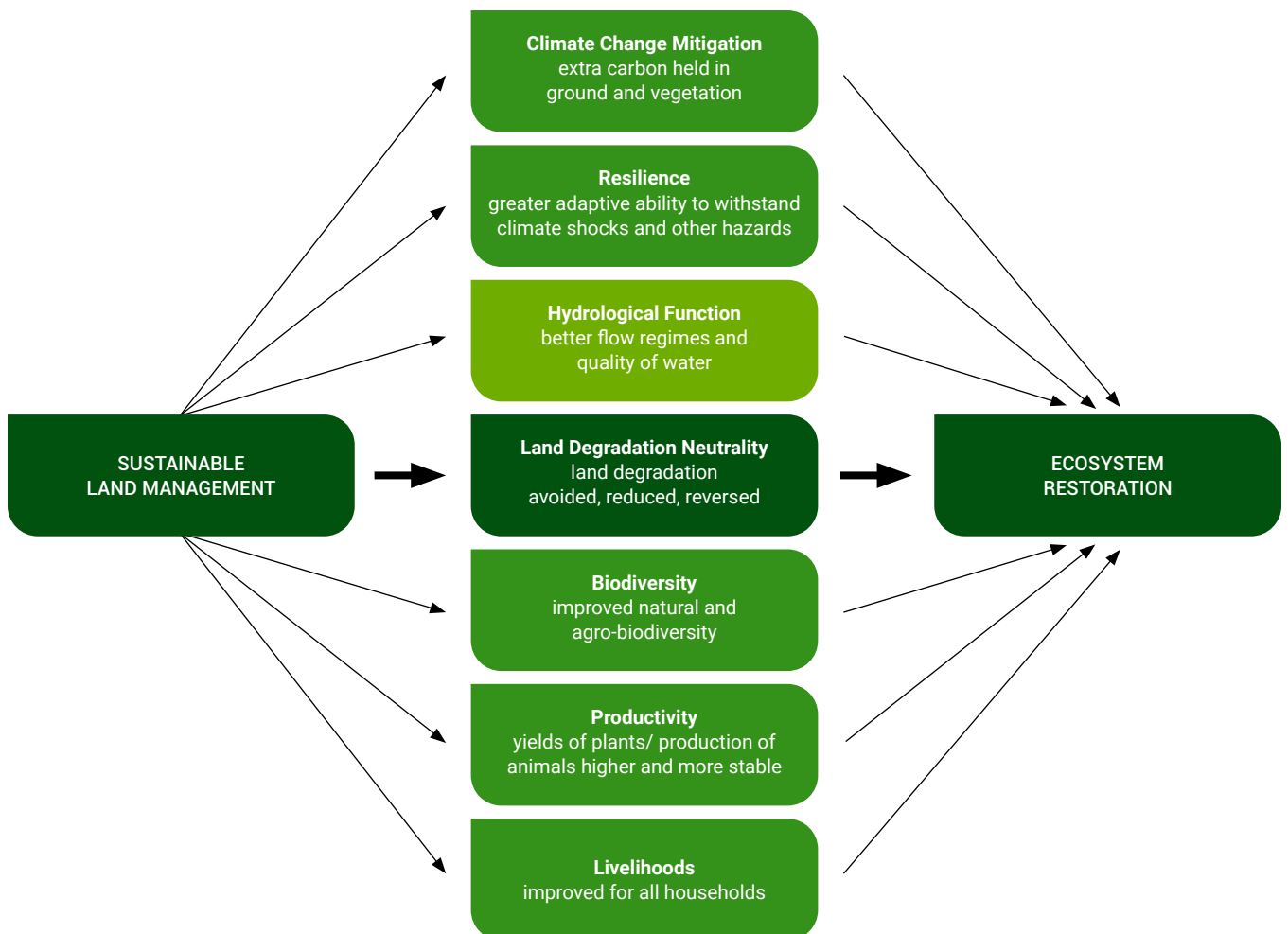
“Ecosystem restoration is the process of halting and reversing degradation, resulting in improved ecosystem services and recovered biodiversity. Ecosystem restoration encompasses a wide continuum of practices, depending on local conditions and societal choice” (UNEP, 2021, p. 7).

illustrates the various pathways through which SLM contributes to ecosystem restoration.

Currently, there is a major momentum around land and ecosystem restoration globally. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (UN Decade) is one of the flagship initiatives. In 2021-2030, it seeks to mainstream restoration activities to pre-

vent, halt and reverse degradation across different types of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems (UNEP, 2021). It also works synergistically across other similar global processes and environmental agreements, supporting the achievement of SDGs, the CBD process of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Paris Agreement, UNCCD’s LDN targets, and other such initiatives (UNEP, 2021).

Figure 1.
The role of SLM in ecosystem restoration
(Source: Adapted from Critchley et al., 2021, p. 6).



Standards of practice for ecosystem restoration (FAO, IUCN CEM & SER, 2021):

Principle 1

Ecosystem restoration contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of the Rio Conventions.

Principle 2

Ecosystem restoration promotes inclusive and participatory governance, social fairness and equity from the start and throughout the process and outcomes.

Principle 3

Ecosystem restoration includes a continuum of restorative activities.

Principle 4

Ecosystem restoration aims to achieve the highest level of recovery for biodiversity, ecosystem health and integrity, and human well-being.

Principle 5

Ecosystem restoration addresses the direct and indirect causes of ecosystem degradation.

Principle 6

Ecosystem restoration incorporates all types of knowledge and promotes their exchange and integration throughout the process.

Principle 7

Ecosystem restoration is based on well-defined short-, medium- and long-term ecological, cultural and socio-economic objectives and goals.

Principle 8

Ecosystem restoration is tailored to the local ecological, cultural and socioeconomic contexts, while considering the larger landscape or seascape.

Principle 9

Ecosystem restoration includes monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management throughout and beyond the lifetime of the project or program.

Principle 10

Ecosystem restoration is enabled by policies and measures that promote its long-term progress, fostering replication and scaling-up.

2.3 Land/ecosystem degradation and conflict – what’s the link?

Conflicts in general are a normal phenomenon in human societies (Ajroud et al., 2017). At the same time, they are highly complex and diverse and can refer to anything from inter-state violence and military interventions to more local, low-intensity socio-economic disputes (IUCN 2021). Conflicts can become violent when the pursuit of individual or group interests escalates and negatively impacts humans, their property, or activities (Ajroud et al., 2017). For the PFI, a conflict can refer to disputes and tensions where two or more parties have contradictory interests, as defined by Hammill et al. (2009) and Ajroud et al. (2017), additionally involving a cross-border element.

The relationship between the environment and conflict is bidirectional – environmental factors can contribute to conflicts, while conflicts often cause negative impacts on the environment (IUCN, 2021). However, the exact connections between different environmental drivers are not straightforward or universal, and remain subject to debate (IUCN, 2021). The conflict curve or conflict cycle offers a simplified illustration of the manifold relationships between environmental factors and the different stages of conflict, the version depicted here focusing especially on the different links between nature-based solutions and conflicts. (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Potential risks and opportunities associated with nature-based solutions’ contribution to peace along the conflict curve

(Source: Adapted from Wolters and Schellens, 2024, p. 5).



2.3.1 Conflict-related drivers of environmental degradation

The environmental impacts of a conflict are generally negative due to conflict-related disturbances to natural ecosystems, pollution, increased hunting of wild animals, or impeded conservation activities, among others (IUCN, 2021). Conflicts can directly accelerate land and resource degradation through destruction of crops, pastures, and watering systems, in addition to the immediate, environmentally unsustainable survival measures adopted by communities to secure access to shelter and food for themselves by resorting to local resources (UN Habitat, 2022). For example, in war-affected Syria, some agricultural lands have been converted into temporary IDP camps (Daiyoub et al., 2023). Related governance deficits and financial constraints further contribute to the conflict-driven depletion of land-based resources in the absence of effective preventive and mitigation policies (UN Habitat, 2022).

Darbyshire (2020) studied Yemen, where the conflict has severely impaired agricultural production and degraded farming lands, and thereby accentuated food insecurity through a complex mixture of war-induced drivers. These include direct targeting of farmlands and related infrastructure, reduced access to water, agricultural inputs, and markets in times of conflict, as well as governance deficit, with 257,000 hectares of agricultural land under pressure as a consequence (Darbyshire, 2020).

In East Africa, conflicts can accelerate land degradation by restricting the movements of pastoralists and their livestock, forcing them to unsustainably graze the limited pastures available to them (FAO et al., 2022). Climate change worsens these conditions, and women are especially affected – in the absence of alternative grazing areas, animals sometimes feed on agricultural lands managed by



Photo: Discover Corps

women for crop production (FAO et al., 2022).

Daiyoub et al. (2023) confirm significant deforestation in Western Syria as a result of the ongoing armed conflict – between 2010 and 2019 almost 64,000 hectares, or 19.3% of the study area's forests were lost. Key factors driving deforestation included proximity of roads and refugee camps, forest fires, and high occurrence of bombing and other explosive events (Daiyoub et al., 2023). The war-induced economic strain that is burdening the Syrian people explains the intensive unsustainable logging, especially by displaced people who have lost access to other sources of cooking and heating energy, but also to supply urban areas (Daiyoub et al., 2023).

As already indicated by Daiyoub et al. (2023) above, conflict-induced displacement is another typical driver of deforestation. Migrant-receiving areas that already

Environmental decision-making is generally prone to conflicts, especially in developing countries where human populations grow rapidly, poverty rates are high and people strongly depend on the natural resources around them

suffer from land scarcity can experience increased resource competition between the resident and incoming communities, often driving the latter to exploit forested lands (Ahmed et al., 2019). For example, areas in southeastern Bangladesh that have received high numbers of Rohingya refugees fleeing from Myanmar have experienced significant levels of deforestation – in just two years between 2016 and 2018, the studied forest area has halved from about 8,500 ha to less than 4,500 ha, while the refugee settlement area expanded nearly 10-times from 271 ha to almost 2,680 ha within the same time period (Ahmed et al., 2019). Such loss of forest cover further contributes to land degradation through reduced soil fertility and increased risk of erosion, while also releasing carbon (Ahmed et al., 2019).

Conversely in some cases, however, where human influence on the environment is restricted due to a conflict, it can have a positive impact on forests and biodiversity, albeit incidental and unplanned (McNeely, 2003). Such examples include the Belum Forest Reserve between Thailand and Malaysia, which was banned from public access by the Malaysian military forces, effectively turning it into a wildlife sanctuary (McNeely, 2003). Another example is the highly restricted Korean demilitarized zone, which nurtures significant biological diversity in the absence of human impact (McNeely, 2003). On the other hand, conflicts can also prevent forests from being cleared to new pastures as herders fear losing their livestock or the risk of being abducted (Daiyoub et al., 2023).

2.3.2 Environmental and natural resources governance causing conflict

Human societies are complex mixtures of various social, political, economic, and environmental dimensions (UNCCD, 2017) and in most cases there are more than one root cause to a conflict (IUCN, 2021). In combination with other factors pro-

pellling instability, issues related to land, environment and natural resources can be significant drivers of conflict but are seldom the only factor causing tensions (UNEP, 2009a; UNCCD, 2017; IUCN 2021).

Environmental decision-making is generally prone to conflicts, especially in developing countries where human populations grow rapidly, poverty rates are high and people strongly depend on the natural resources around them (Hammill et al., 2009). In such circumstances, access to and control of natural resources can impact power relations, livelihoods, and income distribution, which are among the typical drivers of instability and conflict (Hammill et al., 2009). Such environmental conflict risk is further heightened in societies that are readily fragmented along socio-economic, ethnic, or ideological divides (Brown and Nicolucci-Altman, 2022).

Environment and natural resources can play a role at any point along the conflict cycle (UNEP, 2009a; Ajroud et al., 2017; Bruch et al., 2019). According to UNEP (2009a), the three most typical linkages include:

- 1) Environmental factors fueling the outbreak of conflict through resource degradation or unequal benefit sharing;
- 2) Natural resource exploitation financing conflicts through revenues from high-value resources, e.g., timber and minerals, and
- 3) Natural resources weakening the peace process due to the vested interests and access to conflict-related resource revenues.

Table 1.

Possible conflict root causes and triggers as they relate to land

(Source: Adapted from UN, 2019, p. 9).

Land issues, root causes and triggers of conflict	
1. Politics of exclusion	Displacement of people from their land and homes either within the country or transnationally
2. Scarce natural resources	Population pressure, environmental and land degradation, disputes over access to water
3. Population pressure	Demography and an increased land-to-people occupancy ratio, urbanization, youth population bulge
4. Capture of state instruments	Corruption, national leaders politicizing the land agencies, powerful and wealthy people capturing the land registry and shaping land laws to their benefit
5. Competition over use rights	Between identity groups, such as pastoralists and farmers
6. Natural resource exploitation and criminality	Rebel, armed or criminal groups funding their insurgency through natural resource exploitation
7. Nation state fragmentation	Driven by identity groups linked to territory
8. Poverty	Link between poverty, inequality and the lack of access to land and secure land rights
9. Occupation of land	By armed groups or foreign powers or political disputes over national boundaries
10. Plural legal systems	Competition between private/statutory land and communal/customary, including indigenous groups and pastoralists
11. Economic and political competition between power blocks	Competition over land between foreign investors and with local communities
12. Weak land administration systems	Weak state, land policies, laws and institutions, land administration, land management and land use planning systems, land governance structures and land dispute resolution capacity
13. Natural disaster	Leading to displacement and land grabbing
14. Inter-generational violence	Gender based violence, competition over family land, including where there is gender inequality
15. Chaotic urbanization	Migration pressure on host communities land, housing and infrastructure



Photo:USDA public.jpg

The basic argument is that the increasing competition over limited resources driven by population and economic growth and socio-economic inequalities can fuel conflict, as land, forests, water, or extractive resources become over-exploited and degraded (IUCN, 2021). Table 1 demonstrates the complexity of the various issues, root causes and triggers related to land and conflicts.

