



## **Mid-Term Review of FAO-GEF Project**

**FAO Project ID: GCP/STP/022/GFF**

**GEF Project ID: 9517**

**Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate  
Change Mitigation in the Republic of Sao Tome & Principe**

**The Restoration Initiative Child project**

**Final Report**

**MTR conducted in November 2021**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Sub-regional Office for Central Africa**

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Note: All maps prepared by the TRI project.

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## **FAO Budget Holder**

- Mr Helder Mutea.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

ANR	Assisted natural regeneration
ACHA	Agricultural Sector Working Group
AFAP	Project Management Trust Agency (World Bank)
AMP	Pico Mountain Association
ASB	Association of Banks in STP
BAU	Business as usual
BD	Biodiversity
BH	Budget holder
CATAP	Advanced agro-pastoral centre
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CECAB	Export co-operative of bio-cocoa producers
CECAFEB	Export co-operative of bio-coffee producers
COPIL	Steering Committee for FLR
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CSO	Civil society organisation
DEX	Direct execution (FAO)
DFB	Directorate for Forests and Biodiversity (MAFRD)
EBA	Endemic bird areas
Ex-Act	Ex-ante Carbon balance Tool.
EO	Expected outcome
FAO-STP	Food and Agriculture Organization Office in Sao Tomé and Príncipe
FLO	Funding liaison officer (FAO)
FLR	Forest landscape restoration
EBCSLM	Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation & Sustainable Land Management
EES	Environmental and social safeguards
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
EMAE	Water and Electricity Enterprise of STP
EO	Expected outcome
FLRM	Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism
FSMP	Forest sector management plan
FRA	Forest resource assessment

GCP	Global child project (of TRI)
GEB	Global environmental benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GCU	GEF Coordination Unit (FAO-Rome)
GPFLR	Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration
Ha	Hectare
HEP	Hydro-electric power
IES	Incentives for ecosystem services
iNGOs	International non-governmental organisations
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KAP	Knowledge, attitudes and practices
LP	Landscape Plan (PP)
LTO	Lead technical officer
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Rural Development
MPFBE	Ministry of Planning, Finance and Blue Economy
MPWINRE	Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Env.
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MCC	Ministry of Climate Change
MRV	Monitoring, reporting and verification
MTR	Mid-term review
NBCSAP	National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan
NCCC	National Committee for Climate Change
NCP	National child project (of TRI)
NFF	National forest fund
NFFD	National Fund for Forest Development of STP
NFLMS	National Forest and Landscape Monitoring System
NFLRP	National Forest Landscape Restoration Plan
NPFMCR	National Platform for Forestry Management, Conservation & Restoration
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
NWFP	Non-wood forest products (same as NTFP)
PAC	Program Advisory Committee (for TRI)
PAM	Protected Areas management
PAPAC	Smallholder commercial agriculture project (funded by IFAD)



PD	Project document
PES	Payment for ecosystem services
PFD	Project framework document (global project of the TRI)
PFLR	Platform for Forest Landscape Restoration
PMU	Project Management Unit
PIP	Policy Influence Plan
PIR	Project Implementation Report (for GEF)
PNOP	Obo Natural Park of Principe
PNOST	Obo Natural Park of Sao Tome Principe (PNOP
PPR	Project Progress Report (for FAO)
PRSP	Power Sector Recovery Project (funded by the World Bank)
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PVC	Plan Vivo Certificate
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
ROAM	Restoration Opportunity Assessment Method
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFC	FAO Subregional Office for Central Africa
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SLM	Sustainable land management
SO	Strategic Objective
SPP	Seedling Production Plan
tCO <sub>2</sub> eq	Tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of reference
TRI	The Restoration Initiative
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WACA	West African Coastal Areas Management Program (GEF)



## 0. Executive summary

### 0.1 Introduction

- 1 The mid-term review (MTR) of project GCP/STP/022/GFF, *"Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate Change Mitigation in the Republic of São Tomé e Príncipe"*, and with GEF Identification Number 9517, hereafter referred to as "the child project" of The Restoration Initiative (TRI), is to assess how far the project is achieving its planned outputs, outcomes and objectives and to provide valuable recommendations, based on evidence and findings, in accordance with the Guide for planning and conducting mid-term reviews of FAO–GEF projects and programmes. The evaluation criteria applied are: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, factors affecting project performance, cross-cutting priorities (including social inclusion and environmental and social standards) and gender equality. The scope of the MTR, covers the period from project's implementation start date (entry of duty) on 13 November 2018 to 30 November 2021. The MTR's field mission took place between 14 and 27 November, 2021. The MTR comprised an independent team of an international consultant (lead consultant) and a national consultant. The work methodology focused on a combination of a desk review of project documents, remote interviews and semi-structured interviews in the field, together with site visits to support triangulation of findings. To guide the interview process, the MTR team produced a theory of change (ToC) and a detailed evaluation matrix (EM) during the inception phase, which were used to guide the MTR's interview process. The MTR team were greatly aided by FAO's decision to authorise the MTR team leader to travel to STP to carry out the field interviews and sites visits in both Sao Tome and Principe.

### 0.2 Main findings

- Relevance** - *Question 1: Are the project outcomes congruent with current country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework, the TRI global project objectives and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women and indigenous peoples if relevant?)*
- 2 **Satisfactory:** The TRI project remains highly relevant to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, in particular the Directorate for Forestry and Biodiversity (MAFRD/DFB), which is in urgent need of capacity building and resources to tackle the growing problems associated with the degradation of its forested landscapes. Moreover, the project emphasises the importance of "institutionalising" the project within DFB's offices, which has contributed to establishing a strong sense of ownership of the project. Overall, the project's four main components respond to the priorities of MAFDB/DFB and emphasise the importance of developing partnerships with local actors who are interested and able to implement FLR activities in order to reverse the depletion of natural resources caused by unsustainable agricultural, agroforestry and coastal practices. However, the

project's strong sector-based approach to FLR and the development of NTFPs has largely overlooked the importance of establishing inter-institutional alliances through which the strategic relevance of FLR could be advocated to support national efforts dedicated to reducing poverty and shifting to more sustainable and resilient rural development. In particular, insufficient attention has been given to establishing alliances with: (i) the Ministry for Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment, in particular the Directorate General for Environment of the (MPWINRE/DGE) which is responsible for disciplines that are crucial to the sustainability of forest landscape restoration (FLR), including land use planning (LUP), NRM and climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCA/CCM), which includes chairing the National Committee for Climate Change (NCCC); (ii) the Ministry of Planning, Finance and the Blue Economy (MPFBE) responsible for supporting the development of SMEs in non-wood forestry products (NWFPs); (iii) the University of STP, which is one of the few permanent institutions in the country that has the capacity to provide diploma courses on forestry (currently unavailable in STP) and promote applied research on FLR and NWFPs. As a result, dialogue on the national relevance of FLR, in particular the co-benefits it generates (and which align fully with GEF6 and FAO priorities and objectives), is not taking place at the national level.

**Effectiveness** - *Question 2: To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives and what broader results (if any) has the project had at regional and global level to date?*

- 3 **Moderately satisfactory:** The TRI project has experienced significant delays and challenges to implement its planned outputs and deliver its expected outcomes. In addition, the absence of key partnerships mentioned above, together with the fact only two years of operations remain indicate it is highly unlikely the project can achieve its objectives by November 2023. Nonetheless, the majority of the preliminary and preparatory activities needed before the FLR and economic activities can start on the ground have been completed, or are nearing completion. In particular, MAFRD has issued a Ministerial Decree to establish the National Platform for Forestry Management, Conservation & Restoration (NPFMCR) which has overseen the elaboration and endorsement in 2021 of the National FLR Plan (NFLRP). Key elements of the NFLRP include the identification of a total of 30,091 ha for FLR activities (84% of the FLR target in the Prodoc) and the selection of four sites where the TRI project will support the application of eight FLR options. To support the implementation of these FLR plans a large number of Letters of Agreement (LoAs) have been earmarked/signed with local actors who have a vested interest in restoring their forests and their ecological services. Similarly, a total of two income generating activities to produce honey (in Sao Tome) and snails (in Principe) have been selected and a LoA signed with Oikos NGO to develop these activities in a total of four communities. A total of seven small bankable projects have been selected for support and the procurement of two mobile saw mills to promote enterprises dedicated to reducing wood waste has been agreed, although delays in the procurement process means this activity will not start until 2022. In addition, a request for Plan Vivo to support the development of carbon trading schemes has been agreed in

principle. Finally, overall progress in delivering planned outputs and outcomes under Component 4 has been slow, especially concerning the development of the National Forest and Landscape Monitoring System (NFLMS), which has been postponed to 2022. Activities linked to international travel have had to be scrapped, or switched to remote communications due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Current resources dedicated to internal M&E and communications were found to concentrate on informing and reporting, rather than focused on encouraging learning to support informed decision-making and advocacy on the strategic relevance of FLR in shifting rural communities to sustainable and resilient rural development that provide substantial co-benefits.

**Efficiency** - *Question 3: To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively?*

- 4 **Moderately satisfactory:** The project's capacity to convert its resources into expected outputs and outcomes to 30/11/2021 shows that 26.8 per cent of GEF funds were needed to achieve an estimated overall physical progress rate of 44% to the same date. Similarly, accumulated expenditure (in cash and in-kind) under co-finance was reported to be 26.8% to 30/06/2021 (PIR-3), which suggests the project is achieving a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness and GEF funds are successfully leveraging co-finance on a ratio of 1:5 USD. However, the MTR team found it very difficult to substantiate these findings due to a lack of information available from FAO on the breakdown of GEF expenditure by component, and an explanation on how co-finance expenditure is calculated taking into account the PAPAC/IFAD project ended in February 2020 and the PSRP project funded by the World Bank is not projected to start operations until mid-2022. In addition, there is consensus among stakeholders interviewed that the decision to implement the project through Direct Execution (DEX) in a small-island developing state (SIDS) where FAO does not have a fully-fledged Office has subjected the project to FAO's heavy administrative bureaucracy that has resulted in very high transaction costs when procuring equipment, recruiting personnel and managing payments, which are managed through a separate system (ASR) that requires all GEF funds to be channelled through UNDP in STP.

**Sustainability** - *Question 4: What is the likelihood that the project results can be sustained after the end of the project?*

- 5 **Moderately satisfactory:** The MTR team found some of the risk ratings maintained in the PIRs have not adequately taken into account changing events over the past two years. Moreover, new risks associated with the pandemic and a growing energy crisis in STP causing regular power cuts have not been identified and assessed. As such, the project is not applying effective risk management in its planning and monitoring, through which learning and consensus on suitable risk mitigation measures can be agreed and funded. In particular, the MTR has identified socio-political, institutional and financial risks are all "substantial". For example, World Bank assessments confirm poverty since the pandemic has grown, precipitating unsustainable expansion of short-cycle crops for food and to generate an income, as well as illegal activities such as charcoal production. Similarly,

political instability remains a significant threat due to the precarious nature of the coalition government made up of four political parties since 2018, and which is unlikely to continue after the next legislative elections in 2022. Moreover, due to the lack of advocacy on the strategic importance of FLR to political parties, it is highly unlikely the sustainability of the FLR process will be adopted as a political priority in these elections. Finally, substantial institutional and financial risks have been identified due a lack of progress in forging alliances with the MPWINRE/DGE, MPFBE and the University of STP. In particular, these risks reduce the capacity of DFB to promote the continuation, research and upscaling of the FLR process over the long-term while small businesses are likely to lack adequate business services and access to funding to continue developing NWFPs.

**Factors affecting performance** - *Question 5: What are the main factors affecting the project from reaching its results?*

- 6 **Moderately unsatisfactory:** Some gaps in the project design are affecting the project's capacity to deliver planned outputs and reach expected outcomes on time. The project's strong sector-based approach to FLR and the development of NWFPs has restricted the opportunities to develop the NPFMCR at the national level, in particular through existing platforms such as the one for climate change under the NCCC, through which synergies, cost-sharing activities could have developed. The promotion and development of small enterprises through the MAFRD/DFB has limited their access to qualified business advisers and business services/finance to support the development and growth of NWFPs. The project's emphasis on recruiting NGOs and consultancies to provide training services on FLR and NWFPs ensures training is delivered, but does not institutionalise such training in a permanent institution that will remain in STP. Moreover, the training of DFB foresters and application of FLR through outsourcing means the scope to develop and tailor the training curriculum to DFB's needs is likely to be limited, as well as become costly over-time, thus forcing DFB to downsize its training needs. The project's targets are very ambitious for a government that has limited capacity and a small annual budget. This situation has absorbed too much of the project's resources and efforts on trying to meet these targets, rather than on delivering a viable model for FLR in, for example two sites where important lessons and good practices can be captured and communicated to decision-makers, investors in the private sector and the general public.
- 7 The application of DEX has directly contributed to slower implementation of some activities than planned, in particular concerning the procurement of mobile saw-mills and solar energy systems. Implementation has also been severely affected by the restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Estimates are that delays in implementation to the pandemic amount to almost 12 months. Finally, the project's current M&E system and communications are geared primarily to support reporting to the GEF Secretariat on operational progress and core indicators. Currently, no qualitative indicators are being monitored to support learning on the theory of change, in particular

transformational change relating to knowledge, attitudes and practices at all levels, but especially at the community level.

**Cross-cutting priorities** *Question 6: To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?*

- 8 **Satisfactory** The checklist for environmental and social standards (ESS) has been fully applied in the Prodoc. Analysis of the ESS checklist in the PIRs confirms no updates in have taken place to date. However, the MTR team's two main findings from its analysis are, first, following new developments in 2021, some classifications will need to reviewed and updated in the next PIR. In particular, the MTR team observed Safeguard 3.4 will need to reviewed, because the options in the four FLR plans include new planting of forests in savanna and mangrove areas. Second, the TRI project has not conducted environmental health analysis to establish baselines that would support monitoring and research of the quality of the restoration process (in particular relating to ESS-2 (biodiversity, ecosystems and natural habitats). Moreover, this would support, for example, research on biodiversity loss/restoration, using tools such as Species Threat Abatement and Recovery promoted by the Global Child Project of TRI. This would also support reporting on the project's contribution to changes in the Red Lists for endangered species and ecosystems managed by TRI's leading partner, IUCN.

**Gender** *Question 7: To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?*

- 9 **Moderately satisfactory:** The Prodoc provides a dedicated section on enhancing gender equality, in which it emphasises minimum participation rates for women (33%) and that women should participate in community forestry and decision making. Analysis of women's participation rates in the project's main activities under components 2-4 all well over the minimum level (48.6%). However, the project does not apply a fully-fledged gender strategy that focuses on other vulnerable groups, such as youths. In addition, no monitoring is conducted to support reporting on empowerment, such the number of women who are actively participating in decision-making roles, such as the boards of directors for enterprises promoting NWFPs.

**Linkages with the global child project.** *Question 8: What did the global child project (GCP) bring to the national child project including any synergies between child projects and what did the national child project bring to the global child project?*

- 10 **Moderately satisfactory:** The GCP was instrumental in bringing the TRI community together in 2019 to launch the initiative, identify regional training needs and initiate training on new methods and tools to apply FLR. This has contributed to DFB's decision to use open-source GIS mapping software (CEOF/QGIS), which has facilitated the production of the NFLRP. The international events have also served to stimulate the Tri project's networking with other TRI projects; notably with the TRI project in Guinea Bissau



to share information on mangrove restoration. However, since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 the GCP has had to switch to remote support, which most interviewees confirmed has been less effective. Moreover, communications via the internet have been particularly challenging in STP due to regular power cuts and poor internet connections. In addition, the GCP requires all TRI projects to track nine core indicators to inform the GEF Secretariat on TRI progress. Although, the TRI project has received online support in integrating these indicators into the M&E plan in 2021, the absence of qualitative indicators means there is insufficient monitoring of the transformational changes needed to support learning on why FLR/NWFPs are delivering positive/negative results (socio-cultural, economic and ecological). Moreover, this would also provide opportunities to stimulate research on FLR/NWFPs that largely absent in STP. Similarly, this would support the development of GCP's help desk, including its current initiative to develop an online training course on FLR. Finally, the contributions of the TRI project to the GCP have mainly centred on providing inputs for GCP publications, such as the Annual Reviews of TRI. Overall, the lack of qualitative monitoring, a learning hub and applied research indicate the TRI project is not well prepared to identify and communicate success stories, which the MTR team found exist, but remain hidden. For example, the production of the invasive species of West African snails in Príncipe will not only promote income generation, but is likely to reduce pressures on the highly endangered Obo snail, which is endemic to STP.

#### **Impact and response to the Covid-19 pandemic.** Question 9: *COVID-19 impacts*

- 11 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been significant on the project and its contribution to delaying operations is estimated to be as much as 12 months. In particular the lockdowns and restrictions on group meetings and international travel have delayed, or prevented international travel and exchanges from taking place, which has affected operations in the field, especially in Príncipe, where the PMU does not have a consultant on the ground to ensure coordination and regular follow-up on project activities. However, the application of FAO's Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) for prevention and control of COVID-19 have made a positive contribution to enabling the PMU staff to work with DFB staff in the Sao Tome office and enable the PSC meetings to continue operating. Nonetheless, the impact of the pandemic on poverty, inflation, investment, etc. is likely to start taking full effect in 2022 at the same time new legislative elections are about to take place and which are likely to precipitate political unrest and a change of government.

#### **Knowledge activities/products**

- 12 The project has mainly focused on the production of newsletters, summaries of the project's activities for the global and regional newsletters managed by TRI's global child project (GCP), media coverage of the project's main events managed by the NGO Alisei, including television and radio spots on the projects activities and the production of excerpts on the TRI project in STP for TRI's Annual Reviews for 2019 and 2020. Due the delays in implementing the FLR and economic development activities no knowledge



products, or educational materials have been produced to date. There is also limited evidence that the project's communication strategy will support advocacy campaigns designed to win the case for FLR to be adopted as part of a national strategy to support sustainable and inclusive rural development and greater resilience to climate change. The general lack of qualitative monitoring and risk management is also likely to limited learning at the grassroots level as among decision-makers on how to scale-up FLR and investment in SMEs dedicated to stimulating the growth of NWFPs.

### Stakeholder participation

- 13 The project has demonstrated a strong commitment to applying stakeholder participation at all levels of implementation. At the ministerial level it has successfully engaged national stakeholders to participate in the NPFMCR in order to approve strategic activities such as the NFLRP. All the capacity building exercises conducted so far have paid particular attention engaging the participation of DFB officials, which has facilitated the mapping and planning exercises linked to the development of the NFLRP and the rehabilitation/establishment of the DFB tree nurseries, among others. Participation of rural farming communities, coupled with positive discrimination to encourage women to be involved in the project's activities, has been successfully secured by the signing Letters of Agreement (LoAs) with their farmer associations/cooperatives to ensure full ownership of the FLR activities as well as promote farm diversification. Women were also found to be well represented in the income generating activities and bankable projects selected. However, participation rates have had to be downsized from a target of 17,000 households from rural communities to 15,000 due several contributory factors ranging from over-ambitious targets in the Prodoc in relation to the absorption capacity of DFB and its partners, and delays and challenges linked to the project's implementation.

### Progress towards achieving the project's development objective

- 14 The MTR team found sufficient evidence to confirm the TRI project is unlikely to achieve its development objective before its closure in 2023, but **moderately likely** to achieve it if the project is granted an extension and the recommendations in this report are addressed, implemented and monitored. These include, among others, improving coordination with DGE and MPFBE, the development of a forestry diploma course (incorporating FLR) and applied research in forestry (currently absent in STP), resolving the current administrative bottlenecks within FAO to allow more decision-making from the FAO-STP office, and bridging current technical gaps within the PMU, in particular a qualified expert to guide and oversee the development of rural business linked to NWFPs and at least a part-time technical representative stationed in Príncipe, to reduce dependency on the Autonomous Regional Government of Príncipe to implement project activities.

## Overall risk rating

- 15 The MTR assigns an overall risk rating of '**medium**' to the project. This is higher than the "low risk" rating provided in the project implementation reports (PIRs) and in the Prodoc. This is justified because risk management is not fully integrated into project planning and monitoring and new risks associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and the energy crisis in STP have been largely overlooked so far. In addition, legislative, regional and local elections will all take place in 2022, which is likely to cause political unrest, especially as growing threats of poverty, which has grown to cover around 75 per cent of the population, is likely to fuel this unrest at the expense of debate on longer-term solutions to address environmental degradation and climate change which the IPCCC projects will have a devastating effect on SIDS.

## 0.3 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1 (Relevance) on question 1:** *Are the project outcomes and objective congruent with current country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries?*

- 16 The project's outcomes and objectives remain consistent with the policies and priorities of the executing agency, MAFRD. Analysis of the current policy, legal and planning framework in STP and the Policy Influence Plan produced by the TRI project, confirm the NFLRP, adopted by the NPFMCR in 2021, supports the implementation of key policies linked to poverty alleviation, reducing environmental degradation and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Moreover, both the new Minister of MAFRD and new Director of DFB have stated their full commitment to implementing the TRI project. In addition, the MTR team found the project remains fully coherent with GEF Focal Areas CC-2-P4 (promotion of carbon stocks), LD-2-3-P3 (landscape restoration) and LD-3-P4 (sustainable landscape management), FAO's SO-2 (improve provision of goods and services from forestry in a sustainable manner) and Priority Areas 1 and 2 of FAO's latest CPF. However, the project could do more to stimulate learning and communication on how the project's FLR activities generate co-benefits that support the achievement of GEF/FAO priorities and objectives.
- 17 As a result, the strategic relevance of FLR and the development of NWFPs at the national level remains unclear. This is not aided by, on the one hand, the need to integrate FLR into the National Forestry Development Plan (NFDP) and the Forestry Law (No. 5/2001) to officially recognise, guide and regulate the NFLRP. As such FLR is still considered within MAFRD as a pilot activity. On the other, the project's design and implementation promotes a strong sector-based approach to FLR. Inadequate attention has been given to establishing inter-institutional partnerships with key institutions that manage portfolios that are key to the long-term success of FLR. In particular, these relate to land use planning and enforcement, NRM and CCA/CCM (under MPWINRE/DGE) and the development of

SMEs engaged in NWFPs (under MPFBE). In addition, no partnerships are foreseen with educational and research establishments, even though there are neither forestry diploma courses offered by the University of STP to train foresters, nor a research capacity in place on forestry matters. Indeed, this situation suggests some of the TRI project's main targets, in particular its main target to restore/improve the management of over 30% of the country's land area (35,700 ha) over five years, are over-ambitious and/or unrealistic.

**Conclusion 2 (Effectiveness) on question 2:** *To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives?*

- 18 The project has made satisfactory progress in completion of a large number of preliminary activities linked to its main outputs and outcomes, but this has taken longer than planned, meaning most of the FLR and income generating activities will not start until 2022. As a result, it is highly unlikely the TRI project can achieve its objectives by November 2023. Conclusions at the component level indicate the activities completed so far under Component 1 are successfully enhancing MAFRD/DFB's understanding of FLR and, through the formulation of the NFLRP, increased their commitment to reform the policy framework to support its implementation. This has been aided by the establishment of the NPFMCR, which has facilitated a new, more dynamic, decision-making process in place to guide the FLR process within MAFRD/DFB. However, achieving a national commitment to FLR remains elusive for the reasons mentioned in Conclusion 1. Achievement of outcomes under Component 2 have not been aided by the loss of in-kind co-finance from the PAPAC/IFAD which closed in early 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic. The latter has caused up to 12 months of delays in planned activities and caused the slow start up of the PRSP project funded by the World Bank, which is not expected to start until mid-2022. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the NFLRP in 2021 has enabled the TRI the project to revise the FLR/SLM target down from 35,500 ha in the Prodoc to a more realistic target of 30,091 ha. Nonetheless, until there is more information on the cost of FLR/hectare, it remains unclear whether this revised target is achievable in the time remaining. Meanwhile, initial indications on the development of honey and snail production are that both have good markets to become profitable concerns, but it is highly unlikely this can be achieved in the remaining two years of the TRI project.
- 19 Progress under Component 3 is encouraging and likely to demonstrate the added-value of the TRI project. There is positive feedback from DFB on strengthening its capacity in areas such as deontology and forestry surveillance and from the Central Bank on its commitment to apply a 'Green' Code of Conduct for the banking sector. Nonetheless, the voluntary nature of the Code, means it will depend on the MPEBE establishing a coordinated 'green' business development strategy for NWFPs if it is to deliver a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic. This is also important for the seven small bankable projects that have just been selected, together with one medium-large partnership to be established with Plan Vivo to develop carbon credits from FLR and the development of mobile wood mill enterprises to reduce wood waste.

However, because all these activities will not start on the ground until 2022 it is likely the vast majority will struggle to become profitable/generate income in without more time, specialised business support and access to research and training services. Finally, the achievement of outcomes under Component 4 faces major challenges. First, the creation of the NFLMS has been delayed to 2022. Despite agreement to adopt FAO's LCCS and switch to open-source GIS software (CEOF and QGIS), the TRI project will be hard pressed to develop the MRV capacity needed to establish the database by November 2023. Similarly, the identification of unit costs, lessons learned and best practices cannot take place until the FLR process and economic activities have been in operation for at least one year.

**Conclusion 3 (Efficiency) on question 3:** *To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively?*

- 20 The project has achieved a moderately satisfactory level of efficiency when taking into account the project has achieved an estimated physical progress of 44 per cent, while accumulated expenditure stands at almost 27 per cent of GEF funds to 30 November 2021. This indicates the TRI project has delivered a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness so far, which appears to be largely attributed to the successful application of LoAs with an array of implementing partners who have a vested interest in FLR. Moreover, despite delays in starting the implementation of the PRSP project and closure of the PAPAC project in February 2020, the TRI project has still been able to secured an estimated USD 4.47 m. to 30 June 2021, which indicates for every US Dollar of GEF funding, the TRI project is leveraging more than USD 5 in the form of co-funding. This has been achieved in part through the in-kind contributions from the farmer cooperatives and associations that were formerly supported by the PAPAC project, but which are now engaged in the TRI project through LoAs. Nevertheless, the TRI project is spending on average, USD 388 of GEF funds on each beneficiary recorded to 30 November 2021 (1,992 beneficiaries), and FAO's lengthy bureaucratic procedures are resulting in very high transaction costs. On top of this, the TRI project has had to endure the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and a growing energy crisis resulting in regular power cuts. The MTR team estimates these challenges are for forcing FAO staff and the PMU to spend too much time on administrative matters as well as contributed to setting back operations by as much as twelve months.

**Conclusion 4 (Sustainability) on question 4:** *What is the likelihood that the project results can be sustained after the end of the project?*

- 21 It is moderately likely that the project's main outputs and outcomes linked to FLR will be sustained beyond the TRI project, especially where the FLR activities are being implemented through LoAs with local partners such as CECAB and CECAQ-11 who fill fully own the FLR process well after the project has ended. Moreover, the FLR process centres on nature-based solutions that are relatively cheap to maintain and replicate, which in turn will offer further opportunities to exploit its co-benefits, such as carbon emission trading schemes planned with support from Plan Vivo. However, the sustainability of project activities linked to the strengthening of DFB is less likely, because

important gaps remain. These include, a lack of training courses for foresters, inability to procure equipment to support DFB develop MRV capacity to apply the NFLMS and carry out effective patrolling, GPS monitoring, mapping and ground truthing of forest boundaries and buffer zones, and law enforcement, among others. Similarly, the role and tasks of the NPFFMCR have not been clarified at the national level, which has implications on its strategic relevance and ability to advocate the upscaling of FLR to the NCCC. Meanwhile, it is unlikely that the majority of the economic activities will have established themselves as sustainable concerns by the end of 2023. In particular solutions have not been identified so far to link these activities to competent authorities who are able to provide the services and resources that DFB does not have to support the sustainable and adapted development of rural communities in STP. Meanwhile, risks classified as substantial, in particular relating to socio-political, institutional and financial risks, are not being adequately addressed through the integration of risk management in planning and monitoring.

**Conclusion 5 (factors affecting performance) on question 5:** *What are the main factors affecting the project from reaching its results?*

- 22 Several factors are affecting the project's performance and, therefore, potential impact. First, the project design has some unrealistic targets. In particular the FLR targets, even after being downsized following the completion of the NFLRP, remain highly ambitious when taking into account the DFB currently has 28 staff, of which only four are qualified foresters. Second, there is a strong case that the creation of the NPFFMCR has consumed resources that could have been channeled into existing national platforms where the strategic relevance of FLR could have been developed more effectively, such as in relation to the NLUP and meeting national goals and targets linked to the NDCs, CBD, SDGs and Bonn Challenge, among others. Third, by not having a dedicated consultant to support SMEs linked to NWFPs, the TRI project has relied on an *ad hoc* tendering arrangement to select the bankable projects; as opposed to an alliance between the Central Bank/ASB and the MPFBE through which the funding opportunities forum foreseen in the Prodoc could have been framed by a new business development strategy for NWFPs followed by tendering to pilot the application of the Green Code of Conduct. Fourth, the decision to apply DEX in a country that does not have a fully-fledged FAO Office has slowed the delivery of several outputs, in particular where outputs have depended on the procurement of imported equipment, as well as added additional layers of bureaucracy due to the application of the ASR payments system that is managed in STP by UNDP. Fifth, the M&E system and communication strategy are geared to providing information on outputs, rather than on developing a learning hub supported by qualitative indicators to, for example, assess changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP), review and manage risks, or increase understanding on the co-benefits of FLR.

**Conclusion 6 (Cross-cutting priorities) on question 6:** *To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?*

- 23 The MTR team concurs with the “low risk” rating in the Prodoc and PIRs for the ESS assessment. However, it does not concur with the “no” response applied to Safeguard 3-3.4 because the project does include the establishment and management of planted forests. Similarly, the “no” rating for Safeguard 4-4.1 is no longer fully applicable, because the MTR team understands one of the bankable projects selected for funding by the TRI project in October 2021 includes silvopasture involving the introduction of non-native cattle.

**Conclusion 7 (gender) on question 7:** *To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?*

- 24 Overall, the MTR team found the PMU’s monitoring of women’s participation in the project’s main activities to be satisfactory. For example, women’s participation in activities under components 2 and 3 has been over 46 and 51 per cent respectively, which is well over the minimum target of 30 per cent in the Prodoc. Nonetheless, the project does not have a gender strategy in place to monitor the empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups (such as youths) in decision-making roles. As a result, the M&E system does not support learning to identify and stimulate informed planning on the strengths/gaps of the project’s support to enhancing gender equality.

**Conclusion 8 (links to the global child project) on question 8:** *What did the global child project bring to the national child project, including synergies between child projects? What did the child project bring to the global child project?*

- 25 The global child project has had most impact in supporting the TRI project adopt new practices and tools to apply FLR mapping and planning, in particular the decision to apply QGIS open-source software, which will avoid the need to acquire costly licensed GIS software recommended in the Prodoc. Also, significant has been GCP’s role in facilitating networking with the TRI project in Guinea Bissau to exchange knowledge and information on mangrove restoration. Online webinars are also reported to have helped guide the development of the M&E plan adopted by the PMU in 2021. Nevertheless, there is consensus among stakeholders interviewed that the GCP has been far less proactive since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, although the MTR team was informed on-demand support has been provided by GCP (referred to as “TRI support”) in areas such as the development of the FLR plans, on the use of mobile sawmills and on integrating the nine core indicators managed by the GCP in the M&E plan in STP, although the GCP does not have a remote help-desk in operation to date. However, the Core Indicators do not include any qualitative indicators designed to support learning and informed dialogue within the TRI community. As such, the GCP does not have a dynamic communication strategy in place to encourage dialogue within the TRI community on why, when and how FLR and SMEs (for NWFPs) become effective/ineffective and what are the good practices/actions needed to sustain them, make them more inclusive and resilient to climate change.



- 26 The TRI project's contributions to the GCP have been limited to providing support in the formulation of knowledge products, in particular the Annual Reviews of TRI for 2019 and 2020. However, the TRI project has the potential to provide highly valuable information in the future once its operations in the field have materialised and feedback on performance has been analysed. Areas of particular interest include the impact of the Green Code of Conduct on investment in FLR/NWFPs, the impact of West African snail production (an invasive species) on reducing hunting of the endemic Obo snail in danger of extinction and how far the production of essential oils in STP leads to the development of sustainable products, such as soaps in STP, and reduces imports of such products.

## 0.4 Recommendations

- 27 **Recommendation 1** – (linked to conclusion 1 and 5) – relevance and factors affecting performance – for the PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-GCU, FAO-STP, FAO-R, CTA, PMU and members of the NPFCMR: in order to clarify the relevance of FLR beyond the TRI project, it is highly recommended the TRI project reviews (for example, through the PIP) how a coordination mechanism with the DGE of MPWINRE could be established with the main purpose of determining how the NPFMCR could be integrated and sustained within the NCCC. In particular, it is recommended the NPFMCR becomes the main advocate for the consolidation and upscaling of FLR/NTFPs as a strategic response to establishing sustainable livelihoods that enhance their resilience to climate change and which generate important co-benefits that can be shared by all (conservation of biodiversity and habitats, water quality/provision, carbon sequestration/trading, disaster risk reduction as a result of less soil/coastal erosion).

### Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:

- a) High level intervention should be provided by the GEF Coordination Unit to officially request the Minister of MAFRD to convoke a meeting/workshop with the DGE of MPWINRE to determine the role the NPFCMR should play in supporting the NCCC respond to country's strategy and action plan to combat climate change and halt biodiversity loss. It is suggested that the role the NPFMCR in supporting the NCCC develop a national strategy to combat the effects of the climate and ecological emergency unfolding globally is discussed and the NFLRP potentially adopted as a cost-effective response to reduce poverty, enhance sustainable development and build resilience in priority rural areas of STP (starting in the four intervention sites of the TRI project). It is recommended this meeting is conducted in Portuguese and includes the following key stakeholders:
- From the TRI project in STP: MAFRD/DFB, FAO-STP, PMU and a representative from AFAP as main co-financing partner;
  - From FAO (outside STP) either in-person, or remotely: the Budget Holder from FAO-SFC, the LTO and CTA from FAO-R, a representative from GCU;

- **From MPWINRE: Director of DGE and coordinators of GEF-funded projects in STP linked to biodiversity conservation and climate change;**
- **Main implementing partners of GEF-funded projects: UNDP representatives responsible for supporting implementation of the Climate Promise, biodiversity conservation (EBCSLM) and the WACA coastal management programme, among others.**

**It is suggested the DFB and DGE appoint a staff member to act as the secretariat of this meeting, responsible for following up and applying the decisions reached concerning the establishment of the coordination framework agreed upon and which should continue after the TRI and other GEF-funded projects and programmes in the interests of meeting national targets, goals, and pledges.**

- b) In the event the DFB and DGE establish this coordination framework, it is recommended exploratory talks take place to determine a shared work agenda to address outstanding issues that are likely to affect the sustainability and impact of the FLR process in STP. It is recommended a focal point from DFB and DGE are nominated to work with the consultant conducting the PIP to oversee the development of this agenda and to report monthly on progress and any bottlenecks/barriers that need to be addressed by the TRI project, or through the creation of synergies with FAO's own programmes (such as the Technical Cooperation Programme) and services (such as the Legal Service), through other GEF-funded projects managed by DGE, or by other relevant donor-funded projects and programmes operating in STP and that can be tapped for resources. Major issues identified by the MTR team following interviews with DFB and other stakeholders that should be reviewed for possible inclusion in the joint agenda are:**

- **The degree to which the NFLRP can be integrated into the NLUP as part of the country's strategy to conserve ecosystem services and combat climate change in STP. In particular, there is a need to clarify the land cover/land use category/categories to be applied to restored forest landscapes to support enforcement against illegal changes of use of these landscapes after the TRI project has ended and which will affect the sustainability of the FLR process. Moreover, this will also help guide, among others: (i) the banking sector on the types of public and private investment permitted in the restoration sites under the Green Code of Conduct and in line with the land use categories agreed in the NLUP for the FLR sites; (ii) urban planning, in terms of the future allocation of land for housing, public buildings/infrastructure, for agricultural development, etc.; (iii) the planning of green space, changes of conservation/protected area boundaries and protection of high-risk areas that are vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods, landslides and droughts;**
- **The updating of the National Forestry Development Plan (NFDP) and its Guidelines to ensure the full integration of the FLR process is included and managed by DFB and its partners. In addition, its contribution to**



**generating co-benefits should be explained and justified to attract new investment in the restoration of the country's forest ecosystems. It is also highly recommended that the LTO and CTA, in coordination with the PMU and DFB, explore opportunities of harnessing the support of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme to support the updating of the NFDP to 2050 given the FLR process cannot be completed within political cycles of five years and the fact carbon sequestration targets identified in the Prodoc are linked to a 20-year cycle;**

- **A timetable to reform the Forestry Law (No. 5/2001), based on the identification of one, or more suitable funding sources to ensure a new legal framework is in place to support, guide and regulate the implementation of the NFDP and the NPFMCR in line with the legal and strategic provisions in place to combat climate change and meet the targets set in the country's NDCs. It is also highly recommended that the LTO and CTA, in coordination with the PMU and DFB, explore opportunities of obtaining the support of FAO's Legal Service and/or hiring an international legal expert (preferably with work experience linked to forestry, land-use planning and climate change laws and regulations) to advise and guide all legal and regulatory needs;**
- c) **The consultant responsible for the capacity building programme of the TRI project coordinates a set of training modules to support the application of the abovementioned proposals linked to training under Recommendation 1. It is recommended the training courses Encourage institutions such as the Agricultural Sector Working Group (ACHA) to participate to develop an inclusive approach to the reforms proposed;**
- d) **Ensure results, lessons learned and good practices identified from the above actions are systematised and shared with GCP.**

- 28 **Recommendation 2** – (linked to conclusions 1 and 4) – effectiveness and sustainability – for PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-STP, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, CTA, PMU): it is highly recommended to clarify the TRI project's exit strategy concerning who will manage the promotion, development and monitoring of the economic activities beyond the TRI project, taking into account DFB does not have the capacity or mandate to support micro and small enterprise development and the PMU does not include an expert to oversee the development of NWFPs.

**Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:**

- a) **The LTO/CTA should consult with the PMU and DFB on fast-tracking the recruitment of a consultant for 100 days with experience in small enterprise management and development of inclusive value chains for NWFPs. Two options should be explored to determine the fastest way to recruit this consultant: (i)**

**contact FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme to determine if expertise could be provided directly from the TCP taking into account it has been engaged in the implementation of the NWFP project - a pilot multinational institutional support project aimed at helping the five target countries (Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe) to define regulatory frameworks and strategies that could improve NWFP management as a means to safeguarding food security and reducing poverty<sup>1</sup>; (ii) recruit a qualified consultant from FAO's roster for a period of 100 days in order to review key gaps identified by the MTR team concerning the bankable projects and income generating activities being promoted. These gaps include business planning and management, business incubation services, post-harvest storage, product quality control, branding, and marketing and certification and distribution/export licenses, among others. It is recommended the 100-day period of the contract is used to identify the long-term technical assistance needs of the TRI project in the extension period agreed by GEF/FAO (see Recommendation 5). The MTR team is unable to provide a specific recommendation on how this consultant can be funded as no financial statements were provided to it by FAO-SCF (see Table 3). However, taking into account there is a total balance of almost USD 2.5 m. to 30/11/2021, the indications are unspent funds are available due to the pandemic, especially concerning Component 4, which can be reallocated and used for this action (under Component 3);**

- b) Similar to Recommendation 1, a high-level intervention should be organised by the GEF Coordination Unit to officially request the Minister of MAFRD/Director of DFB to convoke a meeting/workshop with representatives from MPFBE, the Central Bank and the bank association in STP (ASB/CREDIAL/Mungi) to determine which government institution and/or financial institution/platform can provide financial and business support services to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the TRI project's economic activities. It is recommended the business consultant proposed in the preceding point together with a focal point for business development nominated by MPFBE and a financial adviser from the Central Bank (responsible for the promoting the Green Code of Conduct) are delegated to oversee the implementation of the decisions and next steps agreed in this meeting, which it is anticipated should lay down the foundations for identifying a "green" business development strategy for NWFPs in STP and which is designed to support the country meet its NDCs;**
- c) In line with the provisions under Output 3.1.2, it is recommended the funding operators forum proposed includes a workshop with representatives from the private sector and, if possible, a representative from IFAD-STP, to review the green business strategy for NWFPs before identifying a road map for investment in NWFPs and certified products that have most potential in**

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<sup>1</sup> FAO, Non-wood forest products, 2014. Available at:

general and regarding the bankable projects in particular. In particular, the workshop should not only inform local operators on potential funding instruments available internationally to small and medium enterprises (Prodoc, p. 53, para. 125), but also inform about projects such as COMPRAM/IFAD that offer such funding in STP. It is recommended the workshop not only reviews funding/potential co-finance options for SMEs, but that the peer-to-peer reviews proposed explore how the development of business incubator services can be agreed and piloted in STP. In this way SMEs linked to NWFPs will be able to gain access to, among others:

- Business networks and investors providing seed capital/support;
  - Co-working space to allow the new enterprises to work with other similar businesses and experienced professionals to support learning.
  - Products and subsidised professional services such as accountants and lawyers linked to the incubator, which in the case of Principe could be explored through the partnership with HBD proposed in Recommendation 4.
- d) Explore the possibility of engaging AFAP/WB to apply its social development strategy in all four interventions sites to promote the active participation of women, youths and other vulnerable groups in the green business strategy and defining activities applicable for co-finance (in-kind and/or cash).
- e) Consider applying one of the brand names proposed by Alisei in its Communication Strategy to all NWFPs produced with the support of the TRI project, differentiating brand names for Sao Tome and Principe products (especially certified products);
- f) Systematise all achievements, lessons learned and good practices identified that can be scaled up/replication and shared with the TRI community.

- 29 **Recommendation 3** – (linked to conclusion 2 and 5) – effectiveness and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-STP, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, CTA): Gaps in DFB's capacity to train its own staff and conduct applied research on FLR/NWFPs are evident and should be addressed to ensure it has access to FLR training services from a permanent institution in STP after the TRI project has ended. This is considered by the MTR as an essential prerequisite to optimising the TRI project's sustainability and impact.

**Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation (University of STP):**

- a) A provisional meeting between the PMU, DFB, the consultants responsible for the PIP and capacity building programme, from TRI's GCP and representatives from the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of STP should be conducted to explore how the University can be supported to develop an internal training capacity on FLR/NWFP development and application of applied research into FLR/NWFPs in post-graduate/doctorate studies. Next steps should be agreed in this meeting regarding the types of courses that could be offered. For example, (i) a Diploma in Forestry, incorporating FLR,

**designed to produce the next generation of foresters and rangers in STP; (ii) Specialised training courses in FLR agro-forestry extension and development of NWFPs designed to support DFB, TRI partners (especially CECAB, CECAQ-11 and CECAFEB) and the private sector in general consolidate FLR activities started by the TRI project and develop business incubators and applied research for selected NWFP enterprises; (iii) exchanges to other TRI countries, or elsewhere to develop capacity in areas such as value-added activities, the development of certified wood and non-wood forestry products, branding and marketing, etc.**

- b) The GCP provides pilot funding and technical assistance to develop the next steps agreed between DFB and the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of STP, but with the aim of learning lessons and good practices to expand the initiative to other TRI countries. The assistance provided, should explore how to capture funding from donors who have a long track record supporting the development of research through either university networks or donors that have an office in STP, in particular:**
- Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC);**
  - Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA);**
  - Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC);**
  - Universities within the TRI community, or linked to FAO.**
- c) The PAC should review with the GEF Secretariat the potential for injecting new resources (under GEF8) to develop a knowledge hub for TRI countries to centralise information on developing a Diploma course on forestry incorporating FLR in all TRI countries. It is recommended, the course should provide general information on FLR that is applicable to all the TRI community countries, so that selected universities are engaged in providing training on, for example, the role of FLR in restoring the carbon cycle, FLR policy development, GIS mapping using ROAM and ANR methods developed by IUCN, application of FLR tools such as Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR), EHI and MRV linked to data collection, management and use to support the identification of carbon inventories. The main aim of this approach should be to development internal capacity within a permanent and autonomous educational institution in order to reduce dependency on hiring NGOs and the private sector to research and upscale the FLR process in STP and other TRI countries. In addition, alternative funding resources should be sought to apply the methods and tools associated with FLR, as well as capture and promote local knowledge and technologies linked to FLR, in the interests of extending learning and informed decision-making to upscale FLR/NWFPs. The ultimate goal of this recommendation should be to institutionalise learning on FLR/NWFP development within STP and to combine it with indigenous knowledge and technologies.**

- 30 **Recommendation 4** – (linked to conclusion 2 and 5) – effectiveness and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-STP, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, CTA): The development of seedlings for the tree nurseries should be fast-tracked through existing local partners following the CECAB model of buying seedlings from its community-based nurseries and through new partnerships with the private sector, such as with HBD in Príncipe.

**Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation (tree nurseries and FLR management):**

- a) The training programme planned on nursery management and seed conservation in early 2022 and which will involve four experts from Cameroon (2), Kenya and Brazil should include the international expert from Spain who has been contracted to support the development of DFB's seedling production plans as well as oversee the development of DFB's tree nurseries.
- b) The five experts concerned should review and develop a fast-tracked seedlings development programme that assesses how far key local partners such as CECAB, CECAQ-11, CECAFEB, AMP can develop community-based nurseries designed to sell the seedlings to their cooperatives for development of the shadow forests proposed in the FLR plans for all four intervention sites to be supported by the TRI project. This approach should be incorporated into: (i) the training programme on tree nursery management with the aim of producing DFB nurseries that are supported by community-based tree nurseries, (ii) the forestry training courses proposed for development by the University of STP (Recommendation 3) and which should include the development of a university-based nursery dedicated to providing training and research on the propagation of native tree species that are on the list of seedlings earmarked for FLR, or which merit inclusion, such as the Pau Fuba tree species, which is endemic to Príncipe island, but which is used widely for housing and furniture;
- c) Explore the development of a private-public partnership in Príncipe between DFB, the Autonomous Regional Government of Príncipe and HBD, on the grounds the sustainability officer of HBD has expressed potential interest to join forces with the TRI project to conserve and restore Príncipe's natural resources as a prerequisite to developing its eco-tourism model and production of NWFPs, in particular sustainable products such as organic soaps, cosmetic creams and chocolate. This includes providing access to its tree nurseries and agro-forestry research facilities;
- d) Identify the equipment needs of the DFB to apply effective law enforcement in line with the lessons and good practices identified from the training courses that have just been completed on the law enforcement in October 2021;
- e) Identify long-term user-friendly FLR management plans to be applied by the TRI project's main partners (CECAB, CECAQ-11, CECAFEB, AMP) to at least 2030

**to protect the seedlings planted until they are mature enough to support consolidation of the FLR process.**

- f) Enhance the DFB's capacity to apply law enforcement in the FLR sites by identifying a partner through which the following are achieved: (i) the establishment of alliances and partnerships with local inhabitants to act as local watchdogs for DFB; (ii) identify funding to support the acquisition of uniforms, walking boots, GPS cameras and rescue equipment, among others; (iii) specialist training in areas such as forest fire management and pest control to support adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction.**

- 31 **Recommendation 5** – (linked to conclusion 3 and 5) – efficiency and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAOPK, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, PMU and GCP of TRI: it is highly recommended the TRI project is extended for a period of between 12 and 18 months to recover the delays endured due to the COVID-19 pandemic and which includes a six-month closure period to implement its exit strategy. However, taking into account the development of the tree nurseries and number of seedlings is still very low, the MTR team believe an additional 12-18 months of operations will not be enough time to achieve the restoration targets of the 28,326 ha (see Table 1), taking into account the DFB has limited resources and capacity. For this reason, the FLR targets in the Result Matrix should be revised to realistic and achievable levels in the 12-18 months extension agreed and which should include the implementation of an exit strategy to secure the sustainability of the TRI project's main outcomes.

**Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:**

- a) The PSC reviews the project's FLR targets in the RM and develops with the PMU and DFB a new agenda/work plan for the project's implementation in the extension period agreed, with clear roles identified and agreed with all implementing partners, the DGE and MPFBE (under Recommendations 1 and 2) as well as the new realistic targets that can be achieved in the extension period and which should be reviewed in a rolling annual work plan that is reviewed by the PSC on a tri-monthly basis;**
- b) The PSC reviews the technical and financial inputs required to oversee the implementation of the new agenda/work plan;**
- c) The PSC and FAO stakeholders agree on a strategy to improve the project's administrative efficiency, by identifying a way to reduce FAO's bureaucracy within existing rules, to ensure the proposed extension period witnesses a reduction in transaction costs and delivers outputs in line with the new agenda adopted. In particular, it is recommended the PMU team (including proposed business consultant) receive training (in-person/online) on FAO procedures to ensure it starts funding requests, staff recruitment, LoAs, and procurement of equipment well in advance and that the PMU is granted by FAO-STP direct access to focal points for finance/recruitment/procurement who can be contacted directly in FAO-SCF to ensure funding, staffing and procuring of equipment is**

not delayed. It is recommended the costs of the training of the PMU is covered by the GCP as part of a dedicated online administrative training course provided to all PMU staff of all TRI projects and that the GCP's help desk establishes on-demand support to PMU TLs as good practice for TRI;

- d) Ensure the MAFRD offices in Sao Tome and the DFB offices in Porto Real in Principe have a solar energy capacity installed as a matter of urgency in 2022 to guarantee the TRI project does not suffer from regular power cuts that are likely to worsen in 2022. This will also strengthen the image of DFB as a low carbon agency. It is recommended the funding of these solar panels is negotiated with AFAP/WB as an extra-official agreement of the co-finance agreed in the Prodoc (in cash), but which is also argued as supporting the achievement of objectives of the Power Rehabilitation Support Project.
- e) The PMU improves its physical presence in Principe from early 2022 to oversee the implementation of the FLR activities, start-up of the snail production enterprise and implementation of the bankable projects. The PMU should explore the following options, before proposing the preferred choice to the PSC:
- Employ a new technical staff member as coordinator of operations in Principe (at least on a part-time basis of three days per week);
  - Strengthen the capacity of the Director of DFB in Principe by employing a consultant to coordinate the TRI project's economic activities and purchasing the equipment the Director needs to oversee and report on progress, lessons and good practices emanating from the FLR process. The MTR identified the following deficiencies: (i) a Desk top computer and monitor screen to manage GIS maps and apply MRV of FLR activities; (ii) a quality laptop that can be used as a tablet in the field; (iii) lack of a GPS land surveying machine to support forest monitoring and surveillance to locate and report where, for example, how far FLR is having a positive effect on forest degradation, encroachment into protected areas, reducing risks of natural disasters, storm surges, etc.;

- 32 **Recommendation 6** – (linked to conclusion 4 and 5) – sustainability and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAOPK, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, PMU, CTA and GCP of TRI: in line with the MTR's recommendations for the child project in Pakistan (2021), it is recommended the GCP convenes a virtual meeting/workshop with FAO stakeholders to agree on the inclusion of qualitative indicators to support learning on how far socio-cultural, economic and ecological dynamics are changing at all levels, but especially within the beneficiary communities. Currently, the nine Core Indicators concentrate on quantitative achievements that do not support learning on far these dynamics are taking place, and which the MTR team considers are crucial to guiding the FLR process and development of sustainable NWFPs. Moreover, monitoring of these changes are considered important to develop effective communication strategies dedicated to lobbying and advocating FLR and development of NTFPs as a viable alternative to generating co-benefits (increasing

**carbon stocks, biodiversity and species conservation) that align with GEF’s focal areas and FAO’s strategic objectives and which encourage the upscaling of carbon-focused restoration plans that will support the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2).**

**Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:**

- a) **The GCP heads a delegation to review and develop a more robust M&E system and communication strategy in all TRI national projects, starting in Pakistan and STP before full roll out. Agreement should be sought on the adoption of the qualitative indicators needed to support the establishment of learning hubs that replace the current application of information hubs in TRI projects such as in STP;**
- b) **It is highly recommended the qualitative indicators support learning in three main areas: socio-cultural, economic and environmental development. Each area should focus on indicators to measure:**
  - **Social transformation vis-à-vis knowledge, attitudes and practices, which can be monitored through methods such as KAP surveys. Attention should be given to ensuring suitable ethnographic methods are chosen for each child project (focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, participant observation, participatory analysis methods, etc.) and that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods are applied by two experts from qualitative and quantitative research traditions. Similarly, attention should be given to monitoring how far women, youths and other vulnerable groups are being engaged in decision-making roles and access to services (as opposed to focusing only on participation rates);**
  - **Economic transformation from the perspective of generating inclusive, sustainable and resilient development in the intervention areas. Attention should be given to measuring costs and return on investment, because rural beneficiaries do not generally know what their costs are in relation to the income they generate. For example, the MTR team found CECAFEB is currently operating at a loss, whereas CECAB is making a profit. In addition, monitoring should relate to relevant SDGs. For example, on SDG12, an inspection/audit would enable the mobile sawmill enterprises planned see where money is being spent, what waste has been generated (compare it to chainsaw waste) and identify ways to reduce it further through a waste reduction plan. Similarly, monitoring of partnerships (SDG17) should be considered as this is a major element in TRI projects and supports learning on how partners such as CECAFEB can improve performance by teaming up with hotels, the retail sector, charities, etc.**
  - **Ecological health of forests subjected to FLR activities. It is strongly recommended the M&E system of all national child projects support educational establishments (such as the University of STP) develop training and research capacity in conducting ecological health index (EHI) and carbon inventory assessments that these can be mapped (using CEOF and QGIS) to**



**determine if the FLR process is having the desired effect and how far progress is linked to the findings from the social and economic monitoring proposed above. This would also support reporting linked to the NFLRP, the CBD/NBSAP/Post-Aichi Targets and the NDCs and determine where monitoring of Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) may be needed and justified.**

- c) Upgrading of the TRI project's communication strategy to show more clearly its contribution at the national level, which in STP concerns the restoration of around 30 per cent of STP's land surface, implying significant generation of the above-mentioned co-benefits. It is recommended that the GCP coordinates this with the aim of encouraging the learning hubs to improve communication on the contribution to national targets and goals linked to the forestry sector in the ten participating countries. This should also support the development of advocacy campaigns to encourage reforms and incentives in support of FLR/NWFPs. In STP, it is recommended the PSC, PMU and CTA consider the following:**
- Increasing the budget Alisei (currently USD 50,000 over 18 months) to develop the communication strategy on the abovementioned lines to support the case for implementing recommendations 1-4.**
  - Ensuring the increase in the budget is conditional on Alisei sharing knowledge on its honey study and progress in producing snails;**
  - Recruiting a communications expert (possibly paid for by GCP) to support the development of the new communication strategy to be identified and implemented.**
- d) Ensure the lessons learned and good practices from the changes adopted in the M&E and communication aspects of the TRI project are systematised and shared with the TRI community and general public**

## 0.5 Table B - GEF ratings

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating <sup>2</sup>	Summary comments <sup>3</sup>
<b>A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE</b>		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	The project represents a major contribution to restoring forest ecosystem services and retaining the classification as a carbon sink country. STP has a land area of 1,001 Km <sup>2</sup> (101,100 ha) and the project will support the restoration of 30 091 ha. This is equivalent to 29.8% of total land area. It also supports the Bonn Challenge to restore 350 million ha by 2030 and restoration will contribute directly to storing 8,034.8 ktCO <sub>2</sub> eq (8,034,828 tCO <sub>2</sub> eq) over 20 years, indicating the TRI project will offset a considerable percentage of the country's emissions under the BAU scenario. It is let down by insufficient attention given to establishing inter-institutional alliances, especially MPWINRE/DGE responsible for the NCCC.
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project remains aligned CC-2 Program 4 (conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forests); LD-2 Program 3: (Landscape Management and Restoration); LD-3 Program 4: (Scaling-up SLM through the Landscape Approach; SFM-3 (Restored Forest Ecosystems); SO-2-Outcome 2.1. Also supports achievement of SDGs 1 (Target 1.4), 2 (Target 2.4) 13 (Target 13b) and 15 (Targets 15.1 and 15.5).
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	S	The project is aligned, but not fully active in supporting implementation of current national policies and laws including the NDS 2017-2021, NS for Poverty Reduction, NLUP 2040, Adaptation to CC (2004); NDCs (Updated, 2021), NBSAP 2015-2020
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MU	The Project has not established close cooperation and coordination with other GEF-funded projects executed by MPWINRE/DGE and implemented by UNDP, or by EU, AfDB linked to forestry. Links with academia and scientific research institutions is not evident. However, TRI does provide opportunities for complementarity with other TRI countries and child projects.
<b>B. EFFECTIVENESS</b>		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	The project has made good progress in implementing the majority of preliminary activities needed before being able to implement main outputs under components 1-3, concerning FLR/NWFs activities in the field (from 2022). This includes finalisation of the NFLRP and detailed FLR plans for the four intervention sites in STP. However, progress under component 4 has been less evident, especially development of the NFLMS. Overall, the TRI project is

<sup>2</sup> See rating scheme at the end of the document.

<sup>3</sup> Include reference to the relevant sections in the report.

		highly unlikely to achieve many of its main outcomes and objectives by Nov. 2023.
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	MS	The project has shown it is delivering well on the preliminary activities required to start implementation of FLR activities with local partners and start the economic activities and funding of 7 small bankable projects selected, plus one large one in the process of negotiation with Plan Vivo on developing carbon credits. However, delivery of some outputs is well behind schedule, especially activities linked to the acquisition of equipment (mobile sawmills, solar panels) work in the Contador watershed, due to delays in starting implementation of the PSRP and setting up the forest monitoring system (NFLMS).
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes <sup>4</sup> and project objectives	MS	The project is unlikely to meet the majority of its outcomes (especially under components 2-4) by November 2023 due to delays in operations amounting to almost 12 months linked to several factors largely beyond the PMU's control such as the pandemic, a growing energy crisis, and heavy FAO bureaucracy.
- Outcome 1	S	The project has established the platform for FLR, but it only operates at the ministerial level. Linkages to already established platforms under the NCCC to support CCA/CCM have not been established to date. Progress in preparing the NFLRP has been satisfactory and confirms the TRI project will contribute to restoring almost 30% of the country's total land area. The PIP is in the process of being developed. It is clear that for the NFLRP to be effective and sustainable, reform of the NFDP, the NFF and the Forest Law are needed. However, the PIP has not fully addressed how the NPFMCR could advocate the strategic relevance of FLR at the national level to combat climate change, while also generate important co-benefits that align with GEF/FAO priorities, nor the socio-cultural dimension that also needs to change for FLR/agro-forestry to succeed over forest clearance and tilling for short-cycle crops.
- Outcome 2	MS	Preparatory activities have been completed including the FLR plans for each of the four project sites, signing of partnership agreements (LoAs) with local partners to implement FLR in relation to these plans, establishing/rehabilitating tree nurseries with management plans to produce approximately 450,000 seedlings for FLR and around 50,000 for shadow forests. Emphasis is on the production of fast and slow-growing native tree species (over 30 in total). Signing of service contracts to implement the economic activities selected (honey and snails) have been completed and initial activities started in final quarter of 2021. However, implementation of main activities on the ground for most outputs will not start until 2022.
- Outcome 3	MS	The capacity building programme on FLR principles and practices has started and one module conducted so far. A MoU has been signed with the Central Bank, which is committed to producing a

<sup>4</sup> Assessment and ratings by individual outcomes may be undertaken if there is added value.

		voluntary Green Code of Conduct for the banking sector and which will aim to reach out to support small businesses linked to the production of sustainable “green” NWFPs. A review of the NFF has been postponed to 2022 after there is greater clarity on the new Green Code of Conduct. Seven small bankable projects have been selected and in the process of signing agreements with the project. One large bankable project has been identified with Plan Vivo (UK), which has provisionally agreed to support the development of carbon trading schemes where FLR is under effective management. Some of the bankable projects are considered to be highly innovative, such as the production of essential oils from plant extracts that has potential to reduce imports and support the production of natural products, such as soaps. However, there is no business strategy in place to support the development of SME’s promoting NWFPs and which would guide investors in applying the Green Code of Conduct once finalised.
- Outcome 4	MS	NFLMS has been delayed and will not start development until 2022 when a postponed training course has been completed at AGEOS (Gabon). However, it will be developed using FAO’s LCCCS and all mapping/GIS will use open-source software to avoid licence lock-ins. The internal project M&E plan has been completed with support from GCP. Overall, it is mainly operating to collect quantitative data, which can be channelled to the global child project responsible for tracking 9 core indicators on TRI. As a result, the M&E system is not tracking any national indicators (linked to the Bonn Challenge, Aichi Targets/NBSAP, SDGs, or on GHG emissions/forest carbon sinks) or qualitative indicators to support learning on FLR/NWFPs, which can be channelled to the project’s communication strategy. This also implies the communication strategy, based around an information hub and communications through mass/social media are not geared to learning to support advocacy for change, capture finance, etc.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	Achievement of the project and development objectives is unlikely, unless more time is available and some aspects of the project design are addressed. The support to the NWFPs will need to factor in a better understanding of markets and marketing to establish short and inclusive value chains.
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	UA	Not rated in MTRs
<b>C. EFFICIENCY</b>		
C1. Efficiency <sup>5</sup>	MS	The estimated physical advance of the project is almost 44% to 30/11/2021 (end of Year-3), with Component 1 showing most advance at 66% and Component 4 the least at 30%. Total expenditure of GEF funds stands at 26.8% to 30/11/2021. Co-finance expenditure is reported to be 26.8% at 30/06/2021 (PIR-3). This includes cash payments of USD 2.8 m. from the PRSP project. Although the project is behind schedule on its implementation the

<sup>5</sup> Includes cost efficiency and timeliness.

		indications are it is demonstrating a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness, especially when taking into account the PAPAC/IFAD project closed in early 2020 and the PRSP project has not started main operations (planned for 2022 after an EIA). However, this has been compensated by LoAs with former PAPAC cooperatives and farmer associations who provide in-kind support. Administrative efficiency was found to be moderately unsatisfactory. A part from the fact the PMU has had to implement operations in a pandemic and with regular power cuts stopping work (because the solar panels have still not been installed as planned) In addition, the application of DEX in a SIDS that does not have a fully-fledged FAO Office has subjected the PMU and FAO staff to very high transaction costs especially concerning procurement, but also in securing payments and recruiting staff.
<b>D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Sustainability of main outputs and outcomes linked to FLR practices implemented through LoAs is moderately likely, The FLR activities implemented by local partners such as CECAB, CECAQ-11 and CECAFEB are most likely to be sustained and even upscaled, because they will be fully owned and managed by these farmer cooperatives/associations. They are also likely to receive some support from the Plan Vivo on the development of carbon credits that will provide an alternative source of income to continue consolidating FLR activities. FLR activities managed by DFB are moderately likely to continue, although there is an urgent need to develop better linkages with the University of STP to provide forestry courses and training of new staff for DFB, as there is currently no diploma course on forestry available in STP, nor applied research being conducted on FLR, NWFPs, or on forestry monitoring that is needed to support the development and operation of the NFLMS. The sustainability of the income generating activities and majority of bankable projects selected is unlikely in the time remaining due to the fact none have started operations so far. Moreover, there is a need for training to strengthen gaps in key areas such as business planning and management, quality control and marketing...
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	Financial risks have been upgraded from low in the PIR to "moderate" because the effects of the pandemic on the economy of STP has been severe and likely to increase the government's dependency on external aid. However, these effects are likely to be palliated by the introduction of the Green Code of Conduct, which should increase access to finance for small enterprises and the Plan Vivo project is projected to support 92 rural communities in STP. Also, significant is that FLR promotes largely nature-based solutions to restoration, which are very cost-efficient, because they are low cost to implement and maintain.
D1.2. Socio-political risks	ML	Socio-political risks are considered "substantial" (from "low" in the PIRs), because the pandemic has, on the one hand, increased poverty leading to an increase in short-cycle crops for food and

		short-term income needs. Triangulated evidence also suggests not enough attention is being given to the socio-cultural dimension in the PIP and capacity training. On the other, the pandemic has reduced government revenue and increased dependency on aid.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Institutional risks remain “substantial”, because in spite of positive developments such as a new Director of DFB who is committed to supporting and speed up the TRI project significant challenges remain. At the practical level the lack of equipment to apply new patrolling, GPS monitoring of forest boundaries and surveillance is evident. At the inter-institutional level, a robust alliance with MPWINRE/DGE is missing. This means there is insufficient coordination of FLR with policies linked to LUP, NRM, CCA, CCM, etc. that are managed by DGE. Similarly, a lack of coordination with the MPFBE indicates the project’s income generating activities and bankable projects are not being selected and promoted under a coordinated business development strategy for SMEs aimed at encouraging investors in NTFPs to invest in line with the Green Code of Conduct.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	Environmental risks are low, but, the lack of qualitative monitoring has reduced the scope to review key aspects of the ESS, which are needed to support learning on the quality of the FLR achieved.
D2. Catalysis and replication	L	The adoption of CEOF/QGIS software is likely to catalyse a new level of forest monitoring to support the expansion of more effective forest governance. The LoAs with local partners are also likely to encourage follow-on farmers to replicate the agro-forestry practices promoted. It is too early to comment on the income generating activities and bankable projects, but the indication is that replication will depend on how far they are successfully generating profits and the equipment used is readily available in STP, which in some cases, such as the mobile saw mills, is not evident. Having said that, the
<b>E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE</b>		
E1. Project design and readiness <sup>6</sup>	MS	The project’s design is overall satisfactory in terms of developing capacity within DFB and applying FLR through LoAs, but has understated: (i) the importance of working in partnership with DGE to ensure a coordinated response to FLR and adaptation to climate change given FLR directly supports CCA and CCM; (ii) the need for guidance on the provision of SME services from the MPFBE (such as incubation services) to support their effectiveness and sustainability. In addition, the design contains some over-ambitious targets on number of hectares to be restored and number of direct beneficiaries that should be reviewed.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	Overall, the quality of the PMU team’s technical and administrative inputs has been satisfactory, especially taking into account a number

<sup>6</sup> This refers to factors affecting the project’s ability to start as expected, such as the presence of sufficient capacity among executing partners at project launch.

		of factors have affected performance beyond the PMU's control. These include the lack of resources and capacity in DFB, the effects of the pandemic and power cuts, FAO's bureaucracy and the fact the PMU does not have a consultant in Principe, or to guide and supervise the economic activities. Interviewees also confirmed the quality of the trainings and capacity building support has been satisfactory so far especially in areas such as mapping for the FLR plans and on forest surveillance and behaviour (deontology). The quality of the M&E reporting was, however, found to be high for reporting purposes, but low for learning to support work planning decision-making and advocating the strategic relevance of FLR to CCA.
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, CTA, etc.)	MS	The quality of FAO's technical support has been satisfactory, even though no visits or events have taken place since early 2020 until November 2021, when the CTA was granted authorisation to travel again to STP. Regular contact has been maintained via online conference applications. Meanwhile, administrative support from FAO was found to be moderately unsatisfactory, because there is evidence to indicate that FAO bureaucracy has slowed down some operations, which appears to particularly affect SIDS such as STP that do not have a fully-fledged FAO Office capable of taking its own decisions on procurement, finances, recruitment, etc.
E2.1 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	S	The PSC has met on five occasions and no major problems have been identified concerning its decision-making. However, most of the government representatives present still consider the project to be a pilot and that for this reason, it remains largely a "ministerial", rather than "national" project. Moreover, because there is no robust mechanism in place with the MPWINRE/DGE, the DGE only plays a passive role in guiding the TRI project.
E3. Quality of project execution	S	The project's execution appears to have improved substantially since the new Minister of MAFRD and Director of DFB have taken office in September 2021. In particular, interviews confirm they have an educational background and work experience in FLR-related activities, which has contributed to their strong commitment to support and speed up the implementation of the project in 2022.
E3.1 Project execution and management (PMU and executing partner performance, administration, staffing, etc.)	MS	The execution of the project through DEX has subjected the PMU to FAO's internal rules and regulations, which have substantially increased transaction costs. Thus, although DEX has secured a full-time TL, too much of his time is spent in the office on administrative matters, rather than in the field. Taking into account the TRI project has completed most of the preliminary activities actions under components 1-3 and is delivering a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness, the PMU is demonstrating it can deliver results.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	MU	The MTR team identified financial management of the project relies on FAO-SCF based in Gabon to manage its accounts, agree on the procurement of equipment and disburse funds. Despite employing a consultant to support the management of these task, in reality the

MTR of project GCP/STP/022/GFF (GEF 9517) – *Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate Change Mitigation in the Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe* – The Restoration Initiative

		consultant can only act as a filter to link the project up with the division responsible for finance, procurement, recruitment, etc. As a result, there is no evidence this has speeded up the administrative process. Meanwhile, it is unclear where the co-finance expenditure registered to date is coming from when taking into account: (i) PAPAC ended in Feb. 2020 and the PRSP/WB has not yet started.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	MS	Internal project partnerships based on LoAs are showing positive signs the implementation of FLR activities will take place, under the guidance of the DFB, especially because the new director is committed to improving the department's engagement in FLR practices and principles. Engagement of other government institutions such as DGE and MPFBE is low as inter-institutional coordination mechanisms to steer the project in full alignment with policies linked to climate change are missing. As a result, partnerships with institutions such as UNDP that are supporting the implementation of GEF-funded projects on CC are not developing.
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	MS	The project is producing very few knowledge products while it is not implementing in the field. and diffusing them via the internet, or press releases. A communications strategy has been prepared through a service agreement with a local NGO (Alisei), but the agreement does not provide the funding needed to develop a more robust communication strategy dedicated to enhancing learning and advocacy for reforms to support FLR and NWFP development.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	The quality of the M&E system is satisfactory from the point of view of tracking outputs linked to TRI's nine core indicators, but unsatisfactory to support learning, because it has no qualitative indicators or risk monitoring to stimulate understanding and informed dialogue on why knowledge, attitudes and practices are/are not changing at all levels, but especially in rural areas.
E7.1 M&E design	MS	The M&E system is designed to respond to the reporting needs of the PIRs and PPRs. Moreover, it defines which indicators under components 1-4 relate to the GCP's nine core indicators. As a result, the PMU is able micro-manage all actions and outputs as they progress, but, because qualitative indicators are absent, the M&E is not designed to support informed decision-making on annual work planning, or external evaluations that need to address these aspects.
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	MS	The M&E plan has been updated in 2021 with the support of the GCP (through webinars). The M&E consultant in the PMU has not reported any major difficulties in implementing the M&E plan in terms of funding and human resources to support the formulation of the progress reports. However, the delay in starting the NFLMS has meant a lot of time is needed to retrieve forestry data (such as for Tables 1-2). Moreover, the M&E plan will end at project closure.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	Unless the gaps identified are fully addressed and resolved/mitigated, the MTR believes they will continue to affect the project's ability to achieve its objectives.



<b>F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS</b>		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	The project's design places emphasis on advancing gender equality, engaging women in decision-making and registration of sex disaggregated participation rates. However, monitoring only focuses on participation rates of women and men. Although women's average participation rates are satisfactory (43% compared to 30% planned) it is not possible to assess how far women are being empowered, or if other vulnerable groups are directly benefiting.
F2. Human rights issues	S	The MTR found no evidence to indicate the project is having an adverse effect on human rights. Indigenous peoples are not present.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	HS	There is satisfactory compliance with the ESS standards in the Prodoc, but selected safeguards are not tracked by the M&E system.
<b>Overall project rating</b>	<b>MS</b>	

*Ratings: Highly satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately satisfactory (MS), Moderately unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U) Highly unsatisfactory (HU) Unable to assess (UA). Additional ratings for Section E: Likely (L), Moderately likely (ML), Moderately unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U)*

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose and scope of the MTR

- 33 The terms of reference (ToR) of the mid-term review (MTR) of project GCP/STP/022/GFF: *Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate Change Mitigation in the Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe* – The Restoration Initiative (GEF 9517), hereafter referred to as TRI Project-022, specify the main purpose of the MTR is, *to assess the progress made towards achievement of a project's planned results and to provide inputs to better orient FAO-GEF project in São Tomé e Príncipe GCP/STP/022/GFF making it more relevant to the needs of the country*. On this basis the MTR has aimed to provide a set of conclusions and recommendations that will enable decision-makers to take the necessary corrective measures to improve the project's implementation and enhance capacity to scale-up forest landscape restoration (FLR) in STP, based on sustainable forestry management practices (SFM) building resilience to climate variability and change.
- 34 In line with the external evaluation of TRI project GCP/PAK/091/GFF (GEF 9516): *Reversing deforestation and degradation in high conservation value Chilgoza Pine Forests* in Pakistan, which was conducted by the same TL, the MTR will also aim to: draw lessons and provide recommendations on how to improve relations with TRI's global child project responsible for monitoring nine core indicators across the TRI community covering ten countries and eleven national child projects.
- 35 The **scope of the MTR** covers the start of the project's implementation on 24 April 2018 to 31 October 2021. The geographical scope of the MTR covers all four intervention sites in STP, which are in Sao Tome: a) Praia das Conchas, (Northern Landscape); b) Angolares, (Western Landscape); c) Malanza, (Southern Landscape); d) Bom Sucesso, Buffer Zone (Obo National Park) and in Príncipe Island: e) Buffer Zone of the Prince National Park. A wide sample of direct stakeholders were identified and selected following a stakeholder analysis exercise conducted during the Inception Phase in line with GEF/FAO MTR guidelines. However, during the field phase additional stakeholders were identified and interviewed to help triangulate the MTR team's main findings and substantiate its conclusions and recommendations. A list of stakeholders interviewed can be found in Appendix 3.

## 1.2 Objective of the MTR

- 36 The **objective of the MTR** is to assess progress made towards achievement of the project's results, identify challenges faced and provide recommendations on how to make it more relevant to the needs of the country. To achieve this objective the MTR has conducted its analysis based on the same evaluation criteria and main questions provided in the ToR for the MTR of TRI's child project in Pakistan, which is summarised in Box 1 below.

### Box 1: Main questions for the MTR

<b>1. Relevance</b>	Are the project outcomes congruent with country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework, the TRI global child project objectives and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries (local communities, men and women, and indigenous peoples, if relevant)?
<b>2. Effectiveness</b>	To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives?
<b>3. Efficiency</b>	To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively?
<b>4. Sustainability</b>	What is the likelihood that project results can be sustained beyond the project?
<b>5. Factors affecting progress</b> (questions relate to one of the above criteria)	<p><i>(Project design)</i> Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes? Is the project's causal logic coherent and clear?</p> <p><i>(Project execution and management)</i> To what extent did the executing agency effectively discharge its role and responsibilities in managing and administering the project?</p> <p><i>(Achievements and challenges)</i> To what extent has the project progressed in achieving the expected outcomes in each of its components? (Assessed according to findings in Effectiveness)</p> <p><i>(Financial management and co-financing)</i> What have been the financial-management challenges of the project?</p> <p><i>(Project oversight, implementation role)</i> To what extent has FAO delivered oversight and supervision and backstopping (technical, administrative and operational) during project identification, formulation, approval, start-up and execution?</p> <p><i>(Partnerships and stakeholder engagement)</i> To what extent have stakeholders, such as government agencies, civil society, indigenous populations, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, people with disabilities and the private sector, been involved in project formulation and implementation?</p> <p><i>(Communication and knowledge management)</i> How effective has the project been in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and a general audience?</p> <p><i>(M&amp;E design)</i> Is the project's M&amp;E system practical and sufficient?</p> <p><i>(M&amp;E implementation)</i> Does the M&amp;E system operate per the M&amp;E plan?</p>
<b>6. Cross-cutting priorities</b>	<i>(ESS)</i> To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project? To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?
<b>7. Gender</b>	<i>(Gender and minority groups, including indigenous peoples, disadvantaged, vulnerable and people with disabilities)</i> To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?
<b>8. Links to the child project</b>	What did the global child project bring to the national child project, including any synergies between child projects? What did the child project bring to the global child project?

### 1.3 Intended users

37 The primary users of the present MTR report are:

- FAO's Representative in the Subregional Office for Central Africa, who is the Budget Holder of TRI's child project 022 and his Assistant Representative in the STP Country Office;
- The GEF Secretariat and the FAO's GEF Coordination Unit (GCU) in FAO-R;
- The Government of STP (GoP), in particular the members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) in particular from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (MAFRD), which is acting as the Executing Agency of the project and the GEF national focal point in the Responsible for DG Environment in the Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment (MPWINRE);
- The members of the Project Management Unit (PMU) responsible for the implementation of Project 022, especially the FAO appointed Project Manager (PM);
- The Lead Technical Officer (LTO), the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and other FAO technical staff at Headquarters in Rome and in the Regional and Sub-regional Offices including technical divisions and the PTF;
- The GEF funding liaison officer (FLO);
- Other implementing partners of TRI the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), plus the project teams who are managing the implementation of the global child project and six national child projects in five participating countries.

38 Other potential users of the MTR report will include, among others:

- Local stakeholders that are participating in the project's implementation in STP, such as the non-government organisation (NGO), Alisei supporting communications, the Export co-operative of bio-cocoa producers (CECAB) and Export co-operative of bio-coffee producers (CECAFEB).
- Co-funding institutions, in particular the World Bank in partnership with the Project Management Trust Agency (AFAP) and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD).

### 1.4 Methodology

39 The MTR of TRI Project 022 was conducted by two independent consultants; one international (acting as team leader) and one national. The international consultant, Mr. Warren Olding, has over 25 years work experience in project identification, design, management and external monitoring and evaluation linked to sustainable rural development, natural resources management, biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change. He is currently employed as TL for the MTRs of three TRI child project

GCP/PAK/091/GFF in Pakistan (completed in September 2021), the current child project 022 under review in STP and the child project GCP/KEN/090/GFF in Kenya, (foreseen to start in February 2022). The national consultant, Mr Antonio de Graça Correia, has more than 20 years of work experience in the preparation of studies, projects and programs, project evaluation, development of training and conducting surveys. He has worked in the areas of business management, marketing and trade, agriculture, tourism, fisheries and climate change adaptation and mitigation. In addition, he has 39 years of work experience in public administration as a diplomat and technician in international cooperation. The MTR team started the MTR process on 01 October 2021 and is scheduled to present the final report by 31 January 2022. The field mission took place between 14 and 26 November 2021.

40 The work methodology has been applied in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards (2016) and follows the FAO-GEF Guidelines for MTRs together with FAO's corporate policies on gender and other cross-cutting issues. The main sources of information used to support the review and triangulate findings are summarised as follows:

- A review of key documents and reports of TRI project 022, in particular the Project Document (Prodoc), Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), Project Progress Reports (PPR), annual reports, technical reports, back-to-office reports, monitoring reports, including the TRI's global child project's tracking tool of nine core indicators, and government policies, strategies and plans, among others;
- Semi-structured interviews with a wide sample of main stakeholders at the FAO, national and sub-national levels, conducted remotely in the case of FAO staff who are not based in STP using the internet application Teams, and in person in the form of individual or group interviews during the field mission. To ensure a results-based focus to the MTR's field mission, the majority of questions addressed to stakeholders focused on performance-related issues (effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting objectives). Every effort was made during the MTR process to ensure women and other vulnerable groups were fully included in the interview process.
- Direct observations in the project sites where FLR activities are planned and to the sites where bankable projects have been approved by the PMU in both Sao Tome and Principe islands;
- An online questionnaire, designed to facilitate the above-mentioned results-based focus to the MTR by asking questions on project relevance, factors affecting performance and on links with the global child project.

41 The MTR has been conducted through three main phases. First, an **inception phase** in which the MTR prepared and submitted an Inception Report (IR). The IR was cleared on 07 November 2021. Key elements developed in the IR to support the field phase are the: (i) Theory of Change (ToC) for project 022, (see section 3 below and Appendix 9), given

one only exists for TRI, but not at the country level. based on a participatory approach with the PM, LTO and CTA; (ii) Stakeholder Analysis in which all direct stakeholder groups were ranked for interview in terms of “priority”, “desirable”, or “complementary” (see Appendix 3); (iii) Evaluation Matrix (see Appendix 4), outlining all main questions and sub-questions to be asked to interviewees and supported by indicators, judgement criteria and sources of information, to guide the interview process and support the triangulation of main findings, identify lessons learned and good practices that could be recommended for replication/scaling up. In addition, a document review was initiated during the inception phase. The list of documents used to support the formulation of this report can be found in Appendix 5.

- 42 Second, a **field phase**, following clearance by FAO and UNDSS. As stated above, the field phase concentrated primarily on: (i) launching the e-questionnaire a week before the field mission started. A copy of the e-questionnaire’s format can be found in Appendix 6; (ii) carrying out the remote interviews with stakeholders not based in STP; (iii) conducting a series of interviews and site visits in STP between 15 and 25 November 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews in STP were conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the national government, such as the wearing of face masks and use of hand sanitizers in all meetings indoors. The field phase was highly successful. Not only did it cover a wide sample of stakeholders, but also facilitated the identification and interview of some additional indirect stakeholders who the MTR team considered could become important direct stakeholders in the TRI project 022, such as the University of Sao Tome.
- 43 Third a **synthesis phase**, to produce the current MTR report, based on field notes, the responses to the e-questionnaire (six in total), remote interviews and field interviews conducted (see Appendix 7), analysis of the e-questionnaire responses provided by five of the twelve main stakeholders invited to participate in the exercise, and review of remote interview responses recorded in the evaluation matrix (used as a working document). Overall, the MTR team is satisfied it has been able to achieve the triangulation needed to justify its findings, conclusions and recommendations in the present report.

### 1.5 Limitations

- 44 The main limitations to the MTR have been the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the field visit to be realised later than planned from mid-November 2021. In addition, the pandemic has restricted the project’s activities in the field, thus reducing the ability to assess the FLR activities in the field. In addition, one of the main co-financing partners, IFAD, closed the Smallholder Commercial Agriculture Project (PAPAC) in 2020, which limited the review of co-funding (in-kind) with TRI project 022.

## 2 Project background and context

### 2.1 Description of The Restoration Initiative

- 45 The Restoration Initiative (TRI) is a global initiative that supports targeted countries achieve their pledges under the framework of the Bonn Challenge. The project framework document (PFD) states that the **overall goal** of TRI is, *'to contribute to the restoration and maintenance of critical landscapes that provide global environmental benefits and enhanced resilient economic development and livelihoods, in support of the Bonn Challenge.'* Its **global environmental objective** is: *'Biodiversity conservation, protection of climate and other ecosystem services through restoration of critical landscapes in TRI countries and complementary sustainable land management (SLM).'* Meanwhile, the **global development objective** is: *'Poverty reduction, strengthened food security, and human well-being and livelihoods enhanced in TRI countries through restoration of critical landscapes and complementary SLM.'*
- 46 Currently, TRI supports eleven national "child" projects in ten targeted countries in Asia and Africa. Meanwhile, a global "child" project provides coordination and technical support and tracks indicators, lessons and good practices on FLR that can be disseminated to TRI partners and the wider restoration community to promote learning and stimulate networking and partnerships. The implementation of five child projects is entrusted to FAO (child projects in Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Pakistan and Sao Tomé and Príncipe) and the remainder to UNEP and IUCN. TRI involves a coalition of partners and agencies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) operating at the global and national level across the abovementioned continents. IUCN is the lead GEF agency of TRI.
- 47 The PFD identified **four main barriers** to forest regeneration and restoration in the 10 participating countries, which TRI has been designed to address by providing capacity development and support in four main areas as follows:.
- **Policy Development and Integration** – supporting work to enhance the enabling in-country policy environment for FLR.
  - **Implementation of Restoration Programs and Complementary Initiatives** – delivering support for implementation of restoration programs on identified priority landscapes, as well as support for complementary land management initiatives.
  - **Institutions, Finance and Upscaling** – focusing on strengthening the capacity, reach, and effectiveness essential to the successful implementation of restoration and sustainable land management initiatives, and increasing the flow of sustainable finance, both public and private, into restoration and sustainable land management.
  - **Knowledge, Partnerships, Monitoring and Assessment** – providing support for knowledge generation and exchange, monitoring and assessment of progress in achieving objectives and stimulating synergies to enhance learning and scaling up of FLR.
- 48 A total of eleven (11) national "child" projects have been designed in accordance with their specific needs, contexts and challenges. All 11 projects are supported by a global project that is designed to facilitate learning, financing and partnership through the provision of coordination and technical support activities, overseeing monitoring and evaluation across all projects and

capturing and disseminating lessons learned and good practices on FLR, SFM, PES, development of NTFPs, etc. One of the main aims of the global project is to stimulate synergies between child projects through, for example, South-South learning and the provision of tools and resources that facilitate partnerships, reduce costs, etc. in the interests of achieving planned outcomes and meeting of objectives. TRI also aims at filtering results, lessons learned and good practices to the wider international community engaged in FLR, SFM, PES, etc. to advance dialogue and action geared to advancing global environmental benefits (GEBs) and sustainable rural development.

## 2.2 Project description – TRI project in Sao Tome and Principe

- 49 A summary of the project is provided in Box 2 below, followed by a summary of the project and maps showing the five main intervention areas in Sao Tome and Principe. The small island developing state (SIDS) of São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) is situated in the Gulf of Guinea, about 269 km from Republic of Guinea on the African landmass. The islands are part of a volcanic range that includes Pagalu to the southwest and Bioko on the northeast. Sao Tomé is the largest island, with a surface area of 859 km<sup>2</sup>, while Príncipe, 160 km to the northeast of Sao Tomé, has a surface area of 142 km<sup>2</sup>. The last national forest survey for São Tomé and Príncipe (1999) identified approximately 61 percent of the islands are covered by forests, 29 percent by shade plantations (mainly for coffee and cocoa) and 10 percent for is taken up for non-forest land-use. The forested areas are characterised by different ecosystems ranging from upland tropical forest, dense and humid lowland tropical forest, dry tropical forest, secondary forest, shade forest, shrubs, herbaceous grasslands and mangroves. Moreover, they are important carbon sinks that have helped retain STP as a carbon sink country and provide habitats for high levels of endemic flora and fauna. Indeed, WWF and Conservation International have listed STP as one of the world's 200 global biodiversity hotspots and Birdlife International has identified five "Endemic Bird Areas" (EBAs)" in STP against a total of 218 globally.
- 50 Three of the IBAs are found within the Natural Park Obo - São Tomé (PNOT). São Tomé and Príncipe's population census by the National Statistics Institute (2015) recorded a total of 194,000 inhabitants, of which 9,000 live in Príncipe Island, while demographic growth stood at 2.76% per annum. High population growth is one of the main contributory factors behind the rise in forest degradation and deforestation (including mangroves) to support agriculture and livestock, provide timber for construction, especially housing, and access fuelwood. For example, 73.9% of rural households rely on firewood or charcoal for cooking (Prodoc p. 17, para 29). Another important factor is the granting of land concessions for oil palm plantations and tourism projects (Prodoc p. 54, para 131), some of which international observers have reported are not compliant with the country's legal framework; namely the Forestry Law (2005), the Basic Law for the Environment (1999), the Law for the Conservation of Fauna, Flora and Protected Areas (1999), and Regulations for Environmental Impact Assessment (1999). A third factor concerns fragmented institutional structures and governance systems in STP, which contribute to overlaps of portfolios concerning the management of forest resources. Moreover, the Directorate for Forests (DFB) lacks capacity in forestry surveillance and enforcement as well as a mandate to



mainstream forestry/environmental criteria in sector policies, strategies and plans linked to climate change, energy, education, etc.

## Box 2. Basic information on Project 022

- A. **GEF Project ID Number:** 9517
- B. **FAO project number:** GCP/STP/022/GFF
- C. **Recipient country:** Sao Tomé and Príncipe
- D. **Implementing Agency:** FAO
- E. **Executing partner/agency:** Directorate for Forests (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development)
- F. **GEF Focal Areas:** CC-2 Program 4: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forest, and other land use, and support climate smart agriculture; LD-2 Program 3: Landscape Management and Restoration; LD-3 Program 4: Scaling-up sustainable land management through the Landscape Approach; SFM-3: Restored Forest Ecosystems: Reverse the loss of ecosystem services within degraded forest landscapes
- G. **GEF objectives:** BD-2 (Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors)
- H. **FAO Strategy/operational program:** SO2 (Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner), Outcome 2.1: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural sector production in a sustainable manner.
- I. **Date of GEF CEO endorsement:** 24 April 2018
- J. **Project implementation start date:** 13 November 2018
- K. **Project total budget:** USD 21 366 515
- L. **GEF grant amount:** USD 4 666 515
- M. **Project end date:** 12 November 2023
- N. **Geographic location:** Sao Tomé Island: 1) Praia das Conchas, (Northern Landscape); 2) Angolares, (Western Landscape); 3) Malanza, (Southern Landscape); 4) Bom Sucesso, Buffer Zone (Obo National Park). Príncipe Island: 1) Buffer Zone of the Príncipe National Park
- O. **Development objective:** To improve livelihoods and economic diversification of rural communities in São Tomé and Príncipe through the introduction of best practices and the creation of a conducive environment for Forest Landscape Restoration and the sustainable management of natural resources.
- P. **Project objective:** to promote the restoration and sustainable management of the forest ecosystems of São Tomé and Príncipe in order to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and stop and reverse forest and soil degradation.
- Q. **Main components:** 1) FLR policy development and integration; 2) implementation of restoration programs and complementary activities; 3) Strengthening of institutional capacity on FLR and funding of up-scale FLR; 4) promote learning, partnerships, monitoring, assessments and linkages with the global child project.
- R. **Date of Mid-Term Review (MTR):** October to January 2022

- 51 The NCP-STP was identified in response to these developments and the newly elected government's commitment in 2015 to establish reforestation and restoration as a strategic priority to address rural poverty and vulnerability as well as to meet the targets established in its intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) agreed under the Paris Agreement (2015). For this reason, the **development objective** of the NCP-STP aims to, "*improve livelihoods and economic diversification of rural communities in São Tomé and Príncipe through the introduction of best practices and the creation of a conducive environment for Forest Landscape Restoration and the sustainable management of natural resources*" and its environmental objective is, "*to promote the restoration and sustainable management of the forest ecosystems of São Tomé and Príncipe in order to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and stop and reverse forest and soil degradation*" (Prodoc p. 32 para 77-76). To achieve these objectives the Prodoc focuses on four main components to achieve the following outcomes:

**Component 1:** *Creation of a conducive environment for the development and implementation of FLR initiatives in STP.* Key actions centre on: (i) the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform for FLR (PFLR); (ii) the strengthening of the DFB to identify and apply a FLR Plan (FLP); (iii) the elaboration of guidelines and recommendations to improve the policy framework on FLR; (iv) supporting the reform and adoption of a new legal framework to apply FLR. Two **expected outcomes** are foreseen: a) *Enhanced national commitment to FLR*; b) *Improved and conducive policy framework for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of forests in STP.*

**Component 2:** *support for the implementation of FLR interventions in priority areas of STP, as well as support for complementary sustainable land management initiatives.* Two **expected outcomes** are foreseen: a) participatory FLR interventions enhance ecosystem services and mitigate climate change in the priority areas (vulnerable natural forest areas) based on public-private partnerships; b) improved use of forest resources benefit the local communities living in vulnerable forest landscapes in STP.

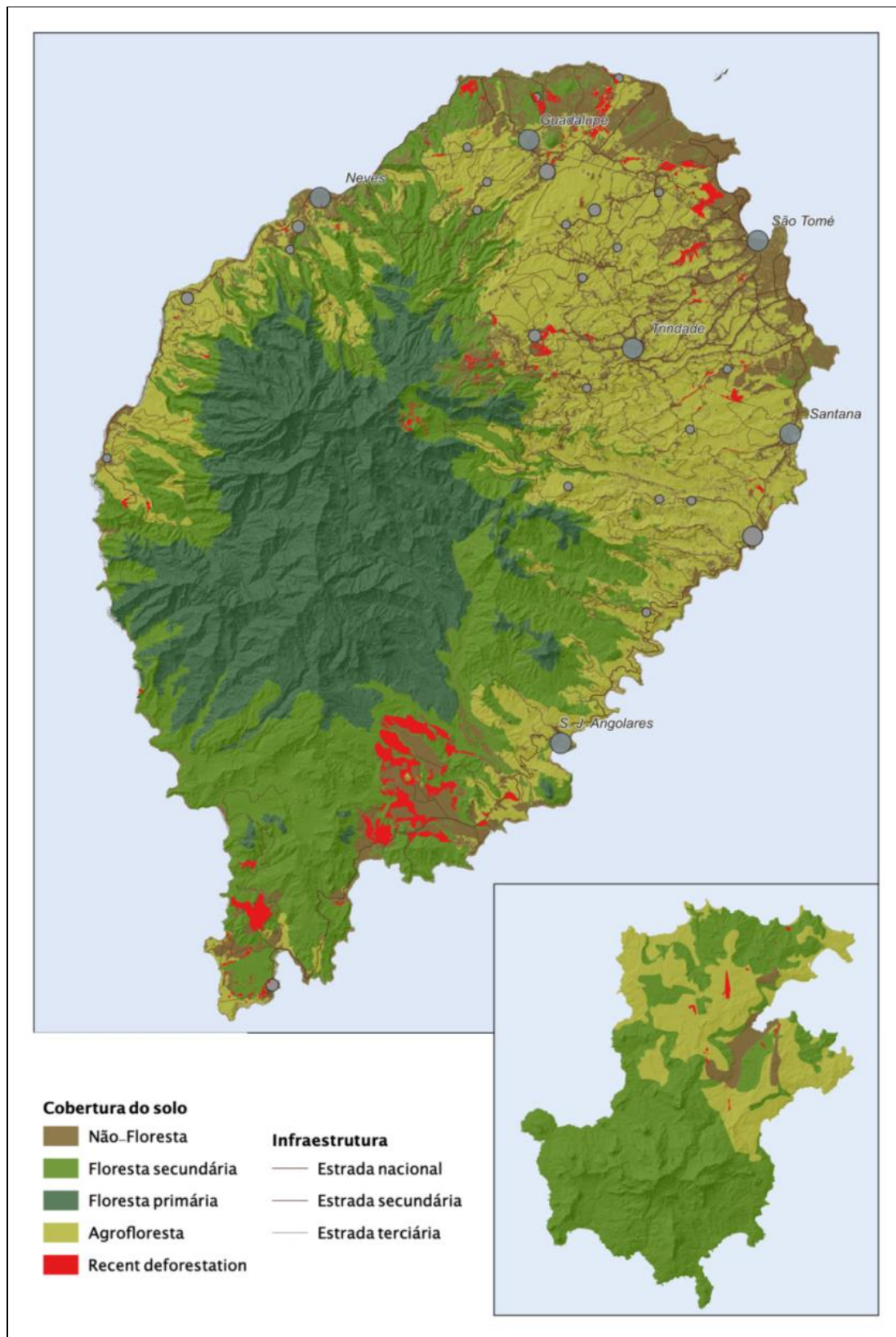
**Component 3:** *strengthen and develop the capacity of all relevant actors in STP on applying FLR.* Key actions centre on: (i) strengthening institutions, private sector, and civil society on the implementation of FLR and the maintenance of critical landscapes and diverse ecosystem services in STP; (ii) the development of partnerships to secure funding from existing domestic public structures, design new financial products for FLR activities, and establish a more conducive environment to finance FLR; (iii) obtaining new funding commitments from both the public and private sectors to support the implementation of bankable FLR projects and sustainable land management (SLM). Two **expected outcomes** are foreseen: a) national capacity to implement the principles and practices of FLR, apply the concepts and use of ecosystem services, and develop financial instruments for FLR; b) FLR is upscaled through public-private partnerships supporting the implementation of the bankable FLR projects identified by NCP-STP/TRI.

**Component 4:** *promote learning, partnerships, monitoring, assessments and linkages with GCP.* Key actions centre on: a) establishing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for FLR in STP, b) connecting information, data and knowledge from NCP-STP to TRI's knowledge management system managed by GCP. The two expected outcome are: a) a collaborative M&E system supports and guides the implementation of the NCP-STP and engages the DFB in

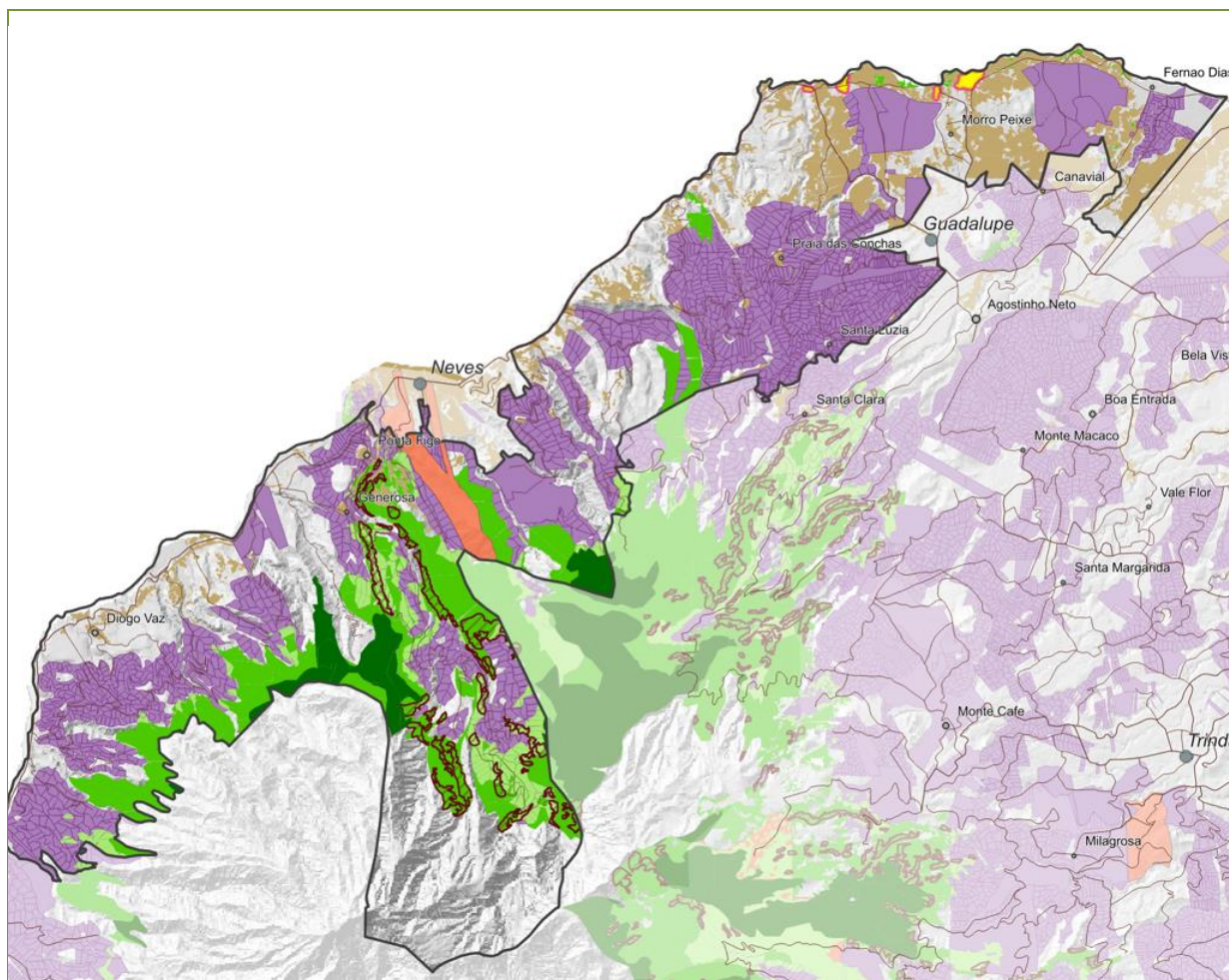
monitoring, assessing and evaluating FLR and SLM efforts at country level; b) the dissemination of lessons learned and best practices from the NCP-STP and TRI network to relevant audiences is enhancing learning on FLR and SLM and stimulating new synergies to scale-up FLR through, South-South, regional, eco/sub-regional and international exchanges and information sharing.

- 52 The **total budget** for NCP-STP amounts to USD 21 366 515, of which USD 4 666 515 is in the form of a grant from GEF. DFB is the executing agency and FAO-STP has been nominated as its implementing partner based on FAO's direct execution (DEX) procedures. **National stakeholders** participating in the PFLR include MAFRD, the Water and Electricity Enterprise (EMAE), the National Institute of Meteorology, Natural Park Authorities, District Authorities, community-based and non-government organisations, education and research institutions and representatives from the private sector and Banks Association. International members of the PFLR include IFAD, through the Smallholder Commercial Agriculture Project (PAPAC) and the World Bank through its support for the Power Restoration Support Project (PRSP).

