



PBL Netherlands Environmental
Assessment Agency

LANDSCAPE RESTORATION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The case of the Global Partnership on Forest and
Landscape Restoration and the Bonn Challenge

Background Study

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Executive summary

Worldwide the quality of land is degrading, reducing its ability to provide ecosystem services humanity depends on for its existence. Land degradation is defined as 'a long-term loss of ecosystem function and services, caused by disturbances from which the system cannot recover unaided' (UNEP, 2007). Some studies estimate that 1.5 billion people globally are directly affected by land degradation (UNCCD, 2013). In view of this trend land degradation and its counterpart, restoration, are currently attracting a surge of interest in the international arena of environmental governance. Ambitious targets for restoration have been set, partnerships between key institutes are forged, and new activities are being proposed and implemented. This study provides an analysis of this process, focusing on the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) and the associated Bonn Challenge.

The aim of this analysis is to identify means to create political momentum and catalyse action for restoration at multiple levels of governance globally. For this it proposes a pragmatic approach to global environmental governance, which builds on collaborative efforts, innovations and initiatives that are taken forward by different types of state and non-state actors largely outside the purview of traditional multilateral processes that, to date, have been unable to curb global land degradation trends.

The GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge are taken as examples of such an approach. The GPFLR is an informally structured assembly and platform that connects the efforts of its individual members (text box 1) around a common vision and objective to see forest and landscape restoration recognised and implemented worldwide. The GPFLR is considered to be successful in pushing restoration on the international political agenda by launching the Bonn Challenge in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment. The Bonn Challenge aspires to bring 150 million hectares of land into restoration by 2020. Achieving this goal can have a range of cross-cutting benefits in areas such as food security, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation, reforestation and carbon sequestration. Countries, landowners and other types of actors are invited to commit a number of hectares for restoration to the Bonn Challenge. To date about 86 million hectares (table 1) have been committed which is almost the size of Nigeria.

Based on this case study means are identified to four interrelated areas of activity that are needed to comprehensively address restoration at a global scale: (1) Engaging in dialogue and policy advocacy at a global level; (2) Catalysing commitment for restoration at lower levels of governance; (3) Implementing commitments to restore; and (4) Providing funds and capacity building.

1) Engaging in dialogue and policy advocacy at a global level

This study demonstrates that groups of state and non-state actors can effectively collaborate on policy advocacy and thought leadership on environmental challenges within the context of an informally structured partnership; based on a common agenda; and through voluntary participation. Through its informal structure the GPFLR for instance provided an informal platform for members to collaborate on goal setting for the Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration on Forests (which extends the aspirations of the Bonn Challenge to a total of 300 million hectares by 2030). The GPFLR also provides a structure through which its members can provide thought leadership by developing and disseminating a common approach of Forest and Landscape Restoration and communicating restoration benefits and success stories.

2) Catalysing commitment for restoration at lower levels of governance

This study also indicates that a system of voluntary non-binding pledges can enhance political momentum behind global environmental targets. Through this system the Bonn Challenge prioritises political will at lower levels of governance, on the basis of which restoration of degraded land can take place as an internally driven process, rather than one that is imposed. In addition political will may be enhanced by framing the nexus between landscape restoration and its politically prioritised domestic benefits, such as improved agricultural productivity and food security.

3) Implementing commitments to restore

Non-binding commitments however also cause implementation to be uncertain. Apart from capacity limitations this can be attributed to the absence of implementation requirements and lacking transparency on efforts to implement Bonn Challenge commitments. But implementation requirements could detriment the voluntary nature of the Bonn Challenge and may therefore not be an effective means to enhance confidence in implementation. Instead, this may be addressed by providing more transparency through monitoring frameworks and by providing incentives to implement through support mechanisms.

4) Providing funds and capacity building in support of implementation.

The majority of commitments to restore degraded land are made by developing countries which often have limited means for implementation. International support is therefore needed to assist implementation in the global south. However, lacking prioritisation and capacity within the international development system as well as bureaucratic processes associated with funding applications cause available support to lag behind a growing demand. In order to implement the Bonn Challenge, the international development system may need to further prioritise land degradation in alignment with growing political momentum behind this issue. Global partnerships including the GPFLR can play a key role in this regard, and can also enhance the effectiveness of support by promoting a move beyond institutional silos through complementary and joint effort among members. Furthermore, in order to curb global land degradation trends support may have to move beyond Official

Development Assistance. Impact investment and mixing public with private funds have the potential to become a key component of restoration in the future.

FULL RESULTS

1 Introduction

Land degradation is widely recognised as a global problem, leading to a significant reduction of the productive capacity of land. It is defined as a 'a long-term loss of ecosystem function and services, caused by disturbances from which the system cannot recover unaided' (UNEP, 2007). The UNEP Global Environment Outlook 4 notes that over the past few decades, increasing human population, economic development and emerging global markets have driven and exacerbated land-use change. Expected population and economic growth are likely to further increase the exploitation of land resources over the next 50 years. Important changes have occurred in forest cover and composition, expansion and intensification of cropland, and the growth of urban areas, leading to land degradation. This is commonly associated with biodiversity loss, contamination and pollution, soil erosion and nutrient depletion (UNEP, 2007), adversely impacting agronomic productivity, the environment, food security, water availability/provision and general quality of life (Eswaran et al., 2001). These challenges affect an estimated 2.6 billion people globally (Adems et al., 2000) and a significant portion of the earth's land surface (Gisladottir et al., 2005). Despite this relevance land degradation until recently received relatively little attention compared to other global environmental challenges (Andersson, 2011).

This is starting to change however. Land degradation and restoration increasingly gains prominence in the international environmental policy arena (Boer and Hannam, 2014). Multiple multilaterally determined targets have recently been agreed upon that strive to reduce degradation and promote restoration (Wunder et al., 2013). Particularly relevant targets are the UNCCD/Rio+20 target on a land degradation neutral world by 2020, the CBD Aichi target 15¹ to restore 15% of degraded lands from a biodiversity perspective and the UNFCCC REDD+ targets to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which includes halting and reversing land degradation². While various governance arrangements thus set specific goals for land degradation and restoration globally, there is no *overarching* sustainable land policy at the international level (e.g. Stringer, 2008). Although the three Rio sister conventions (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC) do deal with land-related issues, they only explicitly address land use in their specific context. Moreover, all three conventions lack political support and appropriate financial resources, suffer from limited levels of implementation or their scope of application

¹ By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks have been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification

² SDG Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

is limited to certain regions and biomes (Fritche et al., 2014; Pistorius et al., 2014; Gisladdottir et al., 2005). While land degradation and restoration is increasingly being addressed on the global political agenda, it is therefore questioned whether this issue will be further substantiated or governed (e.g. Leadley et al., 2014; Pistorius et al., 2014).

Meanwhile much potential lies in the restoration of degraded landscapes. It is estimated that worldwide there are more than two billion hectares where opportunities for restoration of deforested and degraded landscapes can be found (Laestadius et al., 2011). In view of this potential new targets specifically focused on restoration have also emerged, complementary to the above formal processes under the Rio Conventions. In 2011 the Bonn Challenge was launched, hosted by the German Government and IUCN with support of the GPFLR. It aspires to bring 150 million hectares of land into restoration by 2020. In addition the New York Declaration on Forests, which was an outcome of the 2014 Climate Summit, included the Bonn Challenge target and extended this to restoring an addition of at least 200 million hectares by 2030, leading to a total of 350 million hectares. Achieving these goals can have a range of cross-cutting benefits including food security, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation, combatting desertification, reforestation, carbon sequestration and economic growth. Achieving the overall target of restoring 350 million hectares by 2030 can generate net benefits in the general order of US\$170 billion per year, including timber products, non-timber forest products, fuel, better soil and water management remunerated through higher crop yields, and recreation (New Climate Economy, 2014).

However, these ambitious targets need to translate into concrete restoration activity. For this, innovative mechanisms are needed that go beyond formal multilateral processes which have proven to be insufficient to date. A more collaborative and action-oriented approach is needed between the range of state and non-state institutions involved with landscapes, to create further political momentum and instigate restoration, based on a clear understanding of socio-economic and bio-physical circumstances on the ground.

1.1 Transnational multi-stakeholder partnerships for restoration

In light of the demand for implementation of the above international targets new often bottom-up driven initiatives for restoration have come to the forth in the past decade. An important factor in such initiatives is the involvement of a broader range of state as well as non-state actors, which interact through a more networked approach rather than vertical hierarchy. These governance arrangements can be nested in various kinds of transnational multi-stakeholder partnerships. Collaborative approaches to global environmental governance have rapidly gained momentum since the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 (Pistorius et al., 2014), where they were introduced as *type II* initiatives. Such initiatives often operate beyond the auspices of the established conventions (e.g. UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD) and are often driven by smaller groups of like-minded countries, regional authorities, international institutions, private actors, academia and NGOs (e.g. Blok et al.

2012; UNEP, 2013). These partnerships are among other things promoted as a solution to deadlocked international negotiations, ineffective development cooperation and overly bureaucratic international organisations (Pattberg et al., 2014). Wadell (2003) describes these partnerships as 'Global Action Networks' that aim to fulfil a leading role in the protection of the global commons or the production of global public goods'. Interesting examples of these networks can be found in the field of climate governance where they are commonly referred to as International Cooperative Initiatives. These range from global dialogues and formal multilateral processes to concrete implementation initiatives (Harrison et al., 2014). Key in these initiatives is that actors are driven by self-interest or intrinsic motivation rather than external pressure. In the field of climate governance such governance arrangements can give new momentum to mitigation efforts (Blok et al., 2012). While these initiatives are particularly prominent in the field of climate governance, they form a promising means to materialise international landscape restoration targets as well (Fritsche et al., 2014). Professional societies, governments, private actors and NGOs can for instance collaborate to set standards and prioritise ecosystems and regions for restoration and resource allocation (Menz et al., 2013).

Such initiatives will take place in an institutional landscape that is characterised by a plethora of international organisations, civil society groups, national governments and academic institutions that are actively engaged in landscape restoration with overlapping roles and approaches towards restoration³. A transnational multi-stakeholder partnership may be capable of facilitating a collaborative approach by these actors, as these are commonly characterised by fewer bureaucratic hurdles and greater flexibility compared to conventional state-centred governance arrangements. This study focuses on such networks that can potentially facilitate a collaborative approach to global governance of landscape restoration. Examples of such initiatives are the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR); the Landscapes for People Food and Nature (LPFN) initiative; the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER); and the International Model Forest Network (IMFN). These initiatives have a broad membership-base across the global restoration community, including research institutes, (inter)governmental organisations, practitioners and NGOs. These initiatives demonstrate that many well-established institutions with decades of experience in restoration have already organised themselves in various networks with similar purposes; namely those of establishing partnerships, brokering and exchanging knowledge, providing guidance and best practices and engaging in policy advocacy (Pistorius et al., 2014). While it is evident that they have a positive influence in these areas, much uncertainty remains about the strengths and weaknesses of these initiatives to influence landscape restoration activity at various levels of governance. Limited knowledge and experience on how to effectively engage in such collaborative actions for restoration is available. In general social and political

³ Important examples are the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN), the World Resources Institute (WRI), the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In addition a number of national governments are starting to recognize restoration as a priority and influence the playing field, particularly through funding streams (e.g. Germany, Norway, South Korea).

sciences have paid relatively little attention to general ecological restoration challenges (Baker et al., 2014), particularly where the international level of governance is concerned.

