

## Final Review of the Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (GCS REDD+): CIFOR's Management Response

June 2021

CIFOR takes note of and welcomes the "Final Evaluation Report for CIFOR's 'A Global Comparative Study for achieving effective, efficient and equitable REDD+ results'" provided by Efeca and funded by Norad under QZA-16/0010 Nr. 1500551 A Global Comparative Study for Achieving REDD+ Results.

Efeca conducted the final review between November 2020 and May 2021 and concluded with six key recommendations for future work (a proposal for a fourth phase of the project is in the pipeline), as well as flagging relevant recommendations from the mid-term review conducted in 2018, which we respond to below.

### Recommendations for a future phase of GCS REDD+

**1<sup>st</sup> Recommendation.** *CIFOR scientists' physical in-country presence was seen as pivotal in making a difference in activities conducted and impacts achieved locally, therefore it was recommended that CIFOR's presence was sought for all the countries included in future phases of the GCS project.*

#### **CIFOR Management Response.**

The importance of in-country presence has also been noted by previous evaluations of GCS REDD+ (Young & Bird 2015, Ducenne et al. 2019) and indeed is one of CIFOR's strengths. In our future work we want to focus on four countries: Peru and Indonesia where we have offices; DRC where we intend to have a national scientist based in Kinshasa; and Brazil where we have strong partners and now an institutional presence through the CIFOR-ICRAF merger.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Recommendation.** *A more comprehensive communications strategy was also suggested, particularly in some countries (e.g. Indonesia), and with respect to engagement with the private sector (which was not clearly tracked in Phase 3). Similarly, stronger partnerships with local organizations in priority countries were recommended for increasing engagement on the ground, including at the sub-national level, and with private sector actors.*

#### **CIFOR Management Response.**

The evaluation highlights the importance of targeted in-country communications, including through briefs with succinct policy messages written in local languages (e.g. contributing to outcomes observed at national and subnational levels in Vietnam). We have proposed more targeted in-country communications for our future work, while maintaining the strong global communications and outreach activities that have made GCS REDD+ so successful in sharing knowledge in the past.

We have cultivated very strong local partnerships with subnational governments, civil society organizations and local research institutes in GCS REDD+ priority countries, but indeed our collaborations with the private sector have been more limited. Corporate actors will be targeted explicitly in our future work through participation in the proposed stakeholder reference groups (please see next point below).

**3<sup>rd</sup> Recommendation.** *To strengthen GCS research uptake, it was recommended to identify the audience for each study as soon as possible to ensure that the final outputs are targeted to the desired audience(s).*

#### **CIFOR Management Response.**

At the onset of our future work, we intend to create a reference group of key stakeholders in each priority country based on country-level theories of change, which will be nested into a global theory of change. We will work with these reference groups to co-produce knowledge through science-policy platforms. This approach will allow for more effective stakeholder engagement towards outcomes, as well as assist in the internal monitoring of stakeholders' use and uptake of knowledge for policy and practice.

**4<sup>th</sup> Recommendation.** *Country pages on CIFOR GCS website were also suggested, together with a more sophisticated way to 'filter' publications, in order to facilitate access to more targeted content. This was mainly due to the vast amount of resources available on CIFOR GCS website, and the lack of stakeholders' time. For instance, this could be particularly helpful for local CSOs looking for country and/or topic specific evidence.*

#### **CIFOR Management Response.**

We are revamping the [GCS REDD+ website](#) to provide a more user-friendly interface and better, more targeted search capabilities. The website will include knowledge portals in Spanish, Portuguese, French and Bahasa Indonesia to feature content that can be accessed by actors in the four countries targeted in our future work, in their languages.

**5<sup>th</sup> Recommendation.** *Amongst other topics, further research on Benefit Sharing Mechanisms was suggested by stakeholders interviewed, including on the integration of PES and solutions for sustainable livelihoods to help local communities to effectively use PES financial resources. This was linked with the potential to focus more on financing mechanisms for REDD+ initiatives, leveraging the private sector and voluntary carbon markets, particularly at the jurisdictional level.*

#### **CIFOR Management Response.**

As REDD+ finance increases, improved transparency of the revenue flows from current and prospective REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms can help foster confidence among stakeholders and create political support for further investments in tropical forests. CIFOR has a strong track record of work on [REDD+ benefit sharing](#) and finance, which we intend to build on towards providing input for revising ART-TREES guidance on REDD+ benefit (and cost) sharing and informing REDD+ benefit sharing mechanisms in the priority countries.