**Figure 1: Map of forest status in Sao Tome and Principe (2020)**



**Figure 2: Map of the FLR options for the TRI project site in Sao Tome - North (2021)**



## LEGENDA

### Floresta Primária (Ôbo)

Opção 1. Regeneração natural em floresta primária

### Floresta secundária

Declives elevados (terraceamento contra a erosão)

Opção 2. Regeneração natural assistida (áreas sob domínio público)

Opção 3. Regeneração natural assistida (áreas em concessão)

### Manguezais

Opção 4. Restauração de mangais (área remanente)

Opção 4. Restauração de mangais (buffer 50m)

### Sistemas agroflorestais

Opção 5. Plantação de espécies nativas de crescimento rápido

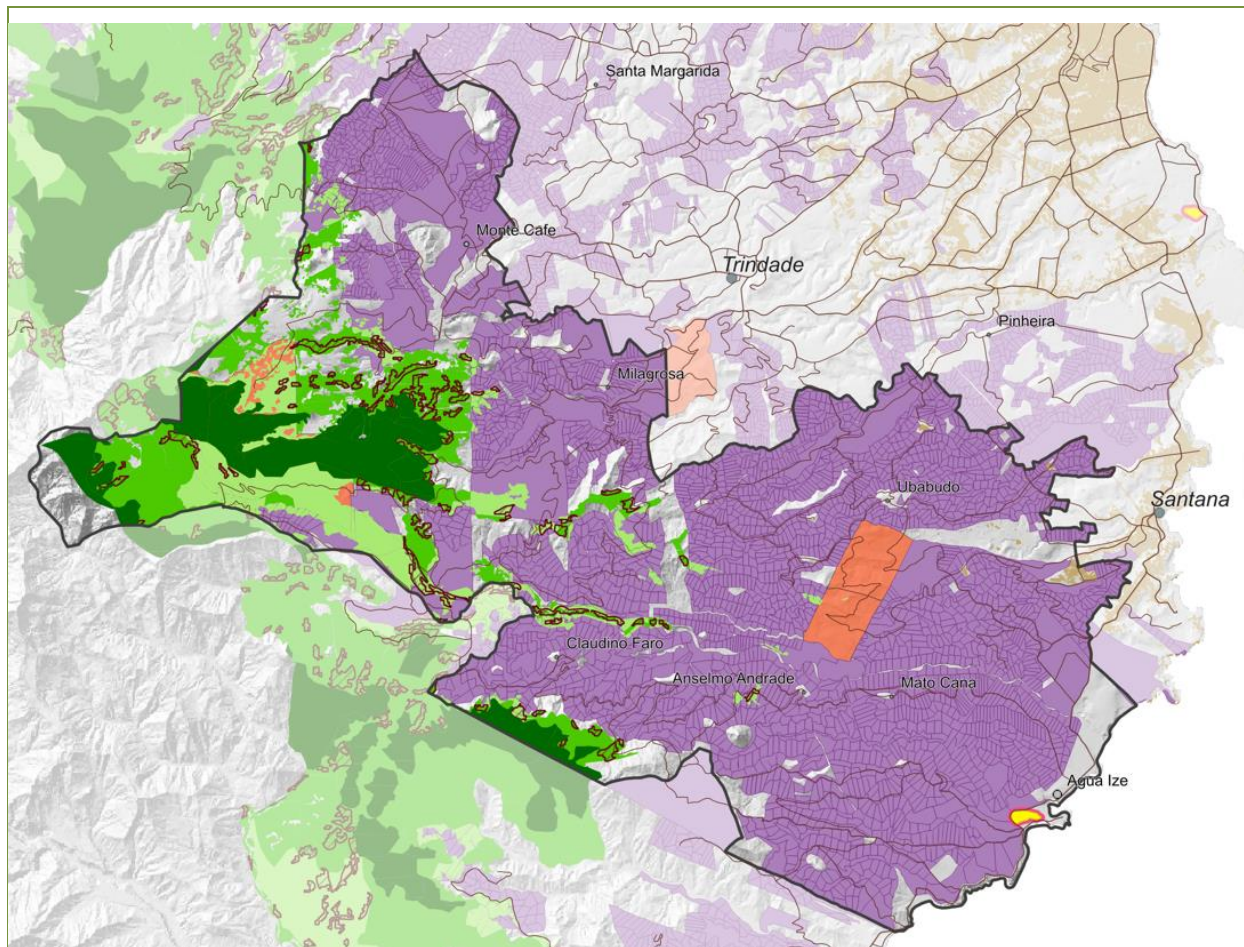
Opção 6 e 7. Enriquecimento de florestas de sombra e diversificação de cultivos

### Savanas

Opção 8. Prevenção de incendios e regeneração natural assistida em savanas



**Figure 3: Map of the FLR options at the TRI project site in Sao Tome - Centre (2021)**



## LEGENDA

### Floresta Primária (Ôbo)

- Opção 1. Regeneração natural em floresta primária

### Floresta secundária

- Declives elevados (terraceamento contra a erosão)
- Opção 2. Regeneração natural assistida (áreas sob domínio público)
- Opção 3. Regeneração natural assistida (áreas em concessão)

### Manguezais

- Opção 4. Restauração de mangais (área remanente)
- Opção 4. Restauração de mangais (buffer 50m)

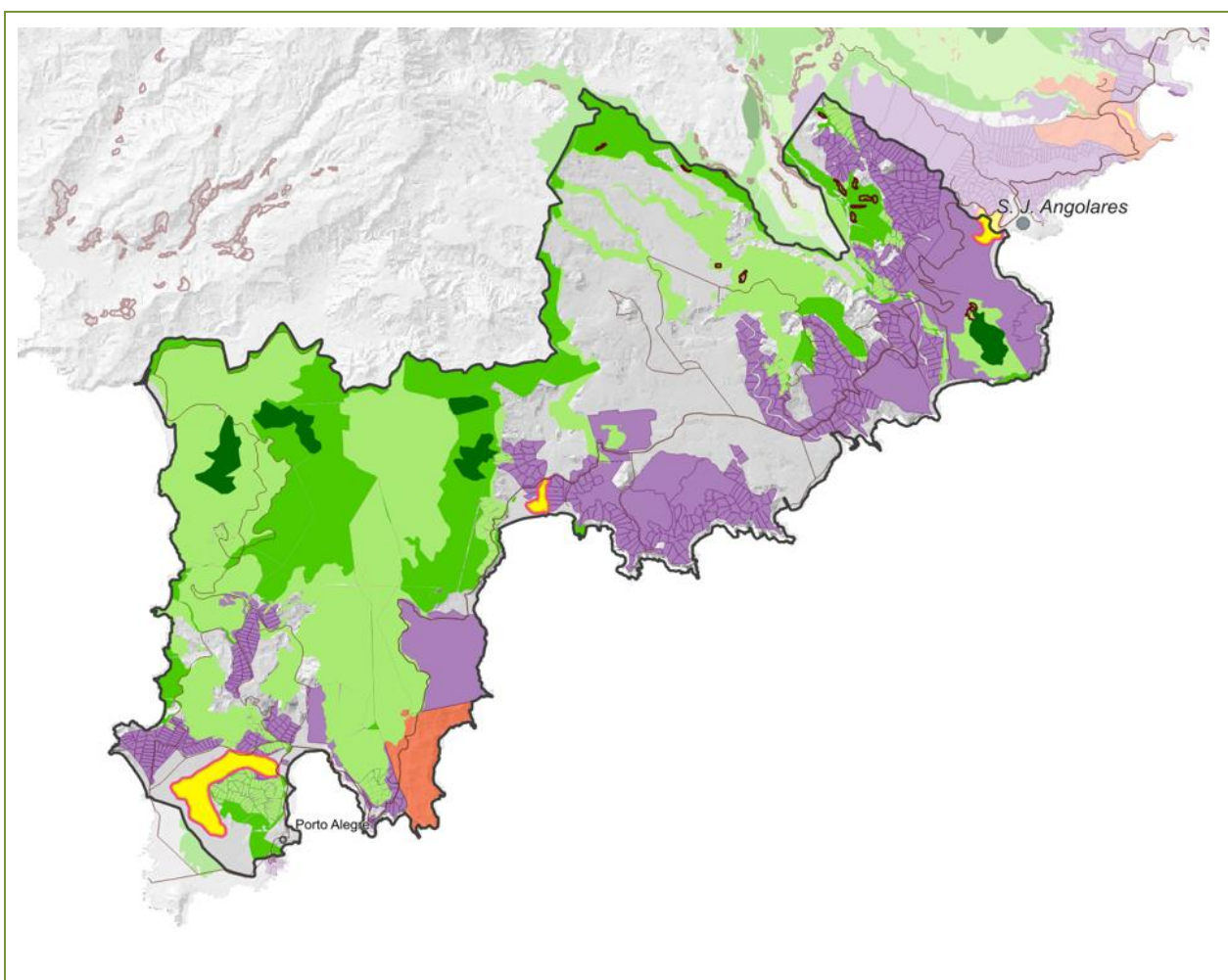
### Sistemas agroflorestais

- Opção 5. Plantação de espécies nativas de crescimento rápido
- Opção 6 e 7. Enriquecimento de florestas de sombra e diversificação de cultivos

### Savanas

- Opção 8. Prevenção de incêndios e regeneração natural assistida em savanas

**Figure 4: Map of the FLR options at the TRI project site in Sao Tome - South (2021)**



## LEGENDA

### Floresta Primária (Ôbo)

Opção 1. Regeneração natural em floresta primária

### Floresta secundária

Declives elevados (terraceamento contra a erosão)

Opção 2. Regeneração natural assistida (áreas sob domínio público)

Opção 3. Regeneração natural assistida (áreas em concessão)

### Manguezais

Opção 4. Restauração de mangais (área remanente)

Opção 4. Restauração de mangais (buffer 50m)

### Sistemas agroflorestais

Opção 5. Plantação de espécies nativas de crescimento rápido

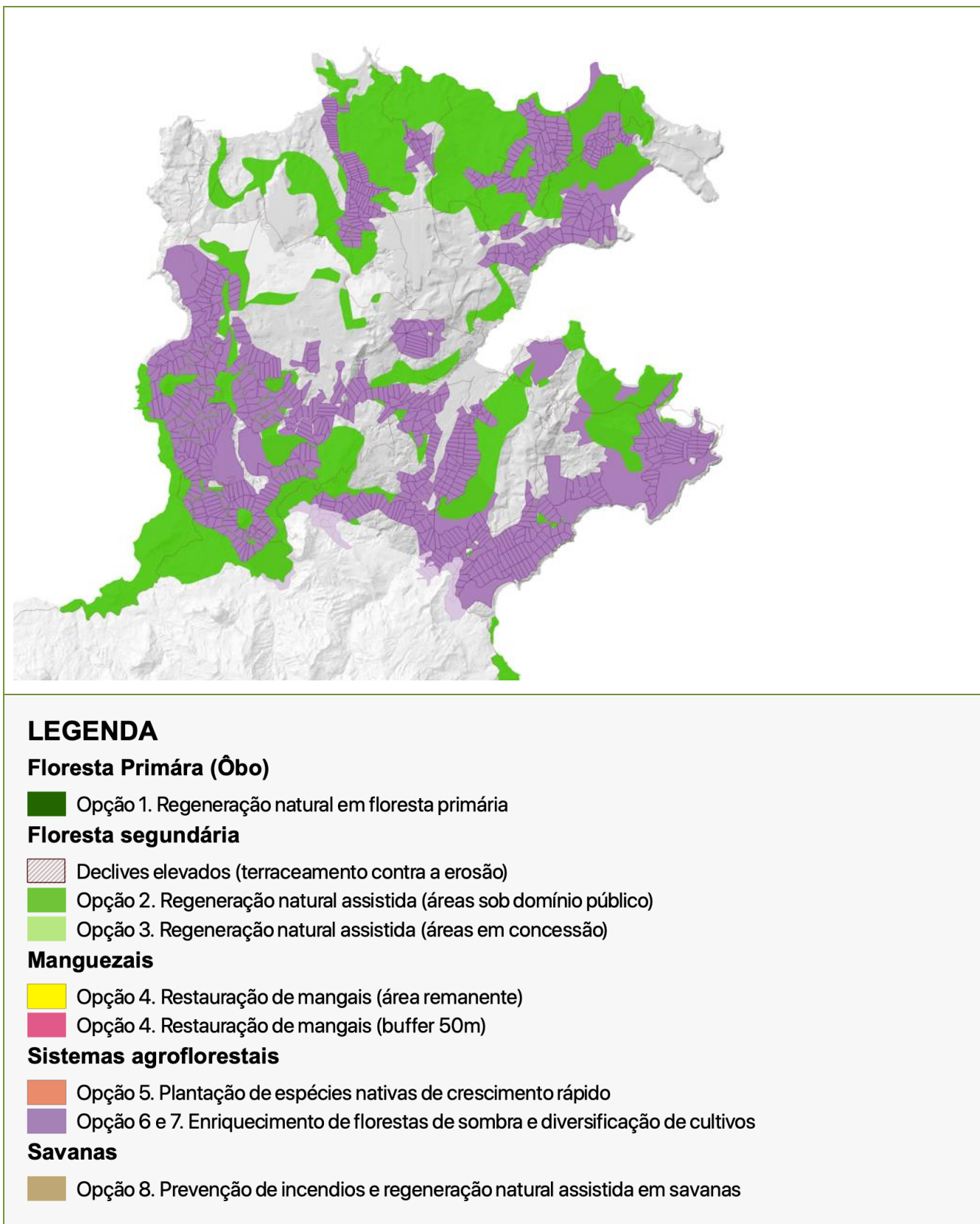
Opção 6 e 7. Enriquecimento de florestas de sombra e diversificação de cultivos

### Savanas

Opção 8. Prevenção de incendios e regeneração natural assistida em savanas



**Figure 5: Map of the FLR options at the TRI project site in Príncipe (2021)**



Source of maps 1-6: PMU (October 2021)



### 3 Theory of change

- 53 The ToC for TRI (all child projects) is provided in Appendix 9a. The MTR team identified two areas in the IR where further details would strengthen the ToC. First, immediate outcomes focus on capacity development and raised awareness on FLR/SFM, improving the enabling environment for FLR and the implementation of innovative FLR practices, rather than what “results” from these achievements (i.e. their effects/outcomes). The MTR argues the ToC would benefit from outlining what capacity development and the enabling environment translate into, in particular in relation to the achievement of targets (intermediate/end) such as the minimum amount of forest landscape to be restored by the national child projects, the projected tonnes of carbon equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>eq) that will be sequestered over time, the number of endangered species conserved, or the minimum number of households (preferably with sex aggregated) who confirm improvements in their livelihoods and well-being. In this way the ToC would be able to highlight the potential for transformational change on key issues of national and global interest; namely progress in reducing poverty, and enhancing sustainable development and adaptation to climate change through the fulfilment of national and international pledges, targets and goals (TRI’s environmental and development objectives).
- 54 Second, the ToC would benefit from labelling the causal linkages in terms of inputs, outputs, immediate and final outcomes to achieve TRI’ impact and include key risks in addition to the assumptions that have been provided. For example, each child project is required to assess risks (section 3.3 in the Prodoc) and project approval requires the application of the Environmental and Social Checklist (ESS). Furthermore, it is clear in most cases that TRI’s NCPs face similar risks relating to fast population growth coupled with a dramatic rise in vulnerability due to the growing effects of climate change and depletion of natural resources.
- 55 An assessment of the contextual relevance of TRI’s ToC in STP also reveals some areas where risk management may need to be strengthened to ensure risk mitigation measures are in place to reduce risks ranked “medium” in the Prodoc, such as political instability, and economic challenges linked to a lack of an enabling environment for investment in forest and landscape restoration, (p. 32, para 71). Moreover, the Prodoc points out that STP’s deforestation and degradation has been caused by illegal logging, charcoal production and the introduction of palm oil concessions. Taking into account these activities cause significant loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, release of carbon stocks and so forth, the MTR team believes, the assumption market conditions are established for bankable projects is unlikely to support the FLR process unless there is also attention given to better law enforcement (through community-based solutions), alternative energy sources to replace charcoal for cooking and lobbying and incentives to halt palm oil plantations and replace them with sustainable alternatives. In summary, the MTR team believes the assumption in STP should focus more on stakeholders reaching consensus to shifting the country’s economy onto a sustainable and resilient path (taking into account access to natural resources is extremely limited and there is a growing global ecological and climate emergency unfolding).

- 56 The three longer-term achievements (final outcomes) established in TRI's ToC to meet TRI's environmental and development objectives (impact) focus on mainstreaming of FLR into national and sub-national policy and regulatory frameworks and that FLR is applied and monitored through management practices and restoration plans to reach a critical mass of projects that demonstrate greater economic viability than traditional practices. However, these outcomes reinforce the project approach to changing policy. The MTR team found that if STP is to establish a sustainable and resilient economy, final outcomes should be focused more on the establishment of permanent mechanism to support informed decision-making on the integration of FLR in national and sub-national development/sector policies, strategies, plans and guidelines, (especially linked to land-use) and that such policies should be based on long-term strategies to 2050 taking into account FLR cannot be consolidated in a five-year cycle.
- 57 The ToC originally constructed by the MTR team for the IR, has been used to support the review process and subsequently updated following the completion of the field mission and discussion with key stakeholders. In particular, effort has been made to match outcomes more closely to relevant national and international targets linked to the Bonn Challenge, Aichi Targets<sup>7</sup>, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement (NDCs) where possible. The new version of the ToC is provided in Appendix 9b.

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<sup>7</sup> Takes also into account the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework proposal by IUCN, based on the concept "conservation works", but which has not been adopted under the framework of CBD to date. Available at: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/global-policy/our-work/convention-biological-diversity-cbd/post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework>

## 4 Key findings and MTR questions

### 4.1 Relevance

**MTR question 1 – *Are the project outcomes congruent with current country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries?***

**Finding 1.** The TRI project appears to have increased its relevance, because it operates within MAFRD/DFB, which in the words of the new Director for DFB and his staff, together with the Regional Government of Príncipe, has allowed capacity development on FLR to be successfully “institutionalised”. This strong sense of ownership of the project is important taking into account the forestry capacity level in DFB is low, due to limited resources and the fact only four of the Department’s 28 staff are qualified foresters; all of whom have been educated abroad due to absence of forestry-specific diplomas and training facilities in STP. In addition, the project’s expected outcomes and objectives remain aligned with the priorities of MAFDB/DFB and the emphasis on developing partnerships with local cooperatives and association, provides a strong indication the project can deliver FLR to address the depletion of natural resources caused by their agricultural, agroforestry and coastal practices. However, the project’s relevance at the national level is far less evident. In particular the understanding of the connection between FLR and its contribution to enhancing sustainable rural development and adaptation to climate change that generates significant co-benefits, does not appear to be developing. This is not aided by the project’s strong sector-based approach to FLR and inadequate attention given to the establishment of robust and proactive inter-institutional partnerships through effective coordination is required with: (i) MPWINRE/DGE which is responsible for land use planning, NRM and climate change and which already has a national platform to combat climate change; (ii) MPFBE responsible for supporting the development of businesses linked to, among others, NWFPs; (iii) with the education and scientific research sector (University of STP) in order to address DFB’s needs such as in-country training of current and future foresters on FLR methods and tools, and the urgent need for applied research into FLR and NWFPs that can be retained and developed within a permanent institution in STP.

**Finding 2:** The TRI project continues to align with GEF6 and FAO priorities and objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the connection between GEF/FAO priorities and objectives are not adequately clarified (through monitoring, learning, communication) to demonstrate how GEF Priorities (to restore forest ecosystems) generate co-benefits that fully meet the needs of the government of STP in terms of reducing rural poverty/unsustainable rural development and enhancing resilience to climate change. In particular, the promotion of the NPFMCR has no linkage to the national platform for climate change, through which the co-benefits of FLR - water quality/provision, conserving biodiversity and its habitats (essential for

pollinators and seed distributors), disaster risk reduction through reduced soil/coastal erosion, increased carbon sequestration/trading, etc. - could and should be advocated as an integral part of the country's response to the climate and ecological emergency unfolding (especially in SIDS). Similarly, unless there is better education and research capacity to support the study of these co-benefits, it will remain challenging for the project to demonstrate how far it is contributing to FAO's Strategic Objective 2/Outcome 2.1: *Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural sector production in a sustainable manner*; and its contribution to achieving national targets (such as in the NDCs linked to forests, agriculture and fisheries) or international commitments such as SDG15 (Life on Land): in particular Target 15.1: *By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements*.

#### 4.1.1 Strategic relevance of the project's objectives and expected outcomes (components 1-4)

- 58 The project's strategic relevance on paper is highly satisfactory when taking into account STP has a land area of 1,001 Km<sup>2</sup> (101,100 ha) and the Prodoc proposes the restoration of 355 km<sup>2</sup> (35,500 ha) or 35.5% of this land area, which in per capita terms confirms STP as a flagship country for the Bonn Challenge, which aims to restore 3.5 million km<sup>2</sup> by 2030. In addition, the TRI project will contribute directly to storing 8,034.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>eq (8,034,828 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq) over 20 years. Taking into account STP's NDC's report total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030 are estimated to be 240 ktCO<sub>2</sub>eq based on the business as usual (BAU) scenario, the TRI project is projected to reduce the country's emissions. According to the MTR team's analysis of latest data from the TRI project (see subsection 4.2.2 below) **the FLR targets in the Prodoc are overstated, but have been revised down from 35,700 ha to 30,091 ha (300.91 km<sup>2</sup>), which is still around 30 per cent of the country's total land area (1,001 km<sup>2</sup>)**. This confirms the TRI project is on track to make a significant contribution to restoring the country's forest ecosystems that can support a shift to more sustainable rural development and enhance the resilience of the country and its population to the climate change, which the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has predicted will have a devastating effect on small island developing states (SIDS).
- 59 However, interviews in STP indicate the relevance of the TRI project at the national level remains unclear and even the Minister of MAFRD still considers it a "pilot project". However, the project's relevance at the ministerial level has increased since the election of Carlos Vila Nova as President of STP in September 2021. In particular, this helped precipitate the naming of a new Director of DFB, who informed the MTR team that he is fully committed to supporting and speeding up the implementation of the TRI project. The MTR team identified three main factors that have contributed to enhancing the relevance of the TRI project in 2021.

- 60 First, both the Minister of MAFRD and the Director of DFB have strong technical backgrounds in agriculture and forestry respectively (the latter having studied forestry in Cuba) and aware of the growing problems of the extension of the agriculture frontier in STP and its effects on forest ecosystem services. In addition, there is awareness that the continued loss of forests is likely to remove STP's status as a climate neutral country; namely it captures more carbon than it emits. Second, MAFRD, DFB and Regional Government of Principe all expressed their satisfaction that the TRI project is operating within government services, rather than in parallel that is the case with many donor-funded projects. The recognition of the so-called "institutionalisation" of the TRI project is significant, because the new administration in DFB is now committed to full ownership of the TRI project. For example, this is evident from its support for the National Platform for Forest Management, Conservation, and Restoration (NPFMCR), finalisation of the National FLR Plan (NFLRP) and drive to rehabilitate DFB's tree nurseries since September 2021.
- 61 Third, adoption of FLR in MAFRD/DFB aligns with the country's legal and policy framework. For example, the latest version of the FLRP demonstrates alignment with the following laws:
- Law n° 10/1999 – Basic Environment Law;
  - Law n° 11/1999 - Law for the Conservation of Fauna, Flora and Protected Areas;
  - Decree-Law n° 37/1999 – Regulation on the Environmental Impact Assessment Process;
  - Law n° 5/2001 – Forestry Law (establishes the general framework for forest conservation and exploitation in the country and the mandate of the DFB);
  - Law n° 6/2006 and Law n° 7/2007 – establishing the Obo Natural Parks for Sao Tome and Principe Islands, (including their demarcation, management and use);
  - Decree-Law n° 19/2009 – Import Control, Acquisition and Circulation of Chainsaws in the Country;
  - Decree-Law n° 20/2009 - Regulation for Licensing Imports of Wood;
  - Decree-Law n° 01/2016 - Regulation on hunting;
  - Law n°7/2018 – Framework Law on Water Resources (covering rivers, lakes, groundwater and coastal estuaries);
  - Law n° 9/2020 – Approving the Legal Regime for the Exploitation and Extraction of Aggregates;
- 62 In addition, the following legislation was found to support the application of FLR in STP:
- Decree-Law n° 26/2014 – Legal Regime of the Organization of the Electricity sector, taking into account the Tri project will receive co-finance from the Power Sector Recovery Project (PSRP), funded by the World Bank, and which through its Project Administration Fiduciary Agency (AFAP) will support FLR in the Contador watershed (see figure 2).
  - Decree n° 13/2012 creating the National Committee for Climate Change (NCCC), and which is responsible for steering the country to achieving its targets in the Nationally Declared Contributions 2020-2030 (NDC), that centre on reducing emissions of carbon dioxide by 109 KtCO<sub>2</sub>eq to 2030, which would be equivalent to a reduction of 27% of

emissions compared to “business as usual” (BAU) from 2004 levels by 2030, and at a total cost of around USD 150 m.<sup>8</sup>

- Decree-Law n° 26/2014 First alterations and adding to the organic statutes of the National Institute for Gender Promotion and Equity (INPG), approved by Decree-Law no. 18/2007.

63 A number of policies, strategies and plans also demonstrate the growing relevance of the TRI project in STP. Three of the most significant provide the overarching framework for the TRI project are. They are:

- The National Development Strategy 2017-2021 (NDS), which includes as one of its five Strategic Objectives (SO) improved land management and preservation of the natural environment;
- The National Strategy for Poverty Reduction 2018-2030 (SNRP) of São Tomé and Príncipe, known as the “Zero Hunger Strategy – Horizon 2030” which aims to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the population in line with Sustainable Development Goal 2 through programmes such as the Participatory Support Programme for Commercial Agriculture 2015-2021 (PAPAC), supported by IFAD;<sup>9</sup>
- The National Land Use Plan (NLUP) to 2040. The NLUP, funded by the Africa Development Bank (ADB), is in the process of finalisation by the Directorate of Natural Resources and Environment of the Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment. Among its priorities are the establishment of sustainable buffer zones for the Obo Natural Park of Sao Tome (PNOST) and of Principe (PNOP) in which the NLUP foresees the establishment of land use categories that the TRI project will support directly. These include, among others, forest conservation and agro-forestry areas, coastal conservation zones and green corridors.<sup>10</sup> Reference to Figure 6 below shows how Figures 1-5 above provide different options to support the implementation of the NLUP in Sao Tome, which will be implemented through the National Forest Landscape Restoration Plan (NFLRP). The NFLRP is in the process of adoption by the new government and will be implemented under the guidance and oversight of the NPFMCR.
- National Strategy for the Adaptation to Climate Change (2004) in particular Strategy 1: Sustainable Management of Forest Resources and Strategy 9: Search for Alternative Solutions to Coastal Erosion Processes and Marine Invasion.

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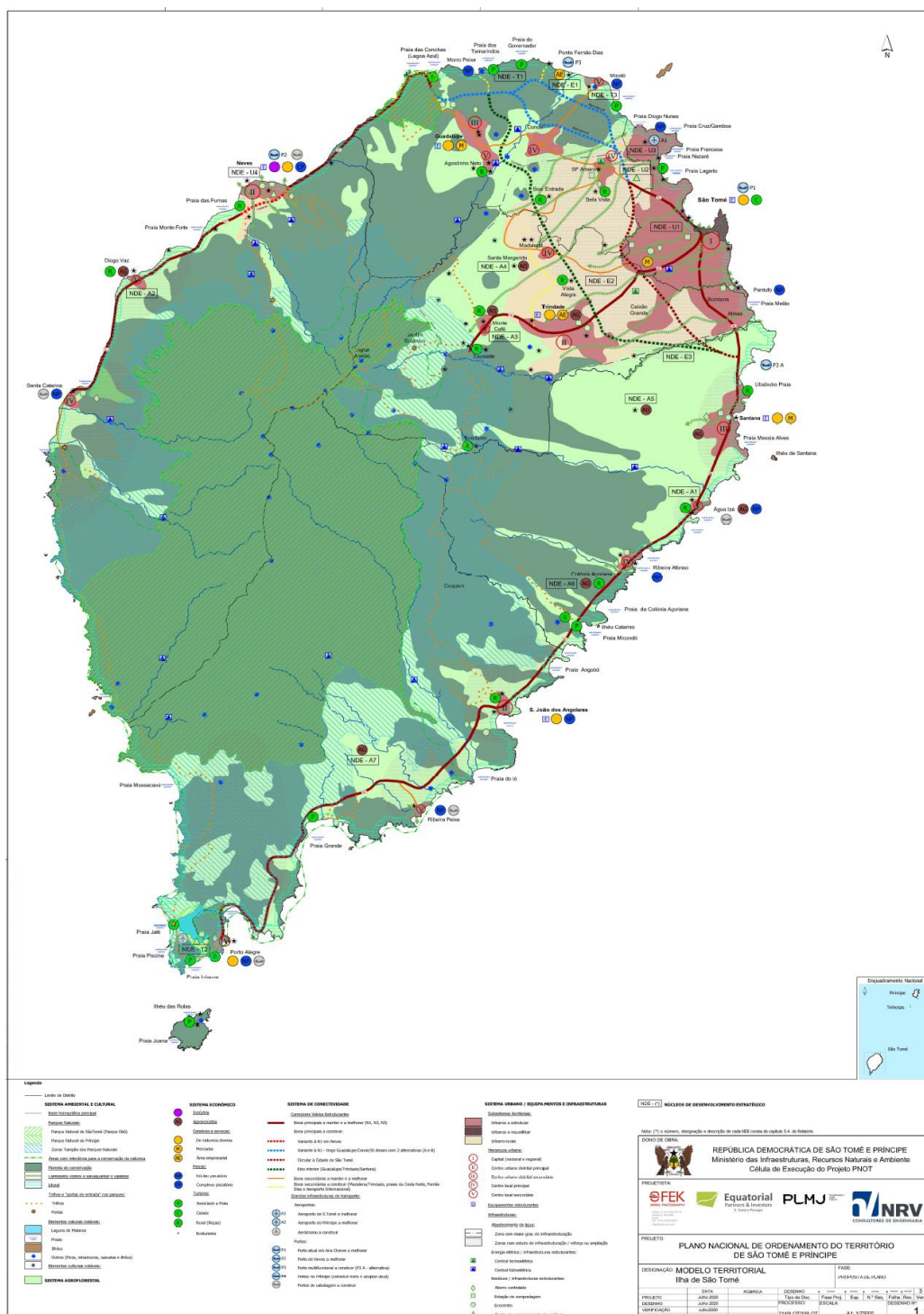
<sup>8</sup> This data is taken from the updated NDCs (2021). The Prodoc refers to the intended NDCs (iNDC) of STP, which states, “According to the INDC (2015), in 2030 it is expected that national emissions will be about 240 ktCO<sub>2</sub>eq, according to the BAU scenario. Net emissions from LULUCF under the BAU scenario are expected to be around -630 ktCO<sub>2</sub>eq, indicating that STP will continue to be a carbon sink country, in which net absorptions will be - 400 ktCO<sub>2</sub>eq” (p. 26, paragraph 55).

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 5 – Programmes and Projects completed/ongoing (p. 59).

<sup>10</sup> These actions are also supportive of the Central Africa Forestry Policy (2005), which is to be implemented under the Convergence Plan 2015-2025 in which six priority axes of intervention are proposed, together with three horizontal axes. They are: Axis 1 - Harmonization of forest and environmental policies; Axis 2 - Sustainable management and valorisation of forest resources; Axis 3 - Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; Axis 4 - Combating the effects of climate change and desertification; Axis 5 - Socio-economic development and multi-stakeholder participation; Axis 6 - Sustainable financing. Crosscutting axes are: Axis 1 - Training and capacity building; Research –and development; Axis 3 - Communication, awareness raising, information and education.



**Figure 6: Latest National Land Use Plan proposal (June, 2020)**



Source: MPWINRE/PMU

64 Other national policies originally mentioned in the Prodoc, or which have been identified by the MTR team, that remain supportive of the PNRFP, include:

- The Strategic Plan for Tourism Development (2001) and its Action Plans (2009-2015 and 2016-2021), which includes a Regulation for the Collection of the Tourism Tax.

- The National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity 2015-2020, including the Sixth National Report on Biodiversity (2019), which includes the approval and application of the National Forest Development Plan to safeguard the integrity of forest ecosystems and promotion of structures for protection and community management of biological resources;
- The Education Policy of STP – Vision 2012-2022, which includes as one of its objectives to improve Higher Education and Training, which recognises there are insufficient educational centres providing specialised education and calls for gap analysis to determine where the higher education curriculum needs strengthening.<sup>11</sup> For example, the MTR team identified a lack of specialised education concerns the training of foresters, which explains why only four of DFB's 28 staff are foresters (trained overseas).
- The National Strategy for Gender Equality and Equity 2013-2017 (ENIEG), which remains operational under the context of 2030 Agenda and, more specifically the SNRP 2018-2030 mentioned above. The ENIEG stresses the importance of strengthening the empowerment of women by eliminating all forms of discrimination and achieving equality and equity between men and women in all areas. In particular women's empowerment is sought through greater access to education and training, to healthcare (including reproductive health), economic development and rights and participation in decision-making;

65 Nevertheless, the MTR team found the current legal, policy and institutional context does remain challenging to for the TRI project to achieve its objectives. For example, the NLUP has not been approved to date by the government and it remains unclear when the new government will support its approval and whether it has the resources to implement it and commitment to enforce it. As a result, it is unlikely the NPFLR will have sufficient time to guide and oversee the implementation of the NFLRP in line with the provisions of the NLUP before the TRI project's closure in 2023. In another example, the TRI project will support the updating of the National Forestry Plan (NFP) to 2025, but this means the country will not have a far-reaching NFP to support the implementation and consolidation of the NFLRP that is fully aligned to the 2030 Agenda and beyond (i.e. to the end of the first full cycle of FLR to around 2050). In a third example, the above-mentioned gaps in STP's education policy are also likely to limit the opportunities for the establishment of a critical mass of nationally qualified foresters to support the FLR process complete this cycle, apply effective forest governance structures in partnership with local communities, civil society organisations and the private sector and which will contribute to the application of the NLUP.

66 The MTR team also found the NPFMCR operates at ministerial level (under a Ministerial Decree), but its relevance at the national level has not been well defined, especially in relation to the NCCC, which as stated above, is recognised by a Law-Decree (Decree n° 13/2012) and which already has national platform in place. Thus, although the NFLRP represents a significant contribution to enhancing the resilience of rural communities to the effects of climate variability and change,

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<sup>11</sup> Section 4.5 : Higher Education and Training (p.49)



while at the same time generating co-benefits of strategic importance, this is not being advocated to the NCCC. Moreover, because the Directorate General for Environment (DGE), within the Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment (MPWINRE), is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the country's Nationally Declared Contributions (NDCs), it is not entirely clear who is ultimately responsible for key elements of the NDCs. These include, among others, the development of a national programme for the sustainable management of forest and agro-forestry systems by 2025, the reduction of illegal and indiscriminate felling of trees by 2030 and reforestation of species resistant to dry and low rainfall, also by 2030. As a consequence, neither the NPFMCR, nor the NCCC are fully collaborating to on the application of the NFLRP to enhance the resilience of rural communities to the effects of climate variability and change over the long-term.

- 67 Finally, the MTR team found GEF funding of its programmes and projects in STP and the Central African region is fragmented, especially because it is managed by different UN agencies. For example, while FAO is supporting MAFRD implement the TRI project, UNDP is supporting MPWINRE implement the project "Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land and Natural Resource Management" (EBCSLM) over the same period (2018-2023) and which has expected outcomes that overlap with those of the TRI project.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.1.2. Alignment with GEF strategic priorities

- 68 The Prodoc provides a satisfactory level of evidence of how the TRI project is aligned to the following global environment benefits (GEB) expected in relation to GEF-6's Corporate Results (p.62):

- The improved management of landscapes and seascapes: a total of 38 200 ha, which the MTR team found represents a direct contribution of 0.00013 per cent against GEF-6's overall replenishment target of 300 n. ha;
- The application of sustainable land management (SLM): a total of 35 500 ha, which the MTR team has determined represents a direct contribution of 0.0003 per cent of GEF-6's SLM target of 120 m. ha;
- Transformational shift to a low or zero carbon emissions: 12 856 752 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq reduction in emissions (over a period of 20 years), which the MTR has calculated is equivalent to 0.017 per cent of GEF-6's target to reduce emissions by 750 m. tCO<sub>2</sub>eq.

- 69 Moreover, the Prodoc summarises the TRI project's alignment to the following Strategic Objectives of GEF-6:

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<sup>12</sup> GEF-6 Project Identification Form (PIF) states Outcome 1: "Operational policy, institutional, and financial framework and capacity strengthened to protect terrestrial and marine habitats that are of key importance for biodiversity conservation" and Outcome 2: "Improved protection of vulnerable species through sustainable management of STP's PAs and buffer zones covering 23,500 ha on São Tomé, 6,500 ha on Príncipe and 11,198.55 ha coastal and marine habitats" and Outcome 3: "Enhanced environmental sustainability of economic activities in buffer zones, indicated by: i) 1503 households benefiting economically from environmentally sustainable income generating activities; ii) 17,767 ha covered under SLM" (p.2).

- Climate Change Mitigation (CCM) Focal Area 2/Programme 4 (CC-2-P4): *Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forest, and other land use, and support climate smart agriculture.*
- Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) under Focal Area LD-2/Programme 3: *Landscape Management and Restoration* and LD-3 Programme 4: *Scaling-up sustainable land management through the Landscape Approach*
- Sustainable forest management (SFM) Programme 3: *Restored Forest Ecosystems: Reverse the loss of ecosystem services within degraded forest landscapes*

70 The MTR team also found the TRI project aligns with SFM-3 Programme 7: *Building technical and institutional capacities to identify degraded forest landscapes and monitor forest restoration* and SFM-3 Programme 8: *Integrating SFM in landscape restoration*.<sup>13</sup> supports the conservation of biological diversity (BD), in particular and Focal Area 4/Programme 9: *Managing the Human-Biodiversity Interface* which includes as one of its expected outcomes, *increased area of production landscapes and seascapes that integrate conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into management*. However, the main weakness with this summary, is that the Prodoc does not show how GEF-6 priorities linked to CCM, CCA and SFM will be monitored in the TRI project to support learning and communication on the importance of FLR to the NCCC, or other national priorities in, for example, the NBSAP.

#### 4.1.3. *Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, FAO's Strategic Objectives and Country Programming Frameworks 2013-2017 and 2018-2022.*

71 The Prodoc does not include an analysis of the project's alignment to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their respective targets. However, the MTR team's analysis confirms the project directly supports the following SDGs:

- SDG 1 (Poverty Eradication), in particular Target 1.3: *By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance* and Target 1.4: *By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters;*
- SDG 2 (Zero hunger), in particular Target 2.4: *By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality;*

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<sup>13</sup> GEF-6 Programming Directions (p. 171).

- SDG 13 (Climate Action), in particular Target 13.5: *Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries* and Target 13.b: *Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities*;
- SDG 15 (Life on Land): in particular Target 15.1: *By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements*; and Target 15.5: *Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species*.

- 72 Turning to the project's alignment with FAO's Strategic Objectives (SO), the MTR found the Prodoc has been and remains closely aligned with SO-2: increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner, in which specific reference is made to achieving Outcome 2.1: *Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural sector production in a sustainable manner* through the realisation of project output 2.1.1: *Innovative practices for sustainable agricultural production (including traditional practices that improve sustainability, such as those listed as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems) are identified, assessed and disseminated and their adoption by stakeholders is facilitated*.
- 73 Analysis of FAO's latest Country Planning Framework 2018-2022 confirms the project remains highly consistent with two of the CPF's three Priority Areas. They are: Priority Area No. 1: *Sustainable Management of Natural Resources* and Priority Area No. 2: *Improvement of products and development of value chains in agriculture, livestock, forest and fishing*. Furthermore, the TRI project foresees the application of quantitative indicators to monitor how far these priorities will be achieved.

#### 4.1.4 *Complementarity with existing interventions being implemented by UN agencies, or funded by international donors and non-government organisations*

- 74 Annex 12 of the Prodoc provides a comprehensive list of past and present FLR-related initiatives in STP, while Annex 15 provides information on the linkages to be established between TRI's child projects, including the Global Child Project. In the case of the former, the Annex provides a list of projects funded by GEF that have been/are implemented by UN agencies such as UNDP, UNOPS, UNEP and IFAD, as well as projects funded by other donors such as the EU, or the AfDB. However, rather than identifying potential areas to develop/capture learning and establish synergies with on-going projects in areas of mutual interest, only a narrative of the projects' objectives and main elements are provided. For example, the EU is funding the multi-year regional programme "ECOFAC-6 - Preserving Biodiversity and Fragile Ecosystems in Central Africa", which includes the development of management plans for the two Obo Natural Parks of STP, based on landscape approaches that support the conservation and sustainable use of

ecosystem services. In addition, it promotes the exchange of information on lessons learned and good practices between the Central African countries involved in the programme. However, there is no indication of synergies with the TRI project to coordinate the restoration and sustainable development of the buffer zones around these two Natural Parks.

75 Annex 15 describes how the TRI project will be supported by TRI's Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), which incorporates representatives from TRI's three implementing agencies (IUCN, FAO and UNEP), the GEF Secretariat, selected representatives from TRI countries and international consultants. Overall, the MTR team found the Prodoc provides clear and coherent information on what the PAC is designed to carry out; namely to:

- Provide overall strategic policy and management direction to all child projects;
- Review progress of work plans and achievement of key milestones to identify gaps and good practices that should be addressed in annual work plans;
- Facilitate linkages between the TRI Program and other relevant FLR initiatives;
- Provide technical and substantive input to the TRI Annual Knowledge Sharing Workshops.

76 However, the relevance of the PAC is let down by insufficient information and guidance on the mechanisms that need to be put in place before these tasks can be applied and monitored effectively. Similarly, the functions of the Global Child Project (GCP) are listed. These include, for example, providing the lead on optimizing synergies between national child projects, but no mention is provided on how synergies are to be identified and how they should be implemented. In a second example, the GCP is required to control the TRI M&E System based on 9 core indicators, but none of the indicators are aligned with national indicators, even though in the case of STP, the TRI project covers over 30 per cent of the country's total forest restoration target. In a third and final example, the GCP is required to develop and implement a TRI Partnership Strategy designed to engage relevant external programs, projects, institutions, and potential donors/investors in promoting and up-scaling the FLR process in STP. However, it is unclear how this is to be achieved at the country level, given there is no indication of the focal points or institutions that are required to manage these partnerships during and after the TRI projects have ended.

77 In the light of this finding, the MTR team found complementarity between the TRI project and the programmes and projects identified in Annex 12, as well as with other TRI national child projects has, and continues to be, low. This represents a major shortcoming that affects the relevance of the TRI project. For example, the TRI project has a target to reduce emissions by 12 856 752 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq over 20 years. However, it is unclear how this will be monitored given the TRI project does not foresee the development of a monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) capacity under the framework of REDD+ readiness. Moreover, the Prodoc states, *"There is virtually no knowledge in STP on funding sources such as: Compliance Carbon Market, Voluntary Carbon Markets, REDD+ or Green Climate Fund. This gap is very serious, considering that several of these sources/instruments would fit very well current reality and needs of STP, especially: (i)*

*REDD+ (mitigation or adaptation) funds targeting local/community level; (ii) carbon linked instruments, which could be quite useful in a country that is estimated to stock the double of the carbon it generates. It is thus imperative to increase/upgrade existing knowledge/capacity of local institutions/operators on FLR-related funding sources/instruments other than those so far utilised in STP.” (p.51, para. 119).*

78 This situation was triangulated during the field mission, where interviewees confirmed there is a need to develop MRV capacity in STP. Nonetheless, the MTR team also found that the development of this capacity is likely to be constrained by the following observations:

- The absence of a centralised national database on the country’s forest inventory. The MTR found there is a lack of coordination and agreement between MAFRD/DFB and MPWINRE, in particular the Directorate General for Environment (DGE) on the development of this database in DFB, but which is fully accessible to DGE. For example, the MTR mission found that TRI is supporting the development of this inventory in DFB, while MPWINRE/DGE has received support from UNDP on developing an environmental database that includes the mapping of the country’s forests using different datasets;
- The TRI project is considered by government, (includes the Minister of MAFRD), as a “pilot project”. The interviews confirm that this perception of TRI, means key initiatives such as the creation of the NPFMCR are seen as temporary measures only to support the implementation of the TRI project in STP. As such, the MTR team found MAFRD/DFB and MPWINRE/DGE have not developed a clear understanding that FLR should form part of a long-term strategy to not only save the country’s native tree species from extinction, but which are crucial to enhancing the resilience to climate variability and change;
- The TRI project has limited resources to study and monitor the cost-benefit of FLR. For example, the PMU has conducted cost assessments for each of the 8 FLR intervention options identified over a period of 20 years (covering implementation between years 1 to 4 and follow-up between years 5 to 20), but does not have the means to collect data on the expected benefits of each restoration option. As a result, **it is unlikely it can collect the evidence needed to demonstrate that FLR provides a high return on investment over time**. For example, the Commonland Foundation has found landscape restoration found replaces four significant losses (jobs, income, biodiversity, cultural identity and meaningfulness) with four main gains, (return of inspiration and meaningfulness; return of social capital through the creation of diversified jobs, business activity, education and security; return of natural capital including soil and water quality; return of financial capital to sustain the forest economy).<sup>14</sup>
- There is a disconnect between MAFRD/DFB and scientific research that could be conducted through academia to strengthen the learning process on the global, national and subnational benefits/returns derived from FLR. This was triangulated following interviews with stakeholders in the TRI project, in particular with MAFRD/DFB and the Faculty of Science and Technology at the University of Sao Tome and Principe.

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<sup>14</sup> Commonland Foundation, (2015), *Four returns from landscape restoration – a systemic and practical approach to restore degraded landscapes*. (p. 41-42).

- 79 In addition, to the above challenges, the MTR team found that neither the NPFMCR may not have sufficient authority to develop the inter-institutional coordination needed to establish itself as a suitable mechanism through which synergies could be promoted, developed and supervised between donor-funded projects implementing FLR-related activities of mutual interest. On this, the Minister of MAFRD stated that such coordination could be developed and sustained through the platform for the coordination of development partners in the agriculture sector (ACHA) given one of the objectives of ASHA is to advance the 2030 Agenda in STP. Moreover, the Minister emphasised the importance of communicating the importance of coordinated responses to the climate and ecological emergency unfolding globally to establish full ownership of FLR at all levels (government, civil society, private sector).

## 4.2 Effectiveness

### **MTR question 2 – *To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives?***

**Finding 3:** The project has successfully implemented the majority of the preliminary and preparatory activities needed to launch the FLR process under an officially agreed national plan for FLR (NFLRP) and which aims to restore just over 30,000 ha (84%) of the 35,500 ha originally targeted in the Prodoc (30% of STP's total land area). Moreover, DFB is developing capacity to steer the implementation of the FLR process through LoAs with implementing partners who have an active interest to restore and diversify the landscapes that their cooperatives and farmer associations depend on to sustain the livelihoods of its members. However, the achievement of some of the planned outputs and outcomes, especially under components 2 and 3 is highly unlikely by November 2023, due to delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, capacity constraints and insufficient coordination and cooperation between MAFRD/DFB, MPWINRE/DGE and MPFBE on the adoption and upscaling of FLR and the development of NTFPs as part of the country's development strategy to reduce rural poverty and build resilience to climate change through which the co-benefits of FLR can generate alternative sources of income to sustain the FLR process. This has been exacerbated by GEF funding of its programmes and projects in STP through MAFRD/DFB and MPWINRE/DGE without guaranteeing the establishment of appropriate coordination mechanisms (especially between FAO and UNDP) to ensure they are mutually reinforcing each other's effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, without a partnership with MPFBE and the University of STP, the TRI project faces significant challenges to establish an effective business strategy (including business services needed) and a research capacity on NWFPs that are needed to guide and support the banking sector on implementing the Green Code of Conduct and, thus, steering the rural economy away from short-term unsustainable interests to satisfy immediate food and income needs.

**Finding 4:** The establishment of an effective national M&E system for the forestry sector (NFLMS), is well behind schedule to ensure effective tracking of forestry data to support effective planning and enforcement of the NFLRP (and NLUP). As a result, the TRI project is not in a position to report on key forestry indicators (including some of TRI's core indicators),

which is crucial to guiding annual planning and supporting the development of learning and the communication strategy of the TRI project. Moreover, current resources dedicated to communications were found to be insufficient to convert the information hub into an effective learning hub for FLR/NWFPs that stimulates effective advocacy campaigns for the mainstreaming and upscaling of FLR/NWFPs as a viable alternative to establishing sustainable and resilient rural development, import substitution and economic diversification.

#### 4.2.1 *Achievement of project outputs and expected outcomes under component 1 – Policy development and integration*

- 80 The results matrix in Appendix 6 provides a summary of progress to 30 November 2021 which has been triangulated as far as possible by the MTR team following the synthesis of the main findings identified during field mission. The MTR's main findings under component 1 are summarised as follows:
- 81 **Outcome 1.1** - *Enhanced national commitment to Forest and Landscape Restoration in São Tomé and Príncipe*). Overall, the MTR found the TRI project is making a positive contribution to enhancing MAFRD/DFB's commitment to FLR in STP, but in order to develop it as a "national commitment", more needs to be done to establish cross-sector coordination and collaboration. For example, concerning the achievement of **Output 1.1.1** - *National Platform for Forest Landscape Restoration created and operational, to support and steer FLR work, including concerned institutions, private sector, civil society, local communities and partner projects* – the National Platform for Management, Conservation and Restoration (NPFMCR), also referred to in the Prodoc as the platform for FLR (PFLR) has been established, together with a Steering Committee for FLR (COFIL), but currently operates at the Ministerial level of MAFRD, rather than as an inter-ministerial platform operating at the national level. The new administration within MAFRD/DFB is aware that before the platform can transition to the national stage, other key ministries will need to become active members in it. However, this is unlikely to happen, because interviews with MPWINRE/DGE indicate that there are reservations on the TRI project and the role of the NPFMCR for several reasons. First, in line with the findings mentioned in section 4.1, there is concern within DGE that the TRI project is only a pilot project and the NPFMCR is a temporary body that lacks the interinstitutional coordination needed to restore and adapt around 30 per cent of the country's land area. This is especially taking into account the TRI project has a very short lifespan of just five years to achieve this.
- 82 Second, to establish the NPFMC as a national platform, it needs to be officially endorsed by a Government Decree. The indications are this would require significant resources, lobbying and time to achieve. However, even with the new positive commitments of the new MAFRD/DFB towards FLR and the TRI project, the NPFMC is not a priority, especially as the TRI project is planned to close in November 2023. Third, there is a general lack of understanding and



communication among the main stakeholders in STP that the NPFMCR represents a crucial mechanism to support the NCCC (that has a Government Decree) advance climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCA/CCM) in STP to enhance its resilience to the growing climate and ecological emergency that threatens small island developing state (SIDS). Indeed, the proposal in the Prodoc that the platform should, “*identify mechanisms to ensure liaison and cross-fertilization with the National Committee on Climate Change and formalize a collaboration framework*” (p. 34, para. 82) has not materialised so far.

- 83 In a second example, **Output 1.1.2 - Directorate of Forest empowered to produce a Forest Landscape Restoration Plan (FLRP) to inform and guide future forest management, conservation, and restoration initiatives in STP** – has been largely achieved on paper, given the final draft of the NFLRP has been produced by DFB, and can be implemented through four FLR management plans (see Figures 2-6), which have been finalised and will start implementation in 2022. However, taking into account the NPFMC has not established itself as a permanent mechanism within the NCCC and is likely to start implementation of FLR at the four project sites in 2022 without approval of the NLUP, an updated NFP to guide FLR well beyond the UN Agenda 2030 and is unlikely to have a MRV capacity to support the monitoring of FLR before project closure in 2023, **the TRI project faces significant challenges to establishing an effective national commitment to applying FLR over the long-term in STP.**
- 84 **Outcome 1.2 - Improved and conducive policy framework for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of STP forest.** To date, the TRI project has employed a national consultant to produce a Policy Influence Plan (PIP) and conduct a study on how the National Forest Fund (NFF) could support the implementation and expansion of FLR through the introduction incentives and new taxes. Both the PIP and the study on improving the NFF were approved by the NPFMCR in March 2021. Interviews confirm the next steps are to recruit consultants to address gaps in the existing policy and legal framework to support the application of FLR in STP. As mentioned in section 4.1, the National Forestry Development Plan (NFDLP) needs to be updated to clarify the role of FLR in the NFDLP. Similarly, the Forestry Law (No. 5/2001) needs to be revised to guide the application of FLR, as well as facilitate the revision of national policies and plans that would benefit directly from FLR. For example, the national policy and plan for Protected Areas management (PAM), have been identified as priority for revision, given FLR can play an important role in, for example, the establishment of effective buffer zones that are crucial to sustaining PAM, reducing biodiversity loss and developing the livelihoods of local communities and towns that are dependent on the ecological services provided by Protected Areas and their buffer zones.
- 85 Meanwhile, the reform of the NFF will also require a qualified consultant to identify the most viable and cost-effective funding solutions to consolidate and expand FLR under the framework of the new Forestry Law and NFDLP foreseen, and in line with the goals and targets of the NFLRP. In particular, the reform of Decree Law 15/2016 (Code of benefits and tax incentives)<sup>15</sup> has been

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<sup>15</sup> Journal of the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, Law 15/2016.



identified as one area where environmentally-friendly economic investment in FLR sites can be increased. In addition, the MTR team's own research found that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Commerce and Industry may be open to either redistributing a part of its existing tourist taxes to support FLR, or combining it with a new tax dedicated to restring STP's natural resources in the interests of developing responsible and sustainable tourism in the country.