1.2 Research aim

In view of the above mentioned developments and uncertainties this study will question *how transnational multi-stakeholder partnerships can create political momentum behind the global restoration challenge; what opportunities and constraints are in translating this momentum into concrete action at the landscape level; and what role the noted transnational partnerships can play in this regard.*

The aim of answering these questions is to analyse opportunities and constraints to addressing the global restoration challenge through a pragmatic bottom-up governance approach. Such an approach builds on societal actions and initiatives that are already being undertaken by civil society groups, academia, private sectors as well as a range of (inter)governmental actors, instead of adopting a more traditional top-down state-centred approach. Pragmatic bottom-up approaches use cross-sectoral ways of framing global environmental problems in a way that addresses various environmental and developmental targets and interest. They also build on collaborative efforts, innovations and initiatives by actors largely outside the purview of formal multilateral processes (see Ludwig and Kok, 2015).

1.3 Case selection: GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge

While recognising the broader range of partnerships, this study focuses on one case to ensure a clear focus. Innovative governance arrangements (that together form an example of a pragmatic approach to land restoration governance) were selected. Important criteria for these innovative arrangements were the potential for impact; active participation by non-state actors (as opposed to traditional state-centred arrangements); involvement of bottom-up initiatives in land restoration, connecting the global level to local initiatives; and a transnational scope for alignment with global restoration targets.

One transnational multi-stakeholder partnership which in its structure and potential largely fits with these criteria is the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR). Although the focus and activity of the GPFLR has some overlap with other initiatives such as the aforementioned LPFN, no other partnership exists with the same focus on restoration with a strong incorporation of socio-economic aspects of forest and landscape restoration. The GPFLR is considered to be successful in pushing landscape restoration on the international political agenda. Of particular importance in this regard has been the launching of the Bonn Challenge by a number of GPFLR members in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment. The Bonn Challenge has the aspiration to bring 150 million hectares of degraded land into restoration by 2020, to which countries, landowners and other types of actors are invited to commit a number of hectares for restoration. To date about 86 million hectares have been committed to the Bonn Challenge

(Table 1), which is about the size of Nigeria. Of importance to note is that many of these commitments have yet to embark on a process of implementation. The opportunities and constraints to instigate a successful and long-term implementation process, and the role of GPFLR partners (as well as other supporting initiatives) in this regard, forms a key component of this study.

1.3.1 Key informants

Little information on the functioning and effectiveness of the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge is available. To enable an adequate case analysis, semi-structured interviews and e-mail exchanges with GPFLR members and close collaborators have therefore been carried out. A total of 12 informants have been consulted, as listed in the appendix.

1.3.2 What is Forest and Landscape Restoration?

Of importance to note is that the term Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) and the associated partnership (GPFLR) are not limited to forests. It is defined as a 'process to regain ecological integrity and enhance human well-being in deforested or degraded landscapes within biomes with the natural potential to support trees' (WRI, 2015). The entry point of FLR is the role of trees, forests and other types of woody plants, but it goes far beyond planting trees. It relies on active stakeholder engagement and can accommodate a mosaic of various land uses, including but not limited to agriculture, agroforestry, protected wildlife reserves and regenerated forests (IUCN, 2015). The goal of FLR is to enhance native ecosystem functions. It should bring ecological and economic productivity back without causing loss or conversion of natural forests, grasslands or other ecosystems (WRI, 2015).

2 Four activity areas for global restoration governance

This study strives to shed light on the aforementioned research questions by focusing on four interrelated activity areas for restoration (Figure 1). These cover various levels of governance and activities ranging from creating political momentum to activities that directly support the implementation of restoration targets. In order to instigate local restoration activities on a global scale, all four activity areas are of importance, to which various enabling and constraining factors may be relevant.

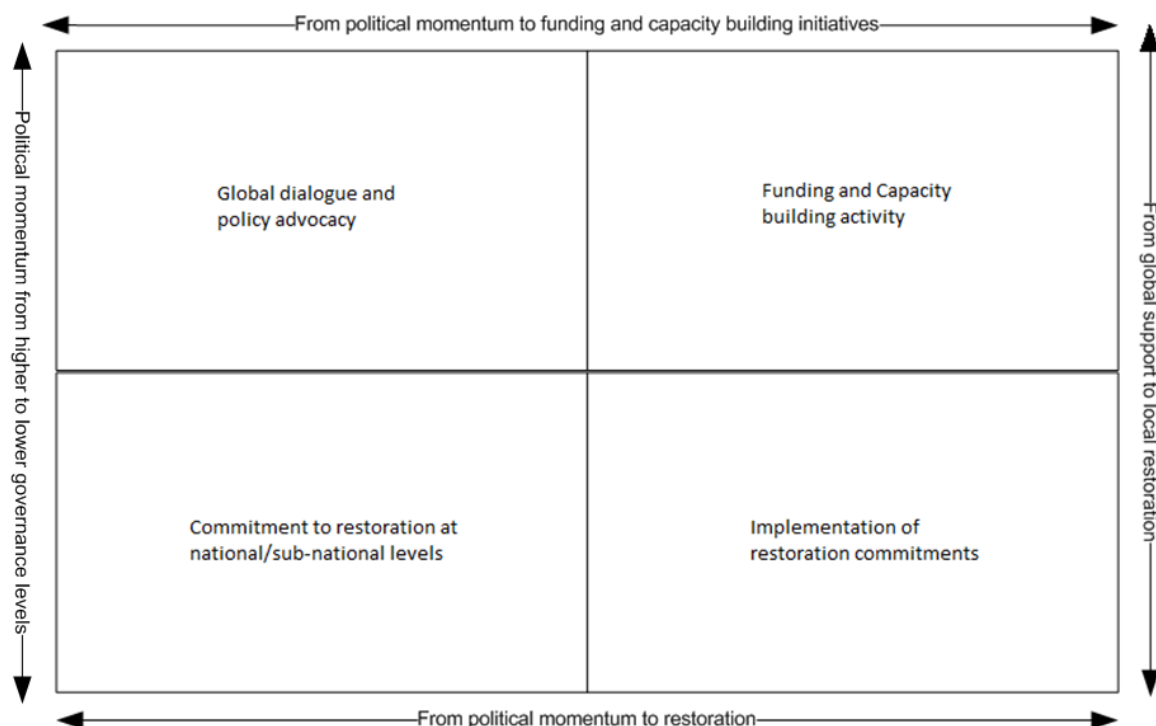


Figure 1. Activity areas for global restoration governance

The following sections first provide insight into how the GPFLR constitutes a platform for global dialogue, policy advocacy and creating political momentum for landscape restoration, of which a key outcome is the Bonn Challenge. Then the study will analyse how this political momentum can trickle down to demonstrated national and sub-national commitment to restore through the Bonn Challenge, and what opportunities and constraints are to translate

this commitment into actual restoration activity. Third, an overview will be provided of opportunities and constraints to support implementation of commitments through various international funding and capacity building streams, many of which involve GPFLR members. Finally, the study discusses how the effectiveness of these support streams for restoration can be enhanced through collaborative efforts and the role of partnerships, such as the GPFLR in this regard.

To guide this analysis use has been made of a theoretical framework developed by Ludwig and Kok (2015). A number of building blocks are proposed which may constitute key ingredients for the noted pragmatic bottom up approach to global environmental governance. The suggested building blocks have helped to better understand how the GPFLR, the Bonn Challenge as well as the broader institutional landscape around restoration does operate effectively and challenges it faces in the coming years; in cooperating, creating momentum for restoration at various levels of governance, and in supporting actual restoration activity on the ground. The conclusion will reflect on the role these building blocks play in the various areas of activity.

3 Global dialogue and policy advocacy

A need for collaboration on landscape restoration at the global level is recognised by a large number of organisations in this field. Such collaboration already takes place in a number of networks, primarily focusing on the establishment of partnerships, brokering and exchanging knowledge, providing guidance and best practices and engagement in policy advocacy (Pistorius et al., 2014). The GPFLR is a key example of this. This section will first elaborate on how the GPFLR can provide a platform for actors in the field of landscape restoration globally, to cooperate on knowledge exchange, communication and creating global momentum behind restoration, which has been the primary activity area of the GPFLR to date. Subsequently it will discuss outcomes and activities that are considered a contribution to the GPFLR.

Global dialogue and policy advocacy	Funding and capacity building
Political commitment to restore at the country level	Implementation of restoration commitment

Figure 2. Global dialogue and policy advocacy as a GPFLR focus

Of importance to note is that the GPFLR is not a formal organisation with a large number of staff and capacity to act. Instead it is an informally structured assembly and platform that connects the efforts of its individual members around a common vision and objective to see forest and landscape restoration recognised and implemented worldwide. The GPFLR was launched in 2003 by IUCN, WWF and the Forestry Commission of Great Britain as a type II initiative under the WSSD process. Since then the number of listed members has risen to the ones notes in Text box 1, while others are in the process of becoming members. In addition various governmental agencies are members, including USA, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. Other governmental agencies are close collaborators, including from China, El Salvador, Norway and Uganda.

Text box 1. GPFLR members

CBD - Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity	IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature	UNFF - Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests
CIFOR - Centre for International Forestry Research	IUFRO - International Union of Forest Research Organizations	UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme
FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	ITTO - International Tropical Timber Organization	World Resources Institute
FORIG - Forest Research Institute Ghana	PROFOR/Worldbank - Program on Forests	ICRAF - World Agroforestry Centre
Global Mechanism for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification	UNCCD - Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	IMFN - International Model Forest Network
	Tropenbos International	UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre
		Wageningen CDI
		Commonland (foundation, 4 returns company, investment fund)

3.1 Understanding co-benefits of GPFLR participation

Collaborative efforts by these members under a partnership such as the GPFLR is dependent on the presence of co-benefits to instigate the convening and cooperation by (potential) members. To enable collaboration, especially if costs are involved, all participating actors will need to see opportunities in collaboration to realise their own interests (Ludwig and Kok, 2015). In the context of the GPFLR, two aspects were noted to be particularly important in this regard, which will be considered in turn: 1) Goal consensus and mutual interest among members on the issue of landscape restoration; and 2) An informal structure without obligations, so that benefits of participation outweighs its cost.

3.1.1 Goal consensus and mutual interest to address landscape restoration

Goal consensus and mutual interest among members can be reached when different goals and interests are aligned in a common aim. This could be achieved by focusing on the relation between restoration and other environmental, developmental and economic interests. An important step in attracting partnership members and instigating active participation is therefore to take a nexus approach towards landscape restoration, which bases itself on the understanding that restoration is a cross-cutting issue through which multiple goals can be addressed (e.g. food security, poverty alleviation, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and reforestation). Thereby being of interest to the noted range of actors with differing aims and priorities. Consensus on the need for such an approach and the associated strategies enhances the effectiveness of partnerships such as the GPFLR (e.g. Pistorius et al., 2014; Pattberg et al., 2014). The interviewed organisations that are engaged in the GPFLR

recognise these cross-sectoral benefits as an important reason for cooperation. Engagement in the GPFLR by these actors leads to win-win outcomes, by furthering the restoration agenda in support of related sector-specific goals. Examples of this are the involvement of UNEP which is engaged in particular due to links between landscape restoration and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation); and the involvement of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which is engaged due to the links between restoration and Aichi Biodiversity targets 14 and 15. It is important to note that there are some limitations on the current goal consensus within the GPFLR, particularly on what forest and landscape restoration entails and what it does not entail. The label 'forest landscape restoration' which is the terminology that was used when the GPFLR was launched in 2003, has never been limited to forests. The entry point of FLR is the role of trees, forests and other types of woody plants in all types of landscapes. However, some confusion on this definition has arisen within the GPFLR in recent years. For instance, one interviewee found the definition of FLR to be too limiting to certain biomes. To help deal with the recent misperceptions some of the GPFLR partners prefer to refer to 'forest and landscape restoration'.