Wahlstedt and Mikkola (2022) highlight the case of Sahel as an example of a region highly prone to environmental degradation, an underestimated driver of societal instability. Bordering the Sahara Desert and stretching across the African continent, the Sudano-Sahelian region faces many challenges from socio-economic development and governance issues to the deterioration of the natural environment leading to food insecurity, weak nation states and conflicts (Wahl-

stedt & Mikkola, 2022). Environmental degradation is mainly evidenced through land erosion, which threatens local food security and livelihoods, weakens natural resilience against droughts and floods, and feeds the formation of drier microclimates, thereby re-enforcing the vicious cycle of deteriorating conditions (Wahlstedt & Mikkola, 2022). In places, the subsequent competition over available land drives farmers and pastoralists into violent conflict, also incentivizing migration (Wahlstedt & Mikkola, 2022).

Thanks to the multiple values they provide to different stakeholders, forests are typical subjects of contest over their control, use and benefits (Harwell, 2010). Forests are, among others, an important source of community livelihoods and culture, a national asset providing timber and land, as well as a source of global goods harboring biodiversity and carbon sinks (Harwell,

2010). More specifically, forest resources often become part of conflicts due to their central role in rural livelihoods, their ability to give shelter and protection to rebel and other such groups, the difficulty for governments to effectively control vast areas of forests, and the relative ease of extracting timber without the need of specialized skills or resources (Harwell, 2010).

2.3.3 Climate change as a conflict multiplier

Today, climate change is widely acknowledged as a conflict risk multiplier, but universally applicable cause-effect relationships between climate change impacts and conflict occurrence do not exist (Detges et al., 2020). The large global variability of climate change impacts similarly creates a wide range of potential security risks (Mobjörk et al., 2016). At the same time, the same climate change impacts can create different security implications depending on the context in different parts of the world (Mobjörk et al., 2016).

Resource grievances induced by climate change may escalate into a conflict especially in circumstances characterised by fragility and prior conflict history, societal polarisation and inequality, and high resource dependence in the absence of alternative livelihoods (Detges et al., 2020). Security questions related to water, for instance, could become especially accentuated in areas already suffering from water scarcity, as well as in arid or semi-arid areas where farming relies on regular rainfall (Mobjörk et al., 2016).

In regions where climate-related conflict potential is particularly pronounced, such as in East Africa, certain connectors can, nevertheless, be specified. In addition to the deterioration of livelihood conditions referred to above, van Baalen and Mobjörk (2017) point out to the changing migration patterns of pastoralists. Large-scale in-migration can intensify local resource competition and grievances, while, on the other hand, traditional institutions and

conflict-mitigation mechanisms may be lacking along the new migration routes that pastoralists are forced to take to avoid the increasing impacts of climate change (van Baalen & Mobjörk, 2017).

2.3.4 Conflict risks related to development policies and projects

Sometimes development cooperation projects and the resource management approaches they promote can become the source of tension or conflict among stakeholders when well-intentioned policies or projects end up creating negative unintended outcomes. For example, the “Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation” (REDD+) projects can carry a conflict risk if not appropriately designed and managed (Alusiola et al., 2021). The key conflict pathways of REDD+ projects identified by Alusiola et al. (2021) relate to restricted or unequal access to forest resources for livelihood and household needs, new forest governance frameworks, non-inclusive project participation by local stakeholders, poor management of beneficiary expectations, and issues related to land tenure.

Similarly, biodiversity conservation projects can have negative impacts on local communities and thereby fuel conflict. This can happen if such projects prohibit peoples’ access to vital natural resources through the creation of protected areas without alternative livelihood measures or due compensation, if they increase the risk of human-wildlife conflict and related damages to local inhabitants, or if conservation benefits and revenues are not equally distributed (Hammill et al., 2009).

Even gender-focused projects that promote women’s inclusion and opportunities in a society may, in some instances, increase the tensions between men and women (Ajroud et al., 2017). All these examples emphasise the crucial role of conflict-sensitive approach in the programming phase and project implementation, discussed in more detail in Section 5.

Resource grievances induced by climate change may escalate into a conflict especially in circumstances characterised by fragility and prior conflict history, societal polarisation and inequality

03



Chapter 3

Peace Forest Initiative – Introduction

Land plays a dual role in climate change – it can either be a source or a sink of carbon dioxide emissions

3.1 Summary of PFI

A flagship program of the UNCCD, the Peace Forest Initiative (PFI)² was launched at the 14th session of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP14) in 2019 in New Delhi, India. The PFI seeks to assist countries affected by fragility or conflict to work together and develop cooperative solutions to rehabilitate and restore degraded land-based resources, including land, soil, water, and forests, with a view to building confidence and peace. This can be achieved by bringing together stakeholders and communities across national borders to catalyze transboundary cooperation and joint action around restoration of connected ecosystems for a peaceful future.

At the heart of the PFI is the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), together with sustainable land management, nature-based solutions and ecosystem restoration, the central concepts and approaches contributing to the achievement of the global restoration goals. In the context of the PFI, LDN can help strengthen the resilience of rural communities against climate shocks by securing and improving the provision of vital ecosystem services, while building cross-border confidence through dialogue, coordination, training, and joint management planning of shared natural resources.

Land plays a dual role in climate change – it can either be a source or a sink of carbon dioxide emissions, depending on the type of land use and resource management approach (IPCC, 2020). Land-based ecosystems are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and extreme weather events can accelerate land degradation, making activities combatting land degradation highly synergistic with improved climate change adaptation and mitigation (IPCC, 2020). Achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) can positively contribute to carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation, and thereby help increase the resilience of communities and the environment against climate change. Soil carbon and land productivity, two major indicators of progress towards LDN implementation, can be enhanced through the application of sustainable land management approaches.

Benefiting from the global momentum to fight land degradation, the PFI will also contribute to the UN Decade in demonstrating the linkages between ecosystem restoration and peace and security (SDG 16, see Section 3.3). Through these guidelines, UNCCD seeks to operationalize the PFI approach through pilot activities on the ground.

² <https://www.unccd.int/our-work/flagship-initiatives/peace-forest-initiative>

PFI draft vision statement

PFI seeks to contribute to building peace and trust and improving cooperation between different stakeholders in conflict-affected cross-border landscapes by forging partnerships in restoration and sustainable management of land-based resources and connected ecosystems.

3.2 PFI approach, principles, and impact areas

The PFI is built on the idea that improved management – more transparent and inclusive governance, equitable benefit sharing, and sustainable use – of land and natural resources in connected cross-border landscapes can open opportunities for dialogue, cooperation and confidence building in conflict situations, contributing to building peace. When land restoration activities are jointly agreed upon and implemented in a fair manner across the involved stakeholders, they offer a potential vehicle for conflict resolution by strengthening positive relationships and communication, increasing accountability and confidence, and thereby promoting peaceful societies (IRP, 2019).

The PFI seeks to demonstrate the value of achieving LDN in cross-border conflict-affected and fragile situations to enhance trust and build confidence and support the UN Decade. Cooperative activities around sustainable land and water management, forestry, and ecosystem restoration can facilitate exchanges and trigger economic collaboration, while also supporting the realization of multiple SDG targets, including the SDG 16. This could ultimately contribute to the alleviation of political tensions, reconciliation, or could be embedded in permanent peacebuilding processes.

The proposed pathway of activities, along the line with the national LDN process, comprises of the following steps (UNCCD, 2019b):

- 1) **Setting common LDN target(s)** that ideally focus on simple, spatially explicit goals relevant to all countries involved, e.g., forest landscape rehabilitation, laying the groundwork for a joint project.
- 2) **Developing joint projects** to implement the above-mentioned targets through activities including sustainable/community-based land and forest management and restoration, agroforestry, recreational services (e.g., eco-tourism), and capacity building, among others.
- 3) **Joint project implementation** encompassing a cross-border landscape that is defined by the countries.
- 4) **Documenting activities and lessons learned** from the PFI processes to be shared with other similar cross-border conflict-affected or other fragile situations.

PFI Impact Areas

Impact area 1

Enabling environment for cross-border cooperation in the field of sustainable land and forest management and ecosystem restoration.

This would be achieved by:

- (1) Establishing a platform/framework to facilitate exchanges at all levels, including multi-stakeholder dialogues and meetings, and thematic/technical working groups on sustainable land and forest management in the concerned area.
- (2) Promoting dialogue among relevant authorities, technical meetings including workshops, seminars and training sessions, ensuring the engagement of diverse stakeholders, including local communities.

Impact area 2

Sustainable management and restoration of degraded ecosystem including land, water and forests. This would be achieved through:

- (1) An appropriate governance scheme/strategy/plan that is agreed and implemented for sustainable land and forest management.
- (2) Joint target-setting for sustainable land and forest management and the co-development and implementation of transformative ecosystem restoration/rehabilitation projects within a landscape approach.
- (3) Joint efforts to mobilize resources to implement these projects and programmes.

Impact area 3

Delivery of vital ecosystem services including improved food security and nutrition, through the restoration of degraded land and the sustainable management of natural resources including forests. More particularly, this would be achieved by:

- (1) Enhancing land productivity, ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation by adopting SLM techniques, methodologies and approaches.
- (2) Improving access to land and other productive resources, including for women, youth and highly food-insecure vulnerable populations.
- (3) Reducing vulnerability to climate crisis and natural disasters.

PFI Principles

(a)

Ensuring equitable access to and shared benefits from restored natural resources and the improved delivery of ecosystem services.

(b)

Strengthening the enabling environment, including the governance and institutional systems, for the implementation of LDN targets.

(c)

Encouraging cooperation among government officials, local communities, CSOs and private sectors to manage land and forests in sustainable ways.

(d)

Including women, youth, and other marginal groups as an integral part of the implementation of these activities.

(e)

Advocating and mainstreaming actions to promote confidence, peacebuilding and reconciliation.



Photo: oarranzli



3.3 SDG 16 on peace and security

Based on the approach and principles presented above, the PFI holds great potential to directly and/or indirectly contribute to the achievement of SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, in addition to many other SDGs.

SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions (Source: UNDESA, n.d.)

“Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

The PFI principles and impact areas are well aligned with many of the related targets, most directly with the ones described below:

Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Given the crucial role of healthy land and ecosystems to human life, societies and economies, PFI aims to forge broad, concrete partnerships around sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration that engage and empower diverse national and regional stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and local communities, while partnering closely with international donors, technical experts, and other relevant actors. To achieve this, multi-stakeholder platforms will be established to promote dialogue and facilitate exchange.

Target 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

PFI focuses especially on the equal participation and promotion of women, youth, indigenous peoples and any other potentially under-represented groups in land, natural resource and ecosystems related decision-making and management. For effective implementation of LDN, secure and equal access to land and other productive resources is key. The PFI aims to improve this, especially for women, youth, and highly food-insecure populations, in addition to ensuring equitable access to and shared benefits from restored lands and natural resources. In addition, PFI aims to contribute to establishing common frameworks or principles for sustainable land and ecosystems management.

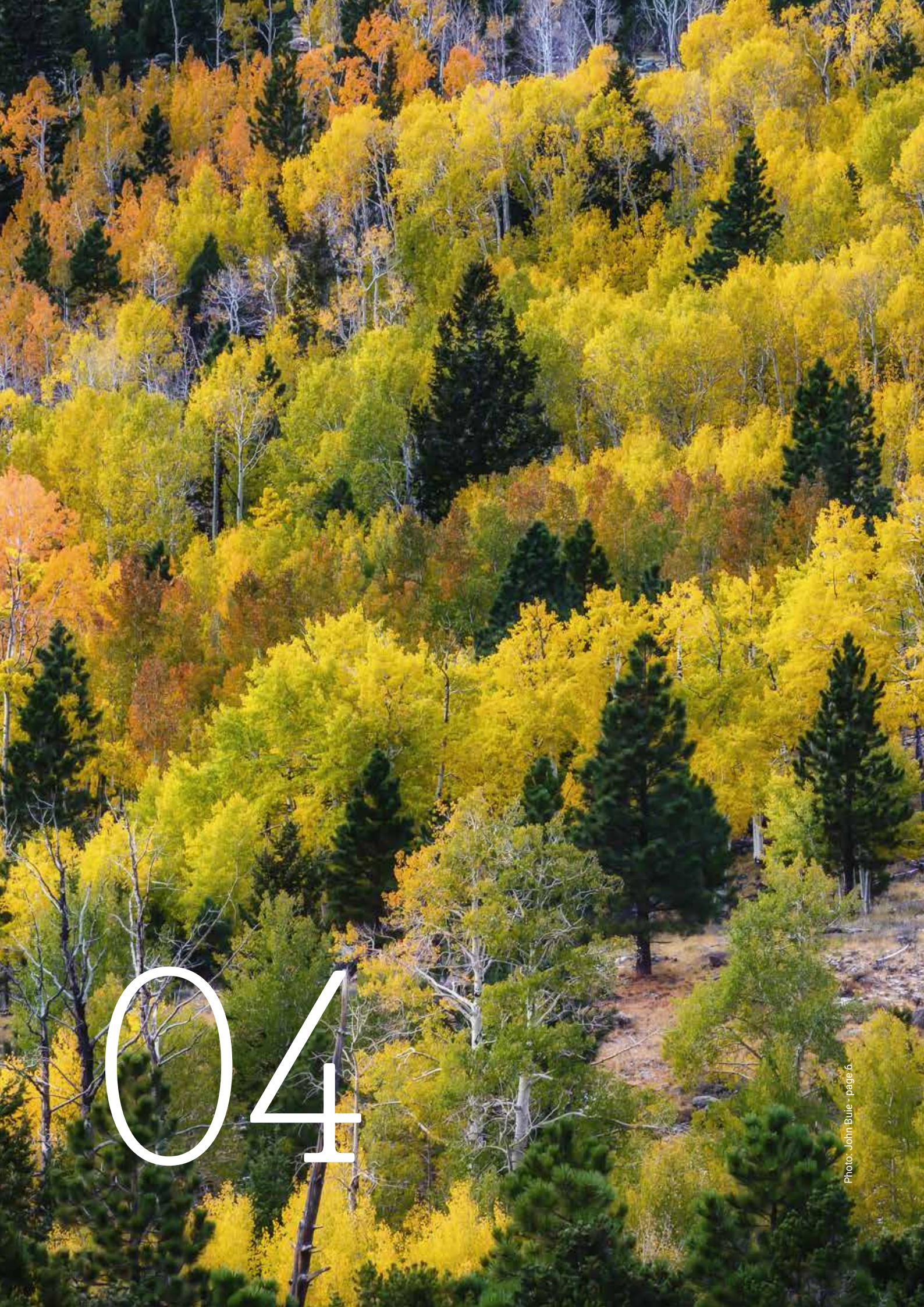
Additionally, in some circumstances, PFI can support the achievement of SDG 16 more indirectly through the following targets:

Target 16.1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

To contribute to larger societal stability and peace, PFI uses land restoration as a tool to promote confidence and exchange, and alleviate tensions between stakeholders in conflict, while exploring the integration of LDN planning and implementation into wider efforts aiming for peacebuilding and bilateral (trilateral) partnerships. Therefore, it serves as an environmental diplomacy tool that could help catalyze peace processes in different contexts. However, political commitment is a pre-condition for any potential integration of PFI in larger peace processes.

Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

At its core, PFI seeks to create an enabling environment for cross-border cooperation in the field of sustainable land and forest management and ecosystem restoration. This involves strengthening relevant national institutions and building on the existing structures. Fundamentally, the PFI operates under the UNCCD, a multi-lateral legally binding convention where parties have committed through national LDN targets to combat land degradation and protect lands globally.



04

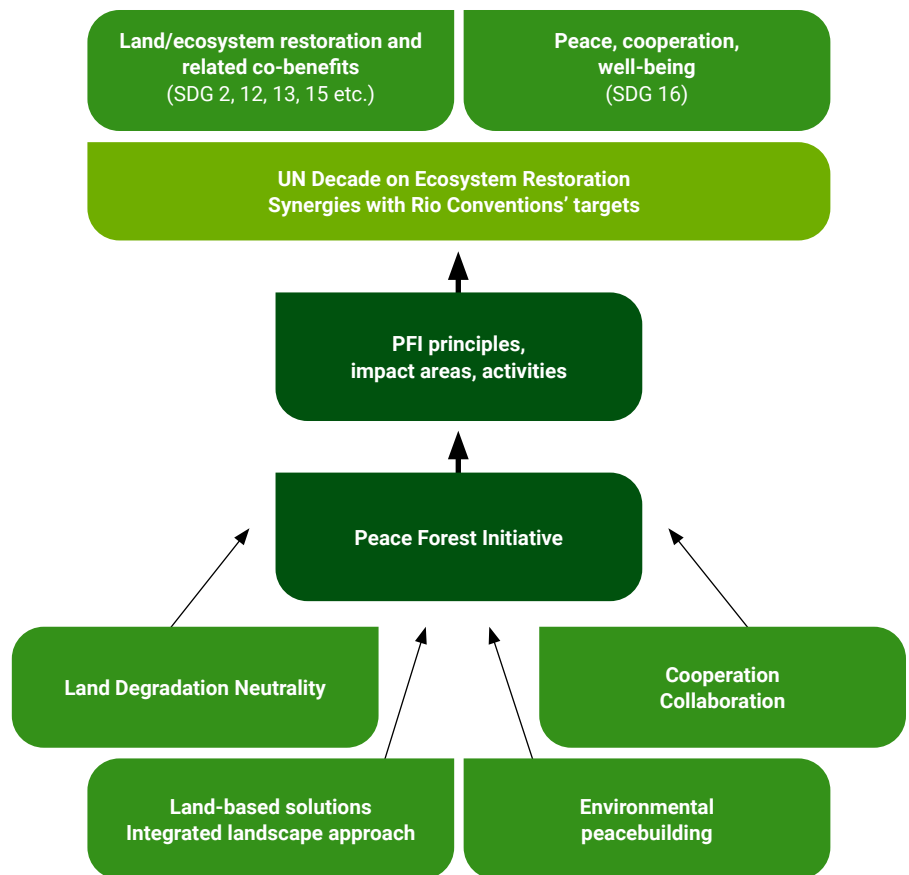
Chapter 4

Conceptual Framework of PFI

The PFI brings together different conceptual elements, including the LDN, integrated landscape approach, conflict-sensitive natural resource management (environmental peacebuilding) and cross-border collaboration. This section provides a

general overview of these elements to summarize the rationale for PFI, together with selected case studies. Figure 3 below provides a graphic presentation of the programmatic and conceptual elements.

Figure 3.
Programmatic and conceptual dimensions of PFI.



4.1 Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and synergies

The LDN concept was developed to address the diminishing health and productivity of land resources by maintaining or enhancing the existing stocks of land-based natural capital and the ecosystem services they provide (Cowie et al., 2018). Implementation of the LDN helps countries to analyze and quantify the level of land degradation and protect local communities against related adverse impacts on their environment, local resources, and livelihoods (UNCCD, 2019b).

Definition of LDN (Source: UNCCD, 2016, p. 9)

“Land degradation neutrality is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.”

Objectives of LDN (Source: Orr et al., 2017, p.3)

- Maintain or improve the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services;
- Maintain or improve productivity in order to enhance food security;
- Increase resilience of the land and populations dependent on the land;
- Seek synergies with other social, economic and environmental objectives; and
- Reinforce responsible and inclusive governance of land.”



Photo: Pacific Southwest Forest Service USDA

The LDN is a flexible concept that can be applied to all land types and land-uses from production lands to protected areas, as well as for different processes of land degradation, benefiting all land users (Orr et al., 2017). LDN directly supports the achievement of SDG 15, specifically the target 15.3 (UNCCD, 2019a). The term “neutrality” refers to counterbalancing between the expected losses and gains in land-based natural capital to achieve “no net loss”, which is to be assessed against a baseline and monitored through relevant indicators (UNCCD, 2019a).

Synergistically, land-based indicators are highly relevant for monitoring climate change and biodiversity targets due to their essential linkages with land resources and ecosystem services (Cowie et al., 2018). Leveraging the synergies and overlapping opportunities between the Rio Conventions and aligning related policies and action plans is of paramount importance for the PFI approach. Halting and reversing land degradation can transform land from being a source of greenhouse gas emissions to a carbon sink by increasing the sequestration capacity of soils and vegetation. This, combined with safeguarding biodiversity and overall provision of ecosystem services, can help reduce climate vulnerability and strengthen resilience and adaptation capacity of affected populations and ecosystems.

The LDN response hierarchy supports the planning of sustainable land management practices for the achievement of LDN (Orr et al., 2017). Applying preventive measures on non-degraded lands to avoid degradation altogether is the first priority, followed by mitigating any ongoing degradation process through appropriate measures, and lastly restoring any degraded lands, where possible (Orr et al., 2017).

SDG 15 Life on Land (Source: UNDESA, n.d.)

“Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”



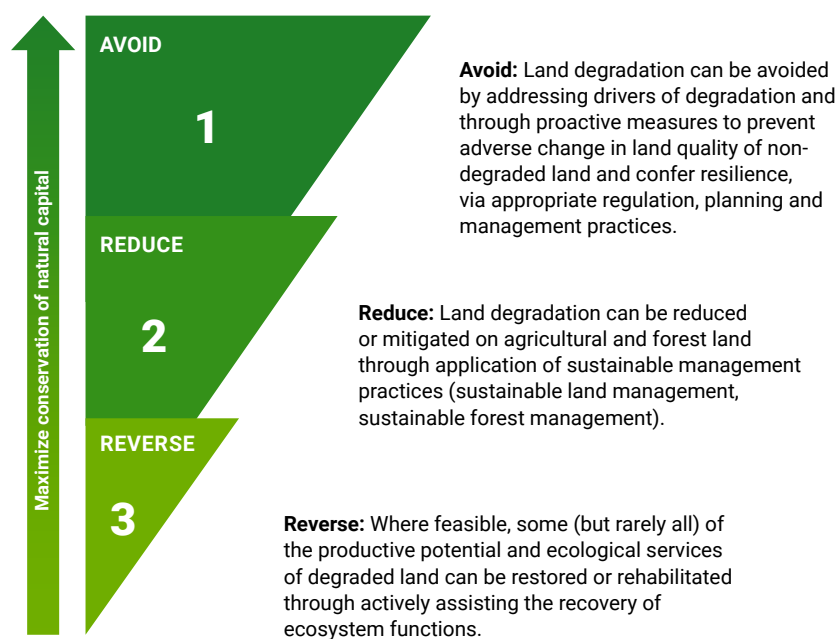
Target 15.3

“By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.”

Figure 4.

LDN response hierarchy

(Source: Adapted from Orr et al., 2017, p. 64).



Environmental peacebuilding is a highly integrated approach that seeks to remove the structural borders between peace, security, environment, and development

4.2 Environmental peacebuilding

Environmental peacebuilding advocates for environmental protection and cooperation as a factor in creating more peaceful relations, addressing contextual complexities and inter-relationships among stakeholders. Definitions vary to some extent between different organizations. According to the Environmental Peacebuilding Association, “Environmental peacebuilding integrates natural resource management in conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and recovery to build resilience in communities affected by conflict” (EnPax, 2024). Taking a more conservation-oriented approach, IUCN (2021) considers environmental peacebuilding as promoting peace through improved resource governance and management, nature conservation, transboundary cooperation, and international agreements. For the PFI, the main vehicle to promote peace and confidence-building is through the restoration of degraded land-based resources and connected ecosystems between countries.

The underlying element of “peace dividends” assumes that more effective resource management and equitable benefit sharing ultimately reinforces relations between state and society, enabling more peaceful future development of a country (Bruch et al., 2019). Environmental peacebuilding is a highly integrated approach that seeks to remove the structural borders between peace, security, environment, and development, and unifies the various dynamics, actors, and resources along the conflict curve (Bruch et al., 2022a). It can apply equally to the management of renewable and non-renewable resources, as well as the sustenance of ecosystem services (Bruch et al., 2019). Placing more emphasis on community participation and resilience, environmental peacebuilding can be distinguished from the more government and military focused field of environmental security (Baden et al., 2022).

Five practices of environmental peacebuilding (Source: Ide, 2020)

- 1) Prevention or mediation of conflicts related to environment/natural resources.
 - 2) (Post-conflict) peacebuilding around natural resources/environmental management.
 - 3) Addressing security issues related to climate change.
 - 4) Disaster risk reduction and reconstruction that contributes towards peace following a natural disaster.
 - 5) Environmental peacemaking by addressing shared issues and incentives, such as water or wildlife management.
-



Photo: anmede

Key dimensions of environmental peacebuilding

(Source: Bruch et al., 2019)

- 1) Political – how resource benefits and revenues are shared and distributed in a society.
- 2) Security – securing and restoring access to resource-abundant areas.
- 3) Basic services – ensuring food security and provision of other key services.
- 4) Economic – promoting viable and sustainable livelihoods for people.
- 5) Social – enabling dialogue between rivaling parties to build trust.

Common elements of environmental peacebuilding

(Source: Ajroud et al., 2017)

- 1) Takes an ecosystems-based perspective independent from administrative borders.
- 2) Promotes collaborative management and decision-making among multiple stakeholders.
- 3) Recognizes gender-differentiated needs, interests, impact and roles in resource-use and conflict.
- 4) Addresses community vulnerabilities, and resource rights and distribution in support of sustainable and resilient livelihoods.
- 5) Facilitates increased and equitable access, income and economic benefits to communities from resource-use and ecosystem services.

Water is a typical natural resource subject to environmental cooperation in a conflict context, in addition to the creation of conservation areas across national borders

4.3 Collaboration on resource management and conservation

Water is a typical natural resource subject to environmental cooperation in a conflict context, in addition to the creation of conservation areas across national borders (Krampe et al., 2021). Different approaches to transnational biodiversity conservation can range from informal agreements allowing for animal migration to the creation of shared protected areas governed through well-established intergovernmental processes (Refisch & Jenson, 2016). Joint protection of connected ecosystems provides an additional motivation for cooperation to avoid the spreading of conflicts and related resource exploitation between the neighboring countries (Refisch & Jenson, 2016).