**6<sup>th</sup> Recommendation.** *It is suggested that a fully implemented MELIA system is used from the start of Phase 4.*

#### **CIFOR Management Response**

As noted by Efeca, the existing MELIA plan (Thuerer & Rouge 2019) was developed and introduced following the 2018 mid-term review recommendation. A main component of this MELIA system, the 'Stories of Change', was developed in the final year of the project and provided extremely useful insights for current and future work (see below). We have followed Efeca's suggestion of continuing these stories and expanding them to encompass global impacts by incorporating them in the MELIA description in the phase 4 proposal. We will also establish the previously recommended outcome influence logs into the project MELIA system, as well as country-level theories of change.

CIFOR's Quality for Impact team (Q4I) will prepare the MELIA system for the next phase of GCS REDD+ based on the final global and country specific result frameworks.

#### **Relevant recommendations from the mid-term review flagged by Efeca**

Efeca reviewed the four key recommendations from the mid-term review to assess their progress by the end of GCS REDD+ phase 3.



**1<sup>st</sup> MTR Recommendation.** *Produce a short strategy document outlining what makes for the best ‘match’ between CIFOR and its collaborating organizations (indicated by Efeca as ‘not yet fully addressed’)*

Our global partnership strategy for GCS REDD+ has followed that of the broader CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry in which the project is embedded, and we have broad networks of government, civil society, private sector and research partners in the countries where we work. That said, we plan to develop a country-specific partnership strategy papers alongside the country-level theories of change that will allow for more strategic local partner engagement moving forward.

**2<sup>nd</sup> MTR Recommendation.** *The MELIA system should be put in place as soon as possible. It can be very useful to assess the pathways’ effectiveness and the contribution of the project to final outcomes (indicated by Efeca as ‘fully addressed in 2020/2021’)*

As mentioned in the previous section, the MELIA plan began to be implemented in 2020 and will be revised for a fourth phase of the project.

**3<sup>rd</sup> MTR Recommendation.** *Providing information and exerting influence: “Enough information” and “not enough influence”, in relative terms. Using the MELIA, the module leaders should be able to better identify obstacles and remedy them accordingly. It is not only about improving the flow of information and action but also positioning the product between information and influence (indicated by Efeca as ‘partially addressed’)*

The MELIA plan addresses this recommendation and lessons learned from the ‘Stories of Change’ (below) will be applied to future project work. Annual reflections about the project’s engagement strategies - based on country-level theories of change and partnership strategy papers - will help to identify obstacles and make necessary modifications to the communications and engagement strategy.

**4<sup>th</sup> MTR Recommendation.** *Not to engage into developing country-specific theory of change. The generic theory of change can still be used for the remaining implementation period of time. Instead, the project should select and closely monitor up to four selected policy trajectories in order to enrich the body of knowledge on the process (stories of change) (indicated by Efeca as ‘partially addressed’)*

This recommendation should be considered fully addressed through the completion of the following four GCS REDD+ ‘Stories of Change’ in Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru:

- 1) Payments for Forest Environmental Services in Vietnam: Strengthening effectiveness through monitoring and evaluation (Pham et al. 2021)
- 2) Supporting district-level jurisdictional approaches in Indonesia (Nofyanza et al. 2021)
- 3) CIFOR’s science on wetlands for Indonesian MRV and FREL development (Bhomia et al. 2021)
- 4) *Cómo vamos?* A tool to support more equitable co-management of Peru’s protected areas (Sarmiento-Barletti et al. 2021)

We will continue to document ‘Stories of Change’ at subnational and national, as well as global, levels. Also, as mentioned in the previous section, we plan to develop country-level theories of change for the next phase of GCS REDD+, because these will allow for greater specificity and hence, efficiency. This strategy diverges from the MTR recommendation, but follows the observation in the final review on the value of nested theories of change.

## References

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