3.1.2 Opportunities and constraints of an informal structure

The integrated landscape-oriented focus is likely to be an important factor in attracting the current broad membership base including various intergovernmental organisations, civil society groups, academic institutions and informal involvement of national governments. An additional factor in this regard is the informal structure of the GPFLR. The creation of the GPFLR closely relates to the implementation gap on restoration targets under the more formally established Rio conventions, and aims to take an inherently different, more activity based approach. Cumbersome obligations associated with formal membership are thereby avoided, making the partnership informal with relatively low participation cost. Instead, members can contribute various activities to the partnership (individually or jointly) voluntarily. The informal structure requires little effort from an organisation to become a member while it enhances opportunities for joint activity, whenever this is deemed complementary. Such joint activity can amplify the impact of members beyond what would be achieved if they were to act autonomously. The benefits (e.g. enhanced influence, network access) of participating thus outweigh the cost, which are limited to each member's time, effort and travel cost for meetings. IUCN has provided the secretariat of the GPFLR since 2003 at no cost to other members.

Whether the resulting broad membership base results in active partnership and participation by members is however questioned. While the informal structure of the GPFLR with low requirements (such as aligning with the FLR approach and attending meetings) allows the partnership to be flexible and to attract a broad membership base, it also causes this membership to be loose, with which various challenges are associated. While many institutions are listed as members of GPFLR, it remains unclear what this membership

actually entails. The limited number of membership requirements makes it unclear to members what they should contribute to the partnership, and may cause partnership actions to depend on a limited number of key institutes while other members remain inactive. This is especially the case where the support of FLR implementation is concerned. Various interviewees noted that their partnership activities are largely limited to dialogue and information exchange, seeing it first and foremost as an epistemic community rather than an action-oriented restoration network that is envisaged by others. These concerns however do not seem to hinder collaboration on various primary activities of the GPFLR (knowledge exchange, communication and policy advocacy). But these activities are not sufficient for achieving actual restoration on the ground. For this, the partnership needs to more actively support implementation. For this, a different institutional structure may be needed. Section 6 will further elaborate on this.

3.2 Outcomes and activities under the GPFLR

With its current membership base the partnership overall provides a useful platform for communication and collaboration between all the major organisations that are involved with landscape restoration. It creates an epistemic community, bringing together a network of professionals with specific knowledge and experience in this field. As such it can play an important role in thought leadership on definitions (e.g. what is restoration and what is not?), technical and governance approaches to restoration; and in communicating restoration benefits and success stories to maintain and further build momentum behind restoration. Concrete examples of activities that are considered contributions to the GPFLR cover knowledge exchange (e.g. joint analytical work on climate change adaptation and mitigation in the context of restoration by IUFRO, WRI and IUCN); Dissemination of best practices (e.g. CBD, UNEP, IUCN and WRI collaborate to disseminate a restoration opportunity assessment methodology – developed by IUCN and WRI - through CBD regional capacity building workshops on the Aichi targets); and agenda setting (e.g. IUCN, CIFOR and PROFOR collaborate to ensure that restoration gets adequate profile in the Global Landscape Forum held in conjunction with the UNFCCC COP).

Most importantly the GPFLR has been instrumental in providing a platform for its members to set Forest and Landscape restoration on the global political agenda. The Bonn Challenge was launched in 2011 during a ministerial round-table meeting, hosted by the German environment ministry and IUCN in collaboration with the GPFLR. Since then this initiative has been mentioned and supported in a broad range of multilateral fora. In an online poll of more than one million votes for 'the future we want' the Bonn Challenge was considered the most important forest intervention and overall the second most important intervention that global leaders should support as an outcome of Rio+20. More recently, in 2014 the Bonn Challenge was integrated into the New York Declaration on forests, which aspires to extend the Bonn Challenge target to restore 150 million hectares by 2020 to a total of 350 million hectares by

2030. The New York declaration was endorsed by more than 30 governments as well as 30 large corporations. These targets are not only of relevance in their own right, but are also a potential driver for widening up the agendas of more traditional targets and systems such as the WTO and Rio conventions towards a landscape-oriented perspective. Furthermore, as a contribution to the GPFLR WRI facilitates a 'Global Restoration Council' consisting of former presidents/prime-ministers of Mexico, Brazil and Sweden with the aim to further catalyse and sustain a global movement for restoration. Overall it is evident that the prominence of restoration in the global policy arena has increased, and that the GPFLR as a network has played an important role in this regard.

4 Bonn Challenge: Momentum at country level

Now that ambitious targets for restoration have been set at the global level it is important that the growing political momentum trickles down to national and sub-national levels to instigate actual restoration on the ground. The Bonn Challenge takes an innovative approach to this, by providing a platform to which countries, landowners and other types of actors are invited to commit a number of hectares for restoration through an informal and non-binding process. As previously noted, the Bonn Challenge has the aspiration to restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded lands worldwide by 2020. In practice, interviewees see this as an aspiration to have 150 million hectares in the process of restoration, given the fact that restoration is a long-term process. This study interprets the target as such. To date, about 86 million hectares have been committed (Table 1), an area roughly the size of Nigeria. This section provides insight into whether and how the informal and flexible system of Bonn Challenge commitments can create and collect evidence of political will to restore deforested and degraded land at lower governance levels. Key factors that enable the Bonn Challenge to take up this role are considered: 1) Co-benefits of committing hectares to Bonn Challenge; and 2) Openness and flexibility in the Bonn Challenge commitment process.

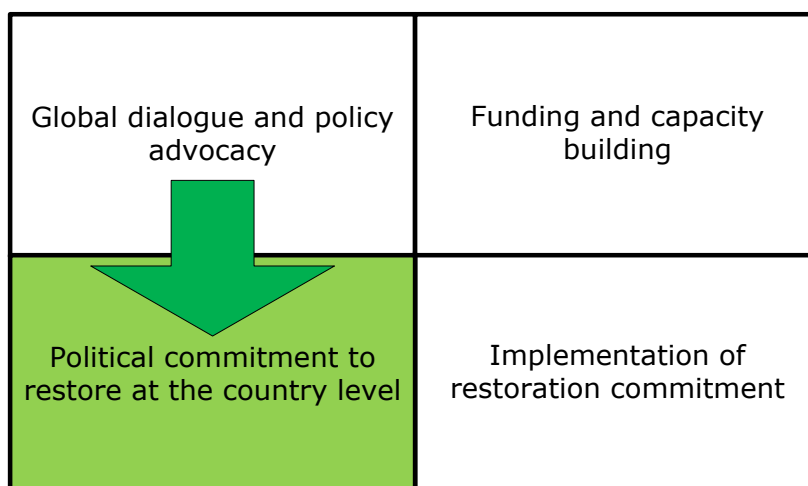


Figure 3. From global targets to local commitments

Table 1. Bonn Challenge commitments

Commitment	Hectares	Type of actors
Brazil's Atlantic Forest Restoration Pact	1,000,000	Coalition (NGO, private, government and research institutes)
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan	380,000	Sub-national government
Quintana Roo State, Mexico	300,000	Sub-national government
Campeche State, Mexico	400,000	Sub-national government
Yucatan State, Mexico	250,000	Sub-national government
Asia Pulp & Paper, Indonesia	1,000,000	Private sector
India	13,000,000	National government
Honduras	1,000,000	National government
Burundi	2,000,000	National government
Liberia	1,100,000	National government
Niger	3,200,000	National government
Colombia	1,000,000	National government
El Salvador	1,000,000	National government
Costa Rica	1,000,000	National government
Ethiopia	15,000,000	National government
Guatemala	1,200,000	National government
Rwanda	2,000,000	National government
Initiative 20x20 (Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Chile)	15,800,000	Coalition (Government led with NGO support)
Democratic Republic of Congo	8,000,000	National government
Uganda	2,500,000	National government
United States	15,000,000	Coalition (government, tribes, NGOs, private actors)
Total	86,130,000	

4.1 Co-benefits of Bonn Challenge commitments

Similar to the previous section, the use of an integrated landscape approach is noted to have been an important factor in creating momentum behind the Bonn Challenge. In the past it was noted that in the international policy arena land degradation had to be more explicitly linked with other global environmental targets (e.g. biodiversity and climate change) to enhance momentum for international restoration targets and initiatives (Gisladdottir et al., 2005). Within soil legislation examples exist where this is common practice, by drafting it in in such a way that is adequately intersects with other aspects of environmental and natural resource management (Boer and Hannam, 2014). International financial mechanisms and major donors are more likely to be engaged in restoration when this linkage is addressed (Gisladdottir et al., 2005). The target of the Bonn Challenge speaks to this as the integrated approach of Forest and Landscape Restoration is an underlying element.

Through restoration countries can address key domestic challenges (e.g. food security, poverty alleviation) and meet targets related to, for example, biodiversity, carbon sequestration and reforestation. This nexus approach is argued to make restoration of greater interest to countries compared to issues such as biodiversity, due to its tangible links

with domestic issues which have a high priority on domestic political agendas, particularly in developing countries. It makes the implementation of Bonn Challenge commitments a practical means to addressing various existing domestic challenges while meeting their commitments to international governance arrangements including CBD Aichi Target 15, the UNFCCC REDD+ goal, and the land degradation neutral goal (Bonn Challenge, 2015). This connection of domestic priorities with existing international commitments helps committing entities (mainly government) to show political leadership and to build a profile that can be capitalised on in the global policy arena. This can open up new opportunities to access technical and financial support for implementation. It can connect committing entities to the global community of practice in the field of restoration, which can provide support on the refinement (e.g. mapping of restoration potential) and implementation of the Bonn Challenge commitment; and can attract financial support for which demonstrated political will is an important prerequisite.

4.2 An open and flexible system

Of importance to note is that there are no formal requirements associated with a commitment to the Bonn Challenge. While the forest and landscape approach is referred to as an underlying element, in practice it is not a formal requirement for restoration commitments. Guidelines on restoration practices are provided, but overall Bonn Challenge commitments may take different shapes or forms depending on the implementing and committing entity. The reasoning behind this approach is that it focusses on the potential to create political will while avoiding heavily contested issues such as the imposition of requirements on commitments and the provision of new expensive support streams. As such, the Bonn Challenge takes a 'clumsy and experimental' approach focusing on what works (creating momentum) with a high degree of consensus while accepting the risks of failure (see e.g. Verweij and Thompson, 2006) associated with limited requirements and safeguards on commitments. While there is no uniform procedure, Text box 2 illustrates a general commitment process in which consultation with GPFLR members takes place and alignment with national priorities is evaluated before being announced publicly.

