

IUCN Resupply Project. Final Evaluation

Summary of key findings, lessons, challenges, conclusions and recommendations

July 2023

Introduction and background

The IUCN ReSupply project aims to engage private sector actors producing forest risk commodities (such as cocoa and sugar) operating in tropical forest-rich countries to adopt forest landscape restoration (FLR) measures in their supply chains. The project has three outputs, which aim to equip landscape actors (government and private sector) in Ghana, Tanzania, and Peru with capacity and knowledge to carry out FLR interventions; to support the three partner companies to apply FLR approaches in their supply chains; and to mobilise and engage other global private sector players to undertake similar actions elsewhere. The ReSupply project is funded by the German Ministry of Environment through its International Climate Initiative (IKI). Funding was provided from January 2019 for a three-year period, but provided with two no-cost extensions of six and twelve months, taking it up to the end of June 2023. A final evaluation of the project was commissioned to assess overall progress and inform the design of future programming. Specifically, the evaluation reviewed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project and extracted key lessons learned as well as recommendations for future programming by IUCN.

Relevance

Overall, relevance is scored as “strong achievement” (green), given the ongoing relevance to different stakeholders – but in particular, private sector actors who have not, until recently, been fully engaged in landscape restoration processes, but who are becoming increasingly aware of the need to minimise risks to their supply chains through nature-based Solutions. The project helps fill a knowledge gap with regards to how private sector actors operating in forest-rich landscapes can be engaged and recruited to support landscape restoration work – and importantly some ‘real-world’ examples to draw upon.

Effectiveness

Overall, performance regarding progress against plans is assessed as “satisfactory”. While three output targets were fully achieved (or exceeded) by the end of project, four targets were only partially met by the end of the project. COVID-16 resulted in delays across all three countries with regard to the production of the ROAMs, but changing priorities, as well as key staff within the private sector partners also resulted in delays to implementation. A no-cost extension was agreed with the donor to provide additional time for the project to reach its milestones and targets. When progress is reviewed against the outputs themselves, progress was assessed as “strong achievement”. ROAMs were conducted in all three landscapes and a wide range of actors were engaged through these processes. Business cases have been developed for each company and landscape that identifies interventions around forest landscape restoration that are economically viable, as well as socially and environmentally responsible. The learning from the programme has been successfully disseminated through a range of platforms, forums and channels. The production of the business guide has been well received, is well timed in terms of meeting a widespread need and fed into a range of useful international processes.

The overall assessment of project implementation and support arrangements is scored as “satisfactory”. Despite the constraints caused by COVID-19, ROAM assessments were carried out in all three countries and large amounts of relevant data compiled with which to inform the business case development process. A good cross-section of stakeholders were consulted in all three

countries. However, complex implementation and support structures and limited in-country capacity have meant that progress has been slower than originally anticipated. There have been limited opportunities for feedback and validation of proposals developed during the ROAMs and Business Cases to stakeholders consulted which may have limited overall effectiveness.

The overall performance score for monitoring and evaluation is “unsatisfactory with some positive elements”. The MEL strategy and plan developed by IUCN headquarter was well presented and clear in terms of providing guidance and tools for project staff. Furthermore, useful learning exercises were facilitated around some key areas of relevance to the project by the IUCN MEL team. However, other than the learning events which were well received, the MEL strategy was not implemented consistently in large part due to staff being over-burdened with other project management responsibilities. As a result, there is very limited evidence with which to track progress against key milestones and indicators.