86 Nonetheless, **the achievement of Outcome 1.2 is unlikely without addressing the socio-cultural dimension that operates in forested landscapes**, in particular the preference for short-cycle cash crops, because they generate income more quickly than FLR practices. Indeed, one of the main findings from the interviews and site visits is that the establishment of a conducive policy framework for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of forest landscapes in STP will ultimately rely upon improving policy coherence between forestry, agricultural and fisheries policies and actors and that these pressures need to be addressed and agreed upon in the NLUP (see Figure 7) to support the effectiveness and sustainability of the FLR process. In addition, the MTR team identified the following gaps that need to be addressed to support effectiveness and sustainability:

- The income gap experienced between establishing FLR/agroforestry practices and harvesting of produce for subsistence and income generation in the interests of optimising the transformational potential of STP's agricultural communities;
- The education gap, in particular the lack of university diplomas/degrees and applied research in the forestry sector. DFB and the University of STP confirmed there are currently no courses to train foresters, nor is there an applied forestry research programme in place to determine, for example, the impact of FLR on soil quality, increasing water retention, increasing carbon sequestration, and improving crop yields and nutrition, among others;
- The communication gap, above all the way forestry and FLR are reported. Stakeholders agree that the main focus of communications on FLR is to inform about what is being done, rather than why it is being done. There is inadequate attention given to the co-benefits that FLR generates, despite their inclusion in the Prodoc (Box 2, p. 37), and the fact they can be achieved at relatively low cost (see also subsection 4.5.6).

#### 4.2.2. *Achievement of project outputs and expected outcomes under component 2 – Implementation of restoration programs and complementary activities*

87 Slow, but steady progress has been observed in achieving **Outcome 2.1 - Participatory FLR interventions to enhance ecosystem services and mitigate climate change in vulnerable natural forest areas in STP, as a public-private partnership**. Reference to Table 1, confirms that although none of the three main outputs identified in the Prodoc to support the achievement of Outcome 2.1 have been achieved, all three have successfully completed the preparatory activities needed before FLR can be applied effectively in the field.

**Table 1 – Summary of FLR progress to 30 November 2021**

Project sites (Island/location)	FLR Planned to 17/11/2023 (ha)	No. tree nurseries plan/estab*	No of seedlings planned	No. of seedlings growing	Actual FLR (ha) to 30/11/2021
ST North/Contador	4,500	1/0	115,000	0	0
ST North/Other	5,742	4/1	90,000	0	0
ST Centre	7,084	4/1	105,000	5,481	0
ST South	5,742	1/0	57,000	0	0
Príncipe North	4,658	1/2	92,500	4,678	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,326</b>	<b>11/4</b>	<b>447,500</b>	<b>10,159</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Estimated KtCO<sub>2</sub>eq#</b>	<b>8,035</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>n/a</b>

Source: PM; n/a: not applicable/available in the timeframes mentioned; # Includes shadow forests (see Table 2)

88 In the case of **Output 2.1.1** - *4,500 hectares of the Contador River watershed restored in partnership with the WB-supported PRSP project* – the MTR team found restoration activities will be ready start in the Contador watershed in the second half of 2022. Main achievements identified so far are summarised as follows:

- A Partnership Agreement has been signed (2020) between DFB, the PMU/FAO, AFAP/PRSP, the District Council of Lemba and the Lemba District Chamber of Commerce to oversee the development and implementation of the FLR plan in the Contador watershed;
- The FLR plan for the Contador watershed has been successfully integrated into the FLR Plan for Sao Tome North, in which four main land use options/categories are proposed in the watershed (see Figure 2);
- No tree nurseries have been established to date for the FLR activities in the Contador watershed although the TRI project estimates around 135,000 seedlings, comprising more than 30 species of which the majority are native noble/timber species, will be produced to restore areas defined in Figure 2 and the EIA to be finalised by the PSRP project in 2022;
- The FLR plan has successfully identified a total of 4,500 ha to be restored in the Contador watershed, although until the first round of restoration work has been completed, it is not clear what will be the optimum seedling density levels required per hectare nor, therefore, the funding needs to support the PRSP achieve two main objectives: (i) to minimise the impact of the rehabilitation works on the forest ecosystem (includes the pruning of trees along forest clearings for electricity cables and pylons to avoid potential fires); (ii) to

minimise the impact of soil erosion and other forms of environmental degradation on the hydro-electric plant's capacity to produce energy.

- 89 Nonetheless, the planned commencement of the FLR activities in the Contador watershed in 2022 will mean the FLR process will start around one year behind schedule. This means the TRI project is highly unlikely to complete the FLR activities planned before planned closure in November 2023. This situation has not been aided by delays of more than six months in completing the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the rehabilitation works identified in the PSRP project. In addition, a co-financing agreement has not been formally agreed between the TRI project and AFAP, which is responsible for, among others, the sensitising and preparing of the local communities to support the implementation of the PRSP and coordinate with the TRI project of the FLR work. As a result, it is unclear when the creation of the FLR Contador Working Group (WG) will be formalised.<sup>16</sup> These delays are due to a combination of the COVID pandemic, the slower than planned finalisation of the FLR plans and inadequate communication between the TRI project and AFAP. Indeed, participation in a meeting between the PMU, CTA and representatives of AFAP, revealed little has been done to establish focal points to coordinate the elaboration of the co-financing plan foreseen in the Prodoc and which is needed to support the implementation of the FLR plan in the Contador watershed in 2022. In addition, a planned meeting with members of the Generosa community living in the Contador Watershed did not materialise, which indicates coordination between the TRI project and the beneficiary communities is in need of strengthening before commencing the implementation of the FLR plan in 2022.

**Figures 7 and 8: The Contador watershed showing the degradation of native tree species and the HEP plant to be rehabilitated by the PSRP/World Bank**



Source: MTR

- 90 Similarly, progress in achieving Output 2.1.2 - *23,000 hectares of natural forestland restored and sustainably managed in degraded areas of STP* – is around one year behind schedule and, to November 2021, no restoration work has taken place in the field. Reference to Table 1 confirms the following preparatory developments have been achieved to date:

<sup>16</sup> Table 1 in the FLR Plan for ST North foresees the following members will form the WG: DFB, AFAP/WB, the Obo Natural Park Authority of Sao Tome (PNOST), the DGE, the Agricultural Development Support Directorate, the Lemba District Council, the Lemba District Chamber of Commerce and representatives of local communities.

- The finalisation of the four FLR plans in 2021, which aim to restore a total of 28,326 ha (excluding shadow forests). This is equivalent to almost 80 per cent of the FLR planned in the Prodoc (35,500), and represents 28 per cent of the total land area of STP which is 100,100 ha<sup>17</sup>;
- All four plans have been validated by the NPFMCR in 2021. This is around nine months behind planned validation in the third quarter of Year 2.
- LoA have been signed to support the implementation of the FLR plans. So far LoAs have been signed between DFB and the following cooperatives and civil society organisations in Sao Tome: CECAB/ANP-Monte Pico Association (ST North/Contador), CECAFEB and CECAQ (ST Centre). In Principe, the DFB has signed a LoA with the Friends of the Biosphere of Principe.
- In total 5 tree nurseries have been rehabilitated, or created, and are currently producing over 10,000 seedlings comprising at least 22 species of trees, which will be ready for transplanting from early 2022.
- A total of 1,392 representatives from the participating communities at all four of the TRI project's sites in STP are currently receiving initial training, awareness raising and dissemination of the NFLRP, which includes the Landscape Restoration Plans provided in Figures 2-6 and the Seedling Production Plan (PPM) linked to the eleven nurseries planned to support FLR in degraded areas to be covered in the four project sites.

91 This latter achievement, indicates that the participation rates of local people in the TRI project's training activities on FLR (134 people) is low (4%), when compared to the target of 3,500 beneficiaries planned by November 2021. However, the MTR team understands this is partly explained by the application of the "training of trainers" approach, and the fact participation rates will increase considerably when the FLR process starts implementation in the field. In addition, further capacity building activities and applied trainings are planned to commence in 2022. For example, training on nursery management is planned to start in early January 2022, while training on forest inspection and surveillance have been postponed, because the FLR activities have not started implementation in the four project sites.

92 Finally, progress in achieving Output 2.1.3 - *600 hectares of the mangrove sites in STP restored and managed for conservation and recreational purposes* – is also still concluding the preparatory phase before mangrove restoration work can take place in 2022. Two important achievements have been fulfilled in this phase. First, the DFB has successfully mapped and selected priority mangrove restoration sites in STP with the support of the University of STP (Department of Biology). Second, these sites have been successfully integrated into the FLR plans for Sao Tome North (10 ha), Sao Tome Centre (14 ha), Sao Tome South (44 ha, plus 240 ha under an existing management plan) and Principe (10 ha).

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<sup>17</sup> World Bank (2021).



**Figures 9 and 10: Degraded mangroves to be restored in Principe and community tree nursery in CECAB's cocoa plant at Maria Luisa, Sao Tome North**



Source: MTR

- 93 In total, the four FLR plans will aim at restoring a total of 600 ha of mangrove forests using two native species (white and red varieties). Although this is equivalent to 100 per cent of the proposed target in the Prodoc, the MTR identified several reasons justifying this selection. They are, among others:
- The total area of degraded mangroves identified in the NFLRP for restoration in STP amounts to 68 ha, (16 per cent of the target in the Prodoc), which is designed to mainly concentrate on priority mangrove forest sites under threat from deforestation and degradation;
  - The DFB and its partners, which includes Oikos NGO,<sup>18</sup> will support the updating and implementation of the management plan for the Malanza mangrove forests in ST South prepared by a previous GEF-funded project implemented by IFAD, but which has never been implemented. Application of this management plan indicates the TRI project will be contributing the restoration and management of 600 ha of mangrove forests, in line with the target in the Prodoc;
  - To learn lessons on how to restore the ecological balance and provision of ecosystem services of the most seriously threatened mangrove areas in the country, before replicating and upscaling mangrove restoration in STP.
- 94 In addition, to these two main achievements, the MTR team found no community representatives from the selected mangrove sites have participated in the abovementioned training, awareness raising and dissemination of the NFLRP (PRF). This includes specific training on identifying the seedling production plan for the mangrove areas.
- 95 **Outcome 2.2** - *Enhanced and improved use of forest resources for the benefit of local communities living in sensitive landscapes of Sao Tome and Principe*. Fulfilment of this outcome is linked to the achievement of three main outputs. In the case of **Output 2.2.1** - *7,150 hectares of shadow forests supporting high-quality agro-forestry plantations restored and sustainably managed in the buffer*

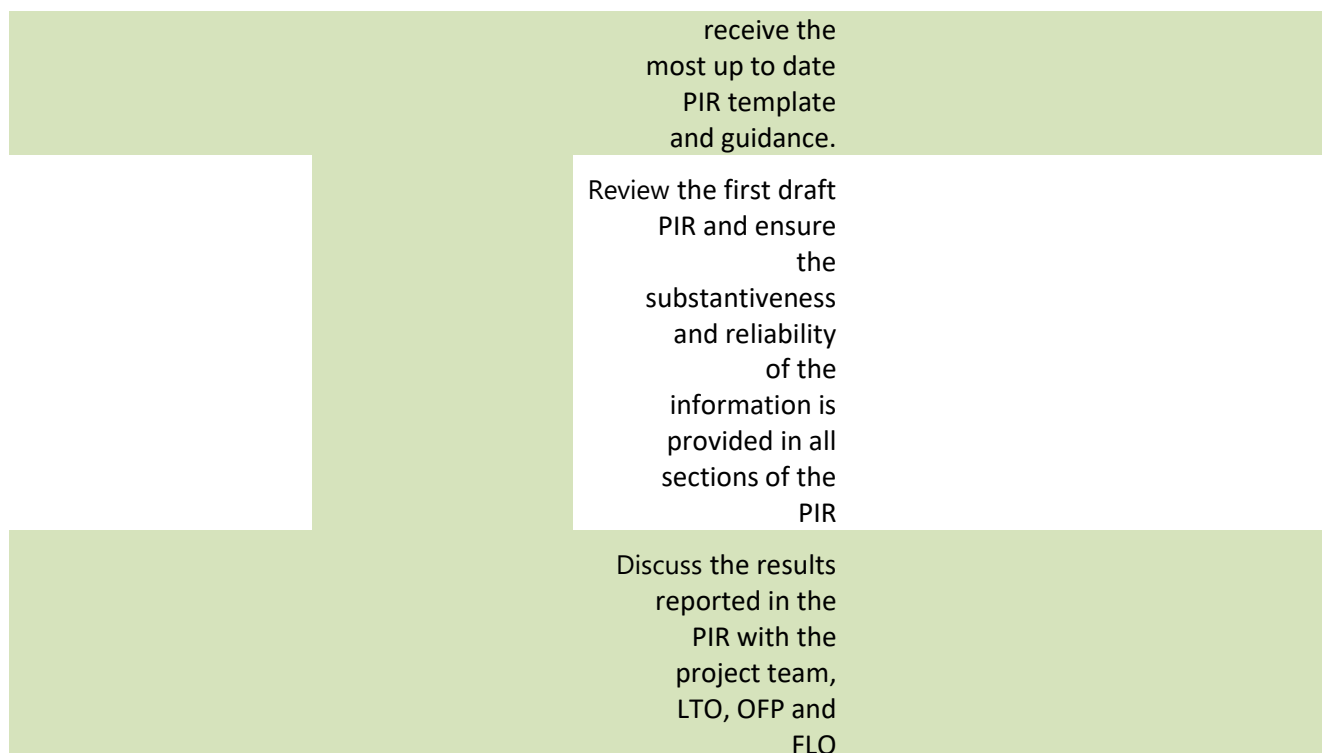
<sup>18</sup> Oikos has been selected by the Ecosystem Partnership Fund to implement the project, "Participatory Management of Malanza and Praia das Conchas Mangroves in São Tomé" from 2019-2022.

*zones of Obo and Príncipe Natural Parks* – the TRI project is unlikely to achieve this target by 2023, due to delays in starting the development of these shadow forests (foreseen to start in early 2022) and the fact co-finance from IFAD's PAPAC will no longer be available to support this initiative as originally planned in the Prodoc. This situation was confirmed in an interview with IFAD representatives during the field mission, which confirmed the PAPAC initiative had ended in 2020. Moreover, no dialogue took place between FAO and IFAD to determine whether co-finance could be agreed in the new project (COMPRAN), which is designed to, "*strengthen capacities of key rural public and private institutions in the country to catalyse and well manage investments and strengthen public-private and producer partnerships, at both central and decentralized levels. This will ensure the continuity and the sustainability of the gains of the former Smallholder Commercial Agriculture Project [PAPAC] that registered huge achievements and impact on the livelihoods of rural populations through increased incomes*".<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the MTR team was informed that the COMPRAN project could support commercial activities promoted by the TRI project (such as under Output 2.2.3) should they meet the eligibility criteria set by the IFAD-funded project.

**Table 2 – Summary of Shadow Forest restoration planned to 30 November 2021**

Project Function		PIR Role
		Ensure that the logframe indicators are monitored throughout the year.
	Project Management Unit (Project Coordinator, Chief	Prepare the first draft PIR accordingly and submit to Budget Holder
	Technical Advisor and other members of the project team	Provide ratings for the Development Objective and Implementation Progress
	Budget Holder - FAO Decentralized Office	Ensure that project teams and operational partners

<sup>19</sup> IFAD Country Director for STP, E. Ndiokubwayo (2020), *Sao Tome and Principe and IFAD partner to improve nutrition and incomes in face of climate change*.



Source: PMU; n/a: not applicable/available; \* Excludes cocoa, coffee and other cash crop seedlings.

- 96 In spite of the abovementioned challenges, the MTR team found the TRI project has achieved the following positive developments, which are summarised in Table 2 above:
- Identified and successfully integrated the priority areas for the restoration of shadow forests in the NFLRP (see options 6/7 in Figures 2-6);
  - Signed LoAs, with CECAB, CECAQ-11, CECAFEB, AMP and DFB-ST/DFB-Principe, through which the TRI project will fund the restoration of a total of 1,765 ha of shadow forests.
  - In the case of the LoA with CECAB an innovative arrangement has been agreed allowing CECAB to pay its farmers to produce the seedlings in family nurseries, or at its local cocoa processing plants (see Figure 10), rather than the TRI project paying the DFB nurseries to produce the plant material;
  - Started the training with the abovementioned partners in the collection of seeds of selected native and fruit trees to support the development of community-based tree nurseries, producing over 20 species, to support the development of high-quality agro-forestry systems designed to diversify production, as well as enhance the sustainability of high value cash crops such as cocoa and coffee.
- 97 Table 2 also shows that a total of 5,111 households have been identified as direct beneficiaries of the shadow restoration exercises, which is equivalent to 32.6 per cent of the 15,650 people planned in the Prodoc. However, it remains unclear whether the actual number of direct beneficiaries who demonstrate effective management of the shadow forests will be monitored before and after the TRI project has ended. In addition, the MTR team identified some shortcomings that may affect the efficacy of the shadow forest restoration activities in the event they are not fully addressed in the work plans for the period 2022-2023:

- A lack of support infrastructure (in particular rainwater harvesting tanks and compost beds) to sustain community/household tree nursery developments;
- Despite a LoA with Bioversity, which placed considerable effort on identifying resilient tree species, some important species were not captured and communication on the reasons for their selection does not appear to have been well developed with the target beneficiary communities to date. For example, the MTR team found the endemic Pau Fuba tree in Príncipe is missing in the list of tree species selected for FLR, despite being highly prized for its fast-growing properties, resilience and widespread use as timber for housing and furniture making (see Figure 12). Similarly, local community members interviewed generally did not see the adoption of slow-growing species as an investment to support their retirement and even less so as a “savings scheme” to be reaped by their children;
- Training on pest control/management and on forest fire prevention/management, both in the nurseries and when transplanted in the agro-forestry plots, taking into account climate change will affect the movement and behaviour of pests and pollinators and lead to prolonged droughts which increase the risk of fires;
- Training on tree development and harvesting (clearing, pruning, inspecting, cutting techniques to reduce wastage and limit tree damage, etc.).
- Collecting, processing and managing tree data (for local and DFB’s use), by using existing farmer-based restoration initiatives as models for training purposes (Figures 11 and 12).

98 Progress in achieving **Output 2.2.2** - *Pilot “Intelligent Wood Processing Plants” using portable sawmills established, as a private/public partnership* – has been affected by considerable delays in procuring two of the three mobile sawmills foreseen in the Prodoc (one each for Sao Tome and Principe) at a cost of USD 52,000. First, there were delays in reaching an agreement with DFB on the need to establish a long-term institutional arrangement for hosting and managing these sawmills. Second, procurement of this equipment required assurance from DFB that the mobile sawmills would be subject to a management plan. Third, the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down the procurement process and, fourth, FAO’s heavy bureaucratic tendering process requires the approval of FAO staff working in FAO-BR/Brazil (where the sawmills have been procured), FAO-STP, FAO-SFC/Gabon, FAORAF/Ghana and FAO-R/Italy. Moreover, because STP is not eligible for direct shipping the mobile sawmills had to be sent from Brazil to Lisbon, Portugal, where they are currently being reshipped to STP.

**Figures 11 and 12: The endemic Pau Fuba tree not included in the seedling production plan for Principe, and successful farmer-based restoration in Principe**





Source: MTR

- 99 Nonetheless, some positive developments have materialised under this output, while waiting for the delivery of the mobile sawmills. Most significant, has been the signing of the LoA with CECAQ-11 to implement a pilot plan (2021-2023) to produce fast and medium-growing tree varieties in degraded landscapes identified in the FLR Plan for Sao Tome Centre (see Option 5, in Figure 3). Work started on the production of the seedlings to restore 240 ha (60 ha/site) under this option/land use category, which is equivalent to 96 per cent of the 250 hectares planned in the Prodoc. According to the pilot plan, the beneficiaries will have permission from DFB to use the mobile sawmills on designated trees during the interim period before the fast-growing varieties can be harvested. In this way, training can start on the establishment of “intelligent” wood-processing plants as planned.
- 100 However, the MTR team identified some gaps concerning the TRI project’s emphasis on establishing these “intelligent” wood processing plants. In particular, it found more emphasis should be given to developing “intelligent” farmers, on the grounds new technologies do not inspire transformational change among farmers unless they have access to essential support services and finance, spare parts are available at reasonable prices and market information is available to ensure incomes offset the costs of using such technologies. Also, in order to support this change, attention must also be given to educating a new generation of foresters and farmers on the application of such technologies, the development of the certified timber market in STP, the application of timber marketing strategies, etc. However, the MTR found there are no university, or vocational training courses available in STP to provide this type of education.
- 101 Progress in achieving **Output 2.2.3** - *Income-generating activities related to the production, processing and sale of NWFP promoted for 650 beneficiaries of 4 rural communities of both islands, based on the replication of existing experiences and on capacity development* – was found to be moderately satisfactory. So far, the TRI project has signed a LoA with the NGO Oikos in October 2021 to carry out two income-generating activities linked to honey and snail production. The former will support the communities of Generosa and Sao Carlos (Sao Tome North), while snail production will engage the communities of Mont Alegre and Porto Real (Principe). The PMU reports a total of 157 people (72 women, 85 men) will be direct beneficiaries of these activities, which is equivalent to 24.2 per cent of the beneficiaries planned under this output in the Prodoc. Site visits to Mont Alegre and Porto Real communities confirmed a total of 20 people (12 women, 8 men) have been selected to manage the production and processing of West African snails.

Moreover, a rapid analysis of the retail market for these snails appears to be very positive, given snail demand is high and fetch good prices in the local markets in Príncipe. For example, the current price for 250 g. of cooked snails is retailing at STD 30 when available in Santo Antonio. However, local interviewees confirmed prices would be even higher if the association supplies direct to bars, hotels, private parties, etc.

102 The MTR team found both activities are also likely to generate important co-benefits. For example, honey production will directly support pollinisation of agro-forestry practices in Sao Tome North and enable by-products such as propolis and bee's wax to be produced, which is likely to create new jobs. The production of the West African snail (an invasive species introduced in the 1980s) represents an important source of nutrition and will support the conservation of the larger Obo snail, which is endemic to Príncipe and on the IUCN Red List due to over-hunting and the introduction of the West African snail.<sup>20</sup>

103 Interviews with representatives of Oikos NGO, confirm the installation of bee hives and design and installation of the snail production pens have started. The MTR team observed, for example, that the sites for the snail pens have been identified and land clearings and paths recently initiated in Príncipe. However, the MTR team also found that the NGO Alisei (responsible for the TRI project's communications) has over two-years work experience in the production of West African snails, but no synergies have been established to identify lessons and good practices associated with this activity. As a result, Oikos has been spending unnecessary resources on identifying suitable designs and materials for the snail pens, that could have been saved had they visited the pens managed by Alisei. This situation reflects a general difficulty encountered by the project in facilitating communication across stakeholders at the national level, resulting in insufficient dialogue on key issues linked to the achievement of Output 2.2.3, such as on food safety and marketing and developing joint ventures to access larger markets at the national level, among others.

104 A second interview with Alisei on this issue at the end of the field mission also identified some important lessons learned concerning snail production, which are summarised as follows:

- All snails produced are physically numbered to support production monitoring;
- All snails are weighed regularly to determine maturity (rather than by size);
- Feeding of snails should always include egg shells to snail health and support shell growth;
- Soil temperature, humidity control and regular cleaning are essential to maintain snail health and optimise the development of body mass;
- Snail pens are made from Gogo wood due to its resilient properties;
- The first 1-2 years should be dedicated to mastering production levels, processing and testing to determine consumer satisfaction levels, before embarking on sales. As such,

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<sup>20</sup> Fauna and Flora International, S. Pocock, (2020), *Príncipe's Obo snail population declines by more than 75% in the last 20 years*.

the first year should be designed to enhance the food security and nutrition of the local communities involved;

- Snail shells can be used to produce calcium carbonate (lime), which can be used in tree nurseries and agricultural plots to neutralise the soil.

#### 4.2.3. *Achievement of project outputs and expected outcomes under component 3 – Institutions, finance, and upscaling*

105 Component 3 is based on the achievement of two main outcomes. The achievement of **Outcome 3.1 - Strengthened national capacity on the principles and practices of FLR, on the concepts and use of ecosystem services, and on FLR financial instruments** – is linked to the realisation of three outputs. Progress in achieving **Output 3.1.1 - capacity building program targeting FLR Platform members, project partners, and other stakeholders from the institutional, private, and civil society sectors organized, on the principles and practices of FLR, ecosystem services, and on FLR and PES-related financial instruments** – has been satisfactory, thanks to a needs assessment conducted in 2019 and the subsequent employment of mainly national experts (plus one international expert) who have provided training to more than 150 stakeholders on FLR principles, practices and financial instruments between 2020 and 2021. An important part of this training has focused on the PSC members and DFB staff, which has contributed to institutionalising the project within DFB at all levels in STP.

106 One particular example, where interviewees from DFB have been satisfied with the training provided so far concerns methods to improve data collection and the mapping exercises to identify the FLR sites and land use options selected for the NFLRP, which is the first time DFB has successfully produced such detailed maps. In addition, the MTR found the capacity building dedicated to developing effective law enforcement, the application of forestry deontology (ethics) and forestry surveillance (August to September 2021) appears to have been highly popular among the 20 forest rangers who participated. Moreover, the MTR team witnessed a law enforcement exercise take place during its field visit to ST North, concerning the sale of illegally cut timber. However, as previously mentioned in this report, the funding of the training courses to support the development of proactive alliances with local communities and watchdogs to enhance surveillance capacity, has not included funding for the equipment DFB foresters need to carry out effective surveillance. Indeed, DFB staff interviewed in Príncipe confirmed they do not have ranger uniforms and boots, nor modern law enforcement technologies, such as GIS radios and GIS cameras to register the exact location of illegal practices when prosecuting, or issuing warnings.

107 Implementation of **Output 3.1.2 - Pathway identified and capacity and consensus created for the opening of new credit lines for FLR-related actions that can fit the needs of SME, and for the elaboration of a Code of Conduct to be adopted by ASB and other private financial entities** – is in its early stages of development. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed with the Central Bank of STP to lead the Banking Association of STP (ASB) on the formulation and agreement of the new Banking Code of Conduct. According to Central Bank staff interviewed, a consultant is in the process of being hired to support the identification of a "Green Code of

Conduct”, based on at least four workshops. It is understood these workshops will be carried out in coordination with the National Council responsible for the National Strategy for Inclusive Finance (2021) and which has four main pillars: (i) application of inclusive green finance; (ii) development of digital financial services in STP (with the aim to at least 50% of all transactions are done digitally); (iii) increasing women’s access to finance and development; (iv) development of consumer rights and financial literacy. The ultimate aim of the Strategy is to secure the inclusion of 70 per cent of the adult population in the formal financial sector by the end of 2025.

108 A Concept Note on how DFB, the Central Bank and ASB will collaborate on the development of the Code of Conduct is currently being drafted and will be sent to Governor of the Central Bank before the end of 2021. The contents of this Note will include ideas on how to address the main challenges to applying a “green” Code of Conduct. The Central Bank, informed the MTR team that these include, among others:

- Only 24 per cent of the adult population currently have access to the formal financial sector;
- Only 18 per cent of adult women are currently engaged in the formal financial sector;
- The majority of the population are still heavily reliant on cash payments to support a large informal economy in STP, where unsustainable activities are prevalent and difficult to eliminate.

109 In spite of these challenges, the Central Bank’s agreement to support the development of a Green Code of Conduct in STP **represents a major achievement of the TRI project in STP**. This is because the application of sustainable finance is increasingly recognised by international institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU) as crucial to developing a green economy and fulfilling international commitments linked to climate change, biodiversity conservation and the sustainable development goals. In other words, “*sustainable finance will help ensure that investments support a resilient economy and a sustainable recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.*”<sup>21</sup> However, taking into account the MTR team’s findings in section 4.2.1 that the NPFMCR does not have a national mandate to support DFB, the Central Bank and ASB identify the Green Code of Conduct on these terms, the NCCC appears to be a highly appropriate candidate at the national level to provide guidance on the formulation of the Code as well as oversee public and private investment is directed to support the development of a climate-neutral, climate-resilient, resource-efficient and inclusive economy in which FLR, certified sustainable timber and NWFPs play a significant part.

110 Finally, activities under **Output 3.1.3 – Assessment study carried out on the National Fund for Forest Development of STP (NFFD) and the new regime of benefits and fiscal incentives and, with recommendations for their enhancement** – have been reprogrammed for 2022 following an inconclusive study conducted by the consultant responsible for the PIP. The MTR team

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<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2021), Why is sustainable finance important?

understands the TRI project is in the process of recruiting a qualified international consultant who can draw on lessons from similar funds already operational in other countries and which meet the requirements of STP, while at the same time fulfilling the priorities of CBD concerning the development of national forest funds (NFFs); namely, *"meeting a number of challenges in the forest sector including: advancing long-term investment needs; supporting the decentralisation and devolution of forest management; leveraging additional sources of funding; encouraging private sector investments; promoting the production of forest ecosystem services; adapting forestry spending to the seasonality of operations (e.g. planting season); stimulating more effective forest management; and creating increased transparency and accountability."*<sup>22</sup> It is understood one of the main recommendations of this consultancy will be to agree with DFB a suitable road map to establish the NFFD in line with these priorities.

- 111 The second expected outcome under component 3 is **Outcome 3.2** - *The FLR work of TRI is upscaled by triggering and supporting the development of public-private partnerships for nationally-implemented bankable projects*. Two outputs are foreseen to achieve this outcome: Output 3.2.1 - *Two medium-large size bankable FLR project (over 100k USD) are developed through public-private partnerships between nationally-operating actors by the end of the project*, and Output 3.2.2 - *Three small-medium size bankable FLR projects (from 10 to 50k USD) are started through public-private partnerships between nationally-operating actors by the end of the project*.
- 112 The MTR team first reviewed the rationale for **Output 3.2.1** following field visits to Príncipe and the ST South, which allowed it to observe the general impact of two of the three public-private concessions mentioned in the Prodoc: HBD touristic investments in Príncipe and Agripalma LDA in ST South. In the case of the former, the MTR team found the HBD concession has demonstrated positive developments can be achieved in partnership with local communities to advance FLR. For example, the MTR team did see evidence that local communities have developed agro-forestry practices to support the production of sustainable tourist products such as coconut and cocoa oil-based soaps and skin creams and chocolate. However, an interview with HBD confirms this had to be scaled back due to financial reasons and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 113 However, the oil palm concession with Agripalma appears to have been developed more in the interests of improving the main road between the Agripalma plantation and Sao Tome port, than to promote the rational use of natural resources with local communities. Indeed, reference to Figure 13 shows monocultural practices surround one of the country's most iconic peaks (Pico Cao Grande).

**Figures 13 and 14: Oil palm plantations around Pico Cao in Sao Tome and natural regeneration of Pau Fuba forests in Príncipe**

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<sup>22</sup> CBD: FAO/GiZ (2013), "National Forest Funds (NFFs) – Towards a solid architecture and good financial governance".





Source: MTR

- 114 In terms of the TRI project's implementation of activities under Output 3.2.1, the main achievement observed so far has been MAFRD/DFB's formal registration of interest in becoming a Plan Vivo-certified project. According to Plan Vivo's website the "Project Idea Note" (PIN), based on the main elements of the Prodoc, was approved in May 2021.<sup>23</sup> The MTR understands the next step is for Plan Vivo to certify the amount of carbon sequestered following the implementation of the NFLRP at the four project sites against the above-mentioned target of 30,000 ha (restored/under improved management) In this way each tCO<sub>2</sub>eq can be converted into a Plan Vivo Certificate (PVC), which can be sold on the voluntary global carbon market to generate funds to support the FLR process in STP well beyond the TRI project (in particular the generation of co-benefits relating to, among others, biodiversity conservation, safeguarding water provision, reducing soil erosion, and adaptation to climate change).
- 115 In theory, the MTR team found the proposed partnership with Plan Vivo represents a viable means to generating funds to support the development of sustainable agro-forestry practices in STP and to encourage investors to upscale FLR practices to capture more carbon finance in line with the provisions in the Green Code of Conduct. Indeed, the PIN stipulates this will support STP, *"shift towards a harmonic coexistence between forest ecosystems and rural communities and... to gain independence from short-term international projects that depend on volatile policies and on large international donors."* (Part J, p. 25). However, in practice, Plan Vivo will not be able to issue the PVCs until significant progress has been achieved in restoring the landscapes at the four project sites and demonstrate to the carbon market that the project has established the conditions needed to be apply effective management of the restored areas over the long-term (20 years), show it is benefiting people's livelihoods and is generating the above-mentioned climate and environmental co-benefits. As a result, it is not clear at this stage when the PVCs can be applied and how much carbon funding can be fed back to the 97 participating communities (17,000 households), taking into account only 60% of the income from the sale of PVCs will go directly to the participants (under the Plan Vivo terms mentioned in its website).

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<sup>23</sup> Plan Vivo Pipeline (2021), *Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate Change Mitigation in the Republic of São Tomé e Príncipe*.

116 Meanwhile, progress in identifying a second medium-sized project appears to have stalled. However, the MTR's interview with HBD confirms there is interest to explore establishing a private-public partnership with the TRI project in Príncipe. Moreover, a partnership with HBD would offer an important opportunity to explore how the Green Code of Conduct can be used to stimulate the commercial side of the Plan Vivo project and, at the same time, support the UN Secretary General's call (2021) to establish "*a recovery process that builds back better*" after the Covid-19 pandemic."<sup>24</sup> In addition, this approach would facilitate the exploration of synergies with IFAD's COMPRAM project launched in 2020 and the Portuguese Fund for Forestry Development.

117 Meanwhile, progress in realising **Output 3.2.2** - *Three small-medium size bankable FLR projects (from 10 to 50kUSD) are started through public-private partnerships between nationally-operating actors by the end of the project* – has been satisfactory. The PMU informed the MTR team that seven small bankable projects have been approved for funding with the following small enterprises:

- Proasilvfor – agriculture and silvopasture (GEF: USD 12,500 / Co-finance: USD 2,500);
- Belavista (BVF) - forestry, crayfish production and coastal protection (GEF: USD12,500 / Co-Finance: USD 1,810);
- Ecoquintas – nature tourism (GEF: USD 14,713 / Co-Finance: USD 1,768);
- Vanha – production of essential oils (GEF: 11,520 USD / Co-Finance: USD 3,480);
- Biotech – medicinal plants (GEF: USD 14,673.53 USD / Co-finance: USD 3,393);
- Marapa Fogon Cu poco nha – fuel efficient wood stoves (GEF: USD 12,500 USD + Co-Finance: USD 1,250 USD).
- Coco Express (GEF: USD 8,811 / Co-Finance: USD 1,905);

118 The MTR team conducted site visits and/or interviews of entrepreneurs of four bankable projects; four in Príncipe (Proasilvor, BVF, Ecoquintas) and one in ST South (Vanha). The overall finding from these visits and interviews is that two of these projects offer significant potential to upscale FLR activities in STP, which could be developed in coordination with the Plan Vivo initiative and potentially with HBD. In particular, the MTR triangulated the following findings:

- They promote the development of tree nurseries in Príncipe;
- They promote the restoration of degraded landscapes that can support several sustainable economic activities, which become mutually reinforcing. These include, planting of fast and slow-growing tree species to support the development of silvopasture systems, development of composts and protection of soils, protection of water resources to sustain small-scale endemic crayfish and fish farming;
- They promote low maintenance highly cost-effective forests that, unlike cash crops, are not subject to crop theft. Indeed, interviewees confirmed crop theft is a regular problem and which has encouraged one of the two entrepreneurs to replace pepper production with tree planting;

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<sup>24</sup> UN Secretary General, A. Guterres, (2021), *Response to COVID-19*.



- They promote inflation-proof economic activities, because timber prices have generally grown year-on-year, especially concerning medium/slow-growing high value species such as Azeitona, Gogo and Jackfruit, which also can be promoted as investments for the next generation;
- They promote opportunities to conserve endemic tree species that are most likely to enhance the resilience of farmers to the effects of climate change (see Figures 11 and 12), as well as restore local soils and biodiversity that depend on them.

**Figures 15 and 16: Bankable projects dedicated to nature tourism (Príncipe) and development of essential oils and hydrolates from aromatic plants (ST South)**



Source: MTR

119 Analysis of the BVF bankable project supporting development of eco-bungalows in Príncipe (Figure 15) and the Vanha project promoting the development of essential oils and hydrolates from aromatic plants in the District of Caue, ST South (Figure 16), also revealed two important findings as follows:

- The installation of eco-bungalows represents a low-cost solution to supporting the consolidation of FLR activities in areas where there is tourism potential in STP. For example, a two-bedroom bungalow costs less than USD 10,000 to install, are low maintenance and can feed tourists with forest garden products such as pineapple, soursop, papaya, banana and passionfruit, among others. Moreover, the going rental rate for this type of accommodation is at least USD 50 per person, per night, which means there is significant potential to recover the cost of the investment over two years (assuming 200 days of occupancy by two people in that period);
- The production of local essential oils will contribute to reducing dependency on imports of such oils, hydrolates and synthetic oil substitutes, to produce cosmetics and essential items, such as soap. Moreover, this activity offers significant potential to develop coco/cocoa-based soaps and cosmetics given the production of cocoa and coconut in STP.

120 Notwithstanding these positive findings, the MTR also identified some risks that have not been adequately addressed that are likely to affect the effectiveness and the potential for upscaling of the bankable projects. Most significant, is that all the bankable projects have been promoted and selected by the TRI project in collaboration with the DFB. As a result, they will be implemented

without any oversight or advice from other government departments that are specialised in small and medium-sized enterprise development, for example, the Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (APCI), within the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Blue Economy. Similarly, it is unclear, where these bankable projects will go to access future finance once the TRI project grants have been spent. Finally, in the case of the Vanha project and BIOTECH project (dedicated to the production of natural medicines from plants), neither are designed to link up with scientific research, such as the Faculty of Research and Technology of the University of STP, in the interests of developing national capacity in these areas.

#### 4.2.4 *Achievement of project outputs and progress towards project outcome 4 - Knowledge, partnerships, monitoring and assessments, and linkages with GCP*

121 The Prodoc specifies this component will focus primarily on establishing the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework for FLR in STP, and on the alignment of the Tri project's internal M&E with the wider knowledge management system of TRI managed by the GCP. To achieve this, two expected outcomes have been defined. **Outcome 4.1** - *Collaborative monitoring and evaluation system successfully implemented to support the NCP in STP* – is to be achieved through the fulfilment of two main outputs.

122 Progress in fulfilling **Output 4.1.1** - *Collaborative National Forest and Landscape Monitoring System [NFLMS] established and operational, in close partnership, and fully harmonized with the GCP of TRI* – has been moderately unsatisfactory, because the development of the NFLMS has been postponed to 2022. This was, on the one hand, due to the need to finalise the abovementioned mapping exercises to identify baseline forest data and formulate the NFLRP in 2021. In addition, the pandemic prevented international training courses to take place as planned in the second half of 2021. However, the TRI project has reached the following milestones, which have clarified how the DFB will develop the NFLMS in 2022:

- Secured the formal agreement of the DFB to adopt and apply FAO's Land Cover Classification System (LCCS) to support the development of the country's NFLMS;
- Drawn up the ToR for the development of the NFLMS, which were approved by the NPFMCR in October 2021;
- The DFB has identified the team of foresters and staff from other institutions to be trained to operate the NFLMS;
- A training course has been agreed with the Gabonese Study and Spatial Observation Agency (AGEOS) to train this team on the development of the NFLMS in early 2022 (pending any new restrictions on travel that may arise from the growing Omicron variant of COVID-19 in Southern Africa).

123 The DFB considers the development of its forest and landscape monitoring capacity is a priority for 2022, in recognition that it will support informed decision making on the implantation of the NFLRP and enhance forest governance. Nevertheless, the achievement of Outcome 4.1 (in particular the establishment of an effective NFLMS), will need to address the following potential barriers identified by the MTR:

- Improve communication and cooperation on forest data harmonisation with the MPWINRE/DGE, which has received considerable support from UNDP since 2007 to date on developing an environmental database (that includes forests) to support the country's national and international commitments to adapting to climate change (see also section 4.1.4). This is particularly important to ensure there is a common agreement on national forest baseline data and targets, among others;
- The TRI project's aim to develop participatory monitoring techniques to support mutual learning on adaptive management as foreseen in the Prodoc is likely to overlap with key activities of the project "Delivering Climate Promise in Sao Tome and Principe" executed by the MPWINRE/DGE and implemented by UNDP since 2020. For example, one of the project's aims is the development of a knowledge management system with in DGE, which includes development of MRV mechanisms to support the NCCC accelerate the implementation of the NDCs<sup>25</sup>;
- The Prodoc foresees the establishment of the NFLMS using "*standard GIS software (i.e. ESRI, ArcMap, ArcView, Arc-info)*" (p. 58, para. 142). However, the MTR team found that this approach has been discarded in favour of using open-source software instead. Similar to the MTR conducted on the TRI project in Pakistan, this approach will avoid license "lock-ins" that Forestry Departments will struggle to fund after the TRI projects have ended. Moreover, the GCP has actively been promoting the application of Collect Earth Open Foris (CEOF) and FAO's Land Cover Classification System, which has facilitated the project's decision to enter into a LoA with Geosolutions to develop the QGIS as the open-source software of choice in DFB. Nonetheless, the MTR found this initiative is not being developed in coordination with the University of STP, which means the scope for developing forestry research using the latest crowdsourced satellite imagery available, or future development of the GIS tools needed to identify ANR sites and track FLR data cannot be outsourced to a reliable research institution linked to STP University;
- There appears to have been little or no engagement of the local community in supporting the development of GIS maps so far. This is considered crucial to developing effective ground-truthing, engaging local communities in the validation of the restoration process and communicating changes in livelihoods to Plan Vivo.

124 The postponement of the development of the NFLMS to 2022, has also resulted in activities under **Output 4.1.2 - All concerned project partners are enabled to take part to the collaborative M&E system-** being postponed to 2022. The training activities proposed in the Prodoc require the participants to gather data in the field in order to develop this M&E system. According to the Prodoc, this is to be done in accordance with indicators "set by the project for the different FLR interventions... with the objective of monitoring the impact of the FLR interventions of the project... and consolidate them in the global M&E system of TRI" (p. 59, para 148). However, taking into account the limited time available, coupled with the fact DFB is obliged to report on national

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<sup>25</sup> UNDP (2020), *Initiation Plan for the project Delivering Climate Promise in Sao Tome and Principe*.

indicators and targets, the cost-benefit of establishing the M&E system primarily for TRI's benefit, is questioned by the MTR team.

125 **Outcome 4.2** - *TRI-related lessons learned and best practices from the NCP and the TRI network disseminated among relevant audiences.* Progress in fulfilling the two main outputs under outcome 4.2 has overall been satisfactory. In the case of **Output 4.2.1** - *information clearinghouse and focal node for knowledge management created and operational through partnership agreement with national actor* – the information hub foreseen in the Prodoc has been established by the NGO Alisei in 2020. A Working Group comprising representatives from DFB, the PMU and Alisei has been established to oversee the development and application of the TRI project's Communication strategy. The MTR team witnessed the strategy includes the presentation of regular updates on the TRI project's activities on national radio and television stations. According to Alisei, televised updates are watched on average by an estimated 100,00 viewers, while as many as 145,000 listeners are reported to tune into the radio spots on the TRI project.

126 One of the requirements of the information hub is the creation of a database on FLR practices and lessons learned. However, the development of this database has been limited by the lack of FLR activities in the field. Nonetheless, Alisei has conducted a preliminary study on keys lessons identified so far on the FLR process linked to CECAP-11 in ST Centre. Main lessons and recommendations are summarised as follows:

- Agro-forestry restoration and management in CECAP-11's cocoa plantations focus on single use trees, rather than multi-use trees and hectares as the unit of analysis;
- Promotion of cocoa production is often interpreted by farmers as justification to cut down quality trees. Instead, CECAP-11 should adopt CECAB's model of locally trained promoters/disseminators of FLR activities that encourage the preservation and integration of existing precious trees into the agro-forestry farming system;
- The use of chain saws remains highly popular, resulting in the continuation of high wastage of precious woods. Greater emphasis should be placed on integrating social programmes to support FLR, which is currently practiced by CECAB;
- The growth of the rat population is a risk that has not been adequately addressed in relation to the production of NWFPs. Risk mitigation measures should be integrated into the FLR process in order to reduce the impact of rats on NWFPs.
- Production of NWFPs has largely focused on food security and income generation, but has largely overlooked the need to improve nutrition in rural communities. More attention should be given to the production of NWFPs with high nutritional value, such as the production of dried fruits and fruit flour as substitutes to imported wheat flour and which Alisei has in-depth work experience.

127 The MTR team's analysis of the resources committed to the development and application of the information hub and communication strategy reveals they are too small to support the development of a dedicated advocacy campaign designed to bring about, among others, policy and legal reforms to mainstream and upscale FLR practices, harmonise and centralise data management on the forestry sector in DFB (with linkages to agriculture, environment, energy, etc.)

promote import substitution through investment in NWFPs and at the same create jobs, improve food security and nutrition, and enhance resilience to climate change. Indeed, the contract with Alisei represents less than one per cent of the GEF grant to the TRI project. This is further compounded by some shortcomings in the Communication Plan produced by Alisei in 2020; namely DFB has very limited resources, time and capacity to support effective communications.

- 128 **Output 4.2.2** - *The STP NCP team benefits of the best practices, lessons learned and capacity development initiatives run by the GCP of TRI and involving the partners of other National Child Projects.* Activities under this output took place as planned until 2020. For example, members from the PMU and DFB attended the TRI's inception workshop held in Kenya (February 2019), and the TRI conference held in FAO-R (October 2019). However, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the study visits planned to other TRI projects in West and Central Africa have not materialised. Instead, PMU staff have participated online in TRI's global information sharing platform, and in webinars provided by GCP on, for example, Landscape Finance (for bankable projects) and the launch of "The Restoration Factory" in May 2021. An online link has also been created with the TRI project in Guinea Bissau to exchange information on mangrove restoration.

### 4.2.3 Achievement of the TRI project's objectives

- 129 The project has successfully achieved the majority of its preliminary and preparatory activities to launch the FLR process in the field in 2022 with its dedicated partners. However, taking into account the delays of up to 12 months caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the above-mentioned shortcomings concerning inter-institutional coordination and effective communication and advocacy for FLR and development of NWFPs, it is highly unlikely the TRI project can achieve its objectives by November 2021. Moreover, despite the setting of new targets for FLR, the TRI project still does not have concrete data on how far the seedling density plans have been estimated correctly, or whether further adjustments to targets are needed. In the event they have been underestimated, restoration and FLR management targets may have to be downsized further in accordance with the GEF funds available. For this reason, the granting of a time extension to the TRI project alone is unlikely to have a dramatic effect on the project's effectiveness and impact (see also the ToC in Appendix 9), unless solutions are agreed on removing the above shortcomings and issues affecting the project's efficiency section 4.3 below are addressed at the same time.

## 4.3 Efficiency

**MTR question 3 – To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively?**

**Finding 5:** Overall physical progress is estimated to be around 44% to 30/11/2021 while accumulated expenditure of GEF funds stood at 22.7% to the same date. Total accumulated expenditure of co-finance (in cash and in-kind) was reported to be 26.8% to 30/06/2021 (PIR-

3). This confirms the project's capacity to convert its resources into expected outputs and outcomes has been slower than planned. This is explained by several factors beyond the control of the PMU. These include, among others, the low level of capacity and resources within DFB, the Covid-19 pandemic, the need to conduct the large number of preparatory activities described in section 4.2, the loss of co-finance due to the closure of the PAPAC/IFAD project in early 2020 and delays in completing the EIA for the PRSP/WB. In addition, the MTR team triangulated a lot of evidence to confirm FAO's current procedures are very bureaucratic and also have contributed to delays in operations. However, in spite of these challenges, the actions realised so far appear to have achieved a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness, which is likely to continue under all components, but especially 2 and 3, thanks to the signing of LoAs with implementing partners who are already present, active and already have work experience in the four intervention sites selected by the TRI project.

#### 4.3.1 *Timeliness of activities*

130 The TRI project has experienced considerable delays in achieving its outputs as planned by the start of Year 4 (November 2021). The MTR estimates the project is around one year behind schedule and that **overall physical progress amounts to 44 per cent of planned outputs** to 30 November 2021. This has been calculated following analysis on the breakdown of estimated overall physical progress of planned outputs by component. This analysis included a participatory review of implementation status to 30 November 2021 with the PMU, which was then triangulated by reviewing the implementation status provided in the latest PIR to 30 June 2021 (Section 3 of the PIR) and the MTR teams interview notes and sites visit observations. The MTR team's assessment is summarised as follows:

- **Component 1: 66 per cent completed.** The MTR team found the 75 per cent physical advance rate provided by the PMU (65% in the latest PIR to 30 June 2021), to be over-estimated on the grounds the NFLRP (Output 1.2.1) and PIP (Output 1.2.1) have been finalised, but not started implementation and although the NPFMCR (Output 1.1.1) has been established and takes decisions on the TRI project, it only operates for the sake of the project and is not officially recognised as a national platform, nor has it established official linkages with the climate change adaptation activities managed by the NCCC;
- **Component 2: 35 per cent completed.** The MTR team did not find sufficient evidence to concur with the latest PMU estimate of 48 per cent (22% in the latest PIR to 30 June 2021). It acknowledges the preparatory activities under component 2 have been completed, and LoA signed to support the implementation of the FLR plans agreed for ST North, Centre and South and for Príncipe, but no FLR activities have started implementation (Outputs 2.1.1 to 2.1.3). Likewise, none of the activities identified and agreed relating to the establishment of shadow forests, intelligent wood processing plants and income generating activities have started implementation (Outputs 2.2.1 to 2.2.3);
- **Component 3: 45 per cent completed.** The MTR found evidence that progress in fulfilling outputs has progressed since the latest PIR estimate (36%), but not to 56 per



cent estimated by the PMU. For example, the preparatory activities for the vast majority of planned outputs have been completed and one module of the capacity building on the principles and practices of FLR has been conducted (Output 3.1.1), but others have not started. For example, on elaborating the Green Code of Conduct for the banking sector in STP (Output 3.1.2) and on the reform of the NFFD (Output 3.1.3). Similarly, not all of the bankable projects have been identified and none have started implementation (Outputs 3.2.1 and 3.2.2);

- **Component 4: 30 per cent completed.** The MTR team was unable to concur with the PMU's estimate of 51 per cent. Overall, it found only a small advance on the PIR estimate (33%), because the design of the NFLMS has still not been finalised (Output 4.1.1), the training and development of the collaborative M&E system has been postponed to 2022 (Output 4.1.2) and a large number of international training events and visits (Output 4.2.2) were unable to take place in the second half of 2021 due to the continuation of travel restrictions.