In practice, commitments come about through various processes that do not necessarily apply this procedure. Underpinning of the number of hectares ranges from detailed restoration opportunity assessments to rough estimates; and can be part of an ongoing or enhanced restoration process (from January 2011) as well as new ambitions for restoration. Some commitments may have been made based on limited knowledge and/or alignment with existing planning and budgetary priorities. As such it may be argued that the benefit of the Bonn Challenge is primarily the created and demonstrated political will to restore, which needs to be further refined at a later stage. From a political point of view this is considered to be a successful approach. It was noted that while the benefits of restoration have been recognised by epistemic communities at the global level over the past decade, action in this regard was constrained by a broader lacking political interest and motivation. The Bonn

Challenge addresses this constraint by providing an informal platform to demonstrate the political will for restoration on national, sub-national and regional levels. Through this flexible process the Bonn Challenge differs from more formalised systems such as the CBD Aichi targets and the associated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP). The CBD formally requires countries to prepare these biodiversity strategies and to ensure that this strategy is mainstreamed into planning activities that potentially impact biodiversity. Most parties to the CBD have developed such an NBSAP. However, studies focused primarily on developing countries indicate that many NBSAPs remain poorly implemented (Wingqvist et al., 2013; Swiderska, 2002). National ownership of these plans is often questioned and implementation appears to be low (Wingqvist et al., 2013) in part due to limited political interest (Swiderska, 2002). It is argued that commitments to the Bonn Challenge take an inherently different approach in which political will is prioritised rather than producing an implementation plan that can be shelved. On the basis of this political will target implementation can take place. It can instigate support for an ongoing process of working with committing entities, to see what knowledge, tools, capacity and other needs there are for implementation; and a collaborative process through to identify potential sources of support.

The current flexibility in the Bonn Challenge allows entities to make and implement a commitment through an approach that aligns with their level of ambition. Meanwhile the imposition of requirements on commitment processes, monitoring and implementation can create barriers to what has been the primary objective of the Bonn Challenge to date: To create and provide evidence of political will for restoration.

Text box 2. Bonn Challenge commitment process

- The first step is to **express interest** by consulting with the GPFLR through its Secretariat and members, and evaluation of the alignment of a potential Bonn Challenge commitment with national or sub-national priorities and with the principles of forest landscape restoration.
 - This is followed by a process of **preparing and confirming a contribution to the target**, including defining the location and number of hectares, the nature of stakeholder support for the restoration initiative, and the planned suite of restoration strategies.
 - **Next commitments are publicized** through special high profile events and through the Bonn Challenge website. This then triggers a process of ongoing exchange and the mobilization of support for the assessment of restoration potential and implementation of restoration actions.
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4.3 From commitment to implementation

However, questions are still raised on how these commitments could lead to concrete results and of the type of framework needed to facilitate this process; whether there should be safeguards and requirements in relation to future commitments; and whether and/or how progress in implementation should be tracked and monitored.

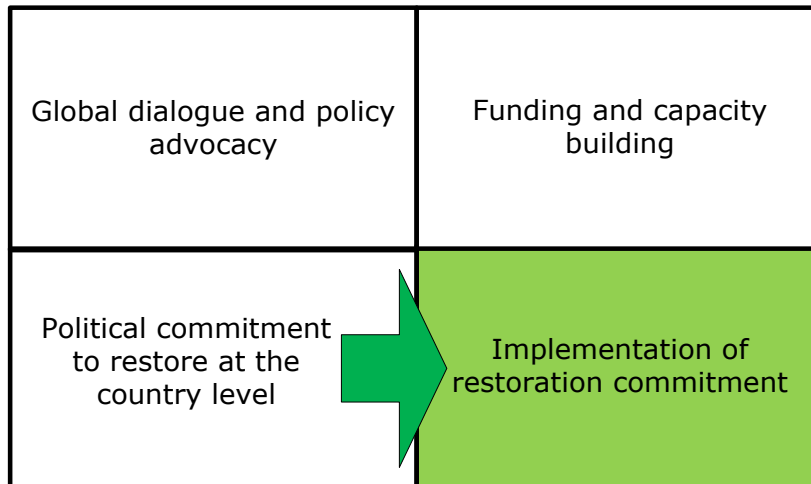


Figure 4. From commitment to implementation

4.3.1 Increasing focus on implementation

Much uncertainty exists about the capacity of committing entities to move from announcing a commitment, towards actual restoration. Interviewees expressed concerns that some commitments have been made with a lack of knowledge or with a lack of alignment with existing planning and budgetary priorities. Restoration commonly takes places in an unpredictable socio-ecological context, involving multiple stakeholders and interests (Menz et al., 2013) making ambitious targets such as the 2 million hectare border to border restoration by Rwanda particularly challenging. Interviewees therefore note the importance to further refine and support commitments so that these can lead to greater implementation; and they emphasise the importance to focus more on regionalisation and implementation of the Bonn Challenge apart from creating political momentum. Actions proposed at the Bonn 2.0 conference in 2015, for instance, included a greater emphasis on the capacity to monitor restoration progress; and bringing Bonn Challenge meetings closer to the field, to deepen the understanding of constraints and opportunities for implementation. To facilitate this, various countries, including the governments of El Salvador, Liberia, Ethiopia and Indonesia expressed interest to organise regional restoration partnerships and/or Bonn Challenge regional meetings. These are expected to be more tailored to local circumstances and more accessible to government agencies and other non-state actors in the region, leading to greater participation. Some interviewees also see this as a symbolical issue, considering it more appropriate to hold meetings in the global south where the majority of restoration opportunity and Bonn Challenge commitments are situated. El Salvador is referred to as a

frontrunner in this regard, which has pledged to launch a Central American Partnership for restoration. In August 2015 its first regional meeting took place.

Overall this indicates that the focus of the Bonn Challenge may be changing. In view of concerns over the feasibility of commitments the playing field around the Bonn Challenge appears to be shifting more towards a focus on implementation and refinement of commitments. Of importance in this regard is the application of the 'Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology' (ROAM) in many current commitments. ROAM is developed and promoted by IUCN and WRI, and is '*a flexible and affordable framework for countries to rapidly identify and analyse forest landscape restoration (FLR) potential and locate specific areas of opportunity at a national or sub-national level*' (IUCN and WRI, 2014, p6). The application of ROAM can deliver various products that can support development of national restoration programmes and strategies, enabling countries to define and implement pledges to the Bonn Challenge (IUCN and WRI, 2014).

4.3.2 Demand for implementation support

Such refinement, and focus on implementation requires external support (technical, knowledge and financial) which is expected to be catalysed by commitments. These support streams will be elaborated on further in Section 6. One interviewee indeed noted that such support is often requested to GPFLR members but that the amount of assistance that can be given lags behind the growing demand. Some GPFLR members insufficiently prioritise such support, while others that do provide support have only limited capacity to do so. Most support streams do not explicitly prioritise Bonn Challenge commitments; partly because many only recognise the Bonn Challenge as a political instrument. One interviewee for instance noted: '*the pledge is not the main impact. The pledge is just a sign of political will. What makes the real difference is the actual restoration on the ground. That is our focus. In the process of that, if the countries want to make a commitment that is of course a bonus. But not our main objective*'.

In an ideal situation however, Bonn Challenge commitments would not only be recognised as a demonstration of political will, but also as a demonstration of concrete restoration activity, that could subsequently be supported and scaled up with external support streams. This is often not the case at this moment. This uncertainty on implementation capacity and the related lack of external support can be considered a threat to the political momentum and the eventual implementation of commitments.

4.4 Enhancing confidence through transparency and implementation

Overall it is evident that the Bonn Challenge plays a positive political role, creating evidence of political will to engage in forest and landscape restoration, particularly at the country level. Its informal and flexible process makes it an instrument through which political commitment can be catalysed and demonstrated, relatively easily. As requirements to a commitment are low, the barrier to commit is low as well. Much uncertainty however remains around the underpinning behind the number of committed hectares and the capability of committing entities to implement. Overall limited information is publicly available on restoration plans and efforts being taken to implement commitments. As a result recognition of commitments is often limited to their political value, while they are in general not recognised as a demonstration of actual restoration activity. A remedy to this downside could be to implement systems for reporting on implementation progress, in which actors reveal restoration plans, practices and results. Currently no systemic framework exists to facilitate or carry out this process. This may have benefited the low barrier to commit, as there are limited means to hold committing entities accountable for the progress they have made in terms of restoration. In the long run however, lacking transparency on actions and demonstrated impact could affect the political value of the Bonn Challenge.

Overall, the focus of the playing field therefore seems to be shifting, toward a more localised and implementation-oriented focus. The noted Bonn Challenge regional meetings which may have a more implementation-oriented focus are an important example of this. In addition, IUCN is developing a Bonn Challenge Barometer that will evaluate whether a government has put in place supportive policies, or allocated domestic budgets among other things that are necessary to underpin implementation of commitments. The first report on this is likely to be launched at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2016. Another means to enhance credibility could be to impose certain requirements on commitments, for instance through mandatory application of restoration opportunity assessments and monitoring of restoration efforts. However, by imposing such requirements on commitments the flexibility of the Bonn Challenge is reduced and the barrier to demonstrating restoration commitment is increased.

Greater demonstration of actual restoration activities and/or strategies on the ground, may lead to greater confidence and support for implementation, which is currently lagging behind. The changing focus and the demand for external support for restoration poses questions about the role of GPFLR members in this regard. Perhaps GPFLR-related actions by members should focus more on implementation apart from the current emphasis on dialogue and policy advocacy. The following sections will therefore explore how restoration commitments can be supported, and how a collaborative and inter-institutional approach can be adopted in this context.

5 Linking implementation with external support

Now that a large momentum for restoration has been created a demand emerges for efforts that could translate the noted political will into concrete activity. The previous section indicated that restoration processes such as those that are committed to the Bonn Challenge are often dependent on external support in the form of capacity building and funding, particularly where developing countries are concerned. To provide insight into how commitments can be supported, this section first elaborates on the various support streams that may play a role in this regard, and will subsequently explore opportunities and constraints for large-scale restoration efforts (e.g. Bonn Challenge commitments) to gain such support. Of importance to note in this regard is that capacity building initiatives in support of restoration have a much broader scope than Bonn Challenge commitments, and that no support streams were found in this study in which a Bonn Challenge commitment is considered a prerequisite for support. Lastly, brief insight is given into the emerging potential to crowd in private investment for restoration.

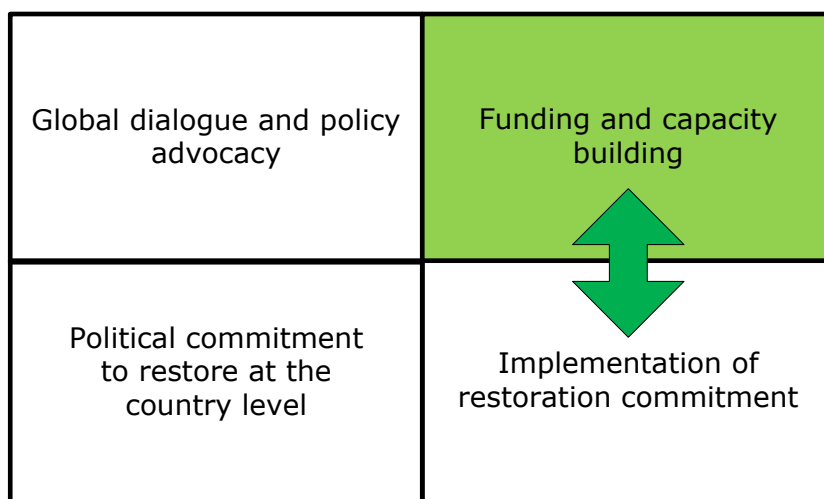


Figure 5. External support and funding for restoration

5.1 Public funding and capacity building

In alignment with the building momentum behind landscape restoration within the international policy arena major donors increasingly recognise this theme as a priority. Financial support for large-scale restoration projects can be attracted through bilateral funds and various multilateral institutions, including various International Development Finance Institutions. These funds are either specifically focused at restoration or consider restoration eligible for support in the context of or in relation to a different policy agenda (e.g. climate, forestry). In particular the linkage between landscape restoration and carbon sequestration is a key avenue to attract external support. In this context the relation to REDD+ is often mentioned by interviewees. Examples of relevant bilateral funding streams that support restoration include the UK Department for International Development, the German International Climate Initiative and the Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative. In addition the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation has identified restoration as one of the key focal areas of its implementing agency GIZ, and WRI is developing a large programme on this with support from USAID (The US development agency). Multilateral funds for instance include the World Bank's Biocarbon Fund for Sustainable Forest Landscapes, the Forest Investment Program and similar funding streams from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In the future, the GEF may be funding a large programme on FLR executed by a number of GPFLR members.