Impact

It has not been possible to assess impacts given the short-term nature of this project. Project outcomes are expressed in terms of implementation and action by private sector partners as a result of their engagement in the three landscapes (outcome indicator 1) and as a result of their participation in the community of practice (outcome indicator 2). With the benefit of hindsight, these indicators were too ambitious and not possible to achieve within this first phase of work. By the end of the 18 month no-cost extension, business cases were prepared for all three sites, but only shared with Peru. Communications with Tanzania have stalled due to non-disclosure of the EIA for the sugar company’s planned expansion area. Implementation of the business cases has yet to take place, in large part due to questions over financing, which was not foreseen in the original project design. While there has been significant engagement with global private sector actors, there is no evidence to suggest that this has been translated into them showing “high level support and the allocation of resources to unlock FLR implementation”. As such, performance has been assessed as “unsatisfactory with some positive elements”.

Efficiency

Overall, efficiency has been scored as “satisfactory”. Financial management has been good overall with spending in line with plans. A 12-month no-cost extension meant that slow rates of spending (caused by COVID-19 and other factors) could be more efficiently used. The bulk of expenditures have been used in staffing costs as per original plan. Supervision and support have been high – covering 63 % of total expenditures, which underlines the need for support that was required from regional and international offices.

Lessons Learned

Three core lessons are presented in this report which have emerged as important learnings from the project. They are discussed in more detail in the body of the report. Lessons are presented on:

- Corporate engagement – which requires time, new skills and changes in approach
- Adapting and evolving the ROAM framework to the needs of the private sector
- Understanding what it takes to change private sector behaviour and the particular need for support with finance and communication

Recommendations

A key recommendation is for IUCN to secure some form of additional financing (either from the German government or from other sources) with which to:

- Finalise the business cases and tailor them to the specific needs of individual companies
- Help contact persons within the three companies “pitch” and communicate the BC

recommendations to their respective boards, senior managers and finance teams

- Develop practical action plans for all three companies with regard to the implementation of FLR recommendations in the business cases and where needed additional areas of external technical support from IUCN
- Help companies identify and pursue new sources of financing including public private partnerships
- Undertake feedback sessions in-country with stakeholders consulted (particularly those outside the private sector partners) and identifying opportunities for additional financing to support wider landscape interventions
- Publish and communicate key learning points regarding engaging with the private sector on FLR – including initial discussions, planning, data needs and sharing, communication and moving into implementation

Three additional recommendations are provided based on learning from this project

- In future IUCN projects, align MEL responsibilities clearly with key staff and ensure that accountability mechanisms are introduced to ensure compliance while not overburdening local staff
- When projects involve new approaches and strategies (such as engaging with the private sector) ensure that sufficient time is provided within the project inception phase to build capacity, engagement and understanding from national staff. Ensuring ownership of project approaches and outcomes by national staff will build opportunities for local engagement and learning.
- When allocating responsibilities for project management, ensure that senior staff have sufficient time to undertake assigned tasks and are not unduly overburdened with multiple projects. While overloading programme management staff may have a short-term benefit of reducing overheads, it represents a false economy in the long term and will lead to delays and inefficiency.

ReSupply Final Evaluation - Management Response

Evaluand identification data		
Evaluand title:	Resupply Final Evaluation	
Date started:	25.04.2022	
Date closed:	30.06.2023	
Evaluand manager:	Programme/office:	
Florian Reinhard	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Unit	

Management Response Summary Data	
Evaluation or review title as it appears on final report: ReSupply Project - Restoration in supply chains from zero net deforestation to net positive action - Final Evaluation Date received: 18 07 2023	Unit/person responsible for managing/tracking follow-up: Agriculture Team, Centre for Economy and Finance
Date Management Response approved: 31 07 2023 Last progress update: 31 07 2023	All units/positions requested to take action: Agriculture team Economic Team M&L and Comms
Expected duration required to fully implement the MR: By end of 2024	

Narrative response:

Overall IUCN accepts the report and evaluation results. It has been challenging for IUCN to convey to the evaluator that the project was about learning of how to run and plan for landscape restoration in supply chains and engaging the private sector, and not getting the business cases to full implementation by the end of the project – this was in some way driven by the donor logframe, whilst they understood the nature of the project their global requirements did force some overly optimistic framing of the outcomes.