131 Triangulation of project progress reports, responses from the e-questionnaire and interviews with main stakeholders confirms there are several factors that have, and continue, to slow down operations. These are summarised as follows:

- The DFB has limited resources and capacity. Moreover, the promotion of the FLR process and development of NWFPs represent new activities for which the DFB has almost no institutional memory. This situation has been particularly challenging for the PMU for different reasons. In the first year of operations, the PMU's main challenge was to operate in accordance with the capacity and slow decision-making process of MAFRD/DFB. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, caused cancellations of travel of FAO staff and consultants, meetings, trainings, etc. leading to the postponement of planned activities. This particularly slowed down the collection of baseline data and meetings with local communities. Finally, in mid-2021, long, drawn-out presidential elections took place, which resulted in changes of senior personnel, including a new Minister for MAFRD and Director of DFB in September 2021;
- The implementation of many outputs under components 2 and 3 could not take place quickly, because several preparatory and preliminary activities had to be concluded first, to ensure the FLR process could be implemented as an officially recognised government initiative. Some of these activities needed considerable time to finalise and be endorsed by DFB and/or the NPFMRC. In particular, the elaboration of the FLR maps required over a year to finalise before they could be integrated into DFB's first ever NFLRP in 2021;
- The TRI project experienced delays in the implementation of the PSRP. This has not been aided by the slow implementation of the environmental impact analysis in 2021. Meanwhile, the termination of IFAD's PAPAC project in the first quarter of 2020 has resulted in the loss of the in-kind support agreed in the Prodoc to support the development of FLR and NWFPs;
- The application of heavy levels of bureaucracy by FAO, especially concerning the procurement of equipment (see also section 4.2.2 concerning the purchase of two mobile



sawmills). This situation has been compounded by: (i) limited understanding by all stakeholders in the different FAO country offices involved (STP, SFC, RAF, Rome, Budapest) of their respective roles in the complex processes related to procurement of equipment, or on the options to hire consultants and/or seek support from FAO's own services and international institutions it hosts (Legal Service, TCP, Secretariat of the ITPGRFA); (ii) the language barrier between STP, where all Government institutions are required to communicate in Portuguese, while FAO-SFC works primarily in French. This has not been aided by the decision by FAO-SCF to employ a consultant to manage the administrative, contractual, financial and procurement needs of the TRI project, but does not speak Portuguese, nor has been delegated any authority to take decisions.

132 In addition to these findings, the MTR mission witnessed first-hand a large number of power cuts. Interviews with all main stakeholders confirmed this is becoming a growing problem in STP, which has contributed to slowing down operations. This situation is exacerbated by an insufficient number of diesel generators in government buildings to ensure staff can work during power cuts.

#### 4.3.2 GEF funding and co-finance

133 Reference to Table 3 shows total expenditure of GEF funding at 30 November 2021 was USD 901,597 equivalent to **26.6 per cent of the total grant provided by GEF**. This confirms expenditure of GEF funds has been relatively low in relation to the abovementioned overall physical progress over the same period. This is partly explained by the slower than planned implementation of project activities reported in subsection 4.3.1, the fact some activities have not yet been accounted for as expenditure, or because cost savings resulted from reducing planned inputs due to the pandemic (such as external technical assistance). As a result, the MTR team has not identified any cost overruns or shortfalls so far. Nevertheless, the PMU's expenditure projections provided to the MTR team, indicate final expenditure of the TRI project to November 2023 under each of the four components will be, in percentage terms: 92.1%, 100%, 87.2% and 79.7% respectively. In addition, expenditure under the PMU is projected to be 75% of the planned budget. The main finding from these projections is that a funding shortfall is most likely under component 2, for reasons explained in sub section 4.2.3; namely the unit costs for FLR/hectare may have been underestimated, which means targets may need to be revised down unless the shortfall in funding needs can be bridged through a reallocation of funds from Component 4.

134 Regarding the administration of GEF funds, the MTR team was informed after the field mission had been completed that the administration of the TRI project's accounts and payments – unlike other TRI projects have to be processed through a parallel financial system (ASR). This requires additional work outside of FAO's main accounting system and requires GEF funds to be transferred to FAO-STP through UNDP's country office in STP, which amounts to another layer of bureaucracy that consumes valuable time of FAO staff and the PMU.

**Table 3. Summary of accumulated GEF expenditure in USD (to 30 November 2021)**

Component	17/11/2018- 16/11/2023 Plan	17/11/2018- 30/06/2019 Actual	01/07/2019- 30/06/2020 Actual	01/07/2020- 30/06/2021 Actual	01/07/2021- 30/11/2021 Actual	Total Balance
Component 1	227,238	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Component 2	1,355,200	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Component 3	354,100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Component 4	570,020	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
PMU	888,860	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,395,418</b>	<b>132,785</b>	<b>640,005</b>	<b>772,790</b>	<b>901,597</b>	<b>2,493,821</b>

Source: FAO Financial statements (provided by the LTO); n/a not available (a breakdown of expenditure by component was requested, but was not provided by FAO-SCF).

135 In an attempt to address these difficulties, the BH in FAO-SCF appointed a consultant to support the Assistant FAO Representative in STP manage the administrative needs of the TRI project. However, this measure does not appear to have made the administrative process more efficient. Indeed, some interviewees have complained that response times to their communications from FAO-SFC are slow. The MTR team has also been party to this problem concerning a request for the breakdown of expenditure to 30 November 2022, which has not been provided to date (see Table 3). According to the online interview conducted with FAO-SFC, the delays are attributed to very high workload, a lack of adequate staff, FAO's heavy bureaucratic process and the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Furthermore, the application of the ASR system also means the payments system can by-pass the administrative tasks of the above-mentioned consultant recruited by SCF.

136 Meanwhile, expenditure of the co-finance assigned in the Prodoc was USD 4,472,012 to 30 June 2021, (see Table 4), which is **equivalent to 26.8 per cent of the total co-finance support assigned in the Prodoc**. When comparing GEF expenditure reported in Table 2 to 30 June 2021 (USD 772,790) against total co-finance expenditure over the same period (17.3%), the indications are that for every US dollar spent from GEF funds, the project leverages USD 5.8 from co-financiers.

**Table 4. Summary of accumulated co-finance expenditure in USD (to 30 November 2021)**

Source	17/11/2018- 16/11/2023 Plan	17/11/2018- 30/06/2019 Actual	01/07/2019- 30/06/2020 Actual	01/07/2020- 30/06/2021 Actual	01/07/2021- 30/11/2021 Actual	Total Balance
PRSP/WB*	10,600,000	530,000	314,762	2,800,000	n/a	7,800,000
PAPAC/IFAD#	6,100,000	305,000	1,357,250	1,672,012	n/a	4,427,988

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,700,000</b>	<b>835,000</b>	<b>1,672,013</b>	<b>4,472,012</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>12,227,988</b>
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Source: \*Grant; #In-kind

137 A breakdown of this expenditure, reveals in-kind expenditure from IFAD/PAPAC amounted an estimated USD 1,672,012, which is equivalent to 27.4 per cent of the co-finance agreed with IFAD/PAPAC. However, given the PAPAC project ended in early 2020, the MTR team understands that in-kind contributions since closure are calculated from the support provided by the farmers cooperatives/associations that were supported by the PAPAC project, but which are now participating in the TRI project under LoAs. However, the latest PIR to 30 June 2021, is still reporting in-kind contributions as if they were from IFAD/PAPAC rather than clarifying they relate to the TRI project's partners (such as CECAB, CECAQ-11, CECAFEB, etc.), which the MTR team has triangulated directly from its field visits (see Figure 11). Similarly, the Results Matrix in the Prodoc explicitly mentions that 15,000 farmers from the PAPAC project form part of the 17,000 beneficiaries planned, when in fact this may no longer is the case.

138 Table 4 also confirms that the PRSP has made cash contributions totalling USD 2,800,000 to 30/06/2021 (PIR-3), which is equivalent to 26.4 per cent of the co-finance budgeted in the Prodoc. However, according to an interview with representatives from AFAP/WB, the implementation of the PRSP project has been delayed due to delays in completing the EIA. The MTR team has been unable to assess exactly how this co-finance has been accounted for. The indications are it was provided to support the elaboration of the FLR plan for the Contador watershed, which has been integrated into the FLR plan for ST North (Figure 2). However, if this is the case, the financial costs involved to produce the FLR plan for the Contador watershed was far higher than the other three FLR plans financed exclusively from GEF funds.

#### 4.3.3 Cost-effectiveness of the project

139 An assessment of the financial progress reported in Table 3, compared to overall physical progress reported in subsection 4.3.1, shows it has cost USD 901,597 of GEF funds to achieve an estimated physical advance of 44% per cent to 30 November 2021. Overall, this indicates the TRI project's **cost-effectiveness has been satisfactory**. This is also demonstrated when comparing total expenditure of GEF funds with the total number of direct beneficiaries who have participated in the project to 30 November 2021. Reference to Table 5 below, confirms a total of 1,992 end beneficiaries have participated in the TRI project, signifying an average of USD 388 has been spent on each beneficiary. This is higher than the average of USD 200/beneficiary planned by the end of the project. Nevertheless, it is considered satisfactory when taking into account the TRI project has not yet started the FLR and economic activities with the 92 communities targeted.

140 A second important finding is that although the external challenges mentioned in subsection 4.3.1 have contributed to delays in operations, they do not appear to have caused any significant

increase in operational costs so far. This is partly explained by the fact the project has not started the majority of its main activities. Nonetheless, the MTR team identified the following issues are likely to have a negative impact on the project's cost-effectiveness once operations in the field have commenced:

- The project's implementation mechanism is not particularly suited to the needs and capacity of DFB. In particular, the decision to implement the project through direct execution (DEX) in STP that has no fully fledged FAO office means the project is fully dependent on external FAO offices, rules and procedures which, as previously stated, are very bureaucratic and have affected efficiency and performance. Moreover, taking into account STP is an isolated SIDS that lacks capacity and resources, the opportunities to bridge delays with government support are not available. Under these circumstances it is clear the Prodoc has overlooked the risks associated with operating DEX in STP, which explains why the Prodoc does not include a specific budget allocation and training, nor clarify the role of the GCP, to mitigate such risks;
- The small size of the PMU limits its ability to accompany DFB and its implementing partners in the field. This is particularly important taking into account the for the promotion of the income generating activities where the DFB has a limited mandate and the PMU has no specialist at hand. This issue was also identified in the MTR of the child project in Pakistan conducted earlier in 2021. Moreover, the PMU does not have a staff member based in Príncipe. This situation is likely to overburden the team leader of the PMU in 2022-2023.
- No formal synergies are in place with key actors engaged in small enterprise development and on CCA and CCM, (see also section 4.1.4). Consequently, cost-sharing agreements on activities of mutual interest are not being exploited. For example, joint training workshops on FLR principles and practices have not materialised with UNDP in the interests of promoting FLR as one of the most viable means to enhancing resilience to climate change and restoration of the carbon cycle in support of the NDCs. Similarly, a lack of synergy with MPFBE, the University of STP, or joint ventures with the private sector is likely to increase project costs linked to data collection, market studies, research, trainings and coordinated participation in trade fairs and promotions, among others.
- The absence of synergies with IFAD's new COMPRAN project, has excluded opportunities to explore the recovery of the co-finance that has been lost since PAPAC closed;
- The reduction in support from GCP since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 has restricted the opportunities for GCP to establish on-demand support that was initiated in 2019 (for example, provision of a consultant to support development of the NFLRP) has restricted opportunities to share the costs associated with training and technical support, among others, as well as increased dependency on webinars and online training courses prepared for the general use by all TRI projects (rather than tailored to specific needs and initiatives of each country);
- The AFAP has agreed co-finance will be made available to support the TRI project's activities in the Contador watershed. However, this support is behind schedule and likely

to become available no earlier than mid 2022 when the project is in its final stages of implementation.

## 4.4 Sustainability

### **MTR question 4 – *What is the likelihood that the project results can be sustained after the end of the project?***

**Finding 6:** The prospects of sustaining main outcomes linked to FLR are not assured because some external risk ratings have not been updated according to current circumstances and new risks associated with the pandemic and the energy crisis in STP have largely been overlooked. As a result, the TRI project does not have a set of appropriate mitigation measures in place to palliate/remove these risks in particular, risks ranked “substantial” by the MTR. These include socio-political risks, linked to, on the one hand, growing poverty in rural areas that forces people to clear forests to support unsustainable short-cycle crops for immediate food and income needs. On the other, the precarious nature of the coalition government in place since 2018, which is unlikely to be reelected in the next legislative elections in 2022 point to a growing risk of political instability. Moreover, it is unlikely the sustainability of the FLR process will be a political priority in these elections. In addition, substantial institutional and financial risks remain that threaten the sustainability of the NPFMCR and the upscaling of FLR in the NFLRP. Similarly, the absence of graduate and post-graduate forestry courses means there are question marks on how effective training, monitoring and research will be carried out to guide, review and learn about FLR processes and the development of NWFPs. In particular, there is currently no research foreseen to determine how far tree planting of selected native species is/is not as cost-effective as ANR (in terms of establishing the right conditions for different tree species to propagate, root and flourish in STP) to guide the future replication of FLR.

**Finding 7:** The prospects of sustaining the income generating activities and bankable projects are low, because DFB and the PMU have limited capacity to support the development of small enterprises. Moreover, the Prodoc places emphasis on partnering with the Central Bank to promote the Green Code of Conduct, but the application of the Code is voluntary and largely dependent on a government department that has the capacity and mandate to develop and apply business development strategies, that ensure the services and incentives that small businesses need are accessible before they are expected to stand on their own feet. In particular, there is no mention of the development of business incubation services to enhance access to technical administrative and marketing expertise, as well as support small rural enterprises enter into inclusive value chains.

### 4.4.1 *Socio-political, financial, institutional and governance, and environmental risks to sustainability*

141 The project’s overall risk classification in the Prodoc (Annex 4) and the latest PIR (June 2021) is “low” which means there has been no change in the project’s overall risk rating since the design

phase. An independent analysis of the risk assessments conducted in the Prodoc and the PIRs by the MTR team, identified new evidence to indicate this risk rating has been underestimated and that a “medium” risk is justified. At first sight, some of the risks reviewed in the Prodoc and PIRs follow the same categories required in the FAO-GEF Project Monitoring Tool (2020) for MTR exercises. However, following more in-depth analysis the MTR team found some discrepancies. The MTR team’s assessment of the risk categories established in the above-mentioned monitoring tool are summarised as follows:

- 142 **Socio-political risks: (i) social risks: substantial.** This ranking is higher than the low-moderate rating provided in the latest PIR for Risk No. 4 – *“Local communities are reluctant to engage in the FLR effort in their respective territory, and unable or unwilling to grant the long-term support and monitoring that is needed to ensure the long-term success of to the interventions”*. The TRI project has attempted to mitigate this risk by applying a participatory approach to key activities such as the mapping and design of FLR plans and ensuring the beneficiary communities actively participate in the implementation of these plans, as well as in the development of NTFPs and bankable projects designed to create new revenue streams and new jobs. However, the World Bank’s review of the current social context in STP, highlights two significant risks that have not been adequately addressed by the TRI project.<sup>26</sup> The first, concerns the growing number of people who live in absolute poverty (under USD 1.9 per day), or in poverty (under USD 3.2 per day). In both cases, the World Bank confirms this has grown to affect one third and two thirds of the country’s population respectively. Moreover, a large percentage of these people are found in Lemba and Caue Districts, which correspond to the project’s intervention sites for ST North and ST South. To mitigate this risk, the PMU emphasises the importance applying partnerships to facilitate awareness raising on the benefits of FLR.
- 143 However, this alone is not likely to guarantee the sustainability of the FLR process. For example, the MTR team’s field visit to Lemba District to observe the Contador watershed observed cases of illegal logging, charcoal production and over planting of breadfruit trees remain major challenges. Similarly, a visit to the coffee plantations of CECAFEB revealed farmers face the dilemma of wanting to adopt agro-forestry practices, but also need to clear land to grow short-cycle crops to meet immediate food and economic needs. Finally, a field visit in Príncipe identified crop theft as a significant barrier to developing bankable projects linked to food crops. In summary, these problems and dilemmas need more robust mitigation measures in place to ensure farmers can sustain their livelihoods in the gap years between planting and first harvest of agroforestry crops (approximately 4 to 5 years). This situation is not aided by the fact the PMU does not include an agronomist, nor a designated member of the Agriculture Department, to identify suitable strategies to deal with socio-cultural risks, or the fact as much as 40 per cent of the rural population do not have access to electric power

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<sup>26</sup> The World Bank in Sao Tome and Principe, Overview – Social Context (2021).

- 144 **(ii) Political risks: “substantial”**. This ranking is higher than the “moderate” risk ranking in the latest PIR for Risk No. 1 - *The political will to implement reforms and improve the legislative and policy framework for FLR is not forthcoming. Turnover and changes in decision makers and institutional arrangements beyond the control of the project lead to a volatile environment that hampers the long-term success of the work.* The MTR found that the proposed actions to mitigate this risk in the Prodoc/PIRs focus primarily on institutional issues at the ministerial level, rather than on mitigating the political or social risks that may affect the project’s long-term sustainability. For example, the latest PIR report describes how the PMU has forged a close relationship with the Minister of MAFRD risks, developed the NPFMCR and strengthened its partnership with the Regional Government of Príncipe. These actions appear to be more appropriate under the assessment of “institutional risks” reviewed under Risk 2 of the Prodoc/PIRs (and below).
- 145 Instead, the MTR team believes it is important to review socio-political risks associated with the current coalition government, which has been ruling STP since 2018, but which will have to contest new legislative, regional and municipal elections in 2022. Currently, the coalition government is led by the Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe–Social Democratic Party (MLSTP-PSD), under the leadership of Jorge Bom Jesus (Prime Minister), and a bloc consisting of the Democratic Convergence Party, the Union of Democrats for Citizenship and Development, and the Force for Democratic Change Movement (PCD-UDD-MDFM). However, the indications are the opposition party (ADI) will exploit the political differences of the political parties to regain a political majority in Congress. The MTR team believes it is unlikely the sustainability of the FLR process will be a political priority in the election campaign, especially as the TRI project does not include any specific training of political parties on the benefits of FLR and the generation of jobs through the development of NTFPs. As a result, the TRI project faces some political uncertainty that has not been addressed so far in order to identify a set of mitigation measures that ensure it retains political backing after the elections.
- 146 **Institutional risks: “substantial”**. This rating coincides with the risk ranking in the latest PIR for Risk No. 2 - *There is insufficient capacity within the institutions of the GoSTP to successfully engage in a complex, comprehensive FLR program touching on many different aspects at the national level.* At the ministerial level, the TRI project has established a close working relationship with the new Minister of MAFRD and new Director of DFB. Both are fully committed to achieving the TRI project’s expected outcomes and objectives and the DFB has increased capacity through the FLR planning exercises to be conducted at the four main intervention sites selected in STP. In addition, the capacity building programme has started, based on a capacity assessment of DFB presented in early 2021 (see also subsection 4.2.3). However, the lack of inter-institutional alliances to support and upscale the TRI project’s main activities, means key questions remain on the future application and sustainability of the NPFMCR, the NFLRP (in particular vis-à-vis the NLUP) and on ensuring high take up of the Green Code of Conduct in the banking sectors. Similarly, it the lack of engagement of the University of STP means it will remain challenging to educate and train the next generation of foresters in STP as well as stimulate learning on FLR and NWFPs to induce



informed dialogue on mainstreaming of FLR and NWFPs in relevant policies, strategies and plans to capture the investment needed from the private sector to upscale the FLR process in STP.

147 **Financial risks: moderate-substantial.** This rating is slightly higher than the “moderate” rating in that latest PIR for Risk No. 3 - *The private sector is reluctant to invest in FLR and agro-forestry due to lack of information, experience, and to the un-conductive framework for FLR finance.* On the one hand, the TRI project is contributing to improving the incentives for all sectors to invest in restoration activities through some innovative approaches that are of interest to other countries of the TRI community. The MTR team highlights the following:

- The formulation of the Green Code of Conduct for the banking sector under the leadership of the Central Bank will provide clearer guidance and incentives for the private sector to invest in the development of, for example, certified NWFPs and agro-tourism/eco-tourism;
- The bankable project agreed with Plan Vivo offers new opportunities to trade PVCs in the voluntary carbon market (subject to studies when restoration has been completed) and, thus, develop a long-term funding source that can support further investment in the development and consolidation of bottom-up approaches to building resilience and longer-term economic sustainability through FLR/NTFPs;
- The application of nature-based solutions in FLR is showing signs it is a highly efficient method to restore carbon-rich ecosystems in STP. This offers a new opportunity for government to officially adopt carbon accounting tools (such as FAO’s Ex-Act tool) to develop a carbon accounting system. The MTR team believes that over time such a system would enable government and the private sector to assess more clearly the climate impact and co-benefits of all major investments (measured in tCO<sub>2</sub>eq), thus strengthening the country’s decision-making capacity to promote place-based PES schemes that enhance sustainable development and resilience to climate change.

148 However, on the other hand, the country’s macro-economic stability has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and structural weaknesses in the economy, in particular concerning the energy sector. This has caused the contraction of important sectors of the economy, such as tourism and agricultural exports, causing a squeeze on already limited public finances. This situation is likely to continue into 2022. Given there is no specific national funding mechanism in place for FLR the MTR team, the MTR team believes the pressures on the government to divert resources to immediate needs will grow and cause friction within the coalition government as ministries compete for funding and seek quick-fix solutions to bolster the economy and retain public support. This is, therefore, likely to be detrimental to establishing and consolidating the above-mentioned financial opportunities as planned and justifies a higher financial risk rating level. Moreover, this calls for risk mitigation measures to be identified and applied from 2022.

149 **Currency exchange rate risks: “low”.** This risk has not been assessed in the Prodoc/PIRs. However, the MTR team found this risk is low because the national currency (Dobra) is pegged to the Euro. Some currency exchange fluctuation has been experienced between the US Dollar

and Euro since the project began operations in 2018, but the MTR team is not aware that this has caused any funding difficulties for the PMU.

- 150 **Fiduciary risks: “low”**. The MTR team found the GEF funds are managed in accordance with GEF/FAO accounting and auditing procedures and fiduciary risk assessments. The application of LoAs also include provisions allowing FAO staff to conduct audits, spot checks and field inspections at any time.
- 151 **Climate change-related risks: “moderate”**. This ranking is slightly higher than the latest PIR rating of “low-moderate” for Risk No. 5 - *Current and future climate change impacts threaten the sustainability of FLR investments*. The PMU has mainly focused on mitigating the effects of climate change by embedding climate change adaptation into its main activities, including the FLR plans produced and adopted by DFB in 2021. In addition, the GCP has promoted webinars to show how the restoration of forest ecosystems and their services strengthens resilience. However, taking into account the institutional risks mentioned above, the TRI project’s mitigation measures represent project-based actions to combat a phenomenon that does not know boundaries and which will, therefore, affect the whole population of STP. This situation provides further evidence on the need for the NPFMCR to have a national dimension that supports institutions such as the NCCC, to discuss how and where the FLR process should be consolidated, replicated and researched to combat climate change. For example, concerning research, there is a need to identify and rank the anthropic and abiotic risks that are most likely to threaten the sustainability of FLR. For example, there is very little applied research available on the resilience levels of the tree species selected for FLR to guide the FLR planning process. Similarly, there appears to be very little research on the movement and behaviour of pests and pollinators linked to the trees being produced in the project’s nurseries.
- 152 **Health-related risks: “substantial”**. This concurs with the risk rating in the latest PIR for Risk No. 7 - *The global COVID19 crisis and the specific limitations adopted by the GoSTP have a negative impact on the pace of work, especially for field work and for all those actions where participatory consultations are required*. The MTR team found the COVID-19 pandemic has played a substantial role in restricting the TRI project’s ability to implement its main activities, carry out international training courses and exchanges and mobilise technical assistance. For example, the TRI project has been unable to mobilise international consultants from Brazil and Spain to support the training on the mobile sawmills and application of the seedlings production plan, through which research on the propagation of native tree species is urgently required. Similarly, the international training and exchanges planned in Gabon, Cameroon and Guinea Bissau, among others have had to be postponed to 2022. Moreover, this situation is directly linked to Risk No. 6 in the Prodoc - *The project is unable to secure the external expertise and technical assistance required to ensure a proper and timely implementation of the work plan* – but which is rated as a “low” risk in the latest PIR. In the light of the above findings and the fact the OMICRON variant is highly contagious and likely to affect operations at least in the first quarter of 2022, it is justified to apply the “substantial” risk rating and expect main stakeholders to agree on appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the potential impact of the pandemic in 2022.

- 153 **Security risks: “low”.** This risk is not addressed in the Prodoc/PIRs. However, the MTR found no evidence to indicate there are any major security risks that are likely to affect the sustainability of the project’s main activities.
- 154 **Environmental risks: “moderate”.** This rating concurs with the Environmental and Social Risk Assessment in Annex 5 of the Prodoc. Overall, the project has a strong focus on supporting the restoration of strategically important forest ecosystems that are designed to support the development of sustainable and resilient buffer zones around the Obo Natural Parks in both Sao Tome and Principe islands. However, external risks that lead to environmental degradation of forests remain a moderate threat to the sustainability of the FLR process. For example, the expansion and use of chemical fertilisers to support oil palm production remains a threat in ST South, while clearance of coastal mangrove forests for housing, tourism and charcoal production remain a threat in three of the TRI project’s sites. More details can be found in sub section 4.61.
- 155 In summary, the above findings indicate the PMU does not have a robust risk management strategy in place to support two key activities. First, risk monitoring to facilitate learning on how far the TRI project is successfully mitigating high, substantial and moderate risks linked to the FLR and economic development activities. Second, annual work planning and reporting in which risks are addressed to optimise the project’s effectiveness and sustainability. This situation was also identified in the MTR of the child project in Pakistan, and provides further evidence that the risk assessment exercise in the PIRs is carried out more as an administrative reporting duty, than as an exercise to strengthen the sustainability of main outputs and outcomes. Moreover, neither of the TRI projects in Pakistan, or STP, have identified their exit strategy, addressing these issues.

#### 4.4.2 *Evidence of replication or catalysis of project results*

- 156 Due to the lack of project implementation in the field, the MTR team is unable to report on the evidence of replication of the FLR activities within the project intervention sites (in line with the FLR plans) or outside. Similarly, it is too early to determine whether the bankable projects and income generating activities concerning the production of snails and honey are creating jobs and catalysing the development of new small enterprises. However, the indications are that replication will depend heavily on whether the project is able to conduct applied research in areas such as comparing the success rates and costs of tree planting programmes in relation to ANR, or the types of services and support small enterprises need to generate the profits that will permit them to stand on their own feet. This is considered of particular importance in relation to new initiatives such the introduction of the mobile saw mills, or promotion of essential oils.
- 157 In terms of the activities where the MTR found potential for replication, the following appear to merit consideration and/or further assessment:
- The development of family tree nurseries where the farmer association/cooperative is committed to buying seedlings to consolidate agro-forestry practices (CECAB model);

- The development of joint ventures between farmer associations/cooperatives and the private sector on the production of fast-growing tree species for the construction and furniture sectors, but which also produce by-products such as fruits and resins to support food security/income generation;
- The development of certified sustainable timber for the furniture sector and export;
- The development of voluntary and a national carbon trading scheme;
- Research and development of medicinal plants and essential oils to reduce imports (if equipment needed can be procured without major barriers).

## 4.5 Factors affecting performance

### **MTR question 5 – *What are the main factors affecting the project from reaching its results?***

**Finding 8:** The absence in the project design of provisions to establish effective inter-institutional partnerships with key ministries linked to NRM/CCA/CCAM and the development of small enterprises, as well as education and research institutions to train foresters and assess FLR practices and technologies is affecting the TRI project's capacity to deliver results. Moreover, there is consensus among stakeholders that the project's targets are too ambitious and unrealistic for a government that has limited capacity and small budgets. This has absorbed too much of the project's resources and efforts on trying to meet these targets and outputs as far as possible through interventions in four large project sites, rather than concentrating resources on delivering a smaller set of targets that ensure key lessons and messages on FLR and NWFPs are captured and communicated to decision-makers and investors in the private sector. Under these circumstances, the project is not communicating its strategic relevance and optimising its transformational potential in terms of steering the country onto a more sustainable and resilient path.

**Finding 9:** The project's oversight by FAO has been hampered by a combination of: (i) the pandemic, preventing technical assistance, backstopping missions and global events and exchanges within TRI to take place between March 2020 and October 2021, and (ii) its inability to reduce the high level of FAO bureaucracy the PMU is subject to because STP does not have a fully-fledged FAO Office that can take decisions on administrative matters. Moreover, the perception among FAO stakeholders is that this bureaucracy cannot be addressed and reformed unless FAO Management intervenes. Although, this has been partially mitigated by the application of LoAs, the TRI project is likely to experience a continuation of high transaction costs and low funding levels reaching the ground that will affect its performance and, therefore, its ability to deliver change (impact).

**Finding 10:** The M&E plan established with the support of GCP in 20201 is an effective reporting tool on the project's outputs, outcomes and contributions to the nine core indicators managed by GCP, but an ineffective learning tool. This is likely to affect performance from 2022 when implementation of the FLR and economic activities start

implementation in 2022, because important findings, lessons, good practices and so forth will not be adequately tracked to: (i) facilitate informed decision-making on planning of activities, outputs and outcomes; (ii) feed into the communication strategy and information hub of the TRI project to advocate the case for change as foreseen in the ToC (Appendix 9).

#### 4.5.1 Project design and readiness

- 158 The MTR team found the TRI project has a satisfactory intervention logic, based on a project objective that remains fully aligned with the current policies and priorities of the new government, as well as the development and environmental objectives of TRI. The Results Matrix provides a clear and coherent vertical and horizontal causal logic in which outputs have been grouped to achieve an expected outcome. In most cases progress in achieving outputs/outcomes can be measured through the indicators, baselines and targets assigned. Interviews with main stakeholders, confirmed they found the majority of the outputs and indicators are clear, correctly grouped under plausible and realistic outcomes that have a strong focus on capacity development as defined in the needs assessment conducted during the design phase.
- 159 However, although stakeholders agree on the project's outputs and outcomes, two elements of the project design were found to be weak. First, the project's design emphasises the important role FLR can play in supporting adaptation to climate change and exploring access to climate finance and participation in carbon trading schemes. However, the institution responsible for CCA and CCM is the MPWINRE/DGE, only participates in the TRI project through the inclusion of the Director General of DGE in the PSC (Prodoc, p. 80 para. 204). As a result, there is a lack of proactive engagement of the DGE in the TRI project to ensure a robust system of cooperation and collaboration is guaranteed at the inter-institutional level. As such, the **TRI project is not effectively communicating to DGE (and the focal point of GEF in particular) that it represents not only a viable national approach to advancing sustainable rural development and adaptation to climate change, but one that also has the potential to deliver a range of co-benefits that include the conservation of biodiversity and habitats, clean water and air, reduction of soil erosion and carbon sequestration/trading, among others.** Currently, interviews confirm the general perception of the government in general, and DGE in particular, is that the TRI project is, "just another pilot project" that is aid dependent and has a very short life-span of only five years before it closes. As a result, although there are indications FLR is being considered as one of the options to provide a response to climate change in the context of the country's NDCs, it is still far from being adopted as a strategic response to the IPCC's recommendations to policymakers of SIDS in 2019, that one of their main priorities should be to engage heavily in terrestrial and coastal restoration.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> IPCC, Special Report on the Ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate (2019), Section C: Implementing Responses to Ocean and Cryosphere Change (p. 30-31).

160 The second element, concerns a strong belief among main stakeholders that the targets assigned in the TRI project's outputs have not adequately taken into account during the needs assessments in the design phase, the low absorption capacity of the government and the limited number of potential partners available on the ground, which is a common feature of SIDS such as STP that are isolated and highly dependent on external aid. For example, stakeholders stated that because FLR is a new concept in STP, the targets did not take into account the large number of preliminary and preparatory activities that have to be realised, reviewed and approved, before starting implementation in the field. Moreover, this had to take place just as the PAPAC/IFAD project ended and the COVID-19 pandemic started in the first quarter of 2020. Consequently, although the TRI project has made good progress in completing these preliminary and preparatory exercises (in particular the FLR plans), the TRI project does not have the capacity, time or resources to achieve the targets established in the Prodoc by November 2023.

161 The MTR team found the following two main targets to be particularly over-ambitious and in need of review to reflect the current capacity and needs of DFB and its partners:

- *35,500 ha of forest landscapes under restoration and sustainable management.* This represents over 35 per cent of the total forested area in STP (100,000 ha) according to the NFLRP approved by the NPFMCR in 2021. Such a high percentage for one project is considered very ambitious for what the government considers is a "pilot" project. Moreover, 28,000 ha of the country's forested area is primary forest that is largely protected in the two Obo Natural Parks of STP, which means the TRI project was projected to restore around 48 per cent of the country's forest landscapes. The MTR team's calculations (see Tables 1 and 2) indicate that the TRI project has the capacity to restore approximately 30,091 ha (82% of the original target). However, according to the latest data collected on the first round of tree planting operations that have taken place in January 2022, the indications are the planting density required is far higher than planned. If this scenario is reconfirmed in the coming months, the indications are the unit cost to restore one hectare of degraded land will also be higher. If this is the case, it is highly unlikely the TRI project will have the resources to restore the FLR target of 30,091 ha, signifying the need to revise downwards its FLR targets to realistic levels;
- *17,000 members of rural communities disaggregated by gender directly benefitting of FLR interventions.* This target includes approximately 15,000 members of rural communities involved in the PAPAC project funded by IFAD. However, as previously reported, the PAPAC project ended in early 2020 meaning in-kind co-finance is no longer available to support these members participate in the TRI project. As a result, it is not possible to support such a large number of beneficiaries in the FLR. For example, the MTR team's analysis of the FLR activities indicates that the TRI project has the capacity to support approximately 5,066 members establish 1,765 ha of shadow forests (see Table 2). This is equivalent to 32 per cent of the 15,600 beneficiaries targeted in the Prodoc and 25 per cent of the 7,150 ha of shadow forests originally planned (Output 2.2.1).

162 In addition, some specific targets in the Results' Matrix do not align with current needs and priorities, especially under Component 2, and are in need of review by the PSC. For example, Output 2.2.2 - *Sustainably harvested and processed wood and timber supplied to 1,300 inhabitants of pilot communities* – is no longer valid, because FAO has authorised the procurement of two of the three mobile sawmills planned in the Prodoc. In addition, the delivery of this equipment has been delayed to February 2022, which according to the MTR team's estimate, indicates approximately 650 beneficiaries (50%) in total can be targeted for training on their operation and maintenance in the time available. Similarly, the number of beneficiaries under Output 2.2.3 - *650 beneficiaries from 4 rural communities engaged in new NWFP economic activities. Increase of USD 1,000 in annual income per community from PY 4* – is clearly not achievable, because these activities will start implementation in 2022 and will train a smaller number of direct beneficiaries. For example, the snail production project in Príncipe will train around 20 people to directly develop this enterprise.

#### 4.5.2 *Quality of project execution and management arrangements (including assessment of risks)*

163 Overall, the MTR team found the project's execution under the leadership of MAFRD was affected by the previous administration's general lack of urgency to move the project forward as planned. For example, efforts to increase DFB's capacity by hiring extra staff did not materialise and appear to have been frustrated by a combination of internal management differences and the lack of flexibility and autonomy within DFB. This appears to have been one of the main reasons for the replacement of the DFB Director in September 2021. Indeed, interviews confirm the new administration in DFB is not only openly committed to supporting the project's execution, but that the new Director has the capacity to deliver it.

164 Notwithstanding, these positive developments, the abovementioned weakness in the design of the project's execution, is likely to restrict the project's execution to one that is too sector-focused. This situation is not aided by the implementation of the project through DEX. Although, the establishment of the PMU within the DFB has facilitated the project's implementation and contributed to its "institutionalisation" within MAFRD/DFB, the project's execution faces two important barriers. First, the TRI project lacks the abovementioned multi-sector dimension it needs to propel it, and the NPFMCR, to the national level where it can be adopted as part of the wider long-term strategy to combat climate change. Similarly, to achieve sustainable rural development, the project's execution should be allied with MPFBE to develop the business and marketing needs of the end beneficiaries, given DFB does not have the mandate, or capacity to oversee such disciplines. Second, DEX means the PMU is obliged to operate in FAO's bureaucratic quagmire, which remains a major factor behind the project's inefficiency reported under section 4.3. concerning the authorisation of payments, contracts and procurement of equipment, among others.

165 With reference to the quality of the project's implementation through the PMU, the MTR team found the team leader and M&E expert are performing their duties to a satisfactory level. For



example, this has been demonstrated by the successful completion of a series of complex and demanding preliminary exercises in partnership with DFB, in particular concerning the elaboration of the NFLRP, the FLR plans for each of the four intervention sites, signing of LoAs to support the implementation of these plans and identification of the income generating activities (including bankable projects). In addition, the MTR team found the PMU is not responsible for the delays in implementation of project's outputs reported in section 4.3, although it is evident the PMU is not applying and monitoring an effective risk management strategy designed to pre-empt delays and apply measures avoid, or by-pass them.

166 Instead, the main factors affecting the quality of project implementation concern a combination of DFB's limited internal capacity and resources, the absence of a FAO Office in STP that can take decisions on administrative, recruitment and procurement matters and the assignment of just two long-term consultants (who have forestry backgrounds) and an administrative assistant who make up the PMU and who are all based in Sao Tome. As such, the PMU does not have a long-term consultant to oversee the activities linked to the development of NWFPs and relies heavily on DFB staff in Principe to organise and oversee the day-to-day implementation of the project in Principe. These factors have contributed to a high number of transactions, which have overburdened the team leader with administrative duties, thus reducing his ability to go to the field (especially to Principe). In addition, by not having an expert in small enterprise development and marketing, the PMU has become too dependent on its contracted parties, such as Oikos, to oversee the business development aspects of the TRI project.

#### 4.5.3 *Project oversight by FAO as the GEF Agency and national partners*

167 Project oversight provided by the BH, LTO, CTA, FLO, GCU and other FAO staff was found to be moderately satisfactory. The COVID-19 pandemic has restricted the ability of all FAO staff to conduct backstopping missions, hold global/regional events, workshops and exchanges and liaise effectively with key stakeholders in-person. To mitigate this the CTA and LTO have held weekly online meetings with DFB and the PMU, as well as relayed webinars and initiatives launched through the GCP (such as the Restoration Factory). This has increased contact between these officials and enabled the TRI project to continue operations during the pandemic (outside of the lockdowns imposed in STP in 2020 and 2021). However, the opportunities for the CTA and LTO to galvanise support within DFB, or with the co-financing partners have been limited by the absence of in-person meetings, especially with the former Director of DFB, who several interviewees confirmed was less committed to the TRI project than the current Director. Furthermore, the LTO has been on maternal leave since the new Director of DFB took office in September 2021, meaning an interim LTO who does not speak, or write Portuguese is temporarily filling this position.

168 In terms of the quality of the technical support provided by the CTA, the MTR team found the consultant in question is providing a satisfactory level of technical advice thanks to his in-depth working experience in the agriculture and forestry sectors in STP and good command of the Portuguese language. This has contributed to a satisfactory level of supervision and guidance on,

for example, the development of the FLR plans. However, due to the inability to travel to STP throughout 2020 and 2021, until November 2021, the CTA has not been able to provide support in two key areas. First, in identifying an alternative solution to the suspension of co-finance from the PAPAC project before its closure in 2020. Second, on improving communications with the GCP in areas of mutual interest, especially to support the development of the project's communication strategy and development of knowledge products, especially in areas considered to be highly innovative in STP. These include interchanges on the Code of Conduct, the propagation of native tree species, promotion of non-conventional NWFPs that support import substitution, and on the application of open-source software such as QGIS/CEOF to support the sustainability of the NFLMS, among others.

#### 4.5.4 *Financial management and co-financing*

- 169 The MTR team found no evidence of poor financial management, nor major funding shortfalls in relation to the project's budget. However, as stated in subsection 4.5.2, FAO procedures dictate that the financial management of GEF funds implemented through DEX in STP is the responsibility of FAO-SCF. This has subjected the TRI project to a lot of time-consuming transactions, which are costly and cause delays in consolidating accounts, processing payments and authorising purchases. For example, the acquisition of solar panels to reduce the impact of frequent power cuts in MAFRD and the purchase of the two mobile saw mills mentioned in subsection 4.2.2 have experienced delays of over 10 and 7 months respectively to 30/11/2022.
- 170 The level of co-finance provided by IFAD/PAPAC and World Bank/AFAP is low and has been a contributory factor in affecting project performance, especially as the PAPAC project ended in early 2020 before the TRI project was ready to implement its FLR activities. To help mitigate this the TRI project has signed LoAs with some of the cooperatives supported by the PAPAC project, who are able to provide support in-kind to support the FLR process, although the latest PIR does not specify how this is calculated since the PAPAC project's closure. Moreover, it was made clear in an interview with IFAD that no co-finance from the COMPRAM project is eligible for bridging any gaps in co-finance relating to IFAD's contribution to the TRI project. Analysis of Table 4 above and reference to Appendix 7, show that total co-finance to 30 June 2021 stood at only 27 per cent of cash and in-kind payments planned in the Prodoc. This percentage does not appear to have increased to date, and the loss of co-finance from the PAPAC project has contributed to reducing capacity to meet targets, as explained in subsection 4.5.1. Moreover, the PSC has not explored the potential of capturing alternative in-kind co-finance from other internationally-funded projects.

#### 4.5.5 *Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement*

- 171 The MTR team found no concrete evidence that the operational partnerships established have, or are likely to affect the project's performance. To the contrary, the application of LoAs with DFB, the Regional Autonomous Government of Príncipe and farmer associations/cooperatives

have already demonstrated they are an effective and efficient means to engaging local farming communities, districts, the private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders in the FLR process and in the development of NWFPs.

- 172 The main caveats concern the lack of solid partnerships, on the one hand with other TRI projects and, on the other, with other ministries and international development agencies engaged in donor-funded interventions where there are risks of overlaps and duplication. This situation has not been aided by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has prevented visits and cooperation between TRI's child projects, although the PMU is in contact with the child project in Guinea Bissau to exchange information on mangrove restoration. In addition, the PSC does not have a coordination mechanism in place to allow it to explore, for example, co-finance opportunities and cooperation with other relevant donor-funded projects. The MTR understands efforts have been made to coordinate with UNDP, but which has not resulted in any agreement, or formal memorandum of understanding to date. For example, the MTR team identified two projects managed by MPWINRE/DGE and implemented by UNDP that should be applying joint/delegated activities to save resources and time. The first is the GEF-funded initiative, *"Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Land and Natural Resource Management"* (2018-2023), and the second, the project *"Delivering the Climate Promise in Sao Tome and Principe"*, which is currently in its inception phase and projected to cover several sectors, including the forestry sector, and the West African Coastal Areas Management Program (WACA), which includes USD 6.0 m. for STP. The MTR team did not have time to interview representatives from UNDP in STP, but the indications are FAO-STP, FAO-SCF and FAO-R/GCU are not working together to establish effective coordination and collaboration with UNDP on the implementation of GEF-funded projects in STP.

#### 4.5.6 *Communication, visibility, knowledge management and knowledge products*

- 173 One of the strengths in the TRI project has been the establishment of a communication strategy to support knowledge and information exchange both within STP and with the wider TRI community (Outputs 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). The communication strategy includes the establishment of an information hub whose principal function is to facilitate the centralisation of data, lessons learned and good practices linked to FLR that can be used by social networks to consolidate and expand FLR activities, income generating opportunities concerning NWFPs, and generally promoting TRI's "brand name". In addition, the information hub is designed to improve communication between the PMU and its partners, although because very few activities have yet



to start in the field the information hub is not yet in full operation. In addition, to the information hub and social networking, other communication channels are already in operation. These include, communicating the TRI "brand" through presentations, e-mails, photographs, videos, music, radio and television spots, leaflets, merchandising and holding of meetings, events and workshops.

174 Overall, the MTR found the communications strategy has a strong emphasis on informing and facilitating social networks to know more about TRI and promote its expansion. Indeed, this represents an ideal medium through which to promote GCP's Restoration Factory programme designed to support people who wish to promote their own restoration projects, or become a mentor for others to develop such projects. However, to have a major impact on project performance, the MTR identified some shortcomings that need to be addressed. As mentioned under subsection 4.2.4, one of the most significant, is the very small budget assigned to the NGO Alisei (see also). Another, is the strategy focuses mainly on one audience; the public and social networks and coordination with the PIP to enhance the case for FLR at the national level has not been established to date. Consequently, **there is no specific advocacy campaign in place to promote the TRI "brand" as a cost-effective approach to advancing sustainable rural development, enhancing resilience and generating significant co-benefits that are crucial if the country is to respond to the climate and ecological emergency unfolding nationally and globally.** Other caveats include, among others:

- The need to appoint a person to manage the design, implementation and monitoring of the communication plan for the TRI project as well as its subsequent evaluation to determine how it should continue post TRI;
- The lack of qualitative monitoring carried out by the TRI project to develop learning through the information hub, stimulate dialogue on risk management and guide the PSC and PMU on annual work planning and reporting;
- The future funding of the communications strategy is unclear.

175 Concerning the project's knowledge products, only a few have been produced to date, because most of the activities have not started in the field. These include a technical manual on the production of red snails (produced with the support of the NGO Oikos) and the TRI project's communication strategy (produced by Alisei NGO). In addition, the PMU has provided inputs to GCP-led publication of TRI's Annual Reports. For example, in the Annual Report for 2020 the TRI project has provided the following inputs:

- Progress in achieving core targets linked to: (i) land under restoration (34%), (ii) land area under improved practices (42%) and (iii) number of direct beneficiaries (8%);
- Reviewing the impact of the pandemic on implementation;
- Preparing the article entitled, *"Bridging the gaps between the banking sector and restoration investment opportunities in Sao Tome and Principe"* which describes progress on the development of the Code of Conduct (see also subsection 4.4.2) to stimulate "green finance" for micro and small businesses producing NWFPs.

176 Finally, at this stage it is not possible for the project to communicate progress on carbon sequestration in relation to the target in the Prodoc of 12,856,752 tCO<sub>2</sub>eq over a period of 20 years from 2023. However, it is evident that the project design made no provisions to clarify how future monitoring of this data should be developed with the support of a permanent research institution, such as the University of STP, nor how it should be used to raise awareness on the co-benefits derived from the FLR process that will directly benefit local communities and the

country's main towns (such as on water quality/provision, the role of trees in maintaining the carbon and water cycles, or on communicating the fact that two mature trees produce the oxygen requirement of one adult for a whole year).

#### 4.5.7 *Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), including M&E design, implementation and budget*

- 177 The PMU has established a very detailed M&E plan, which has been developed following a series of webinars provided by GCP in 2021. The M&E plan has been designed to track progress of the Results Matrix and the nine core indicators required by GCP for GEF reporting purposes. This has been done by assigning an indicator number to each outcome and its corresponding outputs on the vertical axis and a description of how the indicators are to be monitored on the horizontal axis. The latter include columns on methods of collection, means of verification, frequency of monitoring and by whom, baseline situation, mid-term milestone and end targets. A final column is dedicated to updating progress on reaching milestones and end targets.
- 178 The M&E plan's approach was found to be highly satisfactory in supporting the PMU fulfil its reporting duties to its two main clients. First, to GEF/FAO, in particular the BH, FAO-GCU, LTO, CTA and FLO, among others. Second to TRI's GCP to support its reporting duties to the GEF Secretariat and in the development of TRI's knowledge products, such as TRI's Annual Reports analysed in subsection 4.5.6 above. Furthermore, because the M&E Plan is operated in MS Excel all the M&E tasks can be updated on one file and shared easily over the internet.
- 179 However, the MTR team identified some shortcomings with the M&E support provided by GCP. The most significant is that it applies a highly fragmented and compartmentalised approach to collecting data at the output level and tracks outcomes as if they are independent of each other. Although this has resulted in the implementing partners fulfilling specific monitoring duties (in the LoAs), it has resulted in the following developments:
- Data is being collected at the output level and analysed in relation to the targets set in the Prodoc. There is no data tallying facility to show overall progress in meeting the project's objectives, such as the total number of hectares restored, number of direct end beneficiaries, and so forth.
  - The data being collected and analysed does not include analysis of the project's contribution to the country's own targets and pledges linked to FLR, sustainable development, CCA/CCM/DRR, etc. This was also found to be the case in the MTR of the child project in Pakistan, and demonstrates TRI is not adequately linking and communicating its achievements in relation to national and international pledges, goals and targets. This is despite the fact TRI was originally intended to support the Bonn Challenge, selected targets of relevant SDGs (see subsection 4.1.3), the Paris Agreement/NDCs and the Aichi Targets and are addressed in the Prodocs. For example, the TRI project has supported the development of the NFLRP in which the target is to support the restoration of between 35 and 48 per cent of STP's forest landscapes (see also subsection 4.5.1 above) yet there is no reporting on this

- The data collection focuses mainly on informing about operational progress and its relationship to expenditure, rather than to develop learning on FLR and NWFPs. For example, as mentioned in subsection 4.5.6, there are no qualitative indicators in the M&E Plan. This means there is almost no analysis taking place on how far change is being delivered in key areas of human development and which is crucial to the sustainability of FLR and NWFP developments;
- The lack of monitoring of socio-cultural change through, for example, KAP surveys has largely removed the opportunity to develop qualitative analysis needed to review progress at the outcome level. Indeed, this aspect appears to be largely consigned to external evaluation, rather than internal evaluation designed to stimulate dialogue and informed decision-making on project planning and implementation.
- The absence of qualitative monitoring has also reduced analysis and dialogue on TRI's theory of change and, more specifically on the ToC for the project (see Appendix 9). Thus, the indications are the PSC meetings, training workshops and the info-hub, among others, have been largely restricted to *ad hoc* observations and findings from the field;
- The M&E system is not developing institutional memory on project monitoring, because it is managed by a consultant in the PMU, rather than by a DFB official who can also support the development of the NFLMS.

180 Meanwhile, GCP is overseeing the collection of data from the national child projects in relation to the following nine core indicators, which were selected by the TRI members in 2019:

- 1) New or improved policy framework
- 2) Number of hectares under restoration / Area of land restored
- 3) Number of hectares under improved practices
- 4) Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated;
- 5) Number of direct beneficiaries (sex disaggregated)
- 6) Number of cross-sectoral government-led coordination mechanisms
- 7) Value of resources flowing into restoration in TRI
- 8) Number of bankable projects developed
- 9) Number of knowledge products developed and disseminated.

181 The MTR team maintains similar findings to those present in the MTR report on the child project in Pakistan (September 2021). However, because the M&E plan in STP does now explicitly specify which project indicators are linked to the TRI's nine core indicators, the PMU confirmed it will be in a position to report on the majority of these indicators once the FLR activities have started in 2022. However, collection of data for Core Indicator 4, presupposes capacity on MRV, which is not currently available in DFB and although training and guidance on applying KOBO toolbox software to collect and store data has taken place, the DFB does not have access to this software.

182 In addition to the M&E requirements at project and GCP level, the TRI project is required to fill in the Tracking Tool for GEF6-funded projects and programmes. The objective of the TT is to measure progress in achieving the targets and outcomes established by GEF at the portfolio level.

These relate to monitoring the main focal areas under its mandate: namely biodiversity (managing the human-biodiversity interface), climate change mitigation (lifetime direct GHG emissions avoided), land degradation (includes data collection on agro-ecological and sociological contexts, on global environmental and development benefits and on outcomes concerning ecosystem services in forest landscapes and sustainable land management in wider landscapes) and on land area under sustainable forest management. The TRI project is submitting annual updates using this tool, but not linked to the core indicators applied by the GCP, which suggests the TRI project may be double reporting on some of the tracking criteria.