5.1.1 Executing agencies and initiatives

Such funding can be provided to restoration efforts in specific geographical areas or to broader initiatives by executing agencies which engage in various forms of capacity building. These agencies apply and in some cases compete for these funds. Many executing agencies are members of the GPFLR, including WRI, IUCN, UNEP and FAO among others. Capacity building by (GPFLR) executing agencies could for instance entail technical support on restoration opportunity assessments, pilot projects and assistance in the establishment of inter-institutional governance arrangements that can support restoration efforts. Again, these activities can be carried out within the context of, or in relation to, different policy agendas. An example of REDD+ links at the country level is for instance the collaborative effort of IUCN and the UN-REDD programme in Uganda to fully integrate forest and landscape restoration efforts with national REDD+ planning and implementation (Christopherson, 2015). The linkage with REDD+ support streams was further emphasised through collaborative efforts by IUCN and UNEP to link the UN-REDD programme and the GPFLR in support of the Bonn Challenge⁴. Another example of capacity building activity in the context of a related policy agenda is the collaboration between WRI, IUCN and the

⁴ This collaborative initiative includes 'a Helpdesk function for assessments of forest restoration opportunities, and a global mapping database for carbon and non-carbon benefits of forest restoration efforts. It will also include efforts to align forest restoration with benefits under the global climate change mitigation initiative REDD+' (UN-REDD newsletter, 2015).

secretariat of the CBD, which take the Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology to CBD parties through CBD regional capacity building workshops on related Aichi targets. Other initiatives and activities that are specifically focused at landscapes have emerged over the past years as well, in alignment with the growing momentum behind this theme. For instance, the FAO has attracted funding from South Korea and Sweden to set up a mechanism for Forest and Landscape Restoration to provide support for and to scale up restoration activity at the country level. This mechanism aims to facilitate processes in various selected countries in support of the implementation as well as monitoring and reporting of restoration, and will run from 2014 to 2020. Other GPFLR members play an important role in the provision of technical knowledge, guidance and support specifically focused at FLR. Particularly IUCN and WRI are important actors in terms of guidance and technical assistance, of which support given to conduct restoration opportunity assessments is an important example.

5.2 Effectiveness of external support

While many funding streams and capacity building initiatives are in place, a gap remains between these initiatives and the increasing demand for support to restoration activity. For instance, commitments to the Bonn Challenge are often expected to result in concrete support to implementation. In practice this assistance lags behind. This section will elaborate on this with three points of consideration that may enhance the effectiveness of external support: 1) responsiveness of external support; 2) long-term projects and 'patient money'; and 3) inter-institutional collaboration at the country level.

5.2.1 responsiveness of external support

First, the currently existing support streams are unable to fully respond to the currently growing demand for restoration support, instigated by the Bonn Challenge as well as other international processes. Although new funding streams and capacity building initiatives have been coming to the forth, these are in practice limited to a number of key executing agencies where support specifically for FLR is concerned. The prioritisation of restoration support by other GPFLR members remains limited. Organisations which do provide support have limited capacity and are often depending on additional funding from the aforementioned sources.

A key constraint in attracting support is also the bureaucratic process associated with the attraction of funds from institutes such as the World Bank, GEF and the Global Green Fund. While a commitment to the Bonn Challenge is an informal process with limited to non-existent requirements, the funding streams from external donors are logically subject to a wide range of safeguards and a higher degree of formality. Funding applications are time consuming processes which can take years while many requirements are in place which

restoration projects must meet in order to be eligible. Demonstrated commitment to restoration through the Bonn Challenge is only one of several factors that determine the external support. Factors such as logistics, actual restoration opportunity, interest of a broader range of stakeholders, alignment with existing support initiatives, and demonstrated political buy-in from key ministries to restoration plans all play an important role in this regard. The process of developing project proposals that take these factors into account towards gaining actual funds can take several years. This constraint could be a threat to long-term political commitment for restoration.

Prioritisation and/or boosted capacity within (GPFLR) executing agencies may therefore be needed for faster, more responsive restoration support. These agencies could collaborate on supporting the creation of an enabling environment for restoration with greater eligibility for support streams; playing a brokering role by (jointly) applying for funding streams; and taking up a facilitating role in the actual restoration process.

5.2.2 Long-term and resilient projects

An additional constraint is that restoration entails a particularly long-term process, which could only start to pay off after periods of up to 20 years (e.g. Ferwerda, 2015). Meanwhile traditionally donor projects are often relatively short-term, lasting for about 5 years. Concerns were therefore expressed that restoration projects could collapse after donor support is retracted. Comparisons in this regard were made with past projects aiming at ecosystem restoration and tree planting. Although restoration based on FLR principles could be more resilient to this due to its close alignment with national priorities (e.g. through food security benefits), concerns are still expressed over short timescales of external support. The long-term process of restoration involves complexities including the building of stakeholder support, land tenure arrangements and creating a facilitating institutional environment before a technical restoration process can even begin. This may require donor projects with long-term perspectives and long-term availability of financial resources without high expectations on quick results. Also key to the resilience of FLR efforts may be the prevention of an externally driven process by prioritising local ownership of restoration efforts by country level partners; and mainstreaming restoration goals and strategies into national planning and budgetary priorities.

5.2.3 Collaboration at the country level

Finally, the diversity of policy agendas, funding streams and executing agencies within countries leads to a complex and fragmented playing field within which support for restoration-related activities (including Bonn Challenge commitments) take place. Countries can approach multiple agencies and funds for support which can lead to much needed assistance. However, the effectiveness of this may be impaired by lacking cooperation

among executing agencies at the country level. Potential therefore lies in taking up a more coherent inter-institutional approach that is of greater interest to donor institutions (more output from limited funds) as well as recipient projects. A more coherent approach could also capitalise on the comparative advantage of various executing agencies. For instance, intergovernmental organisations have a strong mandate to cooperate with national government agencies on enabling institutional arrangements for restoration. Other non-governmental agencies may be more instrumental at the landscape level, addressing stakeholder complexities and mapping restoration potential. As such, cooperation may ensure a more coherent and synergistic implementation of projects. In the case of Rwanda (2 million hectares committed to the Bonn Challenge), some collaboration between actors from various sectors and levels of governance is already taking place, including various GPFLR members and national ministries with responsibilities that include or relate to (e.g. forestry) landscape restoration. For instance, a joint workshop on restoration was facilitated by Wageningen CDI, hosted by various Rwandan ministries, organised by FAO and IUCN, and attended by various other GPFLR members. Plans are being developed to translate this joint effort into a more permanent mechanism to facilitate an inter-institutional ongoing discussion, dialogue and coordination of activity, to ensure that restoration efforts are coherently addressed by a variety of actors and perspectives. Again, a leading role for local state-actors and civil society groups in this regard may be imperative to making this a process where these local actors take ownership of the restoration process, instead of making it an externally driven process.

5.3 Private investment

This coherent approach may be of even greater importance in the future as the interest for private resource mobilisation for restoration is gaining traction amongst knowledge and donor institutes, NGOs and various private actors. Funds from impact investors⁵ and other private actors with a sense of stewardship and a long-term perspectives are regarded as a potential key avenue for support to restoration efforts (Brasser and Ferwerda, 2015). These actors may provide 'patient money' that pays back over longer periods, as opposed to the relatively short-term timescales of many donor funding sources. In general, this potential is yet to translate into large-scale investments. It requires an enabling and investable environment for restoration in which the scale of restoration activity is maximised and risk of failure is minimised, while adhering to important social and environmental safeguards. This requires an aggregation of various restoration efforts that are relatively small-scale. By collaboratively addressing these issues domestic and international agencies could crowd in long-term private investment, thereby addressing various of the previously mentioned constraints.

⁵ investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate social and environmental impact alongside a financial return

As finding long-term financial resources to enable restoration activities is considered one of the major hurdles for restoration activities wide consensus exists that the private sector must be attracted to and effectively included in the provision of funding for land restoration and conservation activities (Pistorius et al., 2014; Aronson et al., 2013). In view of this, the search for innovative mechanisms in which public funds can leverage private finance has been attracting a surge of interest in the international playing field of restoration and landscapes in general. Achieving the New York Declaration on Forests target of restoring 350 million hectares by 2030 can generate net benefits on the general order of US\$170 billion per year. Benefits include timber products, non-timber forest products, fuel, better soil and water management remunerated through higher crop yields, and recreation (New Climate Economy, 2014). Examples of initiatives that promote private sector involvement are already coming to the forth that focus on, or relate to landscape restoration. For instance, the EcoEnterprises Fund (using private equity for socially and environmentally responsible agroforestry investment), Althelia (investment in sustainable landscapes that generate environmental assets), the VCA platform (providing visible and accountable sustainable landscapes for e.g. impact investors) and the Commonland foundation (scouting restoration projects, development of business cases for restoration and coupling restoration with investment).

5.3.1 Opportunities and constraints for investable restoration

Overall, the emphasis of the interest for private investment lies on finding ways to catalyse long-term multinational investment into larger geographical areas and multimillion dollar sums, by actors such as pension funds. Such institutions may hold potential for substantial and long-term financial commitments. Despite the surge of interest interviewees note that very few examples of international investments in landscape restoration exist to date. Reasons given for this are that there is a lack of investable projects on landscape restoration and a lack of operational mechanisms that can facilitate these transactions in a way that is of interest to investors as well as landscape level stakeholders. There are two key challenges for restoration efforts that may need to be tackled in order for it to be investable:

- 1) The scale of investments that private equity firms are involved in currently does not match the scale of restoration that is taking place on the ground. One interviewee notes that the threshold for the investment of private equity funds can amount to around 50 million US dollars, while there is a clear preference to invest this in large geographical areas of the order of 100,000 hectares. Meanwhile, landscape restoration is a relatively small-scale and long-term process involving a broad range of stakeholders that are involved in restoration activities. It is therefore noted that ways need to be found to aggregate the project size and associated interventions to a level that can attract multi-million dollar investments. This aligns to the aforementioned call for a more coherent approach to restoration support as opposed to fragmentation of relatively small projects.

- 2) Investment risk is increased by uncertainties on stakeholder dynamics in restoration projects, acceptance of agricultural practices (moving towards e.g. climate smart agriculture and agroforestry), land tenure complexities and supportive/constraining state governance arrangements. If these complexities are not addressed, the risk associated with investing in restoration is considered too high. Such uncertainties are particularly important because of the gap between the time of investment and that of revenues being received, as the latter occur at a much later point in time (Pistorius et al., 2015). Investors are therefore unlikely to engage in a restoration plan that only exists on paper. Instead, there needs to be a stable environment in which there is a clear support by government and involved stakeholders.

Meanwhile this risk is likely to increase with the geographical size of the restoration project. The more hectares that are involved, the more complex the investment is.