Despite these potential benefits, however, there is inconsistent evidence of successful peacebuilding between countries through environmental objectives (Ide, 2018). Cooperation around contested high-value resources in the extractives sector, for instance, can risk escalating the underlying tensions or create them anew (Refisch & Jenson, 2016). Complex cross-border landscape management can also be undermined by political tensions and lack of political will, incompatible national legal frameworks, language barriers, and unmatched expectations, among others (Vasilijević et al., 2015). Other potential limitations for practitioners to consider by Kotru et al. (2020) include:

- Cross-border processes require time, consultations, and sensitivity to the geopolitical context.
- Weak policy-level synergies can hamper eventual cooperation on the ground.
- Building national institutions' readiness for effective cross-border cooperation requires significant time investment and resources.

On the other hand, the success factors that enable environmental cooperation include a stable internal political environment in the collaborating countries; strong national weight given to environmental concerns; established collaborative approaches around environmental issues; and the environmental agreement being a component of a larger peacebuilding process (Ide, 2018). Combined with these prerequisite conditions, the governance process should be genuinely collaborative, extending beyond mere consultations to truly empowering the stakeholders in decision-making (Vasilijević et al., 2015). It should be nested within a network of governance systems at different levels and be an adaptive learning process to better respond to existing uncertainty and the fact that landscapes and their social, economic and environmental parameters are constantly changing (Vasilijević et al., 2015).

4.4 Integrated landscape approach

Ideally, planning and implementation of land and ecosystem restoration activities under the PFI should take place at a landscape scale. This will help maximize impact and ensure that connected ecosystems are covered on both sides of the border. Typically, a "landscape" refers to a socio-ecological system composed of a mixture of human-modified and natural ecosystems embodying different forms of land cover and use, ranging from farmlands and urban areas to pristine vegetation (Scherr et al., 2013). The size and extent of landscapes vary greatly and can be defined, based on specific management objectives, by natural borders, such as a watershed or other natural features, or human-made jurisdictional boundaries, for example (Scherr et al., 2013).

The principles and elements of integrated landscape approaches are variously defined (see e.g., Sayer et al., 2013; Scherr et al., 2013; Denier et al., 2015; and Freeman

et al., 2015). In summary, an integrated landscape approach seeks to promote sustainable multi-functionality to achieve manifold social, environmental, and economic objectives by enhancing collaboration across sectors that have traditionally been siloed and managed in an uncoordinated manner (Reed et al., 2017). Taking a landscape-wide perspective to resource management enables holistic identification and assessment of competing land uses and the necessary trade-offs in achieving the multiple landscape objectives (Freeman et al., 2015), facilitated by collective and representative engagement of landscape stakeholders in the landscape management negotiations (Reed et al., 2017).

Conceptually, the LDN and the landscape approach are highly compatible, as the LDN equally seeks to bring about and balance social, economic, and environmental objectives collectively (Orr et al., 2017). Implementation of SLM practices at a landscape level can create a much larger compounded impact than locally applied, individual interventions (Critchley et al., 2021). Therefore, land degradation will ideally be addressed and LDN achieved at a landscape scale through integrated land use planning across different sectors (Orr et al., 2017).

4.5 Case studies

The following case studies offer lessons learned from cross-border environmental cooperation on the ground in different parts of the world, for the consideration of the PFI countries as relevant.



Photo: US Embassy Panama

The Great Green Wall (GGW) – Status, lessons, and way forward

(Source: UNCCD, 2020).

The Great Green Wall is one of the first international initiatives to tackle land degradation, designed by the 11 implementing Sahelian countries and endorsed by the African Union. Its overall objective has been adjusted from creating a massive vegetation belt to promoting a more integrated ecosystem management and restoring 100 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 through sustainable land management.

Implementation progress and key challenges:

- In 2007-2019, rehabilitation activities were conducted on about 4 million hectares of land, translating to 4% of the overall original target, with additional activities found outside the actual GGW zone. Implementation success has been uneven between the countries, with Ethiopia, Niger, and Eritrea leading the work with over 3 million hectares restored in total.
- The challenges faced by GGW relate to 1) governance (weak high-level support and institutional environment, coordination challenges etc.), 2) financial situation (unstable funding, weak financial management capacities etc.), 3) monitoring and reporting (low M&E and reporting capacity etc.), and 4) technical challenges (vegetation cover monitoring, need for locally appropriate interventions etc.).
- Regarding funding, the Nature journal (2022) in a recent editorial article also points to the fact that not all donors channel their funds centrally through the Mauritania-based Pan African Agency of the GGW, but rather provide bilateral funding to the implementing countries. According to the article, this makes it more difficult for the African Union to monitor and coordinate the volumes and destinations of financial flows.
- Securing adequate funding for the achievement of the ambitious target will require addressing the above-mentioned challenges, but also, jointly with all stakeholders, reformulating the GGW vision, scope, and activities to re-establish the momentum for successful implementation.

Ecuador & Peru – Challenges with a peace park

(Source: Ali, 2019)

The Cordillera del Condor provides an example of a peace park, established to resolve a border dispute between Ecuador and Peru. The two countries have a long history of conflict dating back to the Spanish colonial times. The conflict escalated again in 1995 into an armed encounter, followed by the signing of a peace agreement in the same year. After grievances flared yet again in 1998, the peace park was established to create a de-militarized border zone. While the park has yielded many positive outcomes over the years, including termination of the larger conflict, the achievement of its objectives has not been fully materialized and several challenges remain.

Key challenges and lessons learned:

- A key hindrance in the park's success has been the creation of a power vacuum for various reasons. Effective development planning following the conflict has been lacking, while the peace agreement did not stipulate a clear post-conflict role for the ex-military personnel, for example by re-assigning them in the park management. Also, the park is very remote and of low government priority. To avoid environmental conflicts resulting from merely changing their form after the consolidation of peace, continued enforcement of peacebuilding activities is important.
- The power vacuum has enabled the proliferation of illicit business operators, such as illegal miners. Mining activities overall, both small and large, are growing in the area and creating opposition amongst the indigenous peoples.
- Consultations with indigenous peoples during the peace negotiations were considered inadequate. This did not nurture strong support among the communities towards the park.
- The park is not a shared zone between the two countries, but it rather forms buffer zones on both sides of the border, not allowing free movement and easy border crossing despite its original intention.
- Financial constraints and over-reliance on donor funding have also hampered the park's successful implementation.

Guinea & Liberia – Women in cross-border fishery management

(Source: IUCN, 2021)

At the border between Guinea and Liberia runs the Mano River, where fishing, an important source of local livelihood, has traditionally been practiced by women in both countries. At one point, a dispute between certain communities ignited, where community members accused each other of crossing the national border and entering the opposite side of the river to fish without permission. Earlier, the river had been a scene of violence during the Liberian civil war and the fishing grievance risked escalating into a conflict again.

Lessons learned:

- To settle the dispute, the community women came together for information exchange to establish a system of alternating fishing days on the Liberian and Guinean sides of the river. By coordinating their activities with each other, communities could now practice their livelihood without causing any disturbance on the other side.
- One important entry point for successful cross-border cooperation was the mutual solidarity that women found through their shared role as providers for their families.
- This case also highlights the role of women as peacebuilding agents, as well as the effectiveness of cross-border collaboration on the use of natural resources to avoid the resurfacing of old grievances.

Kangchenjunga Landscape – Lessons from transboundary landscape management

(Source: Gurung et al., 2019)

This case does not involve an element of direct resource conflict (other than human-wildlife conflict) but provides lessons from transboundary implementation of the integrated landscape approach. In the landscape of Kangchenjunga between Bhutan, India and Nepal, transboundary cooperation has been active for the past 20 years to conserve and sustainably manage the natural resources and ecosystem services in the region.

Key lessons to ensure effective collaboration include:

- Landscape boundaries may change over time depending on the management priorities. The process to set/revise the boundaries should involve all relevant stakeholders.
- National level policies must be considered when addressing issues of transboundary nature, such as illegal wildlife trade, human-wildlife conflict, pastoralism, and tourism, to recognize the national sovereignty of partnering countries.
- Each country should designate one national institute as the leading agency to ensure sovereignty, coordinated engagement of stakeholders and compatibility between national and landscape level policies.
- As global and regional initiatives often stimulate landscape-level action, the data and information generated at the field-level must be fed back to inform such international initiatives, thereby promoting the global-local-global feedback loop.
- Sharing information through regional platforms is essential.

Greater Virunga Landscape – Lessons from transboundary species conservation

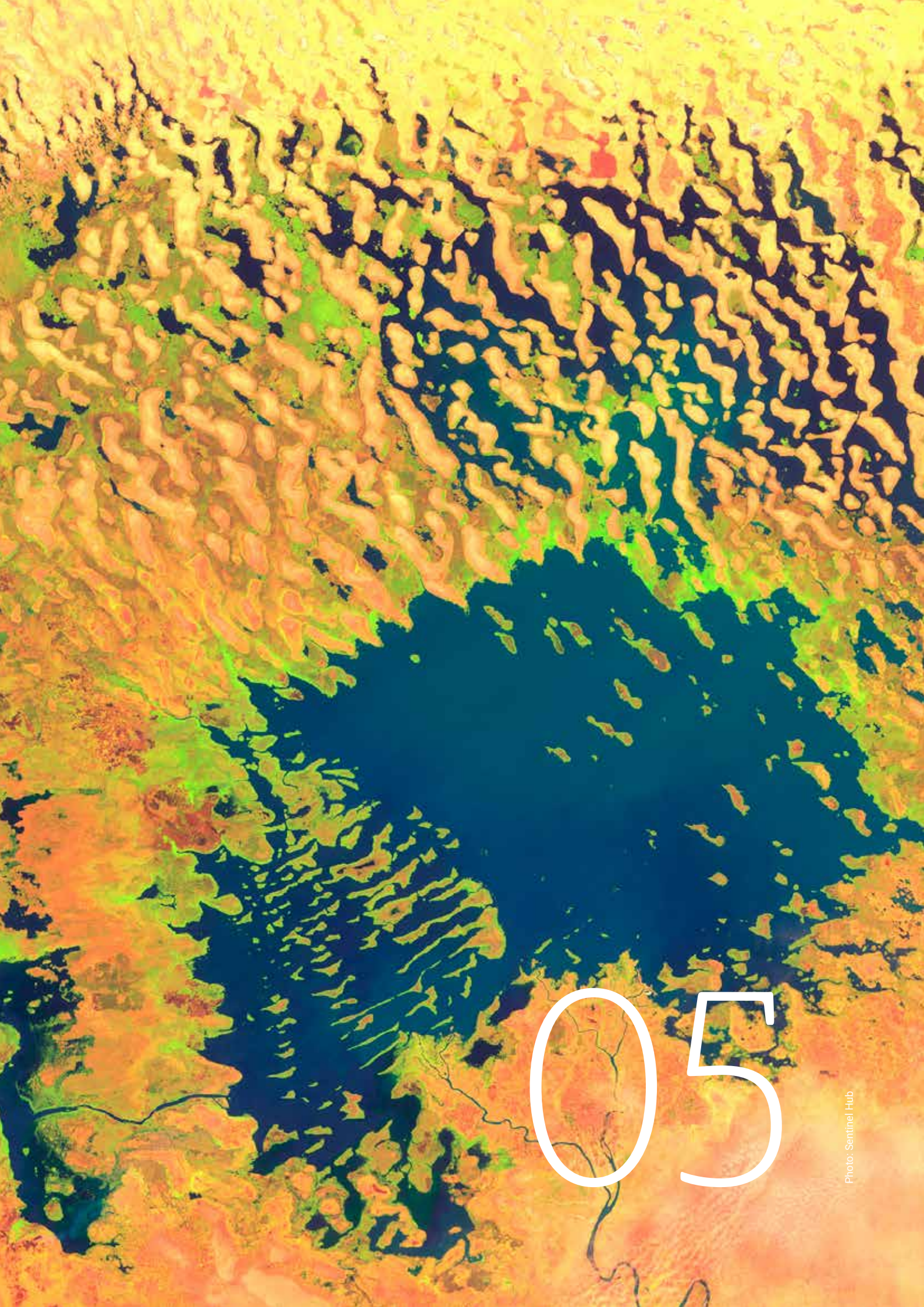
(Source: Refisch & Jenson, 2016)

The ecologically diverse Greater Virunga Landscape that spans across the borders of DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda is characterized by political instability, high levels of poverty and population growth, as well as abundance of high-value resources. Conservation of the mountain gorillas especially through tourism development provides a success story of cross-border collaboration in conflict-affected circumstances, having evolved from initial scientific studies in 1959 to the creation of the Greater Virunga Transboundary Core Secretariat in 2008.

Key success factors include the following:

- A bottom-up approach was employed through technical collaboration and coordination between park wardens and rangers to advance common objectives shared across borders, feeding into higher level decision-making.
- Continued donor support helped the transboundary collaboration persist and build confidence in the process, but in the long run, revenues generated directly from park operations should complement external funding to ensure financial sustainability.
- At the height of political blockades, the history of collaboration between various stakeholders enabled information flow to continue.
- Quick-impact projects and operational flexibility enabling rapid action were important in addressing immediate environmental issues and balancing against long negotiation processes typical for transboundary contexts.
- Creation of mixed technical committees with participants from all involved countries helped to keep the focus on common interests and supported the sharing of information and expertise.
- The experience from the Greater Virunga Landscape provides evidence of the peacebuilding potential of taking a conflict-sensitive approach in conservation (see Hammill et al., 2009).





05

Chapter 5

PFI Process Description

This section presents the overall process and generic steps to design and mobilize resources for PFI programming, following the agreed site-specific deliverables for 2023-2024 (see next page). The process description also builds on relevant conflict-sensitive project cycle elements as explained by Barbero et al. (2004), Hammill et al. (2009), Ajroud et al. (2017), and GEF (2020), among others. Additional perspectives relevant for cross-border resource management are drawn from Vasilijević et al. (2015) and from Denier et al. (2015) as regards the landscape approach.

As mentioned earlier, PFI aims to provide a collaborative platform for stakeholders in regional or transboundary settings to co-design, develop and implement restoration, conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources as a shared asset. By engaging the concerned

parties around a common vision and objective, PFI ultimately seeks to build trust, confidence and contribute to lasting peace in the regions where it operates. By ensuring that planned activities are actionable, equitable and participatory, the PFI encourages dialogue, coordination, training, and joint management planning of natural resources in connected ecosystems. This is achieved by transforming such efforts into concrete, collaborative projects that ensure the resilience of local communities against climate shocks and improve the provision of vital ecosystem services.

The following is a generic description of the PFI process. The different steps may vary and there may be overlaps between them, depending on the specific needs and the PFI approach taken in the given site and context.

PFI site-specific deliverables (2023-2024)

1.

Site specific research on the nexus of environmental degradation/ natural resource management with conflict/peacebuilding, including the identification of critical issue(s).

2

Initial stage **concept note** development including the production of background studies or technical/feasibility assessments.

3.

Mapping and engagement of a broad spectrum of public and civil society **stakeholders** (including as appropriate technical implementing partners, donors and the private sector).

4.

Support for a process of formal (if mainstreamed into existing processes) or informal **dialogue and consultation** around joint natural resource asset management planning in fragile and conflict-affected areas, resulting in a joint statement and/or agreement.

5.

Deployment of **confidence-building measures**. This could involve technical exchanges among the concerned stakeholders, joint workshops or writeshops, training, pilot testing or the development of base/common resources (such as a soil base map and environment dashboard) that are an initial shared asset to facilitate further dialogue.

6.

Co-design of a **natural resource asset management plan** – including joint/common target setting and agreed governance.

7.

Translation of the plan into an **investable project/programme** to support resource mobilization.

8.

Support for plan/project/**programme launch**. PFI can support donor outreach or partner round table events and/or communications related activities in this regard.

9.

Monitoring and documenting/ reporting on progress.

5.1 Initial site-specific research

The first step in the PFI process concerns initial scoping and identification of critical and contextual issues regarding environmental degradation and natural resources management and how they interact with the conflict and peacebuilding elements in the specific site. Initial scoping also includes preliminary formulation of the added value that a PFI approach can bring and how it can help countries achieve their restoration objectives while contributing to peace. Information to be collected includes the following:

- Basic information of the countries and relevant cross-border landscape/resources.
- Initial description of the context and the role of land/ecosystems/natural resources and the involved stakeholders.
- Identification of initial entry points for the PFI support in response to local and regional priorities and, where possible, the geographic locations of relevant cross-border landscapes in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- Preliminary restoration objectives and expected impact of PFI support.
- Expression of high-level political commitment to the PFI process.
- Preliminary description and timeline of upcoming joint activities and confidence-building measures, such as studies and analyses, meetings, and trainings.
- Any other relevant information.

5.2 Conceptual development

To develop a deeper diagnosis and contextual analysis of a cross-border PFI site, the UNCCD Secretariat will engage National Focal Points (NFPs) to UNCCD for the preparation and coordination of the initial concept note in collaboration with interested national and regional stakeholders. This stage involves organization



Photo: UNCCD Secretariat

of regional consultations and can also involve further background studies and technical/feasibility assessments. One of the key outcomes of this process is the joint identification and agreement on the priority workstreams in the given site, upon which the PFI approach and activities will be built on.

To generate sufficient information for a comprehensive context analysis, Bruch and Woomer (2023) identify four key activities to be conducted: **needs assessment; stakeholder identification and analysis; conflict analysis; and environmental and social impact assessment.** In this section, the focus is on the conflict analysis discussed right below, and in analyzing the transboundary context. A separate section below (5.3) is dedicated to the stakeholder analysis and engagement.

Overall, conceptual development under PFI evolves in stages as more information and contextual understanding is gathered and developed. Starting with initial scoping (Section 5.1), the site-specific information is then turned into more detailed concept notes, whereas full-scale project proposals will eventually need to include comprehensive background sections and justifications for the programme logic, as per the requirements of each financing agency or donor.

Conducting the below analyses requires close involvement of relevant national, regional and international technical experts, UN agencies and other stakeholders as appropriate. The UNCCD Secretariat will be able to provide countries with overall guidance and assistance in the selection and development of an appropriate methodological approach, including the engagement of the required experts. It is important that sufficient time and resources are allocated to this foundational phase in the PFI process, as the context-specific knowledge generated will inform the longer-term program development, including formulation of restoration objectives, activities, indicators and monitoring and evaluation plan.

Conducting conflict analysis

To ensure that the planned PFI approach and activities are sensitive to the conflict context in question, conducting a conflict analysis is a crucial step. It typically starts with the mapping of all conflicts affecting the site, prioritizing them against relevant criteria, and choosing the conflict(s) to concentrate on (Hammill et al., 2009). Analyzing the conflict context will help project developers understand the conflict's **profile and character**, the **root causes**, the **role of land and natural resources**, the **actors** (individuals and organizations) and their relationships, as well as key dynamics and **power structures** (Barbero et al., 2004; UNDP & UNEP, 2015; Ajroud et al., 2017; UN Habitat, 2018; GEF, 2020).

Such analysis is critical to identifying and understanding the potential conflict-related implications of the planned projects, both positive and negative (Barbero et al., 2004; Hammill et al., 2009; Ajroud et al., 2017).

A definition of a conflict analysis

(Source: Ajroud et al., 2017, p. 27):

"Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the causes, actors, drivers, and dynamics of conflict. It aims to provide a clearer understanding of the reasons a conflict is occurring, why and how different actors are involved, the relationships between these actors, and potential ways to support peace. It is intended to be a participatory process that brings stakeholders together to develop a common understanding of the conflict."

Importantly, a conflict analysis is not a one-time activity, but it should be repeated and updated regularly throughout the project cycle to help adjust and **adapt the management activities** to any potential changes in the local context (Barbero et al., 2004; Hammill et al., 2009; Ajroud et al., 2017).

There are several conflict analysis tools and resources available for the PFI partners to choose from. Hammill et al. (2009) give guidance on organizing a **conflict analysis workshop**, including a sample agenda, a list of possible participants to be involved, and the various methods for engaging participants and extracting relevant information. Other tools include development of a **conflict tree** to identify the core problem and its root causes and effects, or a **conflict/stakeholder map** to understand stakeholder relationships and power structures (Hammill et al., 2009; Ajroud et al., 2017). Construction of a **peace matrix** can help elaborate on the existing processes, structures and

gaps as relates to different societal elements, including environmental, political, and security related (Ajroud et al., 2017). Barbero et al. (2004, Chapter 2, Annex 1) and Bruch and Woomer (2023), among others, provide further useful information with descriptions of the various tools and methodologies available. For assessing the role of the environment and natural resources in a post-conflict context, UNEP has developed a specific guidance note (UNEP, 2009b).

High level of **sensitivity** is required when conducting such analyses, depending on the local cultural and social customs, and adjusting the working modalities accordingly (Ajroud et al., 2017). Open-source data and information available in the public domain can be used to support such analyses (Bruch & Woomer, 2023). At the same time, no analysis can be fully exhaustive describing all the conflict-related complexities, and a **“good enough”** level of detail is acceptable (Barbero et al., 2004). **Objectivity** and **impartiality** should be maintained, as such analyses can easily become highly political and prone to bias (Barbero et al., 2004).

Assessing cross-border elements

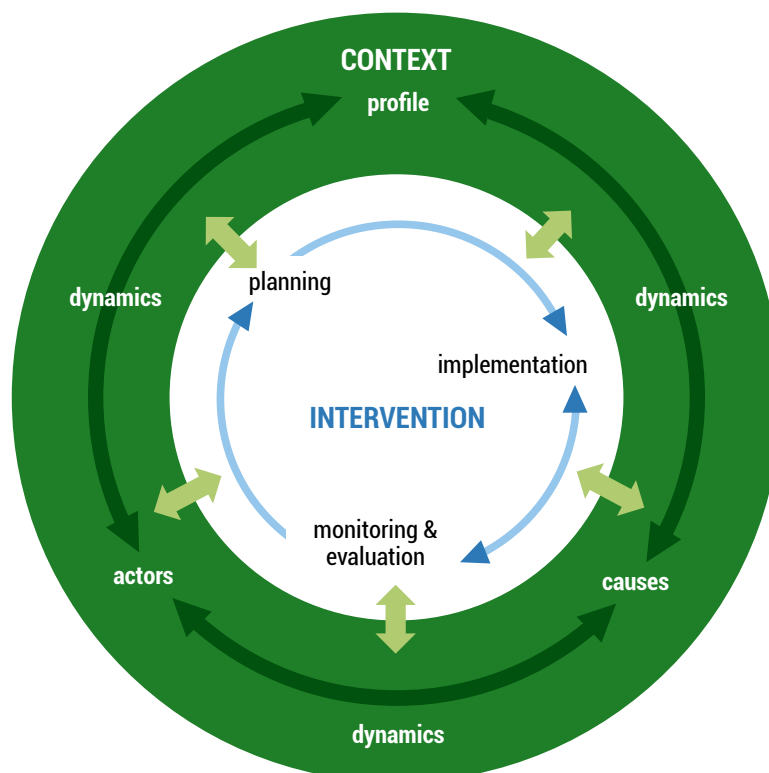
Given the complexity of working in a conflict-affected cross-border contexts, another important point to assess is the **feasibility and potential for collaboration**, and the **organizational readiness** for such work. Vasilijević et al. (2015) summarize related key considerations for project planners to determine:

- Whether significant opportunity and motivation for mutual collaboration exist.
- Whether a critical constituency of stakeholders are willing to address the issue.
- The approximate spatial scope of joint action.
- Sufficient stakeholder capacity and resources to start the collaboration.

Figure 5.

Illustration of interactions between contextual elements and the project cycle

(Source: Adapted from Barbero et al., 2004, Chapter 2, p. 1).



Other important organizational aspects regarding readiness for conflict-sensitive work include (Barbero et al., 2004; Hammill et al., 2009; Ajroud et al., 2017):

- Sufficient capacity and resources (human, technical, financial), adequate skills, motivation, legitimacy, neutrality, and contextual understanding to implement conflict-sensitive activities in a complex environment.
- Internal high-level commitment and support for the planned conflict-sensitive approach that aligns with organizational mandate, coupled with public support to build consensus between the conflict actors.

- Preparedness to convene and encourage cooperation and relationship building amongst different stakeholders.
- Alignment between intended objectives and the local priorities, while being conscious of potential limitations of planned interventions.
- Identification and integration of existing local institutions and processes into the planned activities to maximize, and benefit from their stabilizing and supporting effect.
- Internal operational flexibility to respond to changing conditions, and willingness to learn and develop as an organization.

5.3 Stakeholder mapping and engagement

A stakeholder analysis can help identify the key actors (individuals, groups, organizations) interested in and affected by the current state of land/ecosystem management, their position on the matter, their needs, interests, powers and concerns, their connections with other actors, as well as their desired outcomes of the process (Barbero et al., 2004; Hammill et al., 2009; Vasilijević et al., 2015; Ajroud et al., 2017). Such analysis should identify both direct and indirect actors and their interests as related to the different levels of the conflict (UNDP & UNEP, 2015). Special attention should be paid to mid-level leaders who often operate in the dynamic space between the bottom and the top levels, in addition to the so-called spoilers who may benefit from the continued conflict (Barbero et al., 2004).

Practical methods to conduct more detailed stakeholder analyses include **focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, snowball sampling methods, and social network analysis**, among others (Vasilijević et al., 2015). A **stakeholder map** can help select the key stakeholders to be engaged in a process (Denier et al., 2015) and disclose the different relationships and power structures between them (Ajroud et al., 2017). Using the **persona tool** (Bruch & Woome, 2023) can help uncover the underlying values, beliefs and assumptions of different actors by explaining their behaviour. Ajroud et al. (2017) also introduce the concept of “*collaborative consensus building*”.

Some general practices with regards to stakeholder engagement include the following (Ajroud et al., 2017):

- Conduct a transparent and open process to identify relevant actors, respecting the local culture and traditions.



Photo: Nirara

- Apply the “do no harm” approach to avoid unintended negative consequences to project beneficiaries.
- Acknowledge human rights as a central element when engaging stakeholders.
- Ensure participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and indigenous people, taking gender perspectives into account.
- Through open communication, ensure that all stakeholders have an equal understanding of the project, its goals and activities and the expected benefits.

5.4 Support for dialogue and consultation

One of PFI’s core objectives is to provide a platform to facilitate collaboration around land/ecosystem restoration in conflict-affected or fragile situations by supporting broad-based cooperation among different stakeholders. A multi-stakeholder platform acts as the foundation of PFI by enabling and encouraging dialogue between relevant national and/or regional actors across the border.

To help secure local support for the planned activities, broad-based inclusion of stakeholders in the planning process is necessary, especially that of the marginalized groups who may be more exposed to the project outcomes (Ajroud et al., 2017). Involving target area communities is also critical to access local knowledge and develop a full understanding of the issues at hand (Vasilijević et al., 2015; Ajroud et al., 2017; GEF, 2020). Open participation of women is particularly important due to their different roles and relationships with natural resource management compared to that of men (Ajroud et al., 2017).

Depending on the outcome of the stakeholder analysis (see Section 5.3), relevant actors in PFI processes can include national government agencies, communi-

ties, academic institutions and civil society organizations, regional organizations, National Focal Points to UNCCD and other conventions, UN partners and international organizations, and technical experts and working groups, among others. The UNCCD Secretariat together with the national leading agencies will facilitate the convening of the stakeholders for dialogue and consultation. In general, the purpose is to support both the joint analyses, identification of common priorities, and development of the initial confidence-building activities leading to the large-scale PFI project proposal, as well as the eventual participatory implementation of the agreed restoration activities. Whenever possible, such dialogues and consultations should be supported by expert mediators and trained facilitators, who are familiar with effective participatory methodologies for reaching consensus and developing joint visions and objectives in a conflict-affected or fragile context.

5.5 Deployment of confidence-building measures

The PFI will provide a venue for the deployment of joint confidence-building measures between the concerned parties. Such measures can include organization of technical workshops, writeshops, meetings and seminars, and trainings for exchange, communication activities, and knowledge sharing. They can also include development of initial shared assets to facilitate further dialogue, such as data management dashboards regarding shared natural resources to increase the transparency of local resource governance.

Typical obstacles to negotiating a shared understanding between stakeholders include opposing perceptions and viewpoints of the given situation, language barriers, and other such factors (Denier et al., 2015). For instance, land users, researchers or LDN experts may have a

To help secure local support for the planned activities, broad-based inclusion of stakeholders in the planning process is necessary

The peacebuilding potential of social learning centres around its ability to help build a shared identity, increase trust, and engage and integrate the different actors looking to address a shared problem

different understanding of and different priorities for local land restoration activities in degraded landscapes (Crossland et al., 2018). Fundamentally, the purpose of reaching a consensus is to ensure that all involved stakeholders have adequate information to meaningfully participate in the landscape-level decision-making (Denier et al., 2015).

Leaders of such multi-stakeholder processes should be comfortable with navigating the various, even conflicting, interests on both sides of the border, and help attract the right people to join the process to enable lasting change (Vasiljević et al., 2015). The optimal stakeholder composition needs to balance between the anticipated capacity to reach a consensus, while maintaining sufficient legitimacy and representation (UNDP & UNEP, 2015). The potential implications of inclusion and exclusion of certain stakeholders should be carefully considered (UNDP & UNEP, 2015).

5.6 Co-design a management and action plan

To continue the work initiated earlier through initial consultations, priority setting and related confidence-building measures, the parties will co-design together a plan for the sustainable management of the shared resource or ecosystem. The planning stage should include, among others, joint target setting, ecological objectives, and development of a joint governance framework, with different processes, roles and responsibilities clearly stipulated and agreed upon. PFI encourages active inclusion of women, youth, and marginal groups as an integral part in the planning process and eventual implementation of the restoration activities.

A potential methodology for PFI to successfully steer such joint natural resource/asset management planning is

social learning. Social learning refers to the interactive exchange and reflection of different values, knowledge, and experiences between stakeholders as part of iterative learning and co-creation of sustainable solutions to address a shared challenge (Bonatti et al., 2022). The peacebuilding potential of social learning centres around its ability to help build a shared identity, increase trust, and engage and integrate the different actors looking to address a shared problem (Bonatti et al., 2022). Through positive learning and behaviour change, this process can lead to a joint discovery of improved management practices of the natural environment and resources, while increasing social capital and cohesion (Bonatti et al., 2022).

5.7 Translate the plan into investable project/programme

Building on the initial concept notes, conflict and stakeholder analyses and other related contextual and feasibility studies, the PFI process will now bring the relevant actors together to develop a full-scale project/programme proposal with concrete objectives, activities, indicators and M&E plan, and a fundraising strategy. The UNCCD Secretariat will support stakeholders in developing required partnerships with development actors and donors.

Developing joint activities

The primary starting point is to agree on the joint LDN or other restoration target(s) that specify a relevant, simplified land/ecosystem restoration goal at a spatial scale (UNCCD, 2019b). The LDN Target Setting Program (TSP), the LDN TPS 2.0 and the Transformative Projects and Programs (TPP) process will provide practical windows for designing and developing a large-scale bankable project(s) aiming to promote cooperation on land and ecosystem restoration. Detailed coverage of the LDN planning and implementa-



tion process is available through Orr et al. (2017), UNCCD (2019a), Sims et al. (2021), and other related sources. This section focuses on guiding the PFI project partners to ensure that their planned restoration activities are conflict-sensitive in the given context, contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding, and avoid exacerbating any existing tensions and grievances to the extent possible.

Activities designed under the PFI can take many forms. They can include (UNCCD, 2019b, p. 8):

- *“Sustainable land management and restoration, community-based forestry, community-based rangeland management.*
- *Agroforestry, reforestation, forest landscape restoration, silvopastoral systems, paludiculture.*

General criteria for PFI project activities:

- **Cross-border cooperation** is a key feature to provide opportunities for peacebuilding through joint LDN planning and implementation between conflict-affected and fragile countries.
- Publicly stated **political commitment** is required to strengthen stakeholder buy-in, mobilize sufficient resources and integrate the PFI project activities within peacebuilding efforts.
- A **landscape approach** is encouraged to maximize the impact and to cover connected ecosystems.
- **Women** play a central role in SLM and achieving LDN, emphasizing their role in PFI project activities, in addition to those of other marginalized groups, such as **youth and indigenous people**.
- Emphasis is given to developing **direct economic benefits** for people that are consistent with the environmental and peace objectives, e.g., creating job opportunities related to LDN activities to boost economic reconstruction and cooperation between countries.
- Project activities should be **harmonized, coherent and well-coordinated** at the ground-level.

- *Ecotourism and diverse forest recreation services for the good health and well-being of the people.*
- *Capacity-building relative to sustainable land and forest management for government officials and local communities."*

Under these broader themes, specific outputs and objectives can include:

- A jointly agreed, appropriate resource governance scheme/strategy/plan.
- Joint (cross-border) target-setting/common LDN targets/restoration commitments for sustainable land and forest management.
- Co-development of transformative ecosystem restoration/rehabilitation projects.
- Training and adoption of SLM techniques etc. at a landscape level.

The participating countries, together with the UN and other partners, should ensure that the planned activities and targets holistically contribute to overall sustainable development and other international commitments through the achievement of LDN and enhanced SLM, especially to synergistic land-based targets under the other Rio Conventions, UNFCCC and CBD. Land restoration is highly synergistic with activities aiming at increased food and water security, reduced disaster risks such as drought, sand and dust storms (SDS) and floods, human migration, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity loss.

Conflict-sensitive project design

Practicing environmental peacebuilding does not automatically guarantee that the planned activities are conflict-sensitive (Bruch et al., 2022b). Decisions concerning the use of natural resources can become contentious, and practitioners need to carefully craft a sensitive approach that can deliver both peacebuilding and environmental outcomes (Ajroud et al., 2017; Bruch et al., 2022b).

In the peacebuilding field, both negative and positive peace can be defined (Bonatti et al., 2022). Negative peace refers to a situation where violence is absent and resource-related conflicts are avoided, whereas positive peace refers to a more proactive approach to restoring and re-building relationships between the conflict parties (Bonatti et al., 2022), the latter being the preferred approach for PFI.

When planning for conflict-sensitivity, factors to be mindful of that can potentially aggravate existing tensions include raising unrealistic expectations, failure to secure adequate resources for effective implementation in the short-term, or the risk of external involvement further complicating the local power dynamics (Barbero et al., 2004). Peacebuilding measures that seek to address the different conflict aspects regarding natural resources should be fully aligned with the specific role of the resource in question (UNDP & UNEP, 2015).

To minimize the risk of any unintended developments during project implementation, the design of various project components (activities, target site and beneficiaries, project partners, staffing and timeframe, logical framework, etc.) must be based on a comprehensive conflict analysis (Barbero et al., 2004). A "do no harm" approach is crucial in trying to avoid any inadvertent consequences that could negatively affect the beneficiaries and the stated project objectives (Ajroud et al., 2017). Other key considerations include effective coordination of activities across local, national and international levels to avoid overlaps and competition between actors, and acknowledging and respecting the peacebuilding potential of local or traditional organizations (Barbero et al., 2004).

As a practical example, typical conflict-sensitive characteristics found in GEF-funded projects include (GEF, 2020):

- Setting realistic objectives, focusing especially on building institutions and their capacity, and strengthening the enabling environment in general.
- Flexibility in project design to account for rapidly evolving situations.
- Close engagement of local stakeholders.
- Utilizing conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Benefiting from appropriate and validated local, customary approaches and institutions.

Other considerations include operational costs, which are often higher in fragile environments due to the additional staff, security and logistical expenses, and the longer time investment needed to build stakeholder relations, requiring additional budgetary allocations (GEF, 2020). Flexibility from the funding organization is therefore needed to prepare contingency budgets to manage unexpected risks (GEF, 2020).

As part of adaptive management, a monitoring and evaluation plan should be conflict-sensitive, flexible and participatory, with a regular data gathering and assessment process in place to respond to the fluid conflict context (Ajroud et al., 2017). In addition to environmental indicators, monitoring of relevant social aspects may be equally important (GEF, 2020), as that of specific indicators related to the conflict (Barbero et al., 2004, see Chapter 2, Section 3 for more details).

Resource mobilization

Funding for project implementation under the PFI must be mobilized through active engagement with potential funders, such as GEF, PBF, GCF, UN partners and bilateral donor countries. UNCCD secretariat can support countries in increasing the visibility of their PFI proposals, engaging with potential bilateral donors and multilateral funding agencies, and promoting the PFI approach more broadly for example by

Conflict analysis and sensitivity

(Source: Barbero et al., 2004, Chapter 1, p. 3)

"What to do:

- understand the context in which you operate.
- understand the interaction between your intervention and the context.
- use this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts.

How to do it:

- Carry out a conflict analysis and update it regularly.
- Link the conflict analysis with the programming cycle of your intervention.
- Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate your intervention in a conflict sensitive fashion (including redesign when necessary)."

Institutional considerations for organizations applying conflict sensitivity in their work

(Source: Barbero et al., 2004, Chapter 1, p. 3):

- "Willingness and ability to implement conflict sensitivity.
 - Openness to continuous learning and institutional adaptability to reflect conflict sensitivity.
 - Ability to deal with uncertainty, as there is no one-fits-all recipe for conflict sensitivity.
 - Honesty and humility in recognising the extent or limitation of the impact of interventions.
 - Recognition of the complexity and interdependence of the wider system in which institutions operate."
-

organizing events at the Conferences of the Parties of UNCCD and other Rio Conventions.

Many donors and multilateral funding bodies have their own specifications for project proposal processes and required documentation. Here, the UNCCD Secretariat, the GM, the UN agencies and technical partners are instrumental in assisting countries with developing proposals that comply with all the specific requirements of each donor/funder. Expert working groups at regional level can help develop project concepts and scope, cooperation frameworks, partnerships building, and resource mobilization strategy, as necessary. National partners, on the other hand, will provide the local context and knowledge, ensuring that proposals are aligned with PFI objectives.

Developing funding proposals especially to large-scale donors can be a demanding process in terms of required time and human resources. To ensure that the process remains coordinated and efficient, the PFI partners should establish a small core team responsible for each regional proposal development. Such a team could include a focal point from the UNCCD GM, the key UN partners, NFPs, and technical expert(s). In cooperation with the core team, the Partners Roundtable and the Regional technical working groups (see Section 6) can advise the process on a regular basis as required.



Photo: Maren Barbee

5.8 PFI project launch

PFI acts as a strategic framework and a catalyst for launching large-scale restoration projects through collaborative concept development, resource mobilization, outreach, and communication. The specific PFI implementation arrangements will depend on the country/(sub)regional context and vary case by case. In essence, once a PFI proposal is approved and funding secured, the relevant UN and other international partners come together with the national implementers to operationalize the PFI project activities on the ground.

A central body in the process will be the national and regional stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the restoration activities. The Partners Roundtable and the Regional technical working groups will support countries in the implementation phase by providing advisory services as required.

5.9 Monitoring, documenting and reporting

Conflict-sensitivity should be maintained throughout the implementation phase as it relates to local recruitments, procurement processes and other contractual matters, partner selection and project communications, among others (Hammill et al., 2009; GEF, 2020). It is imperative that all project staff involved in the implementation understand the local context, and how the conflict connects with the objectives the project aims to achieve (Hammill et al., 2009). Most importantly, safety of project staff and partners should be ensured at all times (Hammill et al., 2009).

Monitoring of conflict dynamics may require enhanced processes, such as real-time monitoring, or the establishment of early warning systems, to identify potential risks in advance (GEF, 2020). A key

point is to maintain operational flexibility to quickly respond to any changing circumstances, when needed (Barbero et al., 2004; Hammill et al., 2009; GEF, 2020).

Conflict-sensitivity extends throughout the project cycle through monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to an appropriately planned exit strategy that connects to the conflict analysis (Barbero et al., 2004). The relevant UN partners together with national implementing agencies will develop appropriate and conflict-sensitive M&E systems for their respective PFI project activities, also complying with the specific donor requirements.

Sharing information and lessons learned is an essential element of the PFI processes. The national multi-stakeholder platforms, in collaboration with UNCCD Secretariat and relevant partners, will analyze and compile information and experiences, with the aim of enhancing knowledge of cross-border cooperation on sustainable land/ecosystems restoration in fragile and post-conflict situations at a broader scale. The regional technical working groups will also participate in information sharing in their respective regions.

The project activities and results of PFI will be made visible internationally and connected with high-profile sustainability topics such as SDGs, peace and security, poverty reduction and food security to attract strong interest and further collaborations. This knowledge will offer new insights into the exchanges at the intergovernmental processes and facilitate the replication of the project in other areas.

5.10 Thematic/cross-cutting, conflict-sensitive principles for PFI projects

This section describes additional thematic and cross-cutting PFI principles for the project partners to consider when devel-

Sharing information and lessons learned is an essential element of the PFI processes

Good resource governance is founded on the recognition of secure tenure for all, including the more vulnerable stakeholders, such as women, youth, and indigenous and local communities

oping and implementing restoration activities under the PFI.

(a) Ensuring equitable access to and shared benefits from restored natural resources and the improved delivery of ecosystem services

Ensuring fair and equitable sharing of land restoration benefits is a critical aspect when operating in conflict-affected and post-conflict environments (IRP, 2019). Taking REDD+ projects as an example, an increasing number of studies challenge the effectiveness of the existing REDD+ mechanisms at the community level from the perspective of conflicts, rights and livelihoods (see Alusiola et al., 2021). The study found restricted and unequal access and rights to forest-based resources by communities as an important factor driving conflict in the reviewed case studies.

Factors that can influence the local distribution of restoration benefits include livelihood strategies employed by the local land-users, their resource endowment, as well as gender (Crossland et al., 2018). To detect and eliminate any such potentially discriminatory elements, selected land restoration activities should be sensitive to the social context, local perspectives, and land use strategies, also to increase the local buy-in and acceptance of restoration and achievement of LDN (Crossland et al., 2018). Various socio-economic impacts, trade-offs, costs, and benefits need to be carefully evaluated to determine the advantages and disadvantages of the restoration activities to different social groups (Orr et al., 2017).

(b) Strengthening the enabling environment, including the governance and institutional systems, for the implementation of LDN/restoration targets

Effective LDN implementation requires strengthening the capacities and coordination of relevant institutions at all levels from national to local, key sectors includ-

ing agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, water, and energy (Orr et al., 2017). To avoid creating duplicating management structures, the LDN process should ideally be embedded in existing land use planning and broader development strategies, and land administration and information systems to maximize its effectiveness (Orr et al., 2017).

Building the state capacity, a typical necessary step in post-conflict state development processes, should be considered holistically at the institutional level as opposed to the more traditional focus on individual staff skills and equipment (Krampe et al., 2021). It's a long-term process that covers many functional capacities, such as strengthened information collection and management, stakeholder engagement, participatory decision-making, and institutional learning and flexibility, among others (Krampe et al., 2021).

Good resource governance is founded on the recognition of secure tenure for all, including the more vulnerable stakeholders, such as women, youth, and indigenous and local communities (UNCCD, 2022b). Legitimate rights over resources give people assurance and incentive to invest in sustainable management practices and are therefore essential for effective ecosystem restoration (UNEP, 2021; UNCCD, 2022b). Tenure security alone, however, does not automatically guarantee sustainable land use, such as is the case in Europe, but requires additional policies and regulations to curb degradation (UNCCD, 2017).

Issues around tenure insecurity often stem from weak governance, which can lead to violent and deadly conflicts at worst (Orr et al., 2017). In REDD+ projects, for example, weak land and forest tenure systems are considered one of the key constraints hampering impactful implementation of forest conservation (Soliev et al., 2021). Instead, projects that focus on communities and collective tenure arrangements appear

more successful in mitigating conflicts by involving stakeholders in land negotiations (Soliev et al., 2021).

(c) Encouraging cooperation among government officials, local communities, CSOs and private sector to manage land and forests in sustainable ways

One of the underlying premises of the PFI is the need for increased cooperation between different stakeholders to encourage trust building and peaceful resource development. Governance of land resources is highly complex and beyond the capacity and mandate of any single organization, emphasizing the need for broad partnerships (UN Habitat, 2008). Bringing many partners together can help ensure that the various technical and political issues, and the different stages of a peace-building process are covered through the pooling the expertise and resources (UN Habitat, 2008).

Implementation of LDN necessitates broad engagement of stakeholders to facilitate knowledge sharing, innovation, and learning (Orr et al., 2017, see also social learning in Section 5.6). Albeit challenging, fostering collaboration among all stakeholders involved in land/ecosystem restoration is important to achieve peace and strengthen institutions, including the justice system (IRP, 2019).

Krampe et al. (2021) refer to the “contact hypothesis”, which assumes that closer cooperation between rivalry groups can help mitigate grievances and promote trust. This is especially the case when inter-community collaboration is motivated by mutual benefit, with evidence from Nepal, South Sudan, Sudan, and Colombia (Krampe et al., 2021).

When it comes to addressing land degradation, different land users may have different ideas and opinions about the spatial target areas and restoration approaches to be applied in the given con-

text (Crossland et al., 2018). This underscores the need to jointly negotiate priorities and engage local actors in the assessment of degradation and development of locally apt restoration methods, incentive mechanisms, knowledge, and indicators for impactful LDN implementation (Crossland et al., 2018).

(d) Including women, youth, and marginal groups as an integral part of the implementation of these activities

Unequal power relations often require special attention in solving natural resource conflicts (UNDP & UNEP, 2015). Women are largely disadvantaged in resource ownership and tenure despite their central role in land and ecosystems management (UNCCD, 2017; Critchley et al., 2021). Only in 28 countries worldwide, women have equal rights with men to own and access land (Critchley et al., 2021), while less than 10% of land globally is owned by women (Orr et al., 2017).

Women often farm smaller pieces of land in marginal areas, have weaker access to extension services and finance, are more burdened by family-related responsibilities, and have less external labor available to support with farm work (UNCCD, 2017). Particularly in conflict situations, it’s more common for women to lose their land rights or become evicted by force, or they can face difficulties in claiming land through restitution, inheritance or as marital property following a conflict (UN Habitat, 2018). Nevertheless, women are active stewards of land resources and are thereby greatly affected by land degradation, underscoring the importance of gender-sensitive design of land restoration and LDN implementation (UNCCD, 2017; Orr et al., 2017). There are manuals and guidance documents dedicated to the gender aspects and LDN available online³.

As observed by Crossland et al. (2018), due to the gendered roles and division of labor, there may be differences in the

³ See e.g. https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/land-degradation-neutrality/resources?facets_query=&f%5B0%5D=topics_resources%3A16.

spatial perception of land degradation between men and women, depending on where they spend most of their daily chores. In a study in Ethiopia, women were found to be more knowledgeable about perceived land degradation near homesteads and riverbanks, whereas men focused more on grazing and irrigated lands (Crossland et al., 2018). Therefore, it's crucially important that planning of restoration activities under the PFI is informed by a variety of land-users to get balanced information on the local degradation status.

Children and youth constitute half of the world's population, and the land and ecosystem management decisions taken today will have a major impact on their lives (UNCCD, 2022b). They are therefore key stakeholders in land restoration activities, and their interest in sustainable agriculture and food systems needs to be secured (UNCCD, 2022b).

In line with pro-poor development, a human rights-based approach can help take a more holistic perspective on poverty-related aspects in conflict situations and

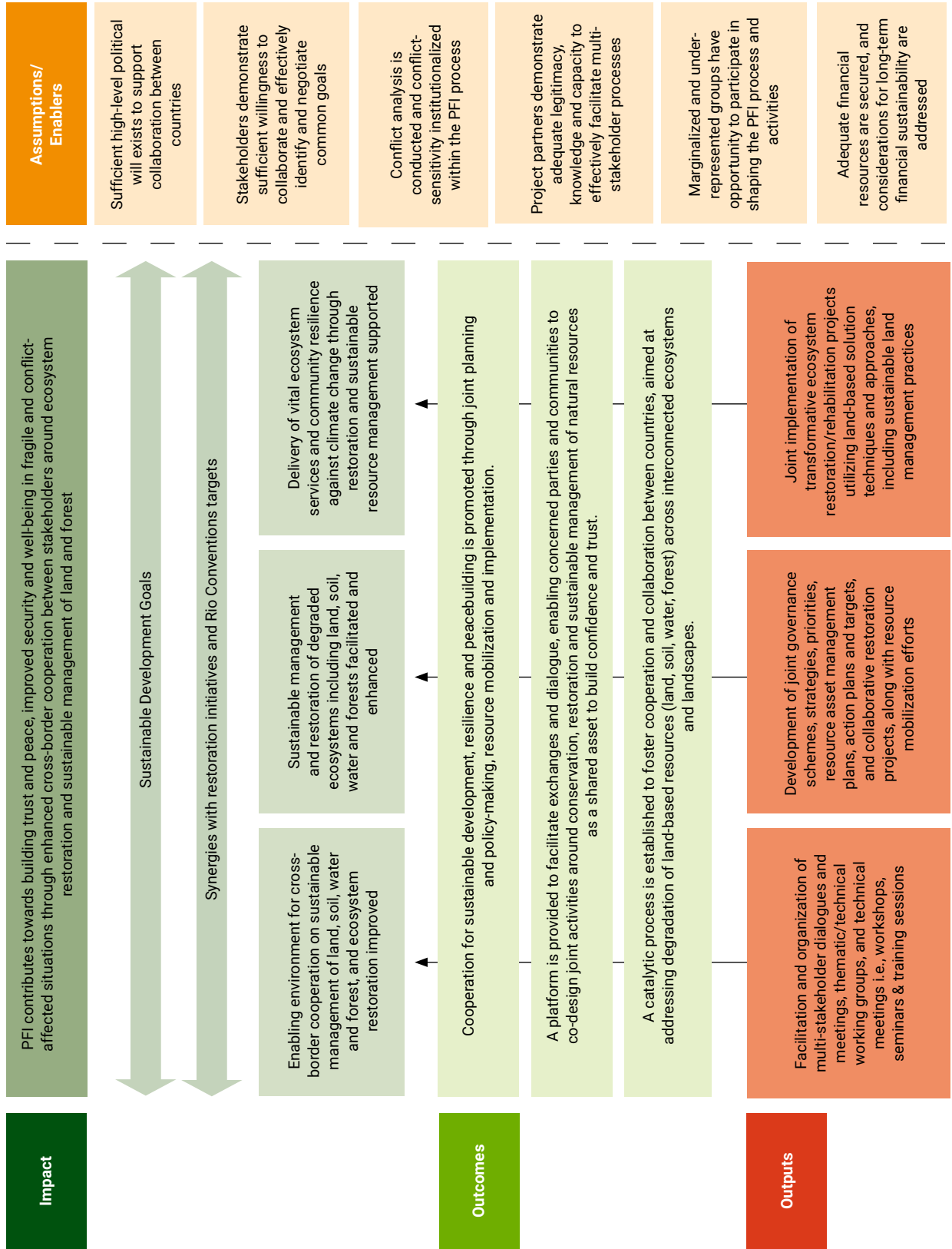
mitigate related power imbalances to help communities achieve their rights, as long as implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner (Barbero et al., 2004). The UN has published a specific guidance note of the Secretary-General to inform UN agencies' work in the nexus of land and conflict, with further guidelines on human rights issues (UN, 2019).

Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is one of the key principles related to working with indigenous peoples or any other local groups (Ajroud et al., 2017). Appropriate application of these principles can help ensure that indigenous communities are fully informed and able to express either their consent or rejection to any planned activity potentially affecting their land and resources (Ajroud et al., 2017).

5.11 Theory of change for PFI

Below is a graphic and narrative description of the PFI theory of change, with key outputs, outcomes, and overall impact, as well as assumptions and enablers spelled out.

Figure 6.
Peace Forest Initiative theory of change



06



06

PFI Governance, Partnerships, and Funding Mechanisms

6.1 Governance and partnership arrangements

The PFI aims to forge broad, concrete partnerships that engage diverse groups of stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), local communities, donors, technical experts, and international actors.

The UNCCD Secretariat will work with key partners, including UN agencies, institutions, and think-tanks with mediation/political background.

Role of the UNCCD Secretariat

The UNCCD Secretariat, within the scope of its mandate and program of work, will function as the center point for strategic framing, planning, and coordinating PFI activities including the organization of relevant meetings, workshops, and trainings, in partnership with global and regional organizations within the available resources. Operating through its Global Mechanism (GM), the UNCCD Secretariat will build further partnerships and collaborations to design, develop, and mobilize resources for the implementation of the PFI project(s) and dissemination of relevant information, as guided by relevant COP decisions including decision 3/COP.15.

To raise PFI's profile and highlight its role in ecosystem restoration to attract the interest of potential partners, the UNCCD Secretariat will raise awareness and promote the PFI through its communications and advocacy functions. The Secretariat

will also analyze and compile all the information and experiences gained through the PFI activities, with the aim to enhance knowledge dissemination on cross-border cooperation on sustainable land and forest management in fragile and conflict-affected situations at a broader scale. This knowledge will offer new insights into the exchanges at intergovernmental processes and facilitate the replication and scaling of the initiative

National partners and stakeholders

National partners and stakeholders from participating countries will include a broad range of relevant actors, from government agencies and technical experts to civil society, local communities, and the private sector. When engaging national partners, important aspects to consider include the potential implications of inclusion of some stakeholders and exclusion of others, the expected prospect of reaching a consensus while ensuring legitima-

cy of the process, and the participation of all relevant marginalized groups in the given context (UNDP & UNEP, 2015).