Similarly, specific issues about private sector engagement were not clear in responses regards the overall ROAM process and how the private sector was engaged, and for the outcomes to be framed for the private sector. Particularly for the non-private sector partners and internally within IUCN this was always difficult to articulate as the why and how for the private sector to restore land on and off farm was seen as in conflict to the wider stakeholder engagement, but should be accepted as part of it.

There was also a sense that the report was very black and white against the original logframe, but the impacts of COVID and challenges from both country teams and company issues saw the team adapt accordingly, and whilst this was changed in the final version, there still seemed to be tensions in the impacts from those issues.

Objective of the Evaluation

This final evaluation was commissioned by IUCN and it fulfils its Evaluation Policy (2023) to conduct an independent Final Evaluation for the purpose of assessing the results of the intervention. It was expected that the findings and recommendations of this final evaluation will help to inform future decisions such as whether to pursue additional interventions, to scale up existing interventions, or to replicate this project elsewhere. The external evaluation should also help IUCN identify key lessons learned that could be used for the development of future project proposals and improve the implementation of future interventions.

The Process

The main evaluation was conducted in May and early June 2022, but during the evaluation, decision was made with the German Ministry for Environment for a further 12-months, no-cost extension. As a result, a finalisation process was undertaken in May and June 2023 to conclude the evaluation to incorporate project results until June 2023.

The draft evaluation report was shared with IUCN staff for feedback and comments in July 2023 and used to finalise the report.

Strength of the report

As can be seen from our responses, the report does accept that the project was successful as to what it achieved (just the match to the outcomes was a challenge for delivery). The engagement of companies was highlighted as relevant in approach for land restoration (which has been very site focused and NGO focused up until now), the business guide was highlighted to demonstrate this. In this context, it is felt that the

recommendations are forward looking to explore opportunities in the future development of projects, financing flows and private sector engagement in land restoration.

Challenge posed by the report and areas of disagreement

The ROAM process was seen as very black and white i.e. we must follow a set process and we must have a clearly defined output. ROAM was not designed as such, it is a methodology that brings in different tools and links different multistakeholder processes to achieve ownership and identify a suite of restoration actions. Also, this was its first application at a landscape level, including strong private sector engagement, which was not fully recognized in the report.

As mentioned above, framing of programme and overall indicators had been confused, as the focus was mainly on learning. After a good dialogue with the evaluator, this was well reflected in the report.

Also, the success and global response to the business guide was a strong outcome that reached many more stakeholders than planned, which was felt needed more recognition.

IUCN use of the report and its recommendation

IUCN welcomes the eight (8) recommendations put forward by the evaluator as the basis for the design and management of similar projects in the future. IUCN has accepted 4 out of 8 recommendations, partially accepted 3 and has not accepted one.

The Agriculture Team will lead the implementation and tracking of the actions to implement the recommendations below and will count on the support of several other units named here with shared responsibility for the actions and intended results. Every/unit requested to take action (listed below) has been consulted and commented on this response and agreed on the planned actions.

Evaluation Recommendations	IUCN Management Response	Key actions in response	Intended Result	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Status (for tracking)	Comment (for tracking)
<p><u>Recommendation 1:</u></p> <p>Finalise the business cases and tailor them to the specific needs of individual companies</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>There is one company with which this will not be possible and cannot be disclosed due to a NDA.</p> <p>The other two are finalised at the time of the management response</p>	<p>Organise a follow up call with KSC to understand needs to finalise business case</p>	<p>Final business cases</p>	<p>Agriculture team</p>	<p>By end 2023</p>	<p>Partially achieved</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 2:</u></p> <p>Help contact persons within the three companies “pitch” and communicate the BC recommendations to their respective boards, senior managers and</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Organise a meeting with the contact persons (October 2023) to plan a meeting with senior managers (November 2023)</p>	<p>Build confidence of the focal points to sell the business case to higher management so they can invest more in landscape restoration in</p>	<p>Agriculture team with support of Economist</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Not started</p>	<p>This result might not be achieved with one of the companies with whom IUCN is having communication issues.</p>