To address this, two key areas of activity may be considered for creating an enabling environment for investable restoration. By addressing stakeholder complexities and building a facilitating institutional setting, risk may be reduced and restoration efforts could be more easily aggregated to an investable scale. Country level efforts by external (GPFLR) agencies may be important to facilitate these processes in conjunction with domestic state and non-state actors; to stimulate restoration on the ground with a business case.

Stakeholder complexities and equity considerations

Overall, large-scale restoration commitments such as those under the Bonn Challenge are currently not considered investable due to the complex stakeholder dynamics that can strongly impair the long-term stability of restoration efforts if not adequately taken into account. Strong participation by landscape stakeholders is therefore required at various levels and scales of restoration governance. This is likely to result in complex decision making processes involving diverging interests, hard negotiation and potential trade-offs (van Oosten, 2013; Van Oosten 2013b). Although complex, through such a participatory process restoration efforts can enhance legitimacy, create a common vision and provide confidence and clear prospects on potential for investments and return, on the basis of access and benefit sharing principles. Of key importance in this process is the creation of a common, and easy to understand language on what restoration is and isn't, to connect the range of stakeholders including farmers, foresters, investors, NGOs, ecologists and state actors (Brasser and Ferwerda, 2015).

Institutional complexities and potential responses

In addition a facilitating institutional environment with policies and regulation that incentivises restoration and associated investments, enhances investment confidence and removes red tape to reduce transaction costs is needed. Social and environmental safeguards are considered particularly important in this regard. Creating a business case for restoration is associated with considerable risks, as the motivation of most private actors is to maximise profit. This interest must be balanced with the interests of land restoration,

poverty alleviation (Pistorius et al., 2014) and land tenure arrangements. Increasing large-scale land acquisitions and land use by large multinational corporations therefore requires social safeguards and transparency (Anseeuw et al., 2013) with adequate considerations for local circumstances (i.e. livelihood systems, tenure regimes and institutional frameworks specific to the landscape) (van Oosten, 2013). These principles work the other way around as well: Interviewees note that private investment requires clear social and environmental safeguards to ensure stability of the investment and low risk to reputation. National governments and external mechanisms such as REDD+ can play an important role in this regard. REDD+ has already developed extensive safeguards for private financial flows which can be used for restoration investment as well. Demonstrated application of these safeguards could increase confidence of private actors for investment in projects with the abovementioned institutional and stakeholder complexities (see e.g. Christopherson, 2015). A similar option could be to apply safeguards developed by the Verified Conservation Area (VCA) Platform, which can make restoration efforts compliant with the VCA standard visible, accountable and marketable.

The above two focal areas address key root causes for the current risk of private investment in restoration and can be considered especially important when aiming for multi-million hectare restoration ambitions under Bonn Challenge commitments. Meanwhile a much broader range of initiatives and mechanisms are proposed and developed to instigate private investment and minimise risk. For instance, the 20x20 initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean, aiming to bring 20 million hectares of land into restoration by 2020, may be supported through private investment of which the risk will be reduced through a protection fund from the Inter-American Development bank. Meanwhile, various types of mechanisms to facilitate and catalyse private investment were proposed and discussed at a Global Landscapes Forum (The Investment Case, London 2015), such as the Moringafund, the Althelia Fund, the Commonland Fund and the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund (UNCCD). Addressing the noted stakeholder complexities, land tenure, safeguards and other institutional arrangements are often part and parcel of these proposed mechanisms.

5.3.2 A role for the GPFLR?

GPFLR members as well as other (executing) agencies may have to take these developments into account and could play a role by communicating and supporting the business case of restoration, facilitating investable restoration efforts and playing a brokering role by connecting these restoration efforts with emerging legitimate investment mechanisms. However, it is also important to note that much uncertainty around this private investment potential remains. Addressing the social and institutional complexities associated with restoration in many developing countries are already considered a difficult challenge. The development of business cases for restoration and pro-poor value chains may very well benefit the implementation of these restoration efforts, but it remains to be questioned to what extent this will result in substantial returns on investment. This uncertainty may for

instance particularly be the case in settings with unorganised small-scale farmers, informal value chains and tenure uncertainties. While recognising the potential of private investment to fund restoration efforts, a role for GPFLR members (as well as other relevant global partnerships) may therefore also be critical towards this development, which may be beneficial to some but certainly not all cases.

5.4 Conclusion

While restoration gains an increasingly prominent position on the agenda of various funding and support streams, a gap remains between these arrangements and the demand for support at the country level. Therefore, the implementation of restoration commitments is not only dependent on the socio-economic and bio-physical feasibility of commitments, but also on the external support that can be attracted from public as well as private sources. Insight is therefore given into the interface between the demand for support and the institutes that can provide this support in various ways. The following opportunities and constraints were identified in this regard:

- Time consuming bureaucratic complexities associated with funding applications cause support streams to be constrained in catching up with the increasing demand for financial, technical and institutional guidance and support. Supporting agencies have limited capacity due to dependence and competition for extra-budgetary funding for capacity building activities. Meanwhile others insufficiently prioritise this support. Prioritisation and/or boosted capacity within (GPFLR) agencies may therefore be needed for faster, more responsive restoration support.
- Externally funded restoration projects are often relatively short-term, leading to a potential mismatch with restoration processes that are long-term. This is considered to be a threat to sustainability of externally funded restoration projects. Long timescales and resilience of restoration projects may therefore need to be taken into account.
- Potential may lie in taking up a more collaborative approach between supporting agencies, to capitalise on their comparative advantages and to ensure a more coherent and synergistic implementation of projects. For instance, intergovernmental organisations have a strong mandate to cooperate with government agencies on institutional arrangements for restoration, while other non-governmental agencies may be more instrumental at carrying out restoration opportunity assessments.
- Mobilisation of private funds is constrained by the limited scale and/or high risk of investing in long-term complex restoration efforts. Addressing institutional and stakeholder complexities may be an area of action for creating an enabling environment in which investable restoration can take place. However of importance is also to remain critical, considering that the development towards private investment may benefit some, but certainly not all cases.

GPFLR members can play an important role in addressing these points, by focusing on creating an enabling environment for restoration with greater eligibility for support; playing a brokering role by (jointly) applying for funding; and a facilitating role in the actual restoration process. This enabling environment which addresses the noted stakeholder complexities, land tenure, safeguards and other institutional arrangements can also pave the way for sustainable and investable restoration activity on the ground. Effectiveness in this regard can benefit from inter-institutional cooperation by external support streams and national/ sub-national state and non-state actors. This could lead to a more coherent effort towards restoration which avoids institutional gaps and enhances sustainability as it reduces reliance on single funding and support streams that pull out after a certain period of time. Capitalisation on institutional infrastructures that are already in place for related policy agendas (REDD+ most notably) aligns with this coherent approach, making use of related funding streams through carbon sequestration and safeguards to enhance eligibility for public support and increase investor confidence. A movement towards this concerted approach appears to be taking place already, as many interviewees recognise and start to address the need for collaboration in practice.

6 Towards a partnership for restoration support

The previous sections have illustrated a changing playing field on landscape restoration in which momentum has been building, demand for support and monitoring is increasing and where new restoration-related support streams are coming to the forth. In this context a need for collaboration between GPFLR members as well as other relevant actors is recognised, beyond activities such as information exchange and policy advocacy, towards concerted and complementary actions on implementation of commitments to restore. This section will explore what kind of institutional setting within the GPFLR could facilitate this. First, an outline will be given of potential for synergy among members. Then it will describe how the GPFLR could capitalise on this potential within the context of an informal and flexible structure. In addition it elaborates on how further effectiveness in this regard may be achieved through increased membership and member commitment; a strengthened secretariat; and links with other global partnerships.

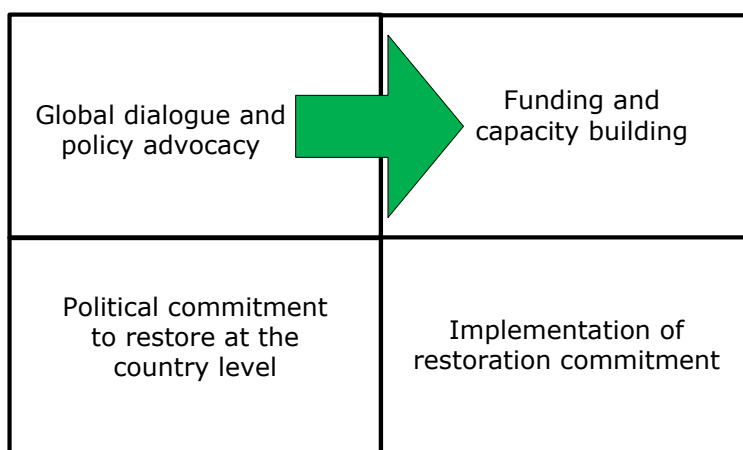


Figure 6. Towards increased GPFLR action on support for landscape restoration

6.1 Opportunities for synergy

Table 2 further illustrates the institutional landscape of actors involved in landscape restoration and the particular activities these globally operating actors engage in. It emphasises on the primary activities of a small selection of GPFLR members. It shows that in most areas of activity overlaps occur, particularly on different kinds of capacity building. Pattberg et al. (2014) note that the fragmentation of global governance can lead to duplication of efforts, institutional gaps and competition among initiatives. Meanwhile collaboration can improve complementarity between related institutes and activities and can help fostering a more coherent and effective approach towards restoration support. Given the increasing range of institutes and initiatives associated with landscape restoration, often with overlapping focal areas, the institutional landscape of landscape restoration does indeed show some of the above aspects of fragmentation. For instance, some competition is described by interviewees among various (GPFLR) agencies for limited funding to pay for extra-budgetary activities, such as capacity building for landscape restoration among other things. In a worst case scenario limited inter-institutional cooperation between these agencies could cause relatively small restoration efforts to be too fragmented while important priorities (e.g. enabling state-governance arrangements) may not be adequately addressed due to limitations in capacity, expertise or mandate. Restoration efforts could also become dependent on single donors, posing risks to the continuation of projects after the pull-out of donor support. To prevent such negative aspects of fragmentation and to capitalise on the potential for synergy, the activities of the many institutions involved in landscape restoration may need to be organised on a global level (Pistorius et al., 2014). Interviewees indeed recognise that overlaps in activities and gaps exist, and that working in a more collaborative and pre-determined manner may be needed, as was also noted in the previous chapter.

Table 2. Primary activities of selected GPFLR members⁶

	Organisation	Knowledge		Policy / target setting		Support streams	
		Research	Knowledge sharing	Policy advocacy	Agenda setting	Capacity building	Financial support
Intergovernmental	UNEP		x	x	x	x	
	FAO		x	x	x	x	
Convention	CBD		x		x	x	
	UNCCD		x		x	x	
Donor countries	Germany				x		x
Knowledge institutes	WRI	x	x	x		x	
	WUR CDI	x	x			x	
NGOs	IUCN	x	x	x	x	x	
	Commonland		x		x	x	x

⁶ This table is not meant to fully and accurately represent the range of activities. It provides a rough illustration of potential for complementarity between GPFLR members as well as close collaborators

6.2 Achieving a collaborative and implementation-oriented focus

Questions are therefore raised on how the work and many activities of these various institutions with overlapping objectives can be aligned. The GPFLR as a partnership can be considered to be a logical network to look at for this, as it is the only one of its kind focusing specifically at restoration with a clear incorporation of socio-economic considerations based on FLR principles. To make the most out of the capacity and resources represented by its membership base, and adequately respond to the increasing demand for guidance and support, the emphasis of GPFLR activity may therefore need to focus more on concrete support for restoration activity. By doing so, the GPFLR could function as an 'implementation branch' of the Bonn Challenge. This section argues that from a pragmatic point of view this can only be achieved through a relatively informal and flexible institutional setting.