## 4.6 Cross-cutting priorities

### **MTR question 6 - To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?**

**Finding 11:** The Prodoc has applied the environmental and social standards' checklist and is included in the PIRs. However, one of the main findings is that some classifications are likely to need review and updating in 2022, because the options for FLR include, for example new forests in savanna and mangrove areas (Safeguard 3.4). As second important finding is the TRI project has not conducted environmental health analysis (EHA) in any of its four intervention sites. As a result, there is no environmental health index that would support monitoring and research on the quality of the restoration process, which would also justify the need for mainstreaming Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR), which has been promoted by the Global Child Project of TRI and which would support reporting on the Red Lists for endangered species and ecosystems managed by TRI's leading partner, IUCN.

### **MTR question 7: To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?**

**Finding 12:** The Prodoc provides a dedicated section on enhancing gender equality, in which it emphasises minimum participation rates for women (33%) and that women should participate in community forestry and decision making. In practice women's participation rates have been satisfactory, with participation rates under components 2-4 all well over the minimum level (48.6%). However, the project does not have a gender strategy focusing not only on women, but also youths and other vulnerable groups and there are no monitoring indicators tracking women's empowerment, such as in decision-making roles.

### 4.6.1 Environmental and social standards

183 The Prodoc classifies the overall EES assessment of the project as "low risk". As a result, an environmental and social plan (ESM) was not required. The PIRs maintain this classification. The MTR team's independent assessment also agrees with this risk rating. However, it flags the following two observations will require the next PIR to be review two safeguards in particular. First, **Safeguard 3 - Plant genetic resources** where currently the response to question 3.4. *Would this project establish, or manage planted forests?* is "no". This will require a review in PIR-



4, because new forests are planned in savanna and coastal areas. Second, **Safeguard 4 - Animal (livestock and aquatic)**, where the response to question 4.1. - *Would this project introduce non-native or non-locally adapted species, breeds, genotypes or other genetic material to an area or production system?* is, “no”, but which will also require a review, because a bankable project includes silvopasture and introduction of cattle stock.

184 The M&E Plan does not include indicators to track any of the safeguards listed in the ESS. For example, there is no qualitative monitoring of ESS-2 (biodiversity, ecosystems and natural habitats), such as the environmental health index to determine the quality of the restoration of forest ecosystems such as in the Contador watershed. Consequently, learning at both the national and TRI levels on, for example, how far TRI is contributing to removing flora or fauna from the IUCN’s Red List of Endangered Species, or Red List of Ecosystems.

#### 4.6.2 Gender and social inclusion focus

185 The MTR team’s assessment of the Prodoc confirms the realisation of a social and gender analysis took place during the design phase and recognises the importance of integrating social sustainability and gender equality in main actions. Also, apart from setting a minimum participation rate of women beneficiaries (30%), participation in decision-making is promoted.

186 Reference to Table 5 below confirms the overall participation rate is satisfactory, surpassing the minimum rate by over 13 per cent. The breakdown of the participation rate by component also confirms satisfactory rates of women’s participation, except in component 1, where it is below the minimum target rate. This is reported to be because the majority of government staff participants are predominately males.

**Table 5. Summary of women’s participation in the TRI project to 30 November 2021**

Component	Number of participants	Male	Female	% of female participation
Component 1	221	163	58	26.2%
Component 2	1,392	744	648	46.5%
Component 3	164	79	85	51.8%
Component 4	145	76	69	47.6%
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>1,992</b>	<b>1,062</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>43.2%</b>

Source: PMU

- 187 On gender equality, the TRI project provides evidence it has integrated this objective into its main activities realised so far in preparation for the FLR and economic activities planned for implementation in 2022. For example, Table 6 confirms the participation rates of women in all four surveys conducted to support the formulation of the FLR plans under component 2, was almost 50 per cent. However, it is not possible to triangulate how far this will translate into women's participation in decision-making. According to the interviews conducted with beneficiaries linked to the income generating activities and bankable projects, the indications are women are well represented, but not at the managerial level, where males appear predominant.
- 188 Another finding is that the project does not have a gender strategy in place that goes beyond women's participation, to cover the participation and empowerment of other vulnerable groups, in particular youths aged 15-25. The MTR team believes measures to engage this age group is crucial, because they are one of the age groups that have most difficulty in accessing basic services, research and credit in rural areas. This is a major reason why many youths choose to migrate to the capital, Sao Tome, or abroad to Portugal and Angola in particular.

**Table 6. Women's participation in activities by component to 30 November 2021**

Component/Activity	Action	Total	Men	Women
C1 - Platform NPFMCR (incl. 4 WGs)	1 x Workshop	33	27	6
C1 - Introduction/launch of TRI	2 x workshops	94	68	26
C1 - Six-monthly PSC meeting	5 x meetings	50	35	15
C1 - Training of NPFMCR members	1 x Training	44	33	11
<b>Sub-total component 1</b>		<b>221</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>58</b>
C2 -Forest baselines and policy review	1 x workshop	35	27	8
C2 - Capacity needs assessment for FLR	1 x workshop	36	26	10
C2 - FLR training of DFB in STP	2 x Trainings	37	28	9
C2 - Community surveys/data man.	2 x Trainings	38	29	9
C2 Participation in Survey in ST South	Survey/Sensitising	129	64	65
C2 - Participation in Survey in ST North	Survey/Sensitising	469	249	220
C2 - Participation in Survey in ST Centre	Survey/Sensitising	396	201	195
C2 - Participation in Survey in Principe	Survey/Sensitising	225	99	126
C2- Forest inspection and deontology	1 x Training	27	21	6
<b>Sub-total component 2</b>		<b>1,392</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>648</b>
C3 - Training on Rural Invest for SMEs	1 x Training	7	6	1
C3 - Training on income gen. (snails) P	2 x Trainings	141	62	79
C3 - Training on income gen. (honey) ST	2 x Trainings	16	11	5
<b>Sub total component 3</b>		<b>164</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>85</b>
C4 - DFB Communication strategy	1 x Training	11	7	4
C4 - FLR/R. invest/bankable Ps GCP/FAO	2 x Webinars	5	5	0
C4 - Awareness raising communications	Mass media	129	64	65
<b>Sub-total component 4</b>		<b>145</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,992</b>	<b>1,062</b>	<b>860</b>

## 4.7 Linkages with the global child project and Covid-19 impacts

### **MTR question 8 – *What did the global child project bring to the national child project, including any synergies and what did the child project bring to the GCP?***

**Finding 13:** The GCP facilitated the realization of some important TRI events in 2019 to support the launch of the initiative and introduce all TRI projects to new methods and tools to apply FLR more efficiently. In STP, this has been instrumental in DFB's decision to use of open-source software (CEOF/QGIS) to conduct the GIS mapping required to prepare the NFLRP. These events have also facilitated networking, in particular with the TRI project in Guinea Bissau on mangrove restoration. More recently, in 2021 GCP has provided remote support in developing the TRI project's M&E plan. However, the support of the GCP since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 has generally been reported as being less evident and effective, as it has had to switch to communications via the internet, which in STP has been very challenging due to regular power cuts and poor internet connections. In addition, the GCP requires all TRI projects to only tracking quantitative core indicators to inform the GEF Secretariat on TRI progress, but which does not include qualitative indicators to support learning. Similarly, the GCP's help desk, which was responding to requests for support by the TRI project in 2019, was found to be providing fewer inputs and contributions to the TRI project since the pandemic, partly because it had to switch to remote methods and the fact most of the FLR activities have not started in the field.

**Finding 14:** The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been significant on the project and its contribution to delaying operations is estimated to be as much as 12 months. In particular the lockdowns and restrictions on group meetings and international travel have delayed, or prevented international travel and exchanges from taking place, which has affected operations in the field, especially in Príncipe, where the PMU does not have a consultant on the ground to ensure coordination and regular follow-up on project activities. Moreover, the full impact of the pandemic on poverty, inflation, investment, etc. will start to take effect in 2022, just as new legislative elections are about to take place and which are likely to precipitate political unrest. However, the application of FAO's Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) for prevention and control of COVID-19 have made a positive contribution to enabling the PMU staff to work with DFB staff in the Sao Tome office and enable the PSC meetings to continue operating.

### 4.7.1 *What did the global child project bring to the national child project including any synergies between child projects and what did the national child project bring to the global child project?*

189 The general perception among stakeholders is that the GCP has provided some valuable in-person guidance to the TRI project during 2019. For example, attendance of the PMU team leader in the five-day inception workshop held in Kenya in February 2019, facilitated interaction between stakeholders of the TRI community, exchange information on each other's projects to identify potential for information exchange and training, and reach consensus on the selection of the

nine core indicators to be managed by the GCP. For example, this event helped set the foundations for developing the current online network established between the PMU and the TRI project in Guinea Bissau concerning mangrove restoration, and also facilitated the identification of field visits to the child project in Cameroon, and the international training course at AGEOS in Gabon.

- 190 The PMU team leader's participation in the second international event hosted by GCP in FAO-R in October 2019, was also instrumental in the PMU and CTA gaining access to an introduction to the CEOF software, which contributed to the decision in DFB to use QGIS and CEOF open-source software to conduct the GIS mapping for the NFLRP, which will enable DFB to avoid costly software licence lock-ins. In addition, all participants received an introduction to the Ex-Act tool to calculate carbon sequestration/emissions, as well as presentations on the Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) which is to be tested by IUCN with the support of the University of Newcastle (but which does not foresee networking with local universities, such as the University of STP).
- 191 However, since the onset of the pandemic in the first quarter of 2020, the GCP has been restricted to providing online support only. This has limited the ability to follow-up activities linked to the introductory training courses provided in Rome, and/or planned from 2020 onwards. However, the M&E consultant in the PMU has participated in the GCP's online training on M&E planning conducted in 2021, leading to the development of the ME plan described in subsection 4.5.7. In addition, as mentioned in subsection 4.5.6, the GCP has coordinated with all child projects on the elaboration of the Annual Reports 2019 and 2020 for TRI and on the launch of The Restoration Factory in May 2021.
- 192 Overall, the MTR team found the added value of the GCP is moderately satisfactory. Despite providing some useful inputs in 2019, its main weakness is that it is tracking nine core indicators to inform the GEF Secretariat on meeting TRI's targets. There is no direct linkage to TRI's contribution to fulfilling national and international pledges, targets and goals, in particular linked to the Bonn Challenge, the Paris Agreement/NDCs, the Aichi Targets/NBSAPs and SDGs (especially 13 and 15), among others. In addition, and building on the findings in the MTR for the TRI project in Pakistan, the MTR team reiterates the lack of qualitative indicators, is restricting the capacity of the TRI projects to assess and learn about how far FLR is contributing to transformational changes in areas such as knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP), which would facilitate reporting on poverty reduction, resilience and sustainable development. Similarly, the absence of monitoring on the environmental health index of the FLR process restricts learning on how far the co-benefits of FLR are contributing to halting/reversing biodiversity loss and improving ecological services such as improving water and carbon cycles. Finally, there is no monitoring of law enforcement indicators to determine, for example, how far the FLR management plans are being enforced to protect and conserve restored forest landscapes.

193 Meanwhile, the help-desk facility within GCP has not picked up on these gaps so far. Instead, it has mainly concentrated on providing on-demand support to the TRI projects to apply the FLR tools promoted in FAO-R in October 2019, on the integration of the core indicators into the M&E Plan and guiding the launch of initiatives such as The Restoration Factory, in order to initiate mentoring of entrepreneurs develop bankable projects through restoration principles. However, the MTR team identified the following areas where on-demand support is not being provided but which are considered by stakeholders to be of particular interest to sustain the FLR process:

- The production of certified products (coffee, cocoa, spices, snails, honey medicinal plants, essential oils, etc.);
- The development of effective marketing strategies, (marketing studies, commercial strategies to shorten value chains, diversification/by-product development,);
- The development of MRV capacity develop carbon inventories and explore carbon trading schemes (developing the NFLMS to capture co-finance from REDD+, developing partnerships with the local communities to conduct inspections and ground truthing, application of the EX-ACT tool, accessing climate funds, etc.);
- Waste management (production of composts, environmentally-friendly packaging, reduction-reuse-recycling strategies that include waste wood, etc.);
- The application of socio-cultural and environmental surveys (KAP surveys based on common criteria within the TRI community, application of environmental health index studies, etc.);
- The development of the communications to develop advocacy for change (methods to target different audiences, development of a mobile app for TRI to promote networking on FLR, etc.).

194 Meanwhile, the contribution of the TRI project to GCP has been limited to date. This has mainly due to the delays in implementation. Nonetheless, the TRI project has provided articles that have been included in the Annual Reviews for 2019 and 2020. In the case of the latter, the article has provided readers with an important insight into one of the TRI project's most innovative features; namely, "*Bridging the gaps between the banking sector and restoration investment opportunities in Sao Tome and Principe*".<sup>28</sup> Moreover, looking forwards, the TRI project in STP is likely to provide the GCP with valuable information on how far the banking sector is applying the voluntary Green Code of Conduct in relation to the development of sustainable NWFPs. In addition, the MTR identified other areas of significant interest to GCP. For example, on:

- The production of West African snails to save the endemic Obo snail;
- The production of essential natural oils to substitute imports of synthetic oils;
- The production of medicinal plants as a means to conserving local knowledge on biodiversity in STP's forests and reducing the costs of imported medicines.

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<sup>28</sup>IUCN, FAO and UNEP, (2021) The Restoration Initiative – 2020 Year in Review. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/cb6675en/cb6675en.pdf>

#### 4.7.2 Questions on COVID-19 impact

- 195 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on slowing down planned activities by as much as 12 months in total, especially when taking into account many international events, exchanges and technical assistance missions of international consultants have had to be cancelled, or postponed. This situation has also been exacerbated by the slow delivery of urgent equipment (solar panels and mobile sawmills), regular power cuts and the fact FAO does not have a fully-fledged Office in STP. Indications are the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to continue affecting implementation until at least the second quarter of 2022. These delays, combined with some shortcomings in the TRI project's design (in particular main targets), has also contributed to the downsizing of its planned restoration targets and number of direct beneficiaries in the NFLRP. Consequently, to ensure the main activities are implemented correctly and to a good standard, an extension to the project's duration will be necessary.
- 196 This is particularly important taking into the effects of the pandemic are likely to be become more evident in 2022, in particular growing poverty, price inflation and the energy crisis. Moreover, taking into account the legislative elections in 2022 are likely to be heated as these pressures become more apparent, the risks of political instability are likely to grow, especially as the current coalition government of four parties is unlikely to return to office.
- 197 Finally, in terms of the support from FAO/TRI global child project in addressing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the MTR team found the promotion of FAO's Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) have successfully reduced the spread of Covid-19 among the TRI project's main stakeholders.



## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusions

- 198 The MTR team's findings indicate the TRI project's **overall risk rating is "moderate"**. The MTR team cannot justify the "low" risk rating in the PIR to 30 June 2021 (PIR-3), because this would suggest the risks affecting the project's performance are not likely to impede it from reaching its planned outcomes and objectives by the end of operations in November 2023. This is not the case. The new risks associated with the Covid-19 pandemic have had a negative effect on the TRI project's implementation, causing delays and the downgrading of some of the main targets. In addition, it has affected the country's economic and social development, which represents a major challenge for the new government which took office in September 2021, because it has become increasingly dependent on external aid. In addition, the new government is based on a coalition of four parties. The majority of stakeholders believe the coalition will face significant challenges to stay together to deliver the promise of "building back better" after the pandemic. On the one hand, there will be legislative and district elections in 2022. On the other, the country is experiencing a major energy crisis and rising poverty, which is currently affects approximately 75 per cent of the population (World Bank).
- 199 However, despite these new challenges the MTR team's risk rating is not higher, because the new administration in MAFRD/DFB is highly supportive of the TRI project and this has already helped the PMU finalise its preparatory activities and FLR plans in 2021. As a result, the TRI project is ready to support its partners implement the FLR and economic activities in the field from 2022-2023.

**Conclusion 1 (Relevance) on question 1:** *Are the project outcomes and objective congruent with current country priorities, GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework and the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries?*

The project's outcomes and objectives remain consistent with the policies and priorities of the executing agency, MAFRD/DFB. Analysis of the current policy, legal and planning framework in STP and the Policy Influence Plan produced by the TRI project, confirm the NFLRP, adopted by the NPFMCR in 2021, supports the implementation of key policies linked to poverty alleviation, reducing environmental degradation and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Moreover, both the new Minister of MAFRD and new Director of DFB have stated their full commitment to implementing the TRI project. In addition, the MTR team found the project remains fully coherent with GEF Focal Areas CC-2-P4 (promotion of carbon stocks), LD-2-3-P3 (landscape restoration) and LD-3-P4 (sustainable landscape management), FAO's SO-2 (improve provision of goods and services from forestry in a sustainable manner) and Priority Areas 1 and 2 of FAO's latest CPF. However, the project

could do more to stimulate learning and communication on how the project's FLR activities generate co-benefits that support the achievement of GEF/FAO priorities and objectives.

As a result, the strategic relevance of FLR and the development of NWFPs at the national level remains unclear. This is not aided by, on the one hand, the need to integrate FLR into the National Forestry Development Plan (NFDPP) and the Forestry Law (No. 5/2001) to officially recognise, guide and regulate the NFLRP. As such FLR is still considered within MAFRD as a pilot activity. On the other, the project's design and implementation promotes a strong sector-based approach to FLR. Inadequate attention has been given to establishing inter-institutional partnerships with key institutions that manage portfolios that are key to the long-term success of FLR. In particular, these relate to land use planning and enforcement, NRM and CCA/CCM (under MPWINRE/DGE) and the development of SMEs engaged in NWFPs (under MPFBE). In addition, no partnerships are foreseen with educational and research establishments, even though there are neither forestry diploma courses offered by the University of STP to train foresters, nor a research capacity in place on forestry matters. Indeed, this situation suggests some of the TRI project's main targets, in particular its main target to restore/improve the management of over 30% of the country's land area (35,700 ha) over five years, are over-ambitious and/or unrealistic

**Conclusion 2 (Effectiveness) on question 2:** *To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives?*

The project has made satisfactory progress in completion of a large number of preliminary activities linked to its main outputs and outcomes, but this has taken longer than planned, meaning most of the FLR and income generating activities will not start until 2022. As a result, it is highly unlikely the TRI project can achieve its objectives by November 2023. Conclusions at the component level indicate the activities completed so far under Component 1 are successfully enhancing MAFRD/DFB's understanding of FLR and, through the formulation of the NFLRP, increased their commitment to reform the policy framework to support its implementation. This has been aided by the establishment of the NPFMCR, which has facilitated a new, more dynamic, decision-making process is in place to guide the FLR process within MAFRD/DFB. However, achieving a national commitment to FLR remains elusive for the reasons mentioned in Conclusion 1. Achievement of outcomes under Component 2 have not been aided by the loss of in-kind co-finance from the PAPAC/IFAD which closed in early 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic. The latter has caused up to 12 months of delays in planned activities and caused the slow start up of the PRSP project funded by the World Bank, which is not expected to start until mid-2022. Nevertheless, the conclusion of the NFLRP in 2021 has enabled the TRI the project to revise the FLR/SLM target down from 35,500 ha in the Prodoc to a more realistic target of 30,091 ha. Nonetheless, until there is more information on the cost of FLR/hectare, it remains unclear whether this revised target is achievable in the time remaining. Meanwhile, initial indications on the development of honey and snail production are that both have good markets to become profitable concerns, but it is highly unlikely this can be achieved in the remaining two years of the TRI project.

Progress under Component 3 is encouraging and likely to demonstrate the added-value of the TRI project. There is positive feedback from DFB on strengthening its capacity in areas such as deontology and forestry surveillance and from the Central Bank on its commitment to apply a 'Green' Code of Conduct for the banking sector. Nonetheless, the voluntary nature of the Code, means it will depend on the MPEBE establishing a coordinated 'green' business development strategy for NWFPs if it is to deliver a more inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic. This is also important for the seven small bankable projects that have just been selected, together with one medium-large partnership to be established with Plan Vivo to develop carbon credits from FLR and the development of mobile wood mill enterprises to reduce wood waste. However, because all these activities will not start on the ground until 2022 it is likely the vast majority will struggle to become profitable/generate income in without more time, specialised business support and access to research and training services. Finally, the achievement of outcomes under Component 4 faces major challenges. First, the creation of the NFLMS has been delayed to 2022. Despite agreement to adopt FAO's LCCS and switch to open-source GIS software (CEOF and QGIS), the TRI project will be hard pressed to develop the MRV capacity needed to establish the database by November 2023. Similarly, the identification of unit costs, lessons learned and best practices cannot take place until the FLR process and economic activities have been in operation for at least one year.

**Conclusion 3 (Efficiency) on question 3:** *To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively?*

The project has achieved a moderately satisfactory level of efficiency when taking into account the project has achieved an estimated physical progress of 44 per cent, while accumulated expenditure stands at almost 27 per cent of GEF funds to 30 November 2021. This indicates the TRI project has delivered a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness so far, which appears to be largely attributed to the successful application of LoAs with an array of implementing partners who have a vested interest in FLR. Moreover, despite delays in starting the implementation of the PRSP project and closure of the PAPAC project in February 2020, the TRI project has still been able to secured an estimated USD 4.47 m. to 30 June 2021, which indicates for every US Dollar of GEF funding, the TRI project is leveraging more than USD 5 in the form of co-funding. This has been achieved in part through the in-kind contributions from the farmer cooperatives and associations that were formerly supported by the PAPAC project, but which are now engaged in the TRI project through LoAs. Nevertheless, the TRI project is spending on average, USD 388 of GEF funds on each beneficiary recorded to 30 November 2021 (1,992 beneficiaries), and FAO's lengthy bureaucratic procedures are resulting in very high transaction costs. On top of this, the TRI project has had to endure the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and a growing energy crisis resulting in regular power cuts. The MTR team estimates these challenges are for forcing FAO staff and the PMU to spend too much time on administrative matters as well as contributed to setting back operations by as much as twelve months.

**Conclusion 4 (Sustainability) on question 4:** *What is the likelihood that the project results can be sustained after the end of the project?*

It is moderately likely that the project's main outputs and outcomes linked to FLR will be sustained beyond the TRI project, especially where the FLR activities are being implemented through LoAs with local partners such as CECAB and CECAQ-11 who fill fully own the FLR process well after the project has ended. Moreover, the FLR process centres on nature-based solutions that are relatively cheap to maintain and replicate, which in turn will offer further opportunities to exploit its co-benefits, such as carbon emission trading schemes planned with support from Plan Vivo. However, the sustainability of project activities linked to the strengthening of DFB is less likely, because important gaps remain and some external risks are now rated as substantial. Major gaps include, a lack of training courses for foresters, inability to procure equipment to support DFB develop MRV capacity to apply the NFLMS and carry out effective patrolling, GPS monitoring, mapping and ground truthing of forest boundaries and buffer zones, and law enforcement, among others. Similarly, the role and tasks of the NPFFMCR have not been clarified at the national level, which has implications on its strategic relevance and ability to advocate the upscaling of FLR to the NCCC. Meanwhile, it is unlikely that the majority of the economic activities will have established themselves as sustainable concerns by the end of 2023. In particular solutions have not been identified so far to link these activities to competent authorities who are able to provide the services and resources that DFB does not have to support the sustainable and adapted development of rural communities in STP. Meanwhile, risks classified as substantial, in particular relating to socio-political, institutional and financial risks, are not being adequately addressed through the integration of risk management in planning and monitoring.

**Conclusion 5 (factors affecting performance) on question 5:** *What are the main factors affecting the project from reaching its results?*

Several factors are affecting the project's performance and, therefore, potential impact. First, the project design has some unrealistic targets. In particular the FLR targets, even after being downsized following the completion of the NFLRP, remain highly ambitious when taking into account the DFB currently has 28 staff, of which only four are qualified foresters. Second, there is a strong case that the creation of the NPFFMCR has consumed resources that could have been channeled into existing national platforms where the strategic relevance of FLR could have been developed more effectively, such as in relation to the NLUP and meeting national goals and targets linked to the NDCs, CBD, SDGs, and Bonn Challenge, among others. Third, by not having a dedicated consultant to support SMEs linked to NWFPs, the TRI project has relied on an *ad hoc* tendering arrangement to select the bankable projects; as opposed to an alliance between the Central Bank/ASB and the MPFBE through which the funding opportunities forum foreseen in the Prodoc could have been framed by a new business development strategy for NWFPs followed by tendering to pilot the application of the Green Code of Conduct. Fourth, the decision to apply DEX in a country that does not have a fully-fledge FAO Office has slowed the delivery of several outputs, in particular where outputs have depended on the procurement of imported equipment, as well as added

additional layers of bureaucracy due to the application of the ASR payments system that is managed in STP by UNDP. Fifth, the M&E system and communication strategy are geared to providing information on outputs, rather than on developing a learning hub supported by qualitative indicators to, for example, assess changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP), review and manage risks, or increase understanding on the co-benefits of FLR.

**Conclusion 6 (Cross-cutting priorities) on question 6:** *To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?*

The MTR team concurs with the “low risk” rating in the Prodoc and PIRs for the ESS assessment. However, it does not concur with the “no” response applied to Safeguard 3-3.4 because the project does include the establishment and management of planted forests. Similarly, the “no” rating for Safeguard 4-4.1 is no longer fully applicable, because the MTR team understands one of the bankable projects selected for funding by the TRI project in October 2021 includes silvopasture involving the introduction of non-native cattle.

**Conclusion 7 (gender) on question 7:** *To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?*

Overall, the MTR team found the PMU’s monitoring of women’s participation in the project’s main activities to be satisfactory. For example, women’s participation in activities under components 2 and 3 has been over 46 and 51 per cent respectively, which is well over the minimum target of 30 per cent in the Prodoc. Nonetheless, the project does not have a gender strategy in place to monitor the empowerment of women and other vulnerable groups (such as youths) in decision-making roles. As a result, the M&E system does not support learning to identify and stimulate informed planning on the strengths/gaps of the project’s support to enhancing gender equality.

**Conclusion 8 (links to the global child project) on question 8:** *What did the global child project bring to the national child project, including synergies between child projects and what did the child project bring to the global child project?*

The global child project has had most impact in supporting the TRI project adopt new practices and tools to apply FLR mapping and planning, in particular the decision to apply QGIS open-source software, which will avoid the need to acquire costly licensed GIS software recommended in the Prodoc. Also, significant has been GCP’s role in facilitating networking with the TRI project in Guinea Bissau to exchange knowledge and information on mangrove restoration. Online webinars are also reported to have helped guide the development of the M&E plan adopted by the PMU in 2021. Nevertheless, there is consensus among stakeholders interviewed that the GCP has been far less proactive since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, although the MTR team was informed on-demand support has been provided by GCP (referred to as “TRI support”) in areas such as the development of the FLR plans, on the use of mobile sawmills and on integrating the nine core indicators managed by the GCP in the M&E plan in STP, although the GCP does not have a remote help-desk in operation to date. However, the Core Indicators do not include any qualitative indicators designed to support learning and informed dialogue within the TRI community. As such, the



GCP does not have a dynamic communication strategy in place to encourage dialogue within the TRI community on why, when and how FLR and SMEs (for NWFPs) become effective/ineffective and what are the good practices/actions needed to sustain them, make them more inclusive and resilient to climate change.

The TRI project's contributions to the GCP have been limited to providing support in the formulation of knowledge products, in particular the Annual Reviews of TRI for 2019 and 2020. However, the TRI project has the potential to provide highly valuable information in the future once its operations in the field have materialised and feedback on performance has been analysed. Areas of particular interest include the impact of the Green Code of Conduct on investment in FLR/NWFPs, the impact of West African snail production (an invasive species) on reducing hunting of the endemic Obo snail in danger of extinction and how far the production of essential oils in STP leads to the development of sustainable products, such as soaps in STP, and reduces imports of such products.

## 5.2. Recommendations

200 **Recommendation 1 – (linked to conclusion 1 and 5) – relevance and factors affecting performance – for the PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-GCU, FAO-STP, FAO-R, CTA, PMU and members of the NPFCMR:** in order to clarify the relevance of FLR beyond the TRI project, it is highly recommended the TRI project reviews (for example, through the PIP) how a coordination mechanism with the DGE of MPWINRE could be established with the main purpose of determining how the NPFCMR could be integrated and sustained within the NCCC. In particular, it is recommended the NPFCMR becomes the main advocate for the consolidation and upscaling of FLR/NWFPs as a strategic response to establishing sustainable livelihoods that enhance their resilience to climate change and which generate important co-benefits that can be shared by all (conservation of biodiversity and habitats, water quality/provision, carbon sequestration/trading, disaster risk reduction as a result of less soil/coastal erosion).

### Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:

- e) High level intervention should be provided by the GEF Coordination Unit to officially request the Minister of MAFRD to convoke a meeting/workshop with the DGE of MPWINRE to determine the role the NPFCMR should play in supporting the NCCC respond to country's strategy and action plan to combat climate change and halt biodiversity loss. It is suggested that the role the NPFCMR in supporting the NCCC develop a national strategy to combat the effects of the climate and ecological emergency unfolding globally is discussed and the NFLRP potentially adopted as a cost-effective response to reduce poverty, enhance sustainable development and build resilience in priority rural areas of STP (starting in the four intervention sites of the TRI project). It is recommended this meeting is conducted in Portuguese and includes the following key stakeholders:

- From the TRI project in STP: MAFRD/DFB, FAO-STP, PMU and a representative from AFAP as main co-financing partner;
- From FAO (outside STP) either in-person, or remotely: the Budget Holder from FAO-SFC, the LTO and CTA from FAO-R, a representative from GCU;
- From MPWINRE: Director of DGE and coordinators of GEF-funded projects in STP linked to biodiversity conservation and climate change;
- Main implementing partners of GEF-funded projects: UNDP representatives responsible for supporting implementation of the Climate Promise, biodiversity conservation (EBCSLM) and the WACA coastal management programme, among others.

It is suggested the DFB and DGE appoint a staff member to act as the secretariat of this meeting, responsible for following up and applying the decisions reached concerning the establishment of the coordination framework agreed upon and which should continue after the TRI and other GEF-funded projects and programmes in the interests of meeting national targets, goals, and pledges.

- f) In the event the DFB and DGE establish this coordination framework, it is recommended exploratory talks take place to determine a shared work agenda to address outstanding issues that are likely to affect the sustainability and impact of the FLR process in STP. It is recommended a focal point from DFB and DGE are nominated to work with the consultant conducting the PIP to oversee the development of this agenda and to report monthly on progress and any bottlenecks/barriers that need to be addressed by the TRI project, or through the creation of synergies with FAO's own programmes (such as the Technical Cooperation Programme) and services (such as the Legal Service), through other GEF-funded projects managed by DGE, or by other relevant donor-funded projects and programmes operating in STP and that can be tapped for resources. Major issues identified by the MTR team following interviews with DFB and other stakeholders that should be reviewed for possible inclusion in the joint agenda are:
- The degree to which the NFLRP can be integrated into the NLUP as part of the country's strategy to conserve ecosystem services and combat climate change in STP. In particular, there is a need to clarify the land cover/land use category/categories to be applied to restored forest landscapes to support enforcement against illegal changes of use of these landscapes after the TRI project has ended and which will affect the sustainability of the FLR process. Moreover, this will also help guide, among others: (i) the banking sector on the types of public and private investment permitted in the restoration sites under the Green Code of Conduct and in line with the land use categories agreed in the NLUP for the FLR sites; (ii) urban planning, in terms of the future allocation of land for housing, public buildings/infrastructure, for agricultural development, etc.; (iii) the planning of green space, changes of conservation/protected area boundaries and protection of high-risk areas that are vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods, landslides and droughts;



- The updating of the National Forestry Development Plan (NFDP) and its Guidelines to ensure the full integration of the FLR process is included and managed by DFB and its partners. In addition, its contribution to generating co-benefits should be explained and justified to attract new investment in the restoration of the country's forest ecosystems. It is also highly recommended that the LTO and CTA, in coordination with the PMU and DFB, explore opportunities of harnessing the support of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme to support the updating of the NFDP to 2050 given the FLR process cannot be completed within political cycles of five years and the fact carbon sequestration targets identified in the Prodoc are linked to a 20-year cycle;
  - A timetable to reform the Forestry Law (No. 5/2001), based on the identification of one, or more suitable funding sources to ensure a new legal framework is in place to support, guide and regulate the implementation of the NFDP and the NPFMCR in line with the legal and strategic provisions in place to combat climate change and meet the targets set in the country's NDCs. It is also highly recommended that the LTO and CTA, in coordination with the PMU and DFB, explore opportunities of obtaining the support of FAO's Legal Service and/or hiring an international legal expert (preferably with work experience linked to forestry, land-use planning and climate change laws and regulations) to advise and guide all legal and regulatory needs;
- g) The consultant responsible for the capacity building programme of the TRI project coordinates a set of training modules to support the application of the abovementioned proposals linked to training under Recommendation 1. It is recommended the training courses Encourage institutions such as the Agricultural Sector Working Group (ACHA) to participate to develop an inclusive approach to the reforms proposed;
- h) Ensure results, lessons learned and good practices identified from the above actions are systematised and shared with GCP.

201 **Recommendation 2 – (linked to conclusions 1 and 4) – effectiveness and sustainability – for PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-STP, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, CTA, PMU):** it is highly recommended to clarify the TRI project's exit strategy concerning who will manage the promotion, development and monitoring of the economic activities beyond the TRI project, taking into account DFB does not have the capacity or mandate to support micro and small enterprise development and the PMU does not include an expert to oversee the development of NWFPs.

Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:

- g) The LTO/CTA should consult with the PMU and DFB on fast-tracking the recruitment of a consultant for 100 days with experience in small enterprise management and development of inclusive value chains for NWFPs. Two options should be explored to determine the fastest way to recruit this consultant: (i) contact FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme to determine if expertise could be provided directly from the TCP taking into account it has

been engaged in the implementation of the NWFP project - a pilot multinational institutional support project aimed at helping the five target countries (Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe) to define regulatory frameworks and strategies that could improve NWFP management as a means to safeguarding food security and reducing poverty<sup>29</sup>; (ii) recruit a qualified consultant from FAO's roster for a period of 100 days in order to review key gaps identified by the MTR team concerning the bankable projects and income generating activities being promoted. These gaps include business planning and management, business incubation services, post-harvest storage, product quality control, branding, and marketing and certification and distribution/export licenses, among others. It is recommended the 100-day period of the contract is used to identify the long-term technical assistance needs of the TRI project in the extension period agreed by GEF/FAO (see Recommendation 5). The MTR team is unable to provide a specific recommendation on how this consultant can be funded as no financial statements were provided to it by FAO-SCF (see Table 3). However, taking into account there is a total balance of almost USD 2.5 m. to 30/11/2021, the indications are unspent funds are available due to the pandemic, especially concerning Component 4, which can be reallocated and used for this action (under Component 3);

- h) Similar to Recommendation 1, a high-level intervention should be organised by the GEF Coordination Unit to officially request the Minister of MAFRD/Director of DFB to convoke a meeting/workshop with representatives from MPFBE, the Central Bank and the bank association in STP (ASB/CREDIAL/Mungi) to determine which government institution and/or financial institution/platform can provide financial and business support services to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the TRI project's economic activities. It is recommended the business consultant proposed in the preceding point together with a focal point for business development nominated by MPFBE and a financial adviser from the Central Bank (responsible for the promoting the Green Code of Conduct) are delegated to oversee the implementation of the decisions and next steps agreed in this meeting, which it is anticipated should lay down the foundations for identifying a "green" business development strategy for NWFPs in STP and which is designed to support the country meet its NDCs;
- i) In line with the provisions under Output 3.1.2, it is recommended the funding operators forum proposed includes a workshop with representatives from the private sector and, if possible, a representative from IFAD-STP, to review the green business strategy for NWFPs before identifying a road map for investment in NWFPs and certified products that have most potential in general and regarding the bankable projects in particular. In particular, the workshop should not only inform local operators on potential funding instruments available internationally to small and medium enterprises (Prodoc, p. 53, para. 125), but also inform about projects such as COMPRAM/IFAD that offer such funding in STP. It is recommended the workshop not only reviews funding/potential co-finance options for SMEs, but that the peer-to-peer reviews proposed explore how the

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<sup>29</sup> FAO, Non-wood forest products, 2014. Available at:

development of business incubator services can be agreed and piloted in STP. In this way SMEs linked to NWFPs will be able to gain access to, among others:

- Business networks and investors providing seed capital/support;
  - Co-working space to allow the new enterprises to work with other similar businesses and experienced professionals to support learning.
  - Products and subsidised professional services such as accountants and lawyers linked to the incubator, which in the case of Príncipe could be explored through the partnership with HBD proposed in Recommendation 4.
- j) Explore the possibility of engaging AFAP/WB to apply its social development strategy in all four interventions sites to promote the active participation of women, youths and other vulnerable groups in the green business strategy and defining activities applicable for co-finance (in-kind and/or cash).
- k) Consider applying one of the brand names proposed by Alisei in its Communication Strategy to all NWFPs produced with the support of the TRI project, differentiating brand names for Sao Tome and Principe products (especially certified products);
- l) Systematise all achievements, lessons learned and good practices identified that can be scaled up/replication and shared with the TRI community.

**202 Recommendation 3 – (linked to conclusion 2 and 5) – effectiveness and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-STP, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, CTA):** Gaps in DFB's capacity to train its own staff and conduct applied research on FLR/NWFPs are evident and should be addressed to ensure it has access to FLR training services from a permanent institution in STP after the TRI project has ended. This is considered by the MTR as an essential prerequisite to optimising the TRI project's sustainability and impact.

Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation (University of STP):

- d)** A provisional meeting between the PMU, DFB, the consultants responsible for the PIP and capacity building programme, from TRI's GCP and representatives from the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of STP should be conducted to explore how the University can be supported to develop an internal training capacity on FLR/NWFP development and application of applied research into FLR/NWFPs in post-graduate/doctorate studies. Next steps should be agreed in this meeting regarding the types of courses that could be offered. For example, (i) a Diploma in Forestry, incorporating FLR, designed to produce the next generation of foresters and rangers in STP; (ii) Specialised training courses in FLR agro-forestry extension and development of NWFPs designed to support DFB, TRI partners (especially CECAB, CECAQ-11 and CECAFEB) and the private sector in general consolidate FLR activities started by the TRI project and develop business incubators and applied research for selected NWFP enterprises; (iii) exchanges to other TRI countries, or elsewhere to develop capacity in areas such as value-added activities, the development of certified wood and non-wood forestry products, branding and marketing, etc.
- e)** The GCP provides pilot funding and technical assistance to develop the next steps agreed between DFB and the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of STP, but with

the aim of learning lessons and good practices to expand the initiative to other TRI countries. The assistance provided, should explore how to capture funding from donors who have a long track record supporting the development of research through either university networks or donors that have an office in STP, in particular:

- Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC);
  - Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA);
  - Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC);
  - Universities within the TRI community, or linked to FAO.
- f) The PAC should review with the GEF Secretariat the potential for injecting new resources (under GEF8) to develop a knowledge hub for TRI countries to centralise information on developing a Diploma course on forestry incorporating FLR in all TRI countries. It is recommended, the course should provide general information on FLR that is applicable to all the TRI community countries, so that selected universities are engaged in providing training on, for example, the role of FLR in restoring the carbon cycle, FLR policy development, GIS mapping using ROAM and ANR methods developed by IUCN, application of FLR tools such as Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR), EHI and MRV linked to data collection, management and use to support the identification of carbon inventories. The main aim of this approach should be to development internal capacity within a permanent and autonomous educational institution in order to reduce dependency on hiring NGOs and the private sector to research and upscale the FLR process in STP and other TRI countries. In addition, alternative funding resources should be sought to apply the methods and tools associated with FLR, as well as capture and promote local knowledge and technologies linked to FLR, in the interests of extending learning and informed decision-making to upscale FLR/NWFPS. The ultimate goal of this recommendation should be to institutionalise learning on FLR/NWFP development within STP and to combine it with indigenous knowledge and technologies.

203 **Recommendation 4 – (linked to conclusion 2 and 5) – effectiveness and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAO-SCF, FAO-STP, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, CTA):** The development of seedlings for the tree nurseries should be fast-tracked through existing local partners following the CECAB model of buying seedlings from its community-based nurseries and through new partnerships with the private sector, such as with HBD in Príncipe.

Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation (tree nurseries and FLR management):

- g) The training programme planned on nursery management and seed conservation in early 2022 and which will involve four experts from Cameroon (2), Kenya and Brazil should include the international expert from Spain who has been contracted to support the development of DFB's seedling production plans as well as oversee the development of DFB's tree nurseries.
- h) The five experts concerned should review and develop a fast-tracked seedlings development programme that assesses how far key local partners such as CECAB, CECAQ-11, CECAFEB, AMP can develop community-based nurseries designed to sell the seedlings to their cooperatives for development of the shadow forests proposed in the FLR plans

for all four intervention sites to be supported by the TRI project. This approach should be incorporated into: (i) the training programme on tree nursery management with the aim of producing DFB nurseries that are supported by community-based tree nurseries, (ii) the forestry training courses proposed for development by the University of STP (Recommendation 3) and which should include the development of a university-based nursery dedicated to providing training and research on the propagation of native tree species that are on the list of seedlings earmarked for FLR, or which merit inclusion, such as the Pau Fuba tree species, which is endemic to Príncipe island, but which is used widely for housing and furniture;

- i) Explore the development of a private-public partnership in Príncipe between DFB, the Autonomous Regional Government of Príncipe and HBD, on the grounds the sustainability officer of HBD has expressed potential interest to join forces with the TRI project to conserve and restore Príncipe's natural resources as a prerequisite to developing its eco-tourism model and production of NWFPs, in particular sustainable products such as organic soaps, cosmetic creams and chocolate. This includes providing access to its tree nurseries and agro-forestry research facilities;
- j) Identify the equipment needs of the DFB to apply effective law enforcement in line with the lessons and good practices identified from the training courses that have just been completed on the law enforcement in October 2021;
- k) Identify long-term user-friendly FLR management plans to be applied by the TRI project's main partners (CECAB, CECAQ-11, CECAFEB, AMP) to at least 2030 to protect the seedlings planted until they are mature enough to support consolidation of the FLR process.
- l) Enhance the DFB's capacity to apply law enforcement in the FLR sites by identifying a partner through which the following are achieved: (i) the establishment of alliances and partnerships with local inhabitants to act as local watchdogs for DFB; (ii) identify funding to support the acquisition of uniforms, walking boots, GPS cameras and rescue equipment, among others; (iii) specialist training in areas such as forest fire management and pest control to support adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction.

**204 Recommendation 5 – (linked to conclusion 3 and 5) – efficiency and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAOPK, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, PMU and GCP of TRI:** it is highly recommended the TRI project is extended for a period of between 12 and 18 months to recover the delays endured due to the COVID-19 pandemic and which includes a six-month closure period to implement its exit strategy. However, taking into account the development of the tree nurseries and number of seedlings is still very low, the MTR team believe an additional 12-18 months of operations will not be enough time to achieve the restoration targets of the 28,326 ha (see Table 1), taking into account the DFB has limited resources and capacity. For this reason, the FLR targets in the Result Matrix should be revised to realistic and achievable levels in the 12-18 months extension agreed and which should include the implementation of an exit strategy to secure the sustainability of the TRI project's main outcomes.

Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:

- f) The PSC reviews the project's FLR targets in the RM and develops with the PMU and DFB a new agenda/work plan for the project's implementation in the extension period agreed, with clear roles identified and agreed with all implementing partners, the DGE and MPFBE (under Recommendations 1 and 2) as well as the new realistic targets that can be achieved in the extension period and which should be reviewed in a rolling annual work plan that is reviewed by the PSC on a tri-monthly basis;
- g) The PSC reviews the technical and financial inputs required to oversee the implementation of the new agenda/work plan;
- h) The PSC and FAO stakeholders agree on a strategy to improve the project's administrative efficiency, by identifying a way to reduce FAO's bureaucracy within existing rules, to ensure the proposed extension period witnesses a reduction in transaction costs and delivers outputs in line with the new agenda adopted. In particular, it is recommended the PMU team (including proposed business consultant) receive training (in-person/online) on FAO procedures to ensure it starts funding requests, staff recruitment, LoAs, and procurement of equipment well in advance and that the PMU is granted by FAO-STP direct access to focal points for finance/recruitment/procurement who can be contacted directly in FAO-SCF to ensure funding, staffing and procuring of equipment is not delayed. It is recommended the costs of the training of the PMU is covered by the GCP as part of a dedicated online administrative training course provided to all PMU staff of all TRI projects and that the GCP's help desk establishes on-demand support to PMU TLs as good practice for TRI;
- i) Ensure the MAFRD offices in Sao Tome and the DFB offices in Porto Real in Principe have a solar energy capacity installed as a matter of urgency in 2022 to guarantee the TRI project does not suffer from regular power cuts that are likely to worsen in 2022. This will also strengthen the image of DFB as a low carbon agency. It is recommended the funding of these solar panels is negotiated with AFAP/WB as an extra-official agreement of the co-finance agreed in the Prodoc (in cash), but which is also argued as supporting the achievement of objectives of the Power Rehabilitation Support Project.
- j) The PMU improves its physical presence in Principe from early 2022 to oversee the implementation of the FLR activities, start-up of the snail production enterprise and implementation of the bankable projects. The PMU should explore the following options, before proposing the preferred choice to the PSC:
  - Employ a new technical staff member as coordinator of operations in Principe (at least on a part-time basis of three days per week);
  - Strengthen the capacity of the Director of DFB in Principe by employing a consultant to coordinate the TRI project's economic activities and purchasing the equipment the Director needs to oversee and report on progress, lessons and good practices emanating from the FLR process. The MTR identified the following deficiencies: (i) a Desk top computer and monitor screen to manage GIS maps and apply MRV of FLR activities; (ii) a quality laptop that can be used as a tablet in the field; (iii) lack of a GPS land surveying machine to support forest monitoring and surveillance to locate and report where, for example, how far FLR is having a positive effect on forest

degradation, encroachment into protected areas, reducing risks of natural disasters, storm surges, etc.;

205 **Recommendation 6 – (linked to conclusion 4 and 5) – sustainability and factors affecting performance – for PSC, BH/FAOPK, FAO-GCU, FAO-R, PMU, CTA and GCP of TRI:** in line with the MTR's recommendations for the child project in Pakistan (2021), it is recommended the GCP convenes a virtual meeting/workshop with FAO stakeholders to agree on the inclusion of qualitative indicators to support learning on how far socio-cultural, economic and ecological dynamics are changing at all levels, but especially within the beneficiary communities. Currently, the nine Core Indicators concentrate on quantitative achievements that do not support learning on far these dynamics are taking place, and which the MTR team considers are crucial to guiding the FLR process and development of sustainable NWFPs. Moreover, monitoring of these changes are considered important to develop effective communication strategies dedicated to lobbying and advocating FLR and development of NTFPs as a viable alternative to generating co-benefits (increasing carbon stocks, biodiversity and species conservation) that align with GEF's focal areas and FAO's strategic objectives and which encourage the upscaling of carbon-focused restoration plans that will support the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2).

Suggestions on how to apply this recommendation:

- e) The GCP heads a delegation to review and develop a more robust M&E system and communication strategy in all TRI national projects, starting in Pakistan and STP before full roll out. Agreement should be sought on the adoption of the qualitative indicators needed to support the establishment of learning hubs that replace the current application of information hubs in TRI projects such as in STP;
- f) It is highly recommended the qualitative indicators support learning in three main areas: socio-cultural, economic and environmental development. Each area should focus on indicators to measure:
  - Social transformation vis-à-vis knowledge, attitudes and practices, which can be monitored through methods such as KAP surveys. Attention should be given to ensuring suitable ethnographic methods are chosen for each child project (focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, participant observation, participatory analysis methods, etc.) and that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods are applied by two experts from qualitative and quantitative research traditions. Similarly, attention should be given to monitoring how far women, youths and other vulnerable groups are being engaged in decision-making roles and access to services (as opposed to focusing only on participation rates);
  - Economic transformation from the perspective of generating inclusive, sustainable and resilient development in the intervention areas. Attention should be given to measuring costs and return on investment, because rural beneficiaries do not generally know what their costs are in relation to the income they generate. For example, the MTR team found CECAFEB is currently operating at a loss, whereas CECAB is making a profit. In addition, monitoring should relate to relevant SDGs.



For example, on SDG12, an inspection/audit would enable the mobile sawmill enterprises planned see where money is being spent, what waste has been generated (compare it to chainsaw waste) and identify ways to reduce it further through a waste reduction plan. Similarly, monitoring of partnerships (SDG17) should be considered as this is a major element in TRI projects and supports learning on how partners such as CECAFEB can improve performance by teaming up with hotels, the retail sector, charities, etc.

- Ecological health of forests subjected to FLR activities. It is strongly recommended the M&E system of all national child projects support educational establishments (such as the University of STP) develop training and research capacity in conducting ecological health index (EHI) and carbon inventory assessments that these can be mapped (using CEOF and QGIS) to determine if the FLR process is having the desired effect and how far progress is linked to the findings from the social and economic monitoring proposed above. This would also support reporting linked to the NFLRP, the CBD/NBSAP/Post-Aichi Targets and the NDCs and determine where monitoring of Species Threat Abatement and Recovery (STAR) may be needed and justified.
- g)** Upgrading of the TRI project's communication strategy to show more clearly its contribution at the national level, which in STP concerns the restoration of around 30 per cent of STP's land surface, implying significant generation of the above-mentioned co-benefits. It is recommended that the GCP coordinates this with the aim of encouraging the learning hubs to improve communication on the contribution to national targets and goals linked to the forestry sector in the ten participating countries. This should also support the development of advocacy campaigns to encourage reforms and incentives in support of FLR/NWFPs. In STP, it is recommended the PSC, PMU and CTA consider the following:
- Increasing the budget Alisei (currently USD 50,000 over 18 months) to develop the communication strategy on the abovementioned lines to support the case for implementing recommendations 1-4.
  - Ensuring the increase in the budget is conditional on Alisei sharing knowledge on its honey study and progress in producing snails;
  - Recruiting a communications expert (possibly paid for by GCP) to support the development of the new communication strategy to be identified and implemented.
- h)** Ensure the lessons learned and good practices from the changes adopted in the M&E and communication aspects of the TRI project are systematised and shared with the TRI community and general public.

## 6. Lessons learned

- 206 **Lesson learned 1 – on the LoAs:** the LoAs indicate they are one of the most cost-effective ways of to develop local ownership of the FLR process and ensure through their associations/cooperatives a lot of the institutional memory on FLR can be retained and applied after the project has ended. This has positive implications for not only consolidating the FLR process, but also facilitating its replication by follow-on farmers.
- 207 **Lesson 2 – on resilience to climate change:** the TRI project is placing a strong emphasis on the propagation of native tree species in the development of the tree nurseries established/rehabilitated so far. This is considered good practice as native trees are more likely to adapt to changing climatic conditions than introduced varieties, as well as maintain their symbiotic properties with other biodiversity (including pollinators). In addition, hard wood species such as Azeitona, Gogo, Jaquiera all represent highly lucrative investments for the long-term that can be used in old age, or to support the next generation.
- 208 **Lesson 3 – on tree nursery development:** the decision by CECAB to buy seedlings from its members encourages farmers to develop knowledge, experimentation and explore income generating opportunities through the development of their own local tree nurseries. This also opens up opportunities for developing partnerships at the local level and increasing the production of seedlings from a variety of sources.
- 209 **Lesson 4 – on forestry education:** by overlooking the engagement of universities and research establishments the FLR process depends too heavily on the DFB to provide training on forestry matters, conduct research, monitoring and so forth, when this could be done by the University of STP. This situation implies a lot of institutional memory on FLR will be lost when the TRI project ends, rather than retaining it in a permanent institution in STP.
- 210 **Lesson 5 – on income generation:** many of the TRI project's economic activities provide opportunities to showcase the opportunity to produce by-products and deliver several co-benefits that will enhance their sustainability and impact on the environment. This provides an added incentive to explore certification and communicate the add-value of the TRI "brand".
- 211 **Lesson 6 – on FAO procedures:** the FAO's decision to apply standard procedures in the same manner regardless of the size and capacity of the country is proving to be counterproductive for projects operating in SIDS that do not have a fully-fledged FAO Office that can take decisions at the country level. This situation reduces the scope for GEF to secure a high return on its investments (grants) and contributes to giving FAO a bureaucratic title.

## 7. Appendices

## Appendix 1. Terms of reference for the MTR

### General Description of tasks and objectives to be achieved

The assignment is linked to two different tasks: (1) the Mid-term Review (MTR) of the United Nations (FAO)'s project in São Tomé e Príncipe GCP/STP/002/GFF, and (2) the Mid-term Review (MTR) of the United Nations (FAO)'s project in Kenya GCP/KEN/090/GFF.

- 1- The purpose of the Mid-term Review (MTR) is to provide inputs to better orient the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s project in São Tomé e Príncipe GCP/STP/002/GFF making it more relevant to the needs of the country. The project GCP/STP/002/GFF "Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate Change Mitigation in the Republic of São Tomé e Príncipe" is part of the Restoration Initiative with the objective of promoting the restoration and sustainable management of the forest ecosystems of São Tomé and Príncipe to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation, and stop and reverse forest and soil degradation. The project is operative on both islands – São Tomé and Príncipe. The project will implement forest and landscape restoration in four priority landscapes covering a total of approx. 36,000 hectares areas of different forest and agro-forestry systems through active participation of the local communities. The project's work plan also includes income-generating initiatives based on sustainable agro-forestry, policy and advocacy work, and working with local banking and private sectors to improve the financial framework for forest restoration and agro-forestry. The project, in addition to the local benefits, will also contribute to the global environmental benefits by mitigating estimated Greenhouse Gas emissions amount of 8,034,828 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (direct) + 4,821,984 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e (consequential/indirect) for a total of 12,856,752 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e in the considered landscapes and timeframe.
- 2- The purpose of the Mid-term Review (MTR) is to provide inputs to better orient the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s project in Kenya GCP/KEN/090/GFF making it more relevant to the needs of the country. The project GCP/KEN/090/GFF "Restoration of arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) of Kenya through bio-enterprise development and other incentives under The Restoration Initiative" is part of The Restoration Initiative and adopts an integrated approach to address deforestation, land degradation and biodiversity loss, targeting policy and institutional capacity while supporting community-led forest and landscape restoration (FLR) and the development of alternative livelihoods. The project's overall objective is to restore deforested and degraded lands through the FLR approach and enhance the socioeconomic development of local communities through the development of bio-enterprises of Non-Timber Forest Products and Services (NTFPS) in ASALs. Its goal is to reduce the overall proportion of degraded land by 20% in the areas covered by the project. The project aims to improve the sustainable management of 152,661 ha (through improved management plans) and directly restore 8,700 ha of deforested and degraded lands in the two targeted landscapes (Mukogodo and Mt. Kulal). This involves implementing sustainable land management practices and improving water management, which ensures long-lasting benefits from sustainable use of the land and protected biodiversity. It will also indirectly lead to the restoration of 55,352 ha of degraded lands in the pilot sites and more through consolidated legal and policy framework, increased coordination and improved knowledge on FLR.

For the assignment 1 (MTR of GCP/STP/002/GFF), the consultant will be under the direct supervision of the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit (FAO GEF CU) MTR focal point, Ms. Genevieve Braun, and the project's budget holder (BH), Mr. Helder Muteia, FAO Representative in the Sub Regional office for Central Africa (FAO SFC). The consultant is responsible for coordinating the MTR team's contribution to the MTR of GCP/STP/002/GFF "Landscape Restoration for Ecosystem Functionality and Climate Change Mitigation in the Republic of São Tomé e Príncipe" and has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the MTR report. His/her mandate is derived from and must fully comply with the overall terms of reference of the MTR. He/She reports to the BH and to the FAO GEF CU MTR focal point.

For the assignment 2 (MTR of GCP/KEN/090/GFF), the consultant will be under the direct supervision of the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit (FAO GEF CU) MTR focal point, Ms. Genevieve Braun and the project's budget holder (BH), Amb. Carla Mucavi, FAO Representative in Kenya. The consultant is responsible for coordinating the MTR team's contribution to the MTR of GCP/KEN/090/GFF "Restoration of arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) of Kenya through bio-enterprise development and other incentives under The Restoration Initiative" and has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the MTR report. His/her mandate is derived from and must fully comply with the overall terms of reference of the MTR. He/She reports to the BH and to the FAO GEF CU MTR focal point.

For both assignments, the consultant will coordinate the MTR team's activities, ensure that the methodology foreseen in the terms of reference is implemented and will organize the division of labor within the MTR team according to areas of expertise.

**Specific responsibilities include for each assignment:**

- Review relevant background documentation including the project document, the project's logframe, progress and final reports, workshop and technical reports, among others as listed in the MTR terms of reference; these documents will be made available by the FAO Representation in the Sub Regional office for Central Africa (FAO SFC) and the FAO Representative for STP for the MTR of GCP/STP/002/GFF, and by the FAO Representation in Kenya for the MTR of GCP/KEN/090/GFF;
- Review and complement (expand as appropriate) the methodology described in the terms of reference, contribute to the preparation of data-collection tools, including questionnaires, checklists and interview protocols as appropriate;
- Coordinate preparation, drafting and finalization of the MTR inception report, including an MTR matrix, theory of change and stakeholder table, and participate in the finalization of the team's work programme;
- Lead and coordinate the collection of primary data by the MTR team through interviews and meetings (virtual) with relevant FAO officers in headquarters and/or in Sub Regional Office and/or national office;
- Given the sanitary situation, the country visits/meetings may not be physically possible and therefore could be done remotely with the strong support of the national consultant. The meetings will be held with key stakeholders including the government, FAO Representative, external partners, project teams, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, research institutes and ultimate beneficiaries, as appropriate, as described in the terms of reference of the MTR and the inception report developed;

- Coordinate the collection of primary data by the MTR team and relevant secondary data, according to the methodology presented in the MTR terms of reference and detailed in the inception report;
- Lead the analysis and discussion of evidence collected within the MTR team to identify key findings and preliminary conclusions that respond to the MTR's issues and questions, and formulate preliminary recommendations in line with the findings and conclusions;
- Ensure that all the findings are sufficiently triangulated and validated;
- Present the preliminary MTR findings to key stakeholders, as required;
- Lead, coordinate and prepare all deliverables planned in the MTR terms of reference, according to specifications provided in the terms of reference and detailed in the FAO-GEF MTR Guide and annexes;
- Coordinate the participation and contribution of team members in all deliverables, as required;
- Lead the preparation of the first and second drafts of the MTR report, integrate comments received, as appropriate, from the BH, FAO GEF CU, other FAO and government agency staff, and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate;
- Lead the finalization of the MTR report and coordinate the inputs of other members of the MTR team into the final version, as needed.

In terms of reporting, or if information, advice or guidance is required from FAO by the consultant, he/she should address requests to both the RM and the FAO GEF CU focal point.

### Key performance indicators

Expected Outputs:	Required Completion Date:
<p>For the assignment 1 (MTR of GCP/STP/002/GFF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inception report, including MTR questions</li> <li>• Briefing on preliminary findings of the MTR following the field mission(s)</li> <li>• First draft of the report</li> <li>• Second draft of the report</li> <li>• Final MTR report, including comments matrix/audit trail</li> </ul>	End of January 2022
<p>For the assignment 2 (MTR of GCP/KEN/090/GFF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inception report, including MTR questions</li> <li>• Briefing on preliminary findings of the MTR following the field mission(s)</li> <li>• First draft of the report</li> <li>• Second draft of the report</li> <li>• Final MTR report, including comments matrix/audit trail</li> </ul>	End of April 2022

## Appendix 2. MTR work schedule, including field missions and reporting

Date	Time	Action	Status
Wednesday, 06/10/21	09:00	MTR team recruitment and contracting completed	Realised
Wednesday, 03/11/21	14:00 – 16:30	Briefing with CTA and national consultant	Realised
Friday, 05/11/2021	09:00	Submission of draft Inception Report to FAO-GCU	Realised
Monday, 08/11/2021	15:30	Clearance of Inception Report	Realised
Tuesday, 09/11/2021	09:00	Remote interview with FLO, Paola Palestini.	Realised
Wednesday, 09/11/2021	14:00 – 15:00	Remote interview with consultant Blaise Bodin (FLR planning, mobile sawmills training)	Realised
Thursday, 10/11/2021	11:00 – 12:00	Remote interview with the LTO, Christophe Besacier	Realised
Thursday 10/11/2021	12:30-13:30	Remote interview with consultant Rosa Colomer (nurseries management plan)	Realised
Friday, 11/11/2021	15:00	Diffusion of e-questionnaire to be completed by 09 December 2021	Realised
Sunday, 14/11/2021	06:00 – 17:55	Flight to Sao Tomé from London Heathrow, via Lisbon.	Realised
Monday, 15/11/2021	08h00 – 09h30	Group discussion with Faustino Oliveira and PMU team	Realised
	10h00 – 12h00	Briefing Argentino Santos (Assistant FAO Rep, STP)	Realised
	15h00 – 16h30	Interview with Adilson Santos (Director DFB) and meet DFB team for the four target FLR landscapes managed by Meyer Antonio (NCP/FAO/GEF National Focal point for FLR/LDN)	Realised
	19 :30 – 20 :30	Working dinner with Marco Pagliani and Boris (CTA)	Realised
Tuesday, 16/11/2021	09h00 – 10h30	Courtesy visit to the Minister of MAFRD, Francisco Martins dos Ramos	Realised



	10h30 – 11h30	MTR Team meeting with Marco Pagliani (CTA), Boris Borogou Nziengui (FAO-SFC)	Realised
	11 :30- 12 :30	Interview with Salvador Sousa Pontes, M&E consultant of the NCP-STP	Realised
	14h30 – 15h30	Interview with Carminda Viegas, Director IFAD-STP, on PAPAC project's work with the National Child Project (NCP-STP)	Realised
Wednesday, 17/11/2021	09h00 – 10h30	Meeting with Mr. Lourenço Monteiro de Jesus, Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment, Responsible for DG Environment and GEF National Focal Point.	Realised
	11h00 – 12:00	Meeting with Darnel Baia, NDC Partnership (in-country facilitator). Coordination on TRI Targets and NDC Targets (Forestry Sector)	Realised
	14h00 – 17h00	Interview with Luis Mário (Exec Director), Lilangie Gomes (President), Nelson Soli (Manager) CECAFEB (Monte Café Coop). Site visits to Agro-forestry sites and coffee processing sites.	Realised
Thursday, 18/11/2021	08h15 – 09h30	Review logistics and finalise meetings in Principe and ST with Rosaria	Realised
	10h00 – 11h00	Interview with António Dias (Rua Barão de Água Izé) Director of CECAB (organic cocoa cooperative)	Realised
	11h30 – 12h30	Interview with the NGO Alisei on the development of the info-hub on FLR and project communications	Realised
	14h30 – 15h30	Interview with the Central Bank and Association of Banks on the adoption of a new Code of Conduct	Realised
	16h00 – 17h00	Interview with Agostinho Fernandes on his work in the Policy Influence Plan (PIP)	Meeting reprogrammed
Friday, 19/11/2021	08h30 – 09h30	Meyer Antonio (NCP/FAO/GEF National Focal point for FLR/LDN)	Realised
	09h30- 10:00	Coordination on travel to UK concerning COVID-19 tests	Realised
	10h00 – 11h00	Interview with Adison Carneiro (AFAP) – progress on the restoration in the Contador watershed of the Power Restoration Support Project	Realised
	14h00 – 15h30	Interview with Oikos NGO (income generating activities)	Realised

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	16h00 – 17h00	Interview with Agostinho Fernandes on his work in the Policy Influence Plan (PIP)	Realised
Saturday 20/11/2021	09h00-09h35	Fly to Principe Island	Realised
Sunday 21/11/2021	14h00-17h00	Update field notes with National consultant; Visit to PNO and interview with Joao Arjane (Park Ranger)	Realised
Monday, 22/11/2021	08h30 – 10h00	Interview with Ana Alice Sec Regional (PSC Member), Maria Dos Prazer, Directora M. Amb (Plataforma NRFP), Julio Mendes Director DFB Principe (Rep Platform NRFP) & Flascoter Hugo, Gov. Regional.	Realised
	11h00 – 12h30	Interview with Daniel Neves of PROASILVFLOR (Bankable project Agro-silvopastoril) meet at hotel	Realised
	14h00 – 15h30	Interview with Alicio Paraíso of Bela Vista Florestal (Bankable project – FLR with bamboo and fishponds for Tilapia and crayfish)	Realised
	16h00 – 17h00	Visit to FLR sites with Julio Mendes DFB (mangrove restoration sites, Abade).	Realised
Tuesday, 23/11/2021	08h30 – 12h00	Site visits in Porto Real and Montalegre community (Red snail production)	Realised
	12h00 – 13h15	Visit to Regional Office for Environment, Forestry and Protected Areas, Porto Real. Interview with Maria Dos Prazer, (Director for Environment and Julio Mendes Director DFB Principe on Tri project operations in Principe, main needs/development of NRFP Platform.	Realised
	15h30 – 16h00	Interview with Ester Costa of Project Ecoquinta (Bankable project – FLR – nature tourism)	Realised
Wednesday, 24/11/2021	10h20 – 11h00	Fly to Sao Tomé Island	Realised
	12h30 – 18h30	Interview with Bastien Loloum, Bankable Project Vanhã (essential oils production) near Porto Alegre.	Realised
Thursday, 25/11/2021	08h30 – 12h00	Visit North Zone - Interviews with Generosa community and inspection of seedlings, nurseries and agro-forestry production for Contador valley with PRSP-WB.	Realised
	12h00-14:00	Visit CECAB cocoa plantations to observe FLR nurseries in the Community of Maria Luisa.	Realised

	16h00 – 17h00	Interview with Armando Monteiro (FLR capacity building assessment)	Realised
	17:30-18:30	Interview with ONG Alisei (synergies with TRI on snail production and potential projects for women)	Realised
Friday, 26/11/2021	08h00 – 08h30	Interview with Adilson da Mata (Director DFB), Meyer Antonio (GEF Focal Point DFB) to report on preliminary main findings and recommendations	Realised
	10h00 – 11h30	Debriefing with PMU and CTA	Realised
	11h30 – 13h00	Debriefing with FAO-STP to be confirmed	Realised
	14h30-15h30	Interview with Amancio Valentin da Cruz Barros on forest traditional medicines (currently not linked to BioTech's bankable project on traditional medicine)	Realised
	16h00 – 17h00	Interview with Lucio Pinto and Manuel Penhor, President and Vice President of the Institute for Science and Technology within the University of STP to review potential applied research with STP-TRI	Realised
	17h00 – 17h30	Wrap-up with local consultant on the MTR and follow-up on the e-questionnaire	Realised
Saturday, 27/11/2021	17:55 – 10:30+1	Travel to homebase, London Gatwick Airport (via Lisbon)	Realised
Tuesday, 30/11/2021	08:30 - 09:00	Remote interview (via Teams/Whatsapp) with the Budget Holder, Mr Mutea, on the MTR on the TRI project in STP	Realised
Friday, 03/12/2021	16:30-17:30	Update on the MTR mission with Nelly Bourlion	Realised
Monday, 06/12/2021	10:00 – 11:00	Remote interview (via Skype) with Emma Tuzinkiewicz, Sustainability Director and Chief of Staff, HBD Príncipe	Realised on 03 February 2022
Monday, 06/12/2021	14:00 – 15:00	Remote interview with former LTO Faustine (on maternity leave)	Cancelled
Tuesday, 07/12/2021	14:00-15:00	Remote coordination meeting with FAO-Kenya on start of MTR mission in February	Realised
Wednesday, 08/12/2021	09:00	Final day for submission of e-questionnaire	Realised

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Monday, 13/12/2021	09:00	Start formulation of the draft report	Realised
Monday, 21/12/2021	09:00 – 12:00	Submit Back to the office report	Realised
Wednesday, 12/01/2022	09:30- 11:00	Online debriefing on the main findings, conclusions and preliminary recommendations of the MTR	Realised
Thursday, 13/01/2022 to Friday, 21/01/2022	09:00	Missing data collection; coordination with FAO-SCF on collecting missing financial data to 30/11/2021	Realised
Tuesday 31/01/2022	09:00	Presentation of the draft report	Realised
Tuesday 08/03/2022	12:00	All comments from stakeholders received (FAO-SCF being the last to provide comments on 08/03/2022)	Realised
Monday, 21/03/2022	12:00	Incorporation of all comments, editing and submission of second (final) draft report in English (and Portuguese executive summary only)	

### Appendix 3. Table 6 - List of stakeholders prioritised for interview

Key stakeholders	Role in the project	Reason for their inclusion/ exclusion from the MTR	Priority for MTR 1 = essential 2 = desirable 3 = complementary	How and when should they be involved in the MTR (Desk &/or Field Phase)
<b>1. Active stakeholders with direct responsibility for the project, e.g. FAO, project management</b>				
<b>FAO-R</b>				
FAO-R	Project Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Mr. Marco Pagliani	In close coordination with national PM, LTO, national/provincial experts, the CTA provides overall technical support for project implementation (annual work plan formulation, progress reporting, compiling guidelines, field implementation, M&E, etc.	1	<b>Desk Phase Preliminary Interview</b> Date: Wed. 03 November 2021 Time: 10:30 (UK) 11:30 (Spain) <b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Tues. 16 Nov. 2021 Time: 10:30 (Sao Tomé)
FAO-R	Funding Liaison Officer (FLO), GEF Coordination Unit, FAO Ms. Paola Palestini	FLO reviews and approves project progress reports, implementation reviews and financial reports, including budget revisions. FLO also participates in the mid-term reviews, final evaluations, and the development of corrective actions in the project implementation strategy.	1	<b>Desk Phase Preliminary Interview</b> Date: Tues. 09 Nov. 2021 Time: 10 am (UK); 11 am (Italy)
FAO consultant	FAO forestry consultant Blaise Bodin (based in Bazil)	Has provided technical assistance to the project in the form of: a) formulation of the National FLR Plan for STP, b) Landscape Restoration Plans at the project's four intervention sites; c) seedlings production plan; d) work plan for portable saw-mills; e) cost-benefit analysis of restoration interventions; e) producing other maps linked to FLR	1	<b>Desk Phase Preliminary Interview</b> Date: Tues. 09 Nov. 2021 Time: 14:30 (UK); 11:30 (Brazil)
FAO-R	Lead Technical Officer (LTO), FAO Mr. Christophe Besacier	LTO provides technical advice and backstopping to the project, and monitor and certify the technical quality of the PMU's operations.	1	<b>Desk Phase Preliminary Interview</b> Date: Wed. 10 Nov. 2021 Time: 10 am (UK); 11 am (Italy)

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FAO consultant	Rosa Colmer	Has provided technical support to the IFAD PAPAC project in STO and to the child project on seedlings production and tree nursery management.	1	<b>Desk Phase Preliminary Interview</b> Date: Tues. 10 Nov 2021 Time: 11:30 am (UK); 12:30 pm (Spain)
FAO-ST/Gabon	Budget Holder (BH), FAO Mr. Helder Muteia	Responsible for oversight and supervision on the use of funds by the executing partner and achievement of project results.	1	<b>Desk Phase Preliminary Interview</b> Date: Tues. 30 Nov 2021 Time: 08:30 (UK); 09:30 (Gabon)
<b>Project management coordination team in FAO Sao Tomé</b>				
FAO-ST	Project Manager (PM) Mr. Faustino Oliveira	PM supports the BH in the supervision of financial management, project progress, procurement and contracting processes, and in the provision of technical guidance to the project, in close consultation with the LTO and CTA.	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Mon. 15 Nov. 2021 Time: 08:00-9:30 (Sao Tomé); Date: 26 Nov. 2021 Time: 09:00 (Sao Tomé)
FAO-ST	Mr. Argentino Dos Santos Assistant to FAO Representative in STP	Mr Argentino Dos Santos is the most senior officer in the FAO-STP Office and represents the authority of the Representative Mr Muteia. He was involved in the project since design phase.		<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Mon. 15 Nov2021 Time: 10:00 (Sao Tomé)
FAO-ST	Mr. Salvador Pontes Project M&E Officer	Project management team and administrators responsible for supervision of project planning financial management, project progress, procurement and contracting processes, and in the provision of technical guidance to the project, in close consultation with the LTO.	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Wed. 17 Nov. 2021 Time: 08:00 (Sao Tomé)
FAO-ST	Ms. Bárbara Campos Project Assistant			
FAO-ST	Ms. Rosária Almeida Administration & Finance			
<b>Project management staff and stakeholders in the field</b> <sup>30</sup>				
Project site: ST Directorate of Forests and Biodiversity (DFB)	Mr. Adilson da Mata, Director DFB Mr. Meyer António Project Focal Point Ms. Rute Cruz, communication and education Mr. Joao D’Alva, director of DFB	DFB under the MoA is the main counterpart of FAO, leading the FLR program and involved in most of the other project activities. The PIU is hosted within the premises of DFB. Mr Antonio	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Mon. 15 Nov2021 Time: 15:00 (Sao Tomé)

<sup>30</sup> The district criteria is not very relevant in STP because of the tiny size of the country, the main geographic divide is between the two Islands Sao Tomé (ST) and Príncipe (PR)

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	Ms. Páscoa Costa- Responsible for patrolling and member of the FLR Platform	was involved in the design of the project and is the appointed focal point.		
Project site: ST World Bank	Mr. Adilson Carneiro Silva Salvavidas Ambientais, Sociais e Indicadores - AFAP	WB agreed to provide baseline co-financing to TRI-STP under its PRSP project – rehabilitation of the hydro-electric plant in the Contador watershed	2	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Tues 16 Nov. 2021 Time: 08:00 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST + PR IFAD	Ms. Carminda Viegas, Director	IFAD agreed to provide baseline co-financing to TRI-STP under its PAPAC project (now finalized)	2	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: 16 Nov 2021 Time: 14:30 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST Value chain Cooperatives	CECAFEB (organic coffee) Mr. Luis Mario Mr. Liliange Gomes Gonçalves Ms. Mercia Loureiro CEPIBA (organic pepper) Mr. Carlos Tavares	The “value chain cooperatives” established by IFAD approx. 15 years ago have grown into a key economic and social actor in STP. They play a key role in the project as (i) co-implementors of the FLR program; (ii) main partners in certain actions (i.e. portable sawmills); (iii) beneficiaries of CD actions; (iv) members of the FLR platform	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé) CECAFEB</b> Date: 17 Nov 2021 Time: 15:00 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST + PR Policy & Advocacy Consultant	Mr. Agostinho Fernandes	Mr Fernandes was hired under OP 1.2.1 + 3.1.3 to develop the Policy Influence Plan (PIP) and is now leading its implementation under OP 1.2.2	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Thurs 18 Nov. 2021 Time: 16:00 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST Value chain Cooperatives	CECAB (organic cocoa) Mr. António Dias (Diretor Executivo) Maria de Fátima (Vogal do Conselho de Administração) CECAQ11 (high-quality cocoa) Adalberto Luis (Diretor Executivo) Mr. Moisés-Loureiro- Membro da Plataforma FLR	The “value chain cooperatives” established by IFAD approx. 15 years ago have grown into a key economic and social actor in STP. They play a key role in the project as (i) co-implementors of the FLR program; (ii) main partners in certain actions (i.e. portable sawmills); (iii) beneficiaries of CD actions; (iv) members of the FLR platform	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé) CECAB</b> Date: 18 Nov 2021 Time: 10:00 (Sao Tomé)



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Project site: ST + PR Capacity Development Consultant	Mr. Armando Monteiro	Mr Monteiro was hired under OP 3.1.1 to develop the Capacity Building Assessment, and is now leading the organisation/implementation of 4 CD courses scheduled for 2021 and 2022	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Thurs 18 Nov. 2021 Time: 11:00 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST + PR Central Bank of STP	Ângela Santiago Consultora do ENIF  Nayda Almeida Banco Central	Another important partner under OP 3.1.2, thanks to ENIF (National Strategy of Financial Inclusion) recently launched by the CB and joined by TRI-STP as provider or technical assistance. Code of Conduct	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Thurs. 18 Nov. 2021 Time: 14:30 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST + PR Association of Banks of STP (ABS)	Mr. Dialo Santos Presidente da ASB STP Ms. Euridice Jordão- Secretária da Associação ASB STP	ASB is the main partner under OP 3.1.2. A MoU was signed between TRI-STP and ABS that should translate into a joint CD program and collaboration between now and end of the project.	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Thurs. 18 Nov. 2021 Time: 14:30 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST + PR NGO Alisei	Mr. Ruggero Tozzo, Director Ms. Patricia Castro, Info Hub Coordinator	The Italian NGO Alisei is active in STP since many years. TRI-STP entrusted to Alisei the setup of an "Information Hub" (OP 4.2.1) and the implementation of all communication and education activities related to the project.	2	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Fri. 19 Nov.2021 Time: 08:00 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: ST + PR Instituto Oikos	Mr. Tomás Pardo Coordenador de Projetos - Delegação de São Tomé e Príncipe	The Portuguese NGO Instituto Oikos is active in STP since many years. TRI-STP entrusted to IO the implementation of OP2.2.3, income-generated activities related to NTFP in four communities of both islands.	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Fri. 19 Nov. .2021 Time: 14:00 (Sao Tomé)
Project site: PR Regional Directorate of Forest	Ms. Maria dos Prazeres- Diretora Regional do Ambiente Mr. Júlio Mendes- Chefe Departamento da DFB do Príncipe.	Same as DFB, but with responsibility for project implementation on PR	1	<b>Field Phase (Príncipe)</b> Date: Mon. 22 Nov. 2021 Time: 10:30 (Príncipe)
Project site: PR Regional Government of Príncipe	Ms. Ana Alice Mata- Regional Secretary for Environment and Sustainable Development Regional Mr. Flascoter Hugo de Oliveira – Regional Secretary for Economy	The Regional Government of Príncipe is the main interlocutor, together with the Regional Directorate of Forests, for all the actions taking place on the island of Príncipe.	1	<b>Field Phase (Príncipe)</b> Date: Mon 22 Nov. 2021 Time: 12:00

<b>2. Active stakeholders with authority to make decisions on the project, e.g. members of the PSC (national level)</b>				
Ministry (Executing agency)	Position: Ministro de Agricultura Pesca e Desenvolvimento Rural Name: Mr. Francisco Ramos	GEF Focal Point in Sao Tomé Mr Lourenço Monteiro	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Tues. 16 Nov. .2021 Time: 09:00 (Sao Tomé)
Ministry	Position: Secretário do Estado do Ambiente Name: Mr. Eugénio Nascimento		1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> To be confirmed in Sao Tomé
<b>3. Stakeholders at grassroots level who benefit directly or indirectly from the intervention (gender disaggregated where possible)*</b>				
Project site: ST + PR Grassroot communities involved in the design/implementation of the FLR program	Position: Angolares Name: Mr. Hugulay Maia	Members of the communities were involved by DFB in the initial assessments and eventually in the design of the FLR plans in the four focal landscapes. These communities are also being involved in the implementation phase that is now taking off.	2	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b>  Visit to be confirmed in Sao Tomé with the PMU (time permitting)
	Position: Plancas I Name: Mr. António Mendes			
	Position: Presidente Claudino Faro Name: Fátima			
Project site: ST + PR NTFP target communities under OP 2.2.3	President Community of Generosa Name: Mr. Benvindo Pereira	The four communities were selected as beneficiaries under OP 2.2.3, for the development of income-generating actions related to NTFP (honey + ground snails). This action is entrusted to IO but the PIU and DFB were in charge of the initial community assessment and selection.	2	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé) Generosa (W)</b> Date: 19 Nov 2021 Time: 10:00 (Sao Tomé) Int. Consultant
	Community of Sao Carlos Name: Camélia Salomé			<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé) Sao Carlos</b> Date: Thurs. 25 Nov. .2021 Time: 14:00 (Sao Tomé)
	Community of Porto Real Name: Kmilson Lima (snail production)			<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé) / Montalegre (W)</b> Date: 23 Nov 2021 Time: 10:00 (Sao Tomé) Nat. Consultant
	Community of Montalegre Name: Vanderley Moreira (snail production)			<b>Field Phase (Principe) / Porto Real (Centre)</b> Date: 23 Nov 2021 Time: 12:00 (Sao Tomé)

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


Project site: ST + PRINCIPE Beneficiaries of OP 3.2.2 small and medium sized bankable project	Beneficiary: Proasilvflor” - Projecto Agro-Silvo-florestal, Roça Abade Name: Daniel Neves	Upon the launch of a call for proposals in Spring 2021, the applications of seven small/medium size companies/organisations were selected as beneficiaries of the grants scheme of project under OP 3.2.2. The applicants are now going through the award process set by the FAO manual of operations and their project will start soon.	2	<b>Field phase (Principe)</b> Date: Mon. 22 Nov. .2021 Time: 11:00 (Proasilvflor - D. Neves)
	Beneficiary: Projeto Belavista Florestal Name: Alisio Paraíso		2	<b>Field phase (Principe)</b> Date: Mon. 22 Nov. .2021  Time: 14:00 (Bella Vista Florestal)
	Beneficiary: Ecoquinta-Turismo da Natureza Name: Ester Costa		2	<b>Field phase (Principe)</b> Date: Mon. 23 Nov. .2021  Time: 15:30 (near airport)
	Beneficiary: BioTech São Tomé Name: António Alberto		3	<b>Field phase Sao Tome)</b> Date: Mon. 22 Nov. .2021  Time: Not possible as in Principe
	Beneficiary: Fogon Poco Nhâ Name: MARAPA/ manual Jorge Carvalho Rio		3	<b>Field phase (Sao Tome)</b> Date: Mon. 22 Nov. .2021  Time: Not possible as in Principe
Project site: ST Beneficiary under different actions of Component 3	Position: Local entrepreneur Name: Bastien Loloum (Bankable projects)	One of the most dynamic entrepreneurs in the field of NTFP, and involved in many conservation and development projects in the country, Mr. Loloum has often acted as informal advisor of the project and is involved in component 3, both as a recipient of training in the field of FLR finance/marketing and as a beneficiary (OP 3.2.2) (SMEs Zuntabawe, Delícias das Ilhas and Vanha	1	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Date: Thurs. 25 Nov. 2021  Time: 14:30 (Sao Tomé)
<b>4. Secondary stakeholders (only indirectly or temporarily affected)</b>				
None identified			3	
<b>5. Stakeholders at grassroots level who do not benefit from the intervention (gender disaggregated where possible)</b>				

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None identified			3	
<b>6. Other interest groups that are not participating directly in the intervention, e.g. UN/other agencies working in the area, civil-society organizations</b>				
NGO Monte Pico (AMP)	António Alamô	President of the Association supporting FLR	2	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> No time available in agenda
CIAT	Xavier Mendes	Director	3	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> No time available in agenda
UNDP	Adérito Santana	Liaison with UNDP STP is very strong, both for financial/administrative aspects, as co-funders/ initiators of OP 41.1, and because they run actions/projects that are relevant to Tri-STP	2	<b>Field Phase (Sao Tomé)</b> Unavailable
Universidade de São Tomé et Príncipe	Lucio Pinto and Manuel Penhor,	President and Vice President of the Institute for Science and Technology, University of STP – discussion on developing a forestry course and applied research into FLR in STP	2	Field phase (Sao Tomé)  Date: Fri. 26 Nov. 2021  Time: 16:30 (Sao Tome)
HBD Hotels group	Emma Tuzinkiewicz,	Sustainability Director and Chief of Staff, HBD Príncipe	2	Synthesis phase (UK)  Date: 03/02/2022 Time: 14:00

\*Interviews grouped as follows: 1) with FAO staff, then 2) Project Management Unit staff, then 3) project management field staff, then 4) grassroots CSOs and local communities at county level (national consultant will be delegated do some/all of these and then to report back to the international consultant who may/may not visit the country according to the latest situation on the COVID-19 pandemic), then 5) research centres/universities, indirect stakeholders, etc.

\*\* Stakeholder groups 3 and 4 listed in the FAO MTR reporting guidelines have been interchanged to reflect the three main groups of direct beneficiaries, followed by indirect beneficiaries in groups 4-6, who are complementary for interview if time allows.

	Confirmed		Did not take place		Did not attend meeting/interview
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## Appendix 4. MTR evaluation matrix (questions for selected stakeholders)

UNEG/GEF Criteria	Questions and sub questions	Indicators and judgement criteria	Sources of information/ methods of enquiry
<b>1. Relevance (e-Questionnaire only)</b>			
<b>1.1 Alignment &amp; ownership at national level</b>	<p><b>Questionnaire Q1 (FAO/national partner) + Triangulate with national stakeholders if required:</b></p> <p><i>Are project outcomes still congruent with country priorities linked to forestry, planning and sector development and/or have new/reformed policies, plans, programmes affected the relevance of the NCP?</i></p>	<p>Level of project alignment to relevant national, sector and cross-cutting policies and plans</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>1.1.1 The Prodoc still conforms with current national government development/sector policies, strategies and plans (especially linked to land-use, forestry, agriculture and energy sectors)</p> <p>i. national government continues to show willingness to support and provide resources for the PFLR and reforms to integrate FLR, SFM, PES, development of NTFPs (with a gender focus).</p>	<p>1) Prodoc</p> <p>2) National Development/Forestry Plans</p> <p>3) NBCSAP/NDCs for STP</p> <p>4) National sector policies, strategies and plans</p> <p>5) National statistics / NFLMS system (if available)</p> <p>7) TRI/NCP-STP - Theory of change</p> <p>8) Responses to online-questionnaire + follow-up</p>

<b>1.2 Alignment and ownership at sub-national level</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q2 (FAO/national partner) + Triangulate with sub-national stakeholders and beneficiary communities if required:</b> <i>Does the project continue to respond to local needs of forestry department at the sub-national (district) level and local communities in the project intervention areas?</i>	<p>Level of alignment with sub national policy framework, regulations, and guidelines and current needs of local communities.</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>1.2.1 Prodoc still conforms with current national government development/sector policies, strategies and plans (latest reforms/new local policies, strategies and plans have been coordinated with the PFLR)?</p> <p>1.2.2 Prodoc still conforms with the needs assessments conducted at the start of the project in the beneficiary communities;</p> <p>1.2.3 Prodoc still confirms with market studies concerning the development of NTFPs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) District Development/Forestry management plans;</li> <li>3) NCP-STP needs assessments</li> <li>4) Sub-national statistics on forestry, carbon sinks, biodiversity, NTFPs, etc. (including from NFLMS system if available);</li> <li>5) Responses to online-questionnaire and (if required) follow-up Interviews with sub-national stakeholders in STP</li> </ol>
<b>1.3 Alignment with GEF/FAO priorities</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q3 (to FAO):</b> <i>Does the project remain fully aligned to GEF and FAO priorities and objectives?</i>	<p>Level of alignment with GEF-6 and FAO priorities and objectives</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>1.3.1 Level of alignment with focal areas CC-2 (Prog 4); LD-2; LD-3; SFM-3 (and priorities BD-2)</p> <p>1.3.2 Level of alignment with FAO's Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable;</p> <p>1.3.3 Level of alignment with CPF priorities (if available).</p> <p>1.3.4 Level of alignment with GEF/FAO priorities on Gender, human rights and FPIC of ethnic minorities/indigenous peoples</p> <p>1.3.5 Evidence GEF Focal areas are tracked in the NFLMS/internal monitoring system of NCP-STP</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) Strategic documents of GEF6 and FAO (Our Priorities - Strategic Objectives), CPF (if available);</li> <li>3) PIR/PPRs</li> <li>4) M&amp;E reports</li> <li>4) Questionnaire and (if required interviews with FAO/PSC</li> </ol>

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<b>1.4 Alignment with wider international goals and targets</b>	<p><b>Questionnaire Q4 (to FAO):</b> Does the project design enable monitoring of project contributions in relation to targets for relevant SDGs, Aichi Targets, NDCs, Bonn Challenge pledgees?</p>	<p>Level of alignment with indicators and targets linked to relevant SDGs, Aichi Targets, NDCs (to 2030)</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>1.4.1 Evidence of alignment with/monitoring of relevant targets under SDGs 1 (poverty), 5 (gender), 6 (water), 13 (climate change) and 15 (life on land);</p> <p>1.4.2 Evidence of alignment with/monitoring of relevant Aichi Targets 5 (loss of forest habitats at least halved, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced), 14 (ecosystems restored taking into account needs of women) and 15 (ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks enhanced);</p> <p>1.4.3 Evidence of alignment with/monitoring of specific targets in the NDCs linked to mitigation and adaptation in the forestry sector in STP;</p> <p>1.4.4. Evidence of alignment with/monitoring of national pledges under the Bonn Challenge 2030 and any other relevant initiatives on reducing carbon emissions (such as application of MRV under REDD+ Readiness to determine carbon inventories)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) Progress reports</li> <li>3) M&amp;E reports</li> <li>4) Questionnaire and (if required) interviews with FAO/PSC</li> </ol>
<b>2. Effectiveness</b>			
<b>2.1 Component 1 - Strengthened regulatory and policy environment for FLR in STP</b>	<p><b>Interviews in STP - Q1a (to all main stakeholders in PFLR):</b> To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs/targets to meet <b>Outcome 1.1</b> - Enhanced national commitment to FLR in STP?</p> <p><b>Interviews in STP – Q1b (to all main stakeholders in PFLR):</b> To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs/targets to meet <b>Outcome 1.2</b> - Improved and</p>	<p>Level of achievement of outcome 1.1:</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>2.1.1 PFLR has been created and demonstrates it has established an inclusive decision-making mechanism to guide and steer FLR actions in the project sites;</p> <p>2.1.2 A national FLR Plan has been approved and is the process of implementation to advance forest conservation, restoration and its sustainable use in STP;</p> <p>Level of achievement of outcome 1.2:</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>2.1.3 Gaps identified on applying FLR in current policy, legal and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) ToC</li> <li>2) Prodoc</li> <li>3) Progress reports (PIR/PPR)</li> <li>3) GAP analysis and other relevant project assessments</li> <li>4) National policy, strategy and planning documents, legal documents, regulations</li> <li>5) Interviews with national stakeholders</li> </ol>



	<p><i>conducive policy framework for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of STP forests</i></p>	<p>regulatory framework for forest management, conservation and sustainable use;</p> <p>2.1.4 Evidence of mainstreaming of FLR/SFM in revised sector policies, strategies and plans and changes in the legal, regulatory and institutional framework supportive of FLR</p> <p>2.1.5. Evidence of new incentives to apply FLR in STP.</p>	
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<p><b>2.2 Component 2 - Implementation of Restoration Programs and Complementary Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Interviews in STP – Q2a (to sub-national stakeholders/communities):</b> <i>To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs/targets to meet</i> <b>Outcome 2.1</b> - <i>Participatory FLR interventions to enhance ecosystem services and mitigate climate change in vulnerable natural forest areas in STP, as a public-private partnership?</i></p> <p><b>Interviews in STP – Q2b (to sub-national stakeholders/communities):</b> <i>To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs/targets to meet</i> <b>Outcome 2.2</b> - <i>Enhanced and improved use of forest resources for the benefit of local communities living in sensitive landscapes of STP?</i></p>	<p>No of hectares under FLR actions that are enhancing ecosystem services and mitigating climate change against the target of 27,500 ha (to 31 October 2021): <b>Judgement criteria:</b> 2.2.1 Actual no. of hectares in the Contador River Watershed (managed by PRSP-World Bank) under FLR plans based on sustainable management by private-public-community partnerships against the target of 4,500 ha (to 12/11/2023) 2.2.2 No. of hectares of natural forestland under FLR plans, based on sustainable management by private-public-community partnerships against the target of 23,000 ha to 12/11/2023 (15,500 ha in ST and 7,500 in Principe) 2.2.3 Degree of satisfaction/ownership of stakeholders and local communities with the FLR process applied so far and main gaps that remain 2.2.4 Amount of carbon sequestration achieved against the target in the Prodoc (8.034 m. tCO<sub>2</sub>eq over 20 years)</p> <p>No. of households/communities applying the conservation and sustainable use of their forest resources in the project sites against the targets in the Prodoc <b>Judgement criteria:</b> 2.2.3 No. of hectares of shadow forests in the buffer zones of Obo and Príncipe Natural Parks supporting high-quality agro-forestry plantations (based on doubling the no. of species promoted by DFB) against the target of 7,150 ha (to 12/11/2023) 2.2.4 No. of Pilot “Intelligent Mobile Wood Processing Plants” established and operated by private-public-community partnerships against a target of 3 (2 in ST, 1 in P) 2.2.5 No. of households/communities benefiting from improved net incomes from the sale of NTFPs in the project intervention sites against a target of 600 (400 in ST and 200 in P) 2.2.3 Degree of satisfaction/ownership of stakeholders and local communities with the above activities so far and main gaps that remain.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Progress reports (PIR/PPR)</li> <li>2) Forestry plans and regulations;</li> <li>3) PRSP progress documents</li> <li>4) Procurement documents</li> <li>4) Interviews with stakeholders</li> <li>5) Site visits</li> </ol>
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<p><b>2.3 Component 3 - Strengthening institutions finance and up-scaling of FLR</b></p>	<p><b>Interviews in STP – Q3a (to national stakeholders):</b> <i>To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs to meet <b>Outcome 3.1</b> - Strengthened national capacity on the principles and practices of FLR, on the concepts and use of ecosystem services, and on FLR financial instruments?</i></p> <p><b>Interviews in STP – Q3b (to national stakeholders):</b> <i>To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs to meet <b>Outcome 3.2</b> - public-private partnerships upscale FLR by implementing national bankable projects on FLR?</i></p>	<p>No. of people trained on the concepts, principles and practices of FLR, ecosystem services and FLR finance in STP: <b>Judgement criteria:</b> 3.1.1 No. of PFLR members, project partners, and other stakeholders from the institutional, private, and civil society sectors trained on FLR ROAM, ANR, SFM, SLM), ecosystem services (PES), and on FLR financial instruments (Compliance Carbon Market, Voluntary Carbon Markets, REDD+, Green Climate Fund) 3.1.2 No. of new credit lines for: a) FLR-related actions; b) for SMEs linked to NTFPs; c) elaboration of Codes of Conduct for the ASB and other private financial entities; 3.1.3 New regime of benefits and fiscal incentives with recommendations for their application discussed, agreed and approved by the PFLR and DFB (based on an Assessment study on the National Fund for Forest Development of STP (NFFD)). 3.1.4 Degree of satisfaction of stakeholders trained on the above activities and main gaps that remain No. of public-private-community partnerships applying bankable projects identified by the PFLR against a target of 5 projects <b>Judgement Criteria</b> 3.2.1 No. of medium-sized bankable FLR projects (over USD 100k) that are being implemented by public-private-community partnerships (engaging national actors) - total of two planned. 3.2.2 No. of small bankable FLR projects (from USD 10k to 50k) that are being implemented through public-private-community partnerships (engaging national actors) - total of three planned 3.2.3 Degree of satisfaction of national actors applying the bankable projects and main gaps that remain</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Progress reports (PIR/PPR)</li> <li>2) IFAD/PAPAC progress reports</li> <li>3) Capacity assessment reports and capacity development plans</li> <li>4) FLR Finance Specialist reports</li> <li>5) Bank Codes of Conduct</li> <li>6) Assessment study on the National Fund for Forest Development of STP (NFFD)</li> <li>7) Bankable project documents</li> <li>8) Interviews with local stakeholders and beneficiaries' organisations participating in the project</li> </ol>
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<p><b>2.4 Component 4 - Knowledge, partnerships, monitoring and assessment and linkages with GCP</b></p>	<p><b>Interviews in STP – Q4a (to FAO-STP and national stakeholders):</b> <i>To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs to meet <b>Outcome 4.1</b> - Collaborative monitoring and evaluation system successfully implemented (National Forest and Landscape Monitoring System - national GIS platform)?</i></p> <p><b>Interviews in STP – Q4b (to FAO-STP and national stakeholders):</b> <i>To what extent has the project delivered planned outputs to meet <b>Outcome 4.2</b> - Lessons learned and best practices from the NCP-STP and the TRI network disseminated among relevant audiences</i></p>	<p>No. of people trained to operate and maintain the NFLMS</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>4.1.1) National Forest and Landscape Monitoring System established, operating and able to track TRI's core indicators on FLR</p> <p>4.1.2) No. of stakeholders taking part in the NFLMS</p> <p>4.1.3) Level of satisfaction of people participating in the NFLMS on their capacity to apply effective and efficient data management and whether the NFLMS is geared to promoting learning at all levels on FLR</p> <p>No. of communications on lessons and good practices recorded on FLR in STP disseminated in the country, to GCP, to the TRI and international communities.</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>4.2.1) information clearinghouse and national focal point for knowledge management on FLR operating in DFB/MAFRD</p> <p>4.2.2) Communications from GCP on best practices, lessons learned, success stories and capacity development initiatives have been received and used by national stakeholders in the PFLR.</p>	<p>1) Progress reports (PIR/PPR)</p> <p>2) Monitoring reports and data</p> <p>3) TRI communications and documents on good practices, lessons learnt, FLR tools, results monitoring, knowledge products, etc.</p> <p>4) Interviews with stakeholders</p>
<p><b>3. Efficiency (e-Questionnaire)</b></p>			
<p><b>3.1 - Efficiency of project implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Questionnaire Q5 (to FAO-STP and national partner):</b> <i>To what extent has the project's four main components been implemented in a timely manner? –</i></p> <p><i>Please provide level of physical implementation against financial implementation for each component (broken down by outputs) to 31 October 2021 <b>using the table provided by the MTR</b></i></p>	<p>Level of physical implementation and expenditure against planned implementation and expenditure to 31/10/2021 (rate of conversion of resources into outputs and outcomes against plan)</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>3.1.1 PSC is providing guidance and oversight in an efficient and effective manner as planned?</p> <p>3.1.2 MAFRD is fulfilling its role as executing agency as foreseen in the Prodoc</p> <p>3.1.3 The PMU demonstrates DEX is an efficient way to implement the project (compared to other methods such as Operational Partner's Implementation Modality (OPIM)</p> <p>3.1.4 Physical progress on project outputs is at a satisfactory level at end of year 3 (12/11/2021) of 5 taking into account loss of time due to the pandemic</p>	<p>1) Progress and annual reports;</p> <p>2) Technical reports</p> <p>3) Follow-up interviews (if required) with PMU staff and PSC members, MAFRD/DFB</p>

<b>3.2 – Co-finance and synergies to enhance efficiency</b>	<p><b>Questionnaire Q6 (to FAO-STP and national partner):</b> <i>Is the level of co-finance foreseen in the Prodoc flowing as planned to support the project's implementation?</i></p> <p><i>Please provide estimated level of in-kind and cash contributions to the project by MAFRD and through agreements/synergies established with PRSP/World Bank and PAPAC/IFAD (by components 1-4) to 31 October 2021 using the table provided by the MTR.</i></p>	<p>Level of co-finance spent against planned expenditure to 31/10/2021</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>3.2.1 Assessment of the Table recording co-finance to determine how far co-finance expenditure rates are satisfactory to 31/10/2021</p> <p>3.2.2 Assessment of project finances to determine how far any shortfalls in expenditure rates are explained by the fact committed expenditure has not yet been disbursed, or whether there are deeper problems in receiving co-finance from partners</p> <p>3.2.3 Assessment of delays and their causes (internal/external factors), in particular relating to the COVID-19 pandemic)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Progress and annual reports;</li> <li>2) Financial budgets and expenditure reports</li> <li>3) Official agreements between MAFRD, NCP-STP and PRSP/World Bank and PAPAC/IFAD</li> <li>4) Follow-up Interviews (if required) with PMU, MAFRD/DFB, PRSP/WB, PAPAC/IFAD</li> </ol>
<b>3.3 – Cost efficiency</b>	<p><b>Questionnaire Q7 (to FAO-STP and national partner):</b> <i>To what extent is the PSC, PMU and PFLR delivering a satisfactory level of cost-efficiency (ability to convert resources into outputs and outcomes as planned at less cost than alternative implementation mechanisms such as OPIM)</i></p>	<p>Level of expenditure to administer the NCP-STP by the PMU against total expenditure to 31/10/2021</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>3.3.1 Assessment of expenditure on PMU (DEX) compared to total expenditure is satisfactory and better/equal to estimated expenditure had OPIM been applied</p> <p>3.3.2 Assessment of co-finance reveals cost-savings in operations have been achieved by working with PRSP and PAPAC.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) PIRs/PPRs</li> <li>3) Technical progress</li> <li>4) Annual reports;</li> <li>5) Interviews with PMU/DFB</li> </ol>
<b>3.3 – Cost effectiveness</b>	<p><b>Questionnaire Q8 (to FAO-STP and national partner) + triangulation in the field as required:</b> <i>Are project outputs achieving a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness in relation to number of hectares under FLR-activities and number of direct households benefitting from these activities.</i></p>	<p>Level of expenditure against a) total number of hectares under FLR and b) total number of direct households benefiting from FLR-related funded by the project is satisfactory (equal, or better than planned) to 31/10/2021.</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>3.3.3 Assessment of average cost to apply FLR against number of hectares achieved to 31/10/2021 is satisfactory (in line with plan);</p> <p>3.3.4 Assessment of average cost to apply FLR against total number of direct beneficiaries achieved to 31/10/2021 is satisfactory (in line or better than planned);</p> <p>3.3.5 No. of joint initiatives and synergies with PRSP and PAPAC provide evidence of cost savings to NCP-STP on applying number of hectares under FLR/number of direct beneficiaries;</p> <p>3.3.6 Evidence that the application of lessons learned/good practices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) PIRs/PPRs</li> <li>3) Technical progress</li> <li>4) Annual reports;</li> <li>5) Interviews with PMU/DFB</li> </ol>

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		on FLR from other NCPs have contributed to improving cost effectiveness	
<b>4. Sustainability:</b>			
<b>4.1 - sustaining project actions and results</b>	<b>Interviews in STP – Q5 (to FAO-STP and national/sub-national stakeholders):</b> <i>What is the likelihood that the project's main actions and results (including implementation of bankable projects) will be sustained after the NCP-STP has ended?</i>	<p>No. of project inputs (training), outputs and outcomes where public, private, non-governmental, or community-based support is likely to continue after the project</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria</b></p> <p>4.1.1 Evidence that local partnerships will remain committed to allocating human and/or financial resources to operate, maintain, up-scale FLR actions, the bankable projects on FLR, and development of NTFPs,</p> <p>4.1.2 Evidence the PFLR will be made permanent</p> <p>4.1.3 Evidence DFB will retain capacity and funding to monitor carbon sequestration, etc.</p> <p>4.1.4 Evidence FAO/UNEP/IUCN staff working on related forestry projects, REDD+ and biodiversity conservation in STP/Central Africa will support networking and provide services to STP.</p> <p>4.15) Evidence of community willingness/ownership to continue to apply FLR/livelihoods linked to NTFPs (local ordinances, farm investment levels, expansion of FLR)</p>	<p>1) Progress reports</p> <p>2) Monitoring and annual reports</p> <p>3) Technical reports</p> <p>4) interviews with PMU and key stakeholders at national and sub-national levels</p>