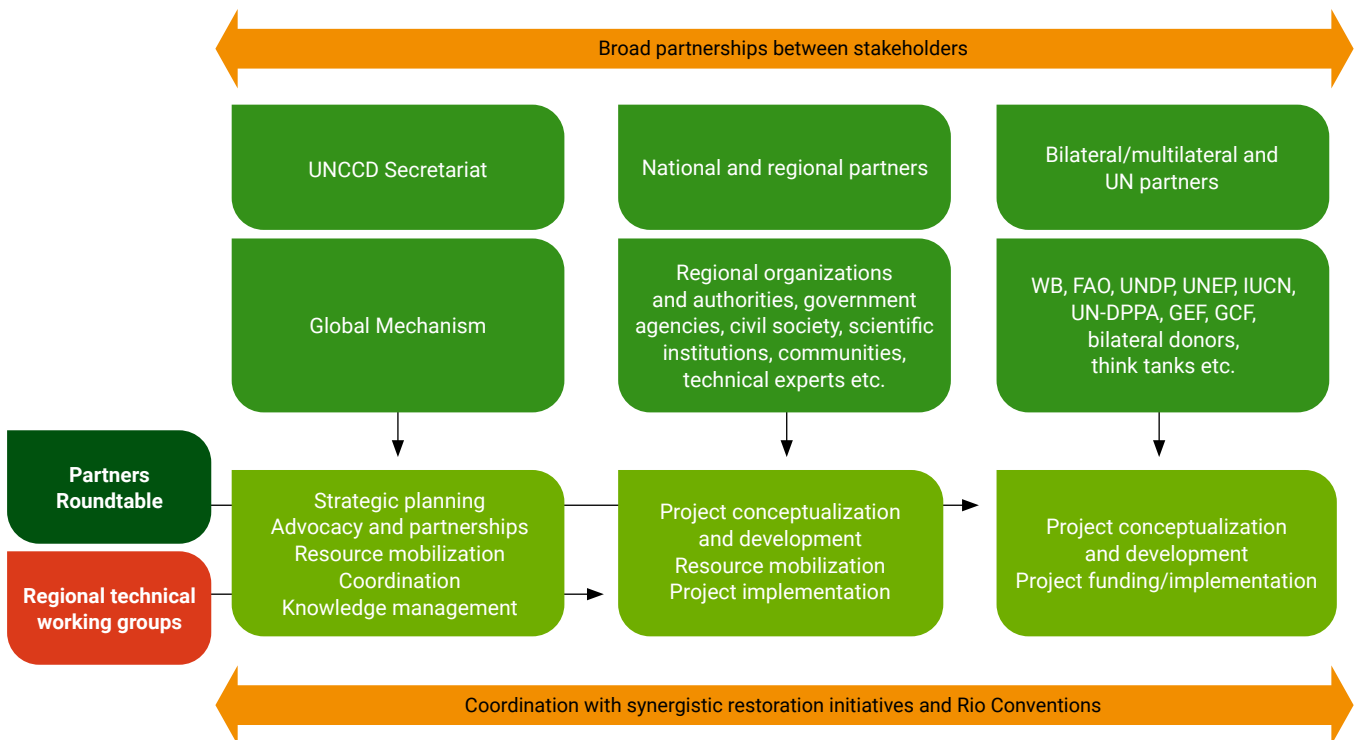
National governments are critical partners to involve, but potential challenges of collaborating with them may include hesitation to cooperate on highly sovereign topics such as land, internal coordination issues at different government levels, and weak technical capacity at local administrative levels (UN Habitat, 2018). Partnering with civil society organizations, on the other hand, is key as they are often more agile and adaptable actors with access to local knowledge and communities, but typically suffer from lacking financial resources and weaker connections to decision-makers (UN Habitat, 2018). Partnering with private companies can be beneficial, while bearing

in mind their potential role as conflict drivers (UN Habitat, 2018).

UN, bilateral and other global partners

Potential partners for PFI planning and implementation include the World Bank, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, CBD, UNFCCC, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), and the UN-led Climate Security Mechanism (CSM), among others. The Secretary-General's guidance note on land and conflict provides guidance on joint arrangements between UN partners (UN, 2019). There are numerous other international organizations to partner with, depending on the regional context and mandates, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), WWF, OSCE, GGGI, as well as

Figure 7. **Illustration of proposed PFI governance arrangements**



many think tanks, research organizations, and relevant regional organizations and institutes to be identified.

Potential funding partners include UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund (AF), regional development banks, as well as relevant bilateral donors to be identified.

These partners are essential in the conceptualization of projects, identifying regional needs and current gaps, conducting analyses and feasibility studies, designing, and developing projects and financing/ implementing them together with the national counterparts. They will also help facilitate synergies between relevant SDGs, other global restoration initiatives and environmental agreements, most notably other Rio Conventions, i.e., sustainable land management and climate resilience in the view of carbon sequestration, mitigation and adaptation while contributing to biodiversity conservation. Joint target setting and implementation of land and ecosystem restoration can facilitate coordinated and cost-effective efforts of participating countries to meet their development priorities and commitments. When identifying partners at the local level, selection should be based on, among others, adequate country presence, appropriate mandate, thematic expertise, and implementation capacity.

Advisory bodies

The PFI Partners Roundtable (PFI-PR) is the principal communication platform to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experiences amongst a wide range of experts and practitioners coming from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations, helping to forge new connections and partnerships for the PFI. It is comprised of representatives from different countries, partner organizations and non-state actors and it will connect policy and decisionmakers, experts, local communi-

ties, private sector, and CSOs and other partners working in the nexus of land and ecosystems, peace, and security to form a network of experts and a community of practice.

The PFI-PR network will steer the development of PFI's vision and overall work, ensuring interventions are effective, appropriate, and based on evidence and in-depth knowledge of the specific contexts. It thereby aims to support and advise UNCCD's Global Mechanism and the PFI implementing organizations with the operations of the PFI, strengthening partnership and resource mobilization. It will help formulating project objectives and rationale, related technical concepts and approaches, and identify funding opportunities, as well as further scope and assess pilot sites and entry points for PFI projects. Roundtable meetings are organised periodically.

Regional technical working groups will be established to facilitate the development of regional activities focusing on region-specific context and close exchanges with a view to building confidence and peace, while securing expertise and resources for the implementation of PFI activities. The working groups will be responsible for the preparation of the thematic concept notes around the agreed priority topics identified during regional PFI workshop. The groups will consist of representatives of participating countries and partners including donors, relevant organizations, experts, and CSOs, and will meet periodically as necessary and agreed. The major tasks of the regional working group include: (i) to serve as a platform for exchange and information sharing at the regional level; (ii) to define and prepare project concepts and resource mobilization documents; (iii) to conduct assessment and analyses as necessary, and (iv) to serve as technical advisory for regional activity, among others.



Photo: Discover Corps

Synergistic initiatives

When planning for activities, synergies should be maximized to avoid duplication of work with other ecosystem restoration initiatives with similar thematic and geographic objectives. Joining forces will enhance operational cost-effectiveness and reduce competition for financial resources. Such initiatives include the Bonn Challenge, the Economics of Land Degradation initiative, the Global Partnership of Forest and Landscape Restoration initiative, the Global Restoration Initiative (WRI), and AFR100 (the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative), to mention a few. See UNEP (2021, p. 41) for more initiatives.

PFI activities must also be aligned across the targets and commitments under the three Rio Conventions (UNCCD, CBD, and UNFCCC) to the extent possible. All of them are official partners to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which seeks to promote synergies and help each Convention achieve their restoration-related targets (UNEP, 2021). PFI activities could further benefit from UNCCD's participation in these coordination efforts.

6.2 Funding arrangements

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) for collaboration to support the PFI was signed by the Korea Forest Service (KFS) of the Republic of Korea and the UNCCD Secretariat in January 2020. Through this MoU, KFS committed to multi-year financial support for the PFI for the purpose of launching preparatory activities, including meetings, workshops, trainings, assessment and analysis, and project development.

Further financing arrangement of project implementation will be determined in the course of project development, taking into consideration potential donor(s) and exploring co-financing opportunities.

Also, a blended multi-partner funding mechanism is proposed as a potential financing scheme in cooperation with relevant UN entities such as UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), GCF, GEF, development banks including the World Bank, bilateral development assistance, private sector (for example the LDN Fund) and national budgets of participating countries where available. There is also scope for innovative funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, or developing revenue-generating activities in the target landscapes (to be explored further).



07

Chapter 7

Risk Management and Safeguards

7.1 Potential risks related to environmental peacebuilding and restoration

As discussed in Section 5 regarding conflict-sensitivity, operating in contexts affected by conflict is particularly sensitive to unintentional consequences and preventive measures for avoidance must be carefully applied. Similar risks are associated with the management of environment and natural resources, including land and ecosystem restoration, if interventions are not appropriately designed for and implemented in the given context. Systematic evidence on the adverse impacts of environmental peacebuilding is currently lacking, while practitioners may also not actively report such outcomes publicly (Ide, 2020). Sharing and learning from negative experiences is nevertheless important, especially to increase understanding of this complex and sensitive field, to better identify underlying risks, and to formulate best practices for future reference (Ide, 2020).

There are potential risks associated with land restoration in conflict-affected areas if not managed in a sensitive manner (IRP, 2019). Restoration can, for instance, alter the existing land use patterns with potentially unequal implications for different land-users (IRP, 2019). For example, reforestation of converted croplands can impact local food security, and care

should be taken to find a balance between environmental and socio-economic objectives (Abhilash, 2021). A case from Ethiopia shows how the establishment of exclosures⁴ on communal pastures created opposition among farmers with high number of animals or with no additional land available, as their livelihood was temporarily restricted due to land restoration (Crossland et al., 2018).

Ill-suited restoration measures can accelerate land degradation, such as afforestation of naturally forest-free areas, which could create unintended consequences of biodiversity loss and disturb natural flows of water, energy, and nutrients (IPBES, 2018), potentially exacerbating resource-related drivers of a conflict. Taking the example of the Great Green Wall, Wahlstedt & Mikkola (2022) note that rather than being a forested expanse, the Sahel region mainly represents a savannah-type grassland ecosystem. Therefore, restoration activities that rely extensively on tree planting, especially to expand carbon sinks by favoring fast-growing alien species, could even have negative impacts on local ecosystems and the pastoral communities (Wahlstedt & Mikkola, 2022).

Ide (2020) has identified the following six types of potential risks related to environmental peacebuilding activities:

⁴ A degraded land area, which is being regenerated by prohibiting grazing and farming activities (Crossland et al., 2018).

- *Depoliticization*: environmental issues and their technical solutions are commonly framed as non-political and therefore relatively neutral as potential peacebuilding entry points. However, a purely technical or scientific approach can conceal and leave the underlying structural and political factors and power dynamics unaddressed that are making certain groups more vulnerable to environmental stress than others.
- *Displacement*: projects occupying large areas of land under the label of environmental peacebuilding, such as hydropower development or conservation areas, may induce forced migration of local populations.
- *Discrimination*: environmental peacebuilding projects that fail to engage indigenous communities or carefully consider gender aspects or local power structures can result in further discrimination of already vulnerable groups, reflecting unequal distribution of benefits from such projects.
- *Deterioration into conflict*: if the above-mentioned risk categories related to environmental peacebuilding coincide with circumstances characterized by ongoing tensions and political instability, the existing conflicts can risk escalating further.
- *Delegitimization of the state*: this can happen when citizens associate their government as the driver of these negative side effects of environmental peacebuilding, or when the local or international peacebuilders are considered better service providers than the national government.
- *Degradation of the environment*: in acute situations where there's urgency to relieve livelihood stress, reduce resource tensions and build confidence, short-sighted response mechanisms may lead to a worsening state of the environment.

Factors that can increase the risk of such negative consequences include existing social divisions and inequalities, and the nature of the political system in place, authoritarian governments being more likely to realize such risks (Ide, 2020).

7.2 Safeguards policy

To ensure positive impact and effectiveness of environmental peacebuilding activities and reduce associated risks and unintended consequences, increased focus should be placed on stakeholder participation and engagement, and designing context-specific interventions (Baden et al., 2022). According to Ide (2020), other such actions include conducting impact assessments (both environmental and social), monitoring by external parties, regulatory protection from discrimination, and better integration of gender and conflict-sensitivity (please see Section 5 on conflict-sensitivity in the PFI process).

When it comes to environmental and social safeguard policies in general, many UN agencies, NGOs and multilateral funding institutions have developed their own guidelines to maximize benefits and avoid negative effects on the intended beneficiaries and the environment. Depending on the implementation and funding partners of each PFI project, the respective safeguard policies must be applied and reported on. Below are a few examples and website links. The UNCCD Secretariat and the UN partners will be able to assist national implementers in applying the respective safeguards.

Safeguard Policies

International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance standards on environmental and social sustainability:

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/sustainability-at-ifc/publications/publications_handbook_pps

GEF Environmental and social safeguard standards:

<https://www.thegef.org/documents/environmental-and-social-safeguard-standards>

GCF: In the interim, GCF applies the IFC performance standards.

UNDP Social and environmental standards:

<https://www.undp.org/accountability/social-and-environmental-responsibility/social-and-environmental-standards>

FAO Framework for environmental and social management:

<https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/en/c/1026868/>

UNEP Environmental, social and sustainability framework:

https://www.unep.org/resources/report/un-environments-environmental-social-and-economic-sustainability-framework?_ga=2.139597811.1597695519.1662023712-210786846.1662023712

IUCN Environmental and social management system:

<https://www.iucn.org/about-iucn/accountability-and-reporting/project-accountability/environmental-and-social-management-system>

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