To enhance the implementation-oriented focus of the partnership some interviewees suggested the possibility to further institutionalise the GPFLR. Effective action-oriented partnerships are in various cases indeed associated with a higher degree of institutionalisation than we currently see in the GPFLR, for instance requiring a stronger and independent secretariat for coordinating purposes (e.g. Pattberg et al., 2014) and more strictly defined memberships. By doing so, rights and responsibilities could be more clearly defined to make GPFLR members more capable of coordinating activities, for instance in support of the Bonn Challenge. Other literature however puts more emphasis on the positive aspect of fragmentation, by looking at the institutional setting through a lens of polycentric governance. Polycentric governance refers to the self-organised and not formally institutionalised cooperation, coordination and steering of multiple centres of decision-making (Ostrom, 2010a). It suggests that the myriad of distinct organisations in an institutional landscape can also produce effective results and functions as a coherent system without a high level of institutionalisation, by more ad-hoc and opportunistic engagement in information sharing, coordination of activities, problem solving and internal conflict resolution (Ostrom, 2010b).

Although a stronger secretariat may indeed be needed for the effectiveness of the partnership, this study argues that from a pragmatic point of view the GPFLR as a partnership can only stimulate more activity and collaboration on restoration support through a relatively informal and flexible structure. Interviewed GPFLR members favour such a structure with limited strings attached to membership; the benefits of the currently loose and informal structure of the GPFLR makes the partnership flexible and adaptive. A key point of consideration is also that a more institutionalised setting could require greater effort from members (in terms of time and money) or could lead to an infringement on the autonomy of participating organisations. The current structure of the GPFLR to an extent already does engage in polycentric governance, by providing a platform for information exchange and establishment of partnerships and joint activity wherever members perceive it as relevant. From this point of view the move towards more implementation-oriented

activities may thus not necessarily require significant institutional changes. For instance, IUCN, FAO and UNEP have already started to engage in a collaborative process, which has led to a proposal for a multi-agency, GEF-funded restoration programme. This shows that more collaboration and action by members on concrete restoration support can also occur within the current GPFLR structure. However, to achieve this three points may have to be addressed: 1) Commitment by members to a more implementation-oriented focus; 2) Servicing capabilities of the secretariat and; 3) a complementary and collaborative position in relation to other global partnerships.

6.2.1 Increased membership and membership commitment

Imperative to the above ad-hoc collaborative actions would be an increased commitment by active members to voluntarily engage in these efforts. To effectively operate on restoration support in a concerted manner, there may therefore be a need for more active partners with mandates and budgets that are willing to make more explicit contributions to support FLR implementation. The previous section noted that restoration support depends on a limited number of key institutes, implying that increased prioritisation of this among other members is needed. Therefore, expanding the GPFLR membership base may also be considered. For instance, greater involvement of national and sub-national government agencies which have an actual mandate to engage in restoration on the ground could play a key role in this regard. Another interviewee also suggested to involve other types of actors, such as large private actors and landowners who also have an ability to implement FLR. Subsequently, different types of membership could be considered, for those who primarily engage in knowledge exchange and for others who can collaborate more closely on the provisioning of FLR support and implementation.

6.2.2 Strengthened secretariat for servicing capabilities

To facilitate such collaborative efforts a strengthened secretariat may also be needed. In this case a strengthened secretariat would not be for coordinating purposes, but for servicing and facilitating purposes instead. It was noted by various interviewees that the secretariat currently lacks capacity for this. It received funding from the UK Forestry commission from 2003 to 2012, but since then it has been hosted and paid for by IUCN without financial contributions from other members. IUCN provides a part time coordinator and a part time communicator. Modest funds at a sustainable and predictable level could enhance the ability of the partnership to convene, engage in structured information exchange, and provide greater oversight to a secretariat to identify and instigate collaboration where appropriate. This could at least enable members to work with more knowledge of what others are doing and to identify associated potential for complementarity.

6.2.3 Links with other global partnerships

Evident is that more commitment and participation by members is needed to achieve a more implementation-oriented focus. However members face limitations in this regard, having multiple responsibilities. Many of these members are also involved with other partnerships such as LPFN⁷ and IMFN⁸, which relate to restoration as well. Linkage between these partnerships may thus enhance effectiveness and membership commitment. Limited cooperation between the GPFLR and LPFN currently exists. This may result in overlapping activities, competition for membership commitment and a situation where important actors support different initiatives. One interviewee for instance expressed concerns that while the German GIZ will prioritise restoration it may focus on LPFN instead of supporting the Bonn Challenge. Non-cooperation between the overlapping partnerships could thus lead to redundancy and may constrain the ability of the GPFLR and other partnerships to facilitate (joint) activity by their members in support of restoration. The effectiveness of the GPFLR may therefore also benefit from ensuring a complementary and collaborative role in relation to other partnerships. Some action in this regard already appears to take place. The GPFLR co-chair is for instance also closely involved with the IMFN. LPFN may however also be of key importance in this regard as some interviewees noted that this partnership is adopting a more implementation-oriented focus as well, while it has various relevant members that are currently not involved with the GPFLR.

⁷ Landscapes for People Food and Nature

⁸ International Model Forest Network

7 Conclusion: Towards a pragmatic approach for restoration governance

This study has provided an overview of global environmental governance in the field of landscape restoration with a focus on the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge. It has followed and analysed the process from creating political momentum to restore at the global level; to the trickling down of this momentum to national and sub-national levels through the Bonn Challenge. Subsequently it analysed opportunities and constraints to translate this momentum into actual restoration activity worldwide, in the context of the Bonn Challenge as well as beyond. The institutions around the global restoration agenda are adopting innovative approaches in these areas. To provide an understanding of these approaches, this section reflects on the case study of the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge, and identifies conditions that improve the chance of success for a 'pragmatic bottom-up approach' (Ludwig and Kok, 2015) to the global governance of forest and landscape restoration. This bottom-up approach builds on collaborative efforts, innovations and initiatives that are taken forward by willing actors largely outside the purview of formal multilateral processes, involving civil society groups, academia, private actors as well as a range of (inter)governmental agencies. This conclusion first reflects on the ingredients that play a key role in activities in the areas of global dialogue, policy advocacy, and creating momentum at various levels of governance. Then it will reflect on building blocks that could play a role in moving towards a more implementation-oriented focus.

7.1 Ingredients for global dialogue, policy advocacy and building momentum for restoration

Three factors have been identified as key contributing factors to creating a facilitating environment in which political momentum for restoration could be instigated at the global level as well as at lower levels of governance:

- 1) Framing a common agenda that addresses multiple environmental and developmental targets and interests at different levels of governance
- 2) Thought leadership and cross-sectoral targets that provide directionality of a global restoration movement
- 3) Informal and flexible systems with low barriers for actors to interact and demonstrate political will to restore.

Framing a common agenda has been an important step in getting a range of actors involved in the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge. The underlying concept of Forest and Landscape restoration takes a nexus approach, which bases itself on the understanding that restoration is a cross-cutting issue through which multiple goals can be addressed, including poverty alleviation, food security, biodiversity loss and carbon sequestration. By doing so it speaks to actors with a wide range of priorities and perspectives. This is an important factor in attracting a diverse membership in partnerships such as the GPFLR. For instance, UNEP is engaged in the GPFLR due to links between restoration and REDD+. At lower levels of governance, countries and other entities show political commitment to restore degraded lands because this relates to various domestic issues (e.g. food security) which have a high priority on political agendas, and because restoration can be used to meet existing commitments to international targets (e.g. CBD Aichi Target 15, the UNFCCC REDD+ goal, and the land degradation neutrality goal). International financial mechanisms and major donors are also more likely to be engaged in restoration when these links are addressed (Gisladottir et al., 2005). In particular, the linkage between landscape restoration, carbon sequestration and REDD+ -related support streams is key to attracting external support.

Thought leadership and cross-sectoral targets by the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge have contributed to a common direction for the international playing field around restoration to operate in. As an epistemic community, GPFLR members play a role in defining what restoration is and what it is not; in developing and disseminating technical and governance approaches to restoration; and in communicating restoration benefits and success stories to maintain and further build momentum behind restoration. It also provided a platform for actors to collaborate on goal setting for the Bonn Challenge (to bring 150 million hectares of land into restoration by 2020) and the New York Declaration on Forests (extending the Bonn Challenge aspiration to restore a total of 300 million hectares by 2030). The Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration provide shared cross-cutting targets that actors from multiple sectors and levels of governance and with different interests can rally behind. It instigates and demonstrates political will to restore at the country level and can function as a potential

driver for widening up the agendas of other more traditional targets and systems such as the Rio conventions, giving restoration a place in their respective contexts.

Informal and flexible systems with low barriers and low costs to participate can help create a critical mass of dedicated actors needed for policy advocacy and creating political momentum. These systems, which are based on voluntary action and participation, emphasise points of complementarity and consensus while accepting different perceptions of problems and definitions. For instance, within the informal and flexible structure of the GPFRL issues such as membership responsibilities remain largely undefined. Actions by members come about through a more fluid voluntary process based on complementarity rather than being based on rigid rights and responsibilities. Resulting joint activity can amplify the impact of members beyond what would be achieved if they were to act autonomously. This system causes benefits (e.g. enhanced influence in the policy arena, network access) of participating to outweigh its cost (e.g. logistical, time and effort costs of participating and convening). The instigation and demonstration of political will to restore through the Bonn Challenge also benefits from a relatively informal and voluntary system. Here, contested issues such as requirements on commitments and monitoring remain undefined. Instead its focus lies on what works (demonstrating political will) with a high degree of consensus while accepting risks associated with limited requirements and safeguards on commitments. From a political point of view this is considered an effective approach. In other systems such as the CBD NBSAPs lacking political support was a factor in failing implementation in various cases. The Bonn Challenge prioritises political will, on the basis of which tailored refinement and implementation of restoration ambitions can take place subsequently.

7.2 Taking stock – Impact of current efforts

It is evident that landscape restoration and landscapes in general are gaining an increasingly important position on the agenda of global environmental governance, and that the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge have functioned as useful instruments to this end. Through thought leadership, new global targets and the use of a nexus approach that can reconcile multiple interests in a common aim, direction can be provided to a cross-sectoral global network. This case study has shown that this process of policy advocacy, global dialogue and creation of political will works well within the context of flexible systems; where the focus lies on what works well, while keeping contested issues undefined. By doing so, the barrier to participate is minimised and the amount of collaboration between actors is maximised, whenever this is complementary.

To further take stock of the effectiveness of the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge it may be useful to look at the output, outcome and impact of current efforts. With output we look at the setting of new international agreements, standards or targets; *outcome* refers to changing behaviour of a particular target group; *impact* refers to the practical changes, in

this case restored landscapes based on FLR principles (e.g. Miles et al., 2001). In terms of *output*, ambitious cross-sectoral targets (Bonn Challenge and the extended New York Declaration on Forests) and a more prominent position of restoration on the international agenda have been established. As an *outcome* this has led to clear evidence of political will to engage in restoration, mainly at the country level through Bonn Challenge commitments. Various types of entities including governments and multi-stakeholder coalitions have pledged about 86 million hectares to restore, with more in the pipeline. Meanwhile various committing countries have started or are under the preparation of national restoration plans, programs and identification of specific hectares for restoration. However, much uncertainty on this outcome still remains. Questions are raised on the extent to which commitments will be implemented, in part due a lack of information and transparency on actions taken by entities following their commitment to the Bonn Challenge. Scepticism therefore also exists on the actual impact of these efforts, in part due to an absence of a systemic framework for restoration support; limited requirements on implementation; a lack of monitoring mechanisms; and concerns over implementation capacity.