<p><b>4.2 - risks to sustainability of project actions and results</b></p>	<p><b>Interviews in STP – Q6 (to FAO-STP and PSC members):</b> <i>What are the main <b>external risks</b> (socio-political, institutional, financial, fiduciary, security, climatic, environmental, health-related, etc.) that may affect the sustainability of the NCP's results and benefits (financial, socioeconomic, institutional and governance, and environmental aspects and what could be done to mitigate medium and high risks to support sustainability of the project's main actions and results?</i></p>	<p>Risk management has been fully integrating into the forestry and development planning process to enhance the resilience of STP's forests and forest communities.</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>4.2.1 Evidence that current high/medium external risks that pose a threat to sustaining the project's main outputs and outcomes have been attended to with appropriate and realistic mitigation measures - in particular continuation of key public services, funding mechanisms for FLR, synergies with PRSP/PAPAC,</p> <p>4.2.2 Evidence effective law enforcement is in place to deter illegal logging, bad practices and corruption</p> <p>4.2.3 Data from the NFLMS remains reliable and supports decision making to continue CC adaptation and mitigation policies in STP's forest ecosystems</p> <p>4.2.4 DFB develops and maintains capacity to apply effective monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) on its carbon stocks (in line with REDD+ readiness).</p> <p>4.2.5 Interviews provide proposals on how to improve the application of risk management in FLR planning and monitoring</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) Work plans and progress/annual reports;</li> <li>3) Technical, training and workshop reports;</li> <li>4) Internal M&amp;E reports</li> <li>5) Project communications</li> <li>6) Group and individual interviews of government and local community stakeholders</li> </ol>
<p><b>4.3 – Replication/scaling up of FLR in STP</b></p>	<p><b>Interviews in STP – Q7 (to FAO and national/sub-national stakeholders):</b> <i>How far is FLR, SFM-SLM, PES and development of NTFPs being replicated outside of the project intervention sites (in particular through partnerships involving national/local authorities, follow-on farmers and the private sector) and are there any important lessons and good practices are supporting the replication process?</i></p>	<p>Level of replication of project actions and good practices outside the project sites (both ST and P) to 31/10/2021</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>4.4.1 NFLMS provides evidence that bankable projects are replicating project actions and good practices in five new sites;</p> <p>4.4.2 Evidence from interviews and site visits of follow-on farmers adopting FLR good practices in neighbouring forest plots/other districts</p> <p>4.4.4 Interviews with DFB and other government stakeholders confirm commitments to replicating FLR in new sites after the project.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) Work plans and progress/annual reports;</li> <li>3) Project's Exit strategy</li> <li>4) Forestry Department monitoring and reporting on FLR/SFM through the target provinces and elsewhere in Pakistan</li> <li>4) Interviews with PMU, TRI and Forestry</li> </ol>



5. Potential impact of the project over the long-term (to Agenda 2030)			
<b>5.1 Likelihood of positive impact - meeting of the project's development objective</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q9 (FAO-STP, National PSC members)</b> <b>+ triangulation in the field:</b> <i>Are there any major barriers, or external risks that are likely to prevent transformational change to a more sustainable economy and resilient society in STP and what should the PFLR/government and FAO do to reduce these barriers and risks/enhance opportunities to deliver change and meet TRI's overall environmental and development objectives by 2030?</i>	National partners are taking steps to address risks/barriers to support the project meet TRI's environmental and development objectives: <b>Judgement criteria:</b> 6.1.1 Evidence that lessons are being learned and risks managed to meet objectives (especially in relation to: decision/policy makers, engaging the public, private and non-governmental sectors, local community organisations) 6.1.2 Project's exit strategy has been defined clarifying the roles of main stakeholders and FAO in the post-project era of TRI	1) Progress reports 2) TRI global project progress and annual reports 3) Interviews
5 Factors affecting performance (e-questionnaire)			
<b>5.1 - Project design</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q10 (to FAO-STP and PSC members)</b> <b>+ triangulation in the field:</b> <i>Is the project's budget and intervention logic clear, coherent and in line with current needs of the country, or are there aspects of the project design (including the Results Matrix) relating to objectives, results/outcomes, outputs, indicators, assumptions/risks, budget that have affected performance (at start-up, annual planning, during implementation) and need adjusting?</i>	No. of areas where the project design has gaps/shortcomings that are impeding the delivery of results/meeting of objectives <b>Judgement criteria:</b> 5.1.1) The project's causal logic (results matrix) is coherent, clear and realistic at the current time and in the timeframe allowed? 5.1.2) The allocation of resources in the Prodoc is sufficient to cover all the actions proposed under components 1-4? 5.1.3) The selection of the four project sites and target communities is feasible according to the resources available and logistics concerned in STP and links to SFC/FAO-R 5.1.4) Needs assessments of national and local stakeholders have been conducive to them taking over the ownership of project actions and results 5.1.5) Gap analysis on the policy and legal framework has adequate funding to meet the needs of the government? 5.1.6) The new funding mechanisms and promotion of public-private-community partnerships for FLR and NTFPs remain priorities for the government.	1) Prodoc/RM; 2) ToC 3) Progress reports; 4) Questionnaire and follow-up interviews with FAO staff, main stakeholders, end beneficiaries

<b>5.2 – Quality of execution and management</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q10 (to FAO-STP and PSC members) + triangulation in the field:</b> <i>Is there any evidence to indicate the quality of project execution and management has been unsatisfactory, affected the project's implementation and needs improving?</i>	<p>No of areas where the implementing mechanism is unable to deliver results as planned and secure their continuation/upscaling</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>5.2.1 Executing agency (MAFRD) - has the resources and authority needed to execute the NCP-STP as planned (in particular can mobilise cross-sector dialogue, coordination and planning)</p> <p>5.2.2) PSC - has the representation needed to provide the guidance and monitoring proposed in the Prodoc</p> <p>5.2.3) PMU has the resources to operate effectively, apply results-based monitoring and apply mitigation measures linked to medium and high external risks</p> <p>5.2.4) The private-public-community partnerships are easy to mobilise and able to deliver results as planned in the Prodoc.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc/logical framework</li> <li>2) ToC</li> <li>3) Progress reports</li> <li>4) Questionnaire and follow-up interviews if required</li> </ol>
<b>5.3 – GEF/FAO oversight and financial management</b>	<b>Interviews in STP: Q8 (to national and sub-national stakeholders):</b> <i>Has GEF/FAO support in any way affected the financial and technical performance of the project (such as due to inadequate levels of oversight, supervision and backstopping on project planning, implementation and monitoring?</i>	<p>Percentage of funds spent in relation to plan (to June 2021).</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>5.3.1) Level of co-financing and GEF funding delivered on time?</p> <p>5.3.2) Level of additional co-financing leveraged/provided since start of implementation?</p> <p>5.3.3) Have any shortfalls in co-financing/additional funding had an adverse/positive effect on project results?</p> <p>5.3.4) At least 60% of interviewees (government stakeholders and beneficiary communities, women groups) confirm quality of FAO support has been satisfactory or better</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>2) Questionnaire and follow-up interviews if required</li> </ol>
<b>5.4 - Stakeholder engagement and Partnerships</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q11 (FAO-STP, National PSC members) + triangulation in the field:</b> <i>To what extent have the project's main stakeholders (including local partners and PRSP/PAPAC played an active role in planning, implementation and monitoring?</i>	<p>No. of interviewees who perceive the level of their participation in project implementation has been satisfactory or better</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria</b></p> <p>5.4.1) Majority of interviewees (public, private, civil society, vulnerable groups) confirm they are satisfied with their participation in decision-making and monitoring of project implementation (in accordance with the needs assessments)</p> <p>5.4.2 Evidence the project's partnerships/synergies with IFAD, World Bank and other donors have contributed to project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) Progress and annual reports</li> <li>3) Partnership agreements</li> <li>4) Questionnaire and follow-up interviews with FAO staff, main stakeholders, end beneficiaries</li> </ol>

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<b>5.5 - Communication and knowledge management</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q12 (FAO-STP, National PSC members) + triangulation in the field:</b> <i>How effective has the SMNFP been in developing and applying an effective communication strategy on FLR to support informed decision-making within the PFLR and DFB on the upscaling of FLR/SFM-SLM, on the development of sustainable NTFPs and on diffusing good practices, lessons learnt, success stories to GCP and other NCPs?</i>	<p>No. of communications on results, lessons learned and good practices, case studies/experiences from NCP-STP shared at project and TRI levels</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>5.5.1 Evidence data from the SMNFP is supporting the production of knowledge products, communications, training materials</p> <p>5.5.2 Evidence communication products feeding into project planning and supporting the sustainability and scaling up of project results</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) PIRs/PPRs, annual reports</li> <li>2) Knowledge and communication materials produced by the project at Pakistan and global TRI levels</li> <li>3) M&amp;E strategy/plan and reports</li> <li>4) Questionnaire and follow-up interviews if required</li> </ol>
<b>5.6 - M&amp;E design and implementation</b>	<b>Questionnaire Q13 (FAO-STP, National PSC members) + triangulation in the field:</b> <i>How effective is the NFLMS in: a) supporting the DFB/PFLR measure FLR performance throughout STP; providing data to the PMU's internal M&amp;E system to support progress reporting and track the nine core indicators of TRI?</i>	<p>SMNFP is providing data on FLR in STP that can be compared with baseline data and national targets (linked where appropriate to international targets, goals and pledges) and support reporting on TRI's core indicators</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>5.6.1 Evidence the NFLMS is managing data on FLR effectively (applying data collection, validation and processing protocols, as well as using data to support decision-making</p> <p>5.6.2 Internal M&amp;E system of the project is receiving data from the NFLMS and has used it to support progress reporting on TRI's core indicators;</p> <p>5.6.3 The Monitoring, Review and Learning (MEL) strategy and related tools are being adequately tracked in the project's M&amp;E system</p> <p>5.6.4) The M&amp;E system is tracking gender-disaggregated indicators, baselines and targets to support the planning/application of the project's gender strategy</p> <p>5.6.5) Lessons on good practices are feeding into communications</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc/results framework;</li> <li>2) Work plans</li> <li>3) Progress/annual reports</li> <li>4) NFLMS internal M&amp;E reports</li> <li>5) 6) Questionnaire and follow-up interviews with FAO staff, main stakeholders of SMNFP and project's M&amp;E system</li> </ol>
<b>7. Cross-cutting priorities including gender equality</b>			

<p><b>6.1 - ESS and gender in project design and implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Interviews in STP – Q10 (FAO and PSC members):</b> <i>To what extent has the project implemented and monitored key aspects of the ESS Checklist and established an ESS Mitigation Plan (if applicable)?</i></p> <p><b>Interviews in STP – Q11 (FAO and sub-national members):</b> <i>Have gender considerations taken into full account in the project's planning implementation and monitoring to ensure vulnerable groups such as women and youths are benefitting from: a) access to training, information and resources; b) participation in decision-making positions; c) income generating activities linked to the development of NTFPs?</i></p>	<p>Degree to which stakeholders are satisfied FLR/SFM planning and monitoring are tracking environmental and social risks identified in the ESS Checklist.</p> <p><b>Judgement criteria:</b></p> <p>6.1.1) Environmental risks are monitored and risk mitigation measures applied and/or updated on a yearly basis to support the ecosystem approach to FLR</p> <p>6.1.2) Social-related risks associated with vulnerable groups (families under the poverty line, women, youths, disabled, etc.) are reviewed and appropriate mitigation measures are evident and updated on a yearly basis (in the form of participatory gender analysis and a gender strategy)</p> <p>6.1.3) Project staff and key stakeholders have been trained in applying gender sensitive skills to ensure the needs of women and other groups are fully heard and acted upon in project planning</p> <p>6.1.4) Majority of women and youths interviewed by the MTR team are happy with the support they have received from the project and confirm participation in decision-making on applying FLR and at least 30% of NTFPs are being developed by women.</p> <p>6.1.5) Evidence of any unexpected negative developments on women (e.g.) due increasing workload disproportionately more on women than men)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Prodoc</li> <li>2) Work plans;</li> <li>3) Technical, training and workshop reports;</li> <li>4) M&amp;E reporting</li> <li>5) FAO/GEF Gender objectives and guidance documents</li> <li>6) policies, plans and guidelines integrating FLR/SFM include gender priorities, ESS</li> <li>7) Group and individual interviews (in particular with women and youths)</li> </ol>
<p><b>8. Additional questions - Linkages with GCP, managing the impact of the pandemic</b></p>			
<p><b>7.1. Linkages – added value of GCP</b></p>	<p><b>Interviews in STP – Q12 (FAO and PSC members):</b> <i>How far has the GCP added value to the NCPs activities and what would you suggest the GCP should do to improve NCPs/TRI's effectiveness (for example on coordination, training, monitoring, communication)?</i></p>	<p>Open question - provide up to five suggestions/recommendations</p>	<p>1) Interviews</p>

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<b>7.2 Managing the Covid-19 pandemic</b>	<b>Interviews in STP – Q13 (to FAO-STP and PSC members):</b> <i>Has the Covid-19 pandemic produced any unexpected positive and/or negative results and, if so, what kind of support from FAO/GCP is required to increase/reduce their effects on the implementation of the NCP?</i>	Open questions - provide up to three positive results for Q12a and up to five suggestions/recommendations for Q12b	1) Interviews
	<b>Thank you</b>		

## Appendix 5. List of documents consulted

### Documents consulted that are not available on the internet

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**IUCN/FAO/UNEP/GCP.** The Restoration Initiative 2021 Year in Review (2021)

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**FAO/GEF.** Project Concept Note (Sept. 2016)

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**FAO/PMU.** Project Implementation Report, 01-Jul-2018 to 30-Jun-2019

**FAO/PMU.** Project Implementation Report, 01-Jul-2020 to 30-Jun-2021

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**FAO/PMU.** Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (2021)

**FAO/PMU.** Tracking Tool for GEF6 projects (2021)

**FAO/PMU.** National FLR Plan (2021) in Portuguese

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[https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/database?f%5B0%5D=focal\\_areas%3A2207&f%5B1%5D=focal\\_areas%3A2210&f%5B2%5D=regional\\_country\\_list%3A137](https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/database?f%5B0%5D=focal_areas%3A2207&f%5B1%5D=focal_areas%3A2210&f%5B2%5D=regional_country_list%3A137)

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## Appendix 6: Results matrix at 30 November 2021 with MTR ratings & observations

Objective /Outcome (Results Chain)	Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term target (12 May 2021)	End of project target (12 Nov. 2023)	Achieved at time of MTR (31 Oct. 2021)	MTR Rating*	Justification for rating
<b>PROJECT OBJECTIVE</b>  Promote the restoration and sustainable management of the forest ecosystems of Sao Tome and Principe to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation, and stop and reverse forest and soil degradation	Number of hectares of forest landscapes under restoration and sustainable management disaggregated by: 1) forests; 2) rangelands and grasslands; 3) agriculture/ agroforestry; 4) wetlands/ mangroves.	25 ha	10,000 ha restored by end of Y3	35,000 Ha by the end of the project	0 ha under FLR	<b>MS</b>	Behind schedule due to pandemic and slow take up of FLR by previous gov., but national FLR plan consisting of four FLR project sites identified, mapped and FLR options proposed to MAFRD/DFB; 16 tree nurseries established; FLR ready to start in 2022.
	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender benefitting of the rural development, training, CD work	15,000 community members involved in PAPAC	6,000 community members by the end of Y3	17,000 community members, disaggregated by gender, by the end of the project	0 beneficiaries have completed the training on FLR	<b>MS</b>	Training is behind schedule due to the pandemic and slow take up of FLR by previous gov., but new government is keen to apply FLR in 2022

	carried out by the project						
	Number of tonnes of tCO <sub>2</sub> eq sequestered due to direct project interventions	400 tCO <sub>2</sub> eq	EX-ACT	8,034,828 tCO <sub>2</sub> eq sequestered as per to direct project interventions	0 tCO <sub>2</sub> eq	<b>MS</b>	No tCO <sub>2</sub> eq planned to be sequestered at this point in time.
	Number of resources flowing into restoration work in STP thanks to the new bankable restoration projects designed and/or implemented as private/public partnerships.	0	All contracts signed by the end of Y2	2 big projects, 3 small projects by the end of the project	0 contracts signed	<b>MS</b>	Call for proposals realised; short-list of bankable projects selected; contracts ready to be signed from November, 2021, starting with snail production by the national NGO, Oikos.

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<b>Outcome 1.1</b>  <b>Enhanced</b> national commitment to Forest and Landscape Restoration in STP.	Number of cross-sectoral planning frameworks supporting restoration established and operational in STP (PFLR)	0	Platform officially established until the end of Y1	1 permanent Platform for Forest and Landscape Restoration running operations from Y2 to Y5	NPFMCR (PNFLR) - involving four sub-groups – formally approved by Ministerial Order No. 40/2019 (Nov. 2019); 33 members (27 men, 06 women).	<b>MS</b>	NPFMCR is operating at the ministerial level, but MAFRD of new government is committed to lobbying for a Government Decree to allow the NPFMCR to operate at the national level.
	Number of FLR management plans	Last national forest survey issued in 1999	Baseline report on the state of forests and policies by the end of Y1	One Forest Landscape Plan produced and validated	Baseline report on the state of STP's forests and FLR-related policy was prepared by the DFB and approved in Dec. 2020 by the NPFMCR.	<b>MS</b>	Four FLR management plans identified (3 in Sao Tome and 1 in Principe) and DFB ready to start their implementation in 2022
<b>Outcome 1.2</b>  Improved and conducive policy framework for the conservation, restoration, and	Number of policy blueprints produced to guide the production/ improvement of the legislative framework in STP	No policies specific to FLR	Assessment report ready by the end of Y1	1 blueprint for policy improvement and cross-sectoral integration by mid-Y3	National consultant prepared and submitted Plan for Improvement of Forest and Landscape Restoration	<b>MS</b>	PIP and Study approved; the same consultant has a new contract to guide the implementation of the PIP from Sept. 2021 to July 2022. This provides an important

sustainable management of STP forest.					Policies (PIP) and Study on the Development of the Forestry Fund supported by new tax benefits and incentives in 2020; Plan and Study were approved by the NPFMCR in March 2021.		framework for DFB to implement the four FLR management plans in 2022, but updating of National Forestry Development Plan has not been undertaken so far by DFB.
	Number of normative documents (decrees, laws, regulations) produced and/or approved, that support FLR while incorporating biodiversity conservation, accelerated low GHG development and emissions reduction, and sustainable livelihood considerations.	No specific law on FLR exists	Consultant hired by the end of Y3	At least 5 FLR-related policies, laws, or regulations produced/ improved by end of the project	No consultant hired so far to start the legal process on supporting FLR.	<b>MS</b>	DFB was in the process of recruiting the consultant before the end of 2021, but better training and communication is needed to demonstrate the benefits of biodiversity conservation in FLR, the role of adaptation and mitigation to enhance resilience to CC and its role in establishing



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							sustainable livelihoods in the four FLR sites.
<b>Outcome 2.1:</b> Participatory FLR interventions to enhance ecosystem services and mitigate climate change in vulnerable natural forest areas in STP based on public-private partnerships	Number of hectares of the Contador watershed restored (as forests)	ESMF and ESIA of the PRSP project	FLR plan validated by the third quarter of Y2	4,500 ha of the Contador watershed and corridors along evacuation lines restored by the end of the project	0 ha.	<b>MS</b>	FLR plan for the North Site of Sao Tome incorporating the 4,500 ha of the Contador Watershed has been finalised (see Figure 2), aided by a partnership agreement signed in 2020 with the District Council of Lemba, DFB, FAO, AFAP and District Chamber of Lemba. However, delays in completing the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the PSRP has prevented preparations to engage the communities in the application of FLR plan in line with the EIA.
	Number of hectares of degraded natural forests restored (to be computed partly	25	FLR plans validated by the	23,000 ha of natural forestland restored and sustainably	0 ha.	<b>MS</b>	The four FLR plans approved in 2021 by the NPFMCR (amounting to <b>11,590</b>

	as forests, partly as rangelands and grasslands, and partly as agriculture/ agroforestry, depending on the FLR plans)		third quarter of Y2	managed in target forest areas by the end of the project.			ha) are to be implemented through Letters of Agreement (LoA) involving the following partners: DFB (includes the Regional Government, responsible for the Department of Forests and Biodiversity in Príncipe), CECAB, CECAFEB, CECAQ, ANP-Monte Pico Association
	Number of hectares of mangroves restored (to be computed as wetlands/ mangroves)	0	FLR plan validated by the third quarter of Y2	600 ha of mangroves restored and sustainably managed by the end of the project	0 ha.	<b>MS</b>	The Department of Biology (University of STP) has mapped and presented the proposed restoration of <b>0,68 km2 = 68 ha</b> mangroves in the South Zone of Sao Tome and <b>10 ha in North Príncipe</b> , and <b>100 ha in Sao Tome North</b> to the PMU and DFB

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	Number of beneficiaries trained on FLR techniques	0	Trainees identified and training modules produced by the second quarter of Y2	3,500 beneficiaries trained on FLR techniques in the target Districts of both islands, disaggregated by gender by the end of Y3	A number of 87 trainees, (equivalent to 2.49% of the total planned) were identified and started training on the application of the NFLRP in the four landscapes proposed for the FLR in STP starting October 2021, and covering 6 communities in the Northern Zone (Cadão, Sta. Jenny, Paga Fogo, Diogo Vaz, Maria Luísa and Sta. Clotilde)	<b>MS</b>	Training, awareness raising and dissemination of the NFLRP (PRF), included the Landscape Plan (PP) and the Seedling Production Plan (PPM). So far <b>87 people (64 men + 23 women)</b> have received training, which will continue until the end of January 2022. In Príncipe training is done through the Friends of the Biosphere of Príncipe.
	Number of beneficiaries hired and trained on surveillance	0	No target provided	20 members of local communities hired and trained to carry out surveillance on the restored areas by the first quarter of Y3	Training on surveillance has been delayed due to the later than start of FLR in 2022	<b>MS</b>	This training cannot commence until the four sites have started to implement the FLR plans at the four project sites.

<p><b>Outcome 2.2:</b></p> <p>Enhanced and improved use of forest resources for the benefit of local communities living in sensitive landscapes of STP.</p>	<p>Number of ha of high-quality agro-forestry plantations restored in partnership with PAPAC/IFAD (to be computed as agroforestry and agriculture land)</p>	<p>FLR plans validated by the third quarter of Y2</p>	<p>7,150 ha of shadow forests supporting high-quality agro-forestry plantations restored by the end of the project</p>	<p>FLR plans validated by the third quarter of Y2</p>	<p>LoAs signed in 2021 between DFB and CACAB, CECACFEB, CECAQ-11, and Assoc. Monte Pico (AMP) to implement FLR plans at all three sites in Sao Tome and with the Regional Department of Forests and Biodiversity in Principe to implement the four FLR plans in STP from early 2022.</p>	<p><b>MS</b></p> <p>Interviews confirm: a) collection of seeds of native varieties of trees to support the establishment or rehabilitation of 16 nurseries; b) CECAB is producing 1,600 seedlings to restore <b>75</b> ha with <b>6</b> species of high value hard wood trees, (to be planted in the cooperative farmers' plots); c) CECAFEB has 9,800 seedlings to restore up to <b>325</b> ha of coffee plantations with agro-forestry (includes 4 high value hard wood trees); d) AMP has <b>2,500</b> seedlings (6 types of hard wood and medicinal species) to restore <b>85</b> ha; e) DFB's Campo de Milho has <b>5,481</b> (five tree species) to restore <b>134</b></p>
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							ha; f) Campo Politico nursery in Principe has 4,678 seedlings (4 wood and fruit species) to restore <b>156</b> ha
	Number of households benefiting from improved shade forest plantations	Beneficiary communities identified by end of Y2	15,600 people belonging to 85 communities, benefit from improved shade forest plantations by the end of the project	Beneficiary communities identified by end of Y2	Communities provisionally identified in the FLR plans indicate	<b>MS</b>	Too early to review, because FLR will start in 2022, but FLR plans indicate <b>1.219</b> households from <b>96</b> communities could benefit from improved shade from agro-forestry practices
	Number of community members supplied with sustainably harvested and processed wood and timber	Sawmills purchased and beneficiaries trained by first quarter of Y3	Sustainably harvested and processed wood and timber supplied to 1300 inhabitants of pilot communities Y3-Y5	Sawmills purchased and beneficiaries trained by first quarter of Y3	A rapid evaluation was carried out in three communities (Mato Cana, Anselmo Andrade and Principe) by the NGO Alisei leading to MAFRD authorising the acquisition of 2 mobile sawmills for Sao Tome and	<b>MU</b>	Data on the quality and quantity of wood processed by the sawmills and number of beneficiaries is still unavailable, because the procurement process has not yet been completed and the arrival of the sawmills is scheduled for Jan/Feb 2022. However, a pilot plan (2021–23), estimates

					Príncipe in early 2022		the use of 1.500 m3 of raw wood per sawmill. Procurement is time consuming: a) FAO require purchase approvals from STP, SFC/Gabon, FAORAF/ Ghana and FAO-R; b) the sawmills cannot be shipped direct from Brazil to STP, but via Portugal.
	Number of ha reforested by CECAQ-11 and DFB in Príncipe under the “intelligent wood processing plant” scheme (forests or agroforestry)	Forestation plans developed by the end of Y2	250 hectares of forest land reforested by beneficiary communities Y3-Y5.	Forestation plans developed by the end of Y2	0 ha	<b>MU</b>	The provisional work plan for mobile sawmills (2021 – 2023) prepared by NGO-Alisei, justifies the acquisition of 2 units for STP to cover around 7,210 ha in the 4 communities. Planting/repopulation is dedicated to achieving 40 trees/ha (total 10.000 trees, that include noble, timber, fruit and fast-growing tree species.

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							The aim is to prevent the felling of around 5,000 large trees and benefit 1,300 households.
	Number of beneficiaries engaged in new NWFP economic activities and expected increase in annual income	NWFP pilot initiatives have been successful in projects already funded by ADB, IFAD, or private companies such as HBD (tourism in Príncipe).	MoU with target communities signed and beneficiaries trained by third quarter of Y2	650 beneficiaries from 4 rural communities engaged in new NWFP economic activities. Increase of USD 1,000 in annual income per community from Y 4.	Two rural communities in Sao Tome have been identified and selected to produce and sell honey and two in Principe to produce and sell snails. LoA signed between PMU and the NGO, OIKOS, to support the implementation of the four NWFP projects in Sao Carlos and Generosa (ST) and Montalegre and Porto Real in Principe.	<b>MS</b>	PMU reports 157 people (72 women, 85 men) will be direct beneficiaries of these 4 activities, support pollenisation of agro-forestry practices and reduce pressure on the endangered endemic red snail in Principe. Site visits in Principe confirm 20 people (12 women, 8 men) will participate directly in snail production. Interviews indicate snail demand is high and is profitable when sold processed in 250 g. at Db 30/jar. Food safety standards are likely to limit sales to



							local markets in Príncipe.
<b>Outcome 3.1:</b> Strengthened national capacity on the principles and practices of FLR, on the concepts and use of ecosystem services, and on FLR financial instruments	Number of people from all stakeholder groups trained and aware of FLR principles, practices and financial instruments	0	CB programmed designed by the second quarter of Y2	At least 150 people from all stakeholder groups trained and aware of FLR principles, practices and financial instruments by end of Y3	7 consultants (6 national, 1 international) have provided training in financial principles, practices and instruments linked to a) FLR; b) training needs on FLR; c) training in forestry Inspection; d) training in forestry deontology; v) training on data collection for FLR mapping activities.	<b>S</b>	A total of 195 people (43 women, 152 men) from all stakeholder groups were trained in the FLR principles, practices and financial instruments by Nov. 2021.
	Number of investment tools developed or improved to support FLR initiatives (i.e. STP Bank Association	0	Manual of instructions for NFFD and regime of fiscal incentives produced by the	At least 3 investment tools are developed or improved i.e. Code of Conduct adopted by ASB to	The Capacity Development Plan (4 training courses) has been identified and a Memorandum of	<b>MS</b>	Int. consultant contracted to support the development of the Code of Conduct from 2022. A Concept Note on how DFB, the

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	(ASB) code of conduct, specialized credit lines, improved National Fund for Forest Development (NFFD), etc.)		first quarter of Y3	screen investment against criteria for SFM, improvement of the NFFD (increase in its capital, specialized credit lines, etc.) by the end of Y4	Understanding signed with the Central Bank of STP as lead of the ASB.		Central Bank and ASB will collaborate will be sent to Governor of the Central Bank before the end of 2021.
<b>Outcome 3.2:</b> The FLR work of TRI is upscaled by triggering and supporting the development of public-private partnerships for nationally-implemented bankable projects.	Value of resources (private, public and development partners) flowing into restoration increases in STP through the large, medium, and small size bankable projects developed and implemented/ submitted to donors	0	Signature of agreements between partners by the end of Y2	Two medium-large bankable projects developed and submitted to donors by the end of the project and at least three small-medium bankable projects implemented by the end of the project	Potential partnership with Plano Vivo is being reviewed with the aim to obtain certification of part of the FLR work that can sell carbon credits in the voluntary carbon trading market; Seven bankable projects have been selected 1) PROASILVFLOR (GEF USD 12,500 + Co-finance USD 2,500) 2) BVF (GEF USD12,500 Co-	<b>MS</b>	The Investment Support Agreement for all 7 bankable projects were signed in Nov. 2021, with a total value of USD 87,712 USD. The work and monitoring plan for each of the 7 projects was submitted to the PMU in November 2021. The interviews confirm marketing studies should be conducted to identify buyers who will pay fair prices for the NWFPs to be developed.

					Finance USD 1,810); 3) ECOQUINTAS (GEF USD 14,713 + Co-Finance USD 1,768); 4) COCO EXPRESS (GEF USD 8,811 + Co-Finance USD 1,905); 5)- VANHA (GEF = 11,520 USD + Co-Finance USD 3,480); 6) BIOTECH (GEF USD 14,673.53 USD + Co-finance USD 3,393) USD); 7) FOGON POCO NHA (GEF USD 12,500 USD + Co-Finance USD 1,250 USD)		
<b>Outcome 4.1:</b> Collaborative M&E system successfully implemented to support the	National Forest and Landscape Monitoring System (NFLMS) set up and operative at DFB	0	Equipment purchased and a specialist trained by the	NFLMS operational and providing relevant information to	This activity was postponed to the final; quarter of 2021. The PMU will support the DFB apply FAO's	<b>MS</b>	The ToR for the development of a forest monitoring system in STP has been prepared and submitted for

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NFLMS at DF and report properly on FLR initiatives (including NCP) in STP.			first quarter of Y3	DFB managers from Y3-Y5	Land Cover Classification System (LCCS). A detailed work plan has not been prepared so far to apply this system in STP.		consideration by the DFB to the NPFMCR in Oct 2021. A training course is being organized for DFB foresters at the Gabonese Study and Spatial Observation Agency (AGEOS) in early 2022.
	Number of DFB staff and other partners trained on FLR M&E systems and tools.	0	No target provided	Team of at least 10 people from DFB and partner institutions fully trained and able to manage the system by the end of Y2	Activity planned in 2022	MS	Too early to review, because LCCS will not be installed and applied until 2022
<b>Outcome 4.2:</b> TRI related lessons learned and best practices from the NCP and the TRI network disseminated	Number of of TRI knowledge products developed and disseminated through the Information Hub established by the project	0	Partnership signed with service provider by the end of Y1	Info Hub for KM on FLR fully operative under DF and providing information to stakeholders from Y3-Y5 through the development of	Info-Hub (created by the NGO – Alisei) and Working Group (DFB, PMU, Alisei) established; Communication strategy and work plan for the TRI project approved	MS	The Info-Hub estimates about 145,000 people have heard radio broadcasts on the TRI project and about 100,000 people seen TV spots on the project. However, the communications are primarily informative

among relevant audiences.				knowledge products	and being implemented; project regularly presented in national radio and TV stations		in nature, rather than targeted to different audiences to support replication of FLR and promote expansion of NWFPs
	Number of people in STP reached by the project's communication work	0	Communication and dissemination plan ready by second quarter of Y3	At least 10,000 people informed of the best practices and lessons learned by the project and the TRI by the end of the project	A total of 1,779 people, (806 women, 973 men), are informed about the best practices and lessons learned by the TRI project.	<b>MS</b>	Approximately 17.8% of the targeted audience has been informed about best practices and lessons learned on FLR in general (but not from the TRI project as FLR and NWFPs will be implemented in 2022).
	Number of project partners benefited from international learning visits	0	No target provided	20 project partners benefited of international learning visits from Y2-Y4	No visits permitted to Nov. 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic		Since 2020, TRI has provided some alternatives to physical international visits, such as webinars and launch of the Restoration Factory Programme in May 2021.

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	Number of Global Child Project (GCP) organised events attended by GEF's team in STP	0	No target provided	At least 75% of GCP-organised events attended by STP team by the end of the project	100% of the events organized by GCP have been attended (TRI Inception in Kenya + 2 events in FAO-Rome).	<b>MS</b>	PMU staff and CTA confirmed their participation in these events, but some of training was either not applicable in STP (use of ROAM to identify ANR sites), or needed follow-up (GIS and database management)
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Source: PM; \*Achievement ratings: HS: highly satisfactory; S: satisfactory; MS: moderately satisfactory; MU: moderately unsatisfactory; U: Unsatisfactory; HU: highly unsatisfactory.

\*\* Physical progress not requested due to the intangible nature of the outputs foreseen (e.g. linked to knowledge development and communication).

**Indicator assessment key**

<b>HS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>MU</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>HU</b>
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## Appendix 7. Co-financing table (in USD to 30 June 2021)

Sources of co-financing <sup>31</sup>	Name of co-financer	Type of co-finance <sup>32</sup>	Amount confirmed at CEO approval <sup>33</sup>		Actual amount materialized (30 June 2021)*		Actual amount materialized at mid-term (12 May 2021)#	Expected total disbursement (12 Nov. 2023)
			Cash	In kind	Cash	In kind		
Multi-lateral Agency	World Bank, PRSP project	Grant	10,600,000	0	2,800,000	0	n/a	10,600,000
Multi-lateral Agency	IFAD, PAPAC project	In-kind	-	6,100,000	-	1,672,012	n/a	6,100,000
FAO	FAO	In-kind	-	-	-	-	-	-
LoA partners	CECAB, CACAQ-11, CECAFEB, AMP.	In-kind	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	All co-financiers	Cash/in-kind	<b>10,600,000</b>	<b>6,100,000</b>	<b>2,800,000</b>	<b>1,672,012</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>16,700,000</b>

\* Based on accounts to 30 June 2020 in PIR-3; # Not provided by FAO-SCF

<sup>31</sup> Sources of Co-financing may include: Bilateral Aid Agency(ies), Foundation, GEF Agency, Local Government, National Government, Civil Society Organization, Other Multi-lateral Agency(ies), Private Sector, Beneficiaries, Other.

<sup>32</sup> Grants, loans, equity participation by beneficiaries (individuals) in the form of cash, guarantees, in kind or material contributions and other (please explain).

<sup>33</sup> The type of co-financing whether cash or in-kind should be indicated separately





## Appendix 8. GEF evaluation criteria rating table and rating scheme

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating <sup>34</sup>	Summary comments <sup>35</sup>
<b>A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE</b>		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	The project represents a major contribution to restoring forest ecosystem services and retaining the classification as a carbon sink country. STP has a land area of 1,001 Km <sup>2</sup> (101,100 ha) and the project will support the restoration of 30 091 ha. This is equivalent to 29.8% of total land area. It also supports the Bonn Challenge to restore 350 million ha by 2030 and restoration will contribute directly to storing 8,034.8 ktCO <sub>2</sub> eq (8,034,828 tCO <sub>2</sub> eq) over 20 years, indicating the TRI project will offset a considerable percentage of the country's emissions under the BAU scenario. It is let down by insufficient attention given to establishing inter-institutional alliances, especially MPWINRE/DGE responsible for the NCCC.
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project remains aligned CC-2 Program 4 (conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks in forests); LD-2 Program 3: (Landscape Management and Restoration); LD-3 Program 4: (Scaling-up SLM through the Landscape Approach; SFM-3 (Restored Forest Ecosystems); SO-2-Outcome 2.1. Also supports achievement of SDGs 1 (Target 1.4), 2 (Target 2.4) 13 (Target 13b) and 15 (Targets 15.1 and 15.5).
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	S	The project is aligned, but not fully active in supporting implementation of current national policies and laws including the NDS 2017-2021, NS for Poverty Reduction, NLUP 2040, Adaptation to CC (2004); NDCs (Updated, 2021), NBSAP 2015-2020
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MU	The Project has not established close cooperation and coordination with other GEF-funded projects executed by MPWINRE/DGE and implemented by UNDP, or by EU, AfDB linked to forestry. Links with academia and scientific research institutions is not evident. However, TRI does provide opportunities for complementarity with other TRI countries and child projects.
<b>B. EFFECTIVENESS</b>		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	The project has made good progress in implementing the majority of preliminary activities needed before being able to implement main outputs under components 1-3, concerning FLR/NWFPs activities in the field (from 2022). This includes finalisation of the NFLRP and detailed FLR plans for the four intervention sites in STP.

<sup>34</sup> See rating scheme at the end of the document.

<sup>35</sup> Include reference to the relevant sections in the report.

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		However, progress under component 4 has been less evident, especially development of the NFLMS. Overall, the TRI project is highly unlikely to achieve many of its main outcomes and objectives by Nov. 2023.
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	MS	The project has shown it is delivering well on the preliminary activities required to start implementation of FLR activities with local partners and start the economic activities and funding of 7 small bankable projects selected, plus one large one in the process of negotiation with Plan Vivo on developing carbon credits. However, delivery of some outputs is well behind schedule, especially activities linked to the acquisition of equipment (mobile sawmills, solar panels) work in the Contador watershed, due to delays in starting implementation of the PSRP and setting up the forest monitoring system (NFLMS).
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes <sup>36</sup> and project objectives	MS	The project is unlikely to meet the majority of its outcomes (especially under components 2-4) by November 2023 due to delays in operations amounting to almost 12 months linked to several factors largely beyond the PMU's control such as the pandemic, a growing energy crisis, and heavy FAO bureaucracy.
- Outcome 1	S	The project has established the platform for FLR, but it only operates at the ministerial level. Linkages to already established platforms under the NCCC to support CCA/CCM have not been established to date. Progress in preparing the NFLRP has been satisfactory and confirms the TRI project will contribute to restoring almost 30% of the country's total land area. The PIP is in the process of being developed. It is clear that for the NFLRP to be effective and sustainable, reform of the NFDP, the NFF and the Forest Law are needed. However, the PIP has not fully addressed how the NPFMCR could advocate the strategic relevance of FLR at the national level to combat climate change, while also generate important co-benefits that align with GEF/FAO priorities, nor the socio-cultural dimension that also needs to change for FLR/agro-forestry to succeed over forest clearance and tilling for short-cycle crops.
- Outcome 2	MS	Preparatory activities have been completed including the FLR plans for each of the four project sites, signing of partnership agreements (LoAs) with local partners to implement FLR in relation to these plans, establishing/rehabilitating tree nurseries with management plans to produce approximately 450,000 seedlings for FLR and around 50,000 for shadow forests. Emphasis is on the production of fast and slow-growing native tree species (over 30 in total). Signing of service contracts to implement the economic activities selected (honey and snails) have been completed and initial activities started in final quarter of 2021. However, implementation of main activities on the ground for most outputs will not start until 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Assessment and ratings by individual outcomes may be undertaken if there is added value.

- Outcome 3	MS	The capacity building programme on FLR principles and practices has started and one module conducted so far. A MoU has been signed with the Central Bank, which is committed to producing a voluntary Green Code of Conduct for the banking sector and which will aim to reach out to support small businesses linked to the production of sustainable “green” NWFPs. A review of the NFF has been postponed to 2022 after there is greater clarity on the new Green Code of Conduct. Seven small bankable projects have been selected and in the process of signing agreements with the project. One large bankable project has been identified with Plan Vivo (UK), which has provisionally agreed to support the development of carbon trading schemes where FLR is under effective management. Some of the bankable projects are considered to be highly innovative, such as the production of essential oils from plant extracts that has potential to reduce imports and support the production of natural products, such as soaps. However, there is no business strategy in place to support the development of SME’s promoting NWFPs and which would guide investors in applying the Green Code of Conduct once finalised.
- Outcome 4	MS	NFLMS has been delayed and will not start development until 2022 when a postponed training course has been completed at AGEOS (Gabon). However, it will be developed using FAO’s LCCCS and all mapping/GIS will use open-source software to avoid licence lock-ins. The internal project M&E plan has been completed with support from GCP. Overall, it is mainly operating to collect quantitative data, which can be channelled to the global child project responsible for tracking 9 core indicators on TRI. As a result, the M&E system is not tracking any national indicators (linked to the Bonn Challenge, Aichi Targets/NBSAP, SDGs, or on GHG emissions/forest carbon sinks) or qualitative indicators to support learning on FLR/NWFPs, which can be channelled to the project’s communication strategy. This also implies the communication strategy, based around an information hub and communications through mass/social media are not geared to learning to support advocacy for change, capture finance, etc.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes	MS	Achievement of the project and development objectives is unlikely, unless more time is available and some aspects of the project design are addressed. The support to the NWFPs will need to factor in a better understanding of markets and marketing to establish short and inclusive value chains.
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	UA	Not rated in MTRs
<b>C. EFFICIENCY</b>		
C1. Efficiency <sup>37</sup>	MS	The estimated physical advance of the project is almost 44% to 30/11/2021 (end of Year-3), with Component 1 showing most

<sup>37</sup> Includes cost efficiency and timeliness.

		<p>advance at 66% and Component 4 the least at 30%. Total expenditure of GEF funds stands at 26.8% to 30/11/2021. Co-finance expenditure is reported to be 26.8% at 30/06/2021 (PIR-3). This includes cash payments of USD 2.8 m. from the PRSP project. Although the project is behind schedule on its implementation the indications are it is demonstrating a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness, especially when taking into account the PAPAC/IFAD project closed in early 2020 and the PRSP project has not started main operations (planned for 2022 after an EIA). However, this has been compensated by LoAs with former PAPAC cooperatives and farmer associations who provide in-kind support. Administrative efficiency was found to be moderately unsatisfactory. A part from the fact the PMU has had to implement operations in a pandemic and with regular power cuts stopping work (because the solar panels have still not been installed as planned) In addition, the application of DEX in a SIDS that does not have a fully-fledged FAO Office has subjected the PMU and FAO staff to very high transaction costs especially concerning procurement, but also in securing payments and recruiting staff.</p>
<b>D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	<p>Sustainability of main outputs and outcomes linked to FLR practices implemented through LoAs is moderately likely, The FLR activities implemented by local partners such as CECAB, CECAQ-11 and CECAFEB are most likely to be sustained and even upscaled, because they will be fully owned and managed by these farmer cooperatives/associations. They are also likely to receive some support from the Plan Vivo on the development of carbon credits that will provide an alternative source of income to continue consolidating FLR activities. FLR activities managed by DFB are moderately likely to continue, although there is an urgent need to develop better linkages with the University of STP to provide forestry courses and training of new staff for DFB, as there is currently no diploma course on forestry available in STP, nor applied research being conducted on FLR, NWFPs, or on forestry monitoring that is needed to support the development and operation of the NFLMS. The sustainability of the income generating activities and majority of bankable projects selected is unlikely in the time remaining due to the fact none have started operations so far. Moreover, there is a need for training to strengthen gaps in key areas such as business planning and management, quality control and marketing...</p>
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	<p>Financial risks have been upgraded from low in the PIR to "moderate" because the effects of the pandemic on the economy of STP has been severe and likely to increase the government's dependency on external aid. However, these effects are likely to be palliated by the introduction of the Green Code of Conduct, which should increase access to finance for small enterprises and the Plan Vivo project is projected to support 92 rural communities in STP. Also, significant is that FLR promotes largely nature-based solutions</p>

		to restoration, which are very cost-efficient, because they are low cost to implement and maintain.
D1.2. Socio-political risks	ML	Socio-political risks are considered “substantial” (from “low” in the PIRs), because the pandemic has, on the one hand, increased poverty leading to an increase in short-cycle crops for food and short-term income needs. Triangulated evidence also suggests not enough attention is being given to the socio-cultural dimension in the PIP and capacity training. On the other, the pandemic has reduced government revenue and increased dependency on aid.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Institutional risks remain “substantial”, because in spite of positive developments such as a new Director of DFB who is committed to supporting and speed up the TRI project significant challenges remain. At the practical level the lack of equipment to apply new patrolling, GPS monitoring of forest boundaries and surveillance is evident. At the inter-institutional level, a robust alliance with MPWINRE/DGE is missing. This means there is insufficient coordination of FLR with policies linked to LUP, NRM, CCA, CCM, etc. that are managed by DGE. Similarly, a lack of coordination with the MPFBE indicates the project’s income generating activities and bankable projects are not being selected and promoted under a coordinated business development strategy for SMEs aimed at encouraging investors in NTFPs to invest in line with the Green Code of Conduct.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	Environmental risks are low, but, the lack of qualitative monitoring has reduced the scope to review key aspects of the ESS, which are needed to support learning on the quality of the FLR achieved.
D2. Catalysis and replication	L	The adoption of CEOF/QGIS software is likely to catalyse a new level of forest monitoring to support the expansion of more effective forest governance. The LoAs with local partners are also likely to encourage follow-on farmers to replicate the agro-forestry practices promoted. It is too early to comment on the income generating activities and bankable projects, but the indication is that replication will depend on how far they are successfully generating profits and the equipment used is readily available in STP, which in some cases, such as the mobile saw mills, is not evident. Having said that, the
<b>E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE</b>		
E1. Project design and readiness <sup>38</sup>	MS	The project’s design is overall satisfactory in terms of developing capacity within DFB and applying FLR through LoAs, but has understated: (i) the importance of working in partnership with DGE to ensure a coordinated response to FLR and adaptation to climate change given FLR directly supports CCA and CCM; (ii) the need for guidance on the provision of SME services from the MPFBE (such as

<sup>38</sup> This refers to factors affecting the project’s ability to start as expected, such as the presence of sufficient capacity among executing partners at project launch.

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		incubation services) to support their effectiveness and sustainability. In addition, the design contains some over-ambitious targets on number of hectares to be restored and number of direct beneficiaries that should be reviewed.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	Overall, the quality of the PMU team's technical and administrative inputs has been satisfactory, especially taking into account a number of factors have affected performance beyond the PMU's control. These include the lack of resources and capacity in DFB, the effects of the pandemic and power cuts, FAO's bureaucracy and the fact the PMU does not have a consultant in Principe, or to guide and supervise the economic activities. Interviewees also confirmed the quality of the trainings and capacity building support has been satisfactory so far especially in areas such as mapping for the FLR plans and on forest surveillance and behaviour (deontology). The quality of the M&E reporting was, however, found to be high for reporting purposes, but low for learning to support work planning decision-making and advocating the strategic relevance of FLR to CCA.
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, CTA, etc.)	MS	The quality of FAO's technical support has been satisfactory, even though no visits or events have taken place since early 2020 until November 2021, when the CTA was granted authorisation to travel again to STP. Regular contact has been maintained via online conference applications. Meanwhile, administrative support from FAO was found to be moderately unsatisfactory, because there is evidence to indicate that FAO bureaucracy has slowed down some operations, which appears to particularly affect SIDS such as STP that do not have a fully-fledged FAO Office capable of taking its own decisions on procurement, finances, recruitment, etc.
E2.1 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	S	The PSC has met on five occasions and no major problems have been identified concerning its decision-making. However, most of the government representatives present still consider the project to be a pilot and that for this reason, it remains largely a "ministerial", rather than "national" project. Moreover, because there is no robust mechanism in place with the MPWINRE/DGE, the DGE only plays a passive role in guiding the TRI project.
E3. Quality of project execution	S	The project's execution appears to have improved substantially since the new Minister of MAFRD and Director of DFB have taken office in September 2021. In particular, interviews confirm they have an educational background and work experience in FLR-related activities, which has contributed to their strong commitment to support and speed up the implementation of the project in 2022.
E3.1 Project execution and management (PMU and executing partner performance, administration, staffing, etc.)	MS	The execution of the project through DEX has subjected the PMU to FAO's internal rules and regulations, which have substantially increased transaction costs. Thus, although DEX has secured a full-time TL, too much of his time is spent in the office on administrative matters, rather than in the field. Taking into account the TRI project has completed most of the preliminary activities actions under

		components 1-3 and is delivering a satisfactory level of cost-effectiveness, the PMU is demonstrating it can deliver results.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	MU	The MTR team identified financial management of the project relies on FAO-SCF based in Gabon to manage its accounts, agree on the procurement of equipment and disburse funds. Despite employing a consultant to support the management of these task, in reality the consultant can only act as a filter to link the project up with the division responsible for finance, procurement, recruitment, etc. As a result, there is no evidence this has speeded up the administrative process. Meanwhile, it is unclear where the co-finance expenditure registered to date is coming from when taking into account: (i) PAPAC ended in Feb. 2020 and the PRSP/WB has not yet started.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	MS	Internal project partnerships based on LoAs are showing positive signs the implementation of FLR activities will take place, under the guidance of the DFB, especially because the new director is committed to improving the department's engagement in FLR practices and principles. Engagement of other government institutions such as DGE and MPFBE is low as inter-institutional coordination mechanisms to steer the project in full alignment with policies linked to climate change are missing. As a result, partnerships with institutions such as UNDP that are supporting the implementation of GEF-funded projects on CC are not developing.
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	MS	The project is producing very few knowledge products while it is not implementing in the field. and diffusing them via the internet, or press releases. A communications strategy has been prepared through a service agreement with a local NGO (Alisei), but the agreement does not provide the funding needed to develop a more robust communication strategy dedicated to enhancing learning and advocacy for reforms to support FLR and NWFP development.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	The quality of the M&E system is satisfactory from the point of view of tracking outputs linked to TRI's nine core indicators, but unsatisfactory to support learning, because it has no qualitative indicators or risk monitoring to stimulate understanding and informed dialogue on why knowledge, attitudes and practices are/are not changing at all levels, but especially in rural areas.
E7.1 M&E design	MS	The M&E system is designed to respond to the reporting needs of the PIRs and PPRs. Moreover, it defines which indicators under components 1-4 relate to the GCP's nine core indicators. As a result, the PMU is able micro-manage all actions and outputs as they progress, but, because qualitative indicators are absent, the M&E is not designed to support informed decision-making on annual work planning, or external evaluations that need to address these aspects.
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including	MS	The M&E plan has been updated in 2021 with the support of the GCP (through webinars). The M&E consultant in the PMU has not reported any major difficulties in implementing the M&E plan in terms of funding and human resources to support the formulation