Evaluation Recommendations	IUCN Management Response	Key actions in response	Intended Result	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Status (for tracking)	Comment (for tracking)
finance teams			their supply chains.				
<p><u>Recommendation 3:</u></p> <p>Develop practical action plans for all three companies with regard to the implementation of FLR recommendations in the business cases and where needed additional areas of external technical support from IUCN</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>Even though this would be the ideal way forward, this can be done only if there is extra funding for a follow up phase from the donor or from the companies.</p>	<p>Follow up with BMUV on opportunities for cost extension (in process)</p> <p>Also consider integration into NbS projects the application of the guide</p>	Implementation of landscape restoration in the companies supply chains.	Agriculture team	End 2023	Not started	
<p><u>Recommendation 4:</u></p> <p>Help companies identify and pursue new sources of financing including public private</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>IUCN will commit to support companies through recommendations number 1.</p>	<p>See recommendation 1 and 3</p> <p>Follow up in September 2023 with IKI on the with cost</p>	Secure new source of funding	Agriculture team	2024	Partially achieved	

Evaluation Recommendations	IUCN Management Response	Key actions in response	Intended Result	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Status (for tracking)	Comment (for tracking)
partnerships	<p>However, being project funded does not allow IUCN staff to spend the necessary amount of time to engage in a working relationship with the companies to identify new sources of funding. In addition to recommendation number 1, IUCN will pursue fundraising with the past donor for an extension of the project.</p>	<p>extension submitted.</p> <p>Consider integration into NbS projects the application of the guide</p>					
<p><u>Recommendation 5:</u> Undertake feedback sessions in-country with stakeholders</p>	<p>Not accepted</p> <p>IUCN does not have funding to organize such meetings.</p>						

Evaluation Recommendations	IUCN Management Response	Key actions in response	Intended Result	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Status (for tracking)	Comment (for tracking)
consulted (particularly those outside the private sector partners) and identifying opportunities for additional financing to support wider landscape interventions	However, IUCN will pursue fundraising with the past donor for an extension of the project that should include these feedback sessions.						
<p><u>Recommendation 6:</u></p> <p>Publish and communicate key learning points regarding engaging with the private sector on FLR – including initial discussions, planning, data needs and sharing, communication and moving into implementation</p>	Accepted	Publish the learning brief	Improve delivery of similar projects	M&L with Communication team	End 2023	Partially achieved	The brief's content is finalized but it needs to be laid out and shared

Evaluation Recommendations	IUCN Management Response	Key actions in response	Intended Result	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Status (for tracking)	Comment (for tracking)
<p><u>Recommendation 7:</u> In future IUCN projects, align MEL responsibilities clearly with key staff and ensure that accountability mechanisms are introduced to ensure compliance while not overburdening local staff</p>	Accepted	In the design phase of the project, inform country teams about MEL responsibilities and co-created an accountability mechanism to ensure buy-in of all team members	Improved MEL	Lead unit of project proposals	Ongoing	Not started	
<p><u>Recommendation 8:</u> When projects involve new approaches and strategies (such as engaging with the private sector) ensure that sufficient time is provided within</p>	Accepted	Organize project inception meetings at the very beginning with a strong component on learning. Plan for an inception phase for learning and	Improved delivery and buy in of project staff	Any project team	Ongoing	Not started	Presence of inception phase dedicated to learning and alignment in project proposals

Evaluation Recommendations	IUCN Management Response	Key actions in response	Intended Result	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Status (for tracking)	Comment (for tracking)
<p>the project inception phase to build capacity, engagement and understanding from national staff. Ensuring ownership of project approaches and outcomes by national staff will build opportunities for local engagement and learning.</p>		<p>aligning before getting to implementation.</p>					