Now that restoration is starting to find its way onto the international policy arena and many commitments to restore degraded land are coming in at the Bonn Challenge, a need is emerging to look beyond the primary activities of policy advocacy and demonstration of political will. Actors around the Bonn Challenge increasingly recognise a need for a more decentralised and implementation oriented focus. The proposed regional Bonn Challenge meetings are important examples of this. The institutional form of the Bonn Challenge however remains informal to date. While strong benefits of this informality have been highlighted, some argue that changes may be needed in the context of the currently changing playing field with newly emerging priorities. However, in the context of the Bonn Challenge formalisation could be counter effective, as collecting political commitment to restore requires a low barrier process.

7.3 Building blocks for future efforts

But when it comes to supporting the refinement, implementation and monitoring of commitments a more concerted effort may be needed. Many GPFLR members indeed emphasise that more focus should be on supporting and monitoring actual restoration activities. This is noted as a recurring topic of discussion among GPFLR members. For this, different building blocks may come into play, which can conflict with some of the aforementioned conditions that prioritise the creation of political momentum:

- 1) Transparency systems for disclosure of information on refinement, implementation and monitoring;
- 2) Responsiveness by supporting agencies to an increasing demand for restoration assistance
- 3) Innovative systems that can crowd in private investment while adhering to social and environmental safeguards
- 4) Collaboration for synergy and complementarity between restoration support efforts
- 5) Global partnerships for convening, engagement in structured information exchange, and provisioning of oversight on activities to facilitate collaboration on restoration support

Transparency systems may be needed for disclosure of information in which actors reveal restoration plans, practices and results. Currently no systemic framework exists within the Bonn Challenge to facilitate or carry out this process. This may have benefited the low barrier to commit because there are limited means to hold committing entities accountable for the progress they have made in terms of restoration. As a result however, there is uncertainty and scepticism about the capacity and efforts of committing entities to move from announcing a commitment to actual restoration. Overall, little information is available about the actions taken and the impact of the Bonn Challenge. In the long run, lacking transparency on actions and demonstrated impact could affect the political value of the Bonn Challenge, while disclosure of information could strongly benefit the credibility of commitments. Transparency systems could also provide the opportunity to disseminate lessons learnt and success stories to maintain and further catalyse the political momentum for restoration. The Bonn Challenge Barometer that is being developed by IUCN could be instrumental in this regard, as it can provide information on, for example, supportive policies and allocated domestic budgets for restoration that are necessary to underpin the implementation of commitments. Of importance to such transparency systems may be to take into account the importance of maintaining a low barrier commitment process, which could for instance be influenced by reporting requirements.

Responsiveness to a demand for restoration support will be needed to facilitate, guide and/or fund the refinement, implementation and monitoring of restoration plans under the Bonn Challenge. These processes require specific know-how, expertise and financial resources that can be provided or brokered by various GPFLR members. Commitments are often expected to result in such support but in practice this lags behind. The activity of

various GPFLR members in providing support remains limited so far, causing it to be dependent on a small number of core institutions. These core institutions have limited funds and capacity for this, and are often dependent on extra-budgetary funding for activity that supports restoration. In addition the established systems of applying, considering and granting of funds by financial institutes (of which GPFLR members are often executing agencies) often entails a formal, cumbersome and long-term process. These long-term processes could break the momentum generated through the Bonn Challenge. Therefore more capacity and commitment among (as well as beyond) GPFLR members may be needed to enable faster, more responsive restoration support to meet the growing demand. This could entail the creation of an enabling environment for restoration with greater eligibility for support streams; playing a brokering role by (jointly) applying for funding streams; and taking up a facilitating role in the actual restoration process.

Innovative systems to crowd in private investment may be needed. The implementation of restoration commitments may require long-term external support, particularly where financial needs are concerned. Meanwhile the traditional donor community is in many cases not tuned to the provisioning of such 'patient money'. As finding long-term financial resources to enable restoration activities is considered one of the major hurdles for restoration activities wide consensus exists that the private sector holds potential for the provisioning of funding for landscape restoration activities. In general however this potential is yet to translate into large-scale investments. It requires an enabling and investable environment for restoration in which the scale of restoration activity is maximised and risk of failure is minimised, while adhering to important social and environmental safeguards. Examples of initiatives that promote private sector involvement are already coming to the forth that focus on, or relate to landscape restoration. External support (by GPFLR members among others) could play a role in this regard by communicating and supporting the business case of restoration, facilitating investable restoration efforts and playing a brokering role by connecting these restoration efforts with emerging legitimate investment mechanisms.

Collaboration on restoration support may enhance effectiveness of the GPFLR where FLR implementation is concerned. Much potential lies in taking up a more coherent inter-institutional approach by GPFLR members that is of greater interest to donor institutions (more output from limited funds) as well as recipient projects. A more coherent approach could capitalise on synergies and comparative advantages of different support agencies. For instance, intergovernmental organisations have a strong mandate to cooperate with national government agencies on enabling institutional arrangements for restoration. Other non-governmental agencies may be more effective in addressing stakeholder complexities and mapping restoration potential.

Where collaborative efforts at the country level are concerned, a leading role for local institutions (e.g. relevant ministries) may be imperative. This can make collaborative efforts a process where these actors take ownership of the restoration process, instead of making it

an externally driven process. Instrumental to this could be country level mechanisms to facilitate an inter-institutional ongoing discussion, dialogue and joint activity, to ensure that restoration efforts are coherently addressed by a variety of actors and perspectives.

Global partnerships including the GPFLR can instigate and facilitate such (collaborative) efforts on restoration support at the meta-level. To achieve this, a shift may be needed towards greater emphasis on implementation apart from policy advocacy and knowledge exchange. Currently, implementation-oriented activities under the GPFLR are dependent on a limited number of core institutes. Increasing the prioritisation of this within other member institutes is experienced as challenging within the context of the informal and voluntary GPFLR structure. Achieving a more implementation-oriented focus within the GPFLR may however not necessarily entail formalisation and a stronger coordinating role for the secretariat (which is not supported by many members). Instead this may be achieved through enhanced servicing capabilities for convening, engagement in structured information exchange, and providing greater oversight of activities to identify and instigate collaboration where appropriate. It has been demonstrated that this collaboration can be achieved within the context of the current informal and flexible GPFLR structure, provided that members are sufficiently committed. Such commitment however requires time and effort from members, who also spend this on other global partnerships such as LPFN. A situation where influential and leading actors are supporting different and possibly competing global partnerships should be avoided. Potential therefore not only lies boosting the servicing capabilities of the GPFLR, but also (and perhaps more importantly) in seeking complementarity and collaboration with related global partnerships. This could reduce the effort needed from members and open up new possibilities to instigate restoration activity and facilitate a more implementation-oriented focus.

7.4 The role of donor institutes

The above building blocks may be relevant to strategies and priorities of (potential) donor institutes as well. The findings of this report have shown that pragmatic approaches to global environmental governance can work, and that relatively informal partnerships and initiatives such as the GPFLR and the Bonn Challenge can play an instrumental role in this regard. They can bring together a broad range of actors and interests on various levels of governance in a common aim; create political momentum for action in a particular issue area; and can play an important role in translating this momentum into implementation. By supporting such activity, donor institutes may make important contributions towards achieving global environmental and developmental targets in a way that can be complementary to traditional multilateral systems. In addition, by being involved with these initiatives, either as a member or informally, donor institutes could benefit from the experience of a broad community of practice, and identify new points of interest for effective donor support.

Reflecting on this case study such points of interest have come to light, which could benefit from funds to build, maintain or enhance effectiveness of various restoration initiatives:

- The building of political momentum for restoration through the Bonn Challenge has been a relatively low cost process. However, to maintain and further build momentum efforts may need to be taken to further regionalise this initiative. Donor institutes could play a role in supporting the efforts towards convening implementation-oriented Bonn Challenge regional meetings and partnerships.
- The implementation of restoration commitments may also benefit from greater availability of donor support. The limited number of institutes that can support the refinement, implementation and monitoring of restoration efforts, are unable to fully respond to the growing demand for such support. Dedicated funds for restoration could boost the capacity of these executing agencies, and could stimulate the prioritisation of this issue within agencies which have provided limited support to restoration to date.
- Restoration entails a long-term process, which could only start to pay off after periods of up to 20 years (e.g. Ferwerda, 2015). However, donor projects are often relatively short-term, lasting for about 5 years. Projects with long-term donor commitment in combination with adequate mainstreaming of restoration plans in national planning and budgetary priorities could therefore add to the sustainability of restoration efforts.
- Potential lies in taking up a coherent inter-institutional approach by executing agencies which capitalises on comparative advantages and synergies between these agencies. This may be of greater interest to donor institutions (more output from limited funds) as well as recipient projects. Joint efforts, such as the noted collaboration by IUCN, FAO and UNEP to attract GEF funding for restoration may therefore be recognised as a positive trait in proposals, if not already.
- Such collaborative efforts may be facilitated at the meta-level by global partnerships such as the GPFLR. Modest funds at a sustainable and predictable level could enhance the ability of the GPFLR secretariat to convene, engage in structured information exchange, and provide greater oversight to instigate concerted efforts for restoration support.
- Links between the different globally operating partnerships may also be considered. Multiple global partnerships exist that focus on or relate to landscape restoration. A situation where important donor institutes support different initiatives should be avoided. Links between these institutes may therefore be promoted as a way to engage with a broader range of partners and to increase potential for concerted efforts towards restoration.
- Finally, it is important to note that globally available public funds may not be sufficient to support the implementation of global targets such as the Bonn Challenge. Donor institutes may therefore also play a role in the search for and establishment of innovative mechanisms that can crowd in private investment with public funds.

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Appendix 1.

Information provided by organisations

Institute	Affiliation with landscape restoration	Name	Information received through
Wageningen Centre for Development and Innovation	GPFLR member	Cora van Oosten	Interview
World Resources Institute	GPFLR member	Lars Laestadius	Interview
Federal Ministry for the Environment (Germany)	GPFLR member, donor	Horst Freiberg	Interview
Ministry of Climate and Environment (Norway)	GPFLR close collaborator, donor	Henrik Fliflet	Interview
Canadian Forest Service	GPFLR co-chair	Peter Besseau	E-mail
Commonland, 4 returns from landscape restoration	GPFLR member	Willem Ferwerda	Interview
United Nations Environment Programme	GPFLR member	Tim Christopherson	Interview
Food and Agriculture Organisation	GPFLR member	Douglas McGuire	Interview
International Union for Conservation of Nature	GPFLR member, GPFLR secretariat	Carole Saint-Laurent	E-mail
Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment (the Netherlands)	Verified Conservation Area Platform	Arthur Eijs	Interview
WeForest	Expert	Eva Vogt	Interview
Net-Positive Solutions	Expert	Fraser Brown	Interview

Acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference Of the Parties
FLR	Forest and Landscape Restoration
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPFLR	Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration
IMFN	International Model Forest Network
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUFRO	International Union of Forest Research Organizations
LPFN	Landscapes for People, Food and Nature
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
ROAM	Restoration Opportunity Assessment Methodology
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SER	Society for Ecological Restoration
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Wageningen CDI	Wageningen Centre For Development and Innovation
WRI	World Resources Institute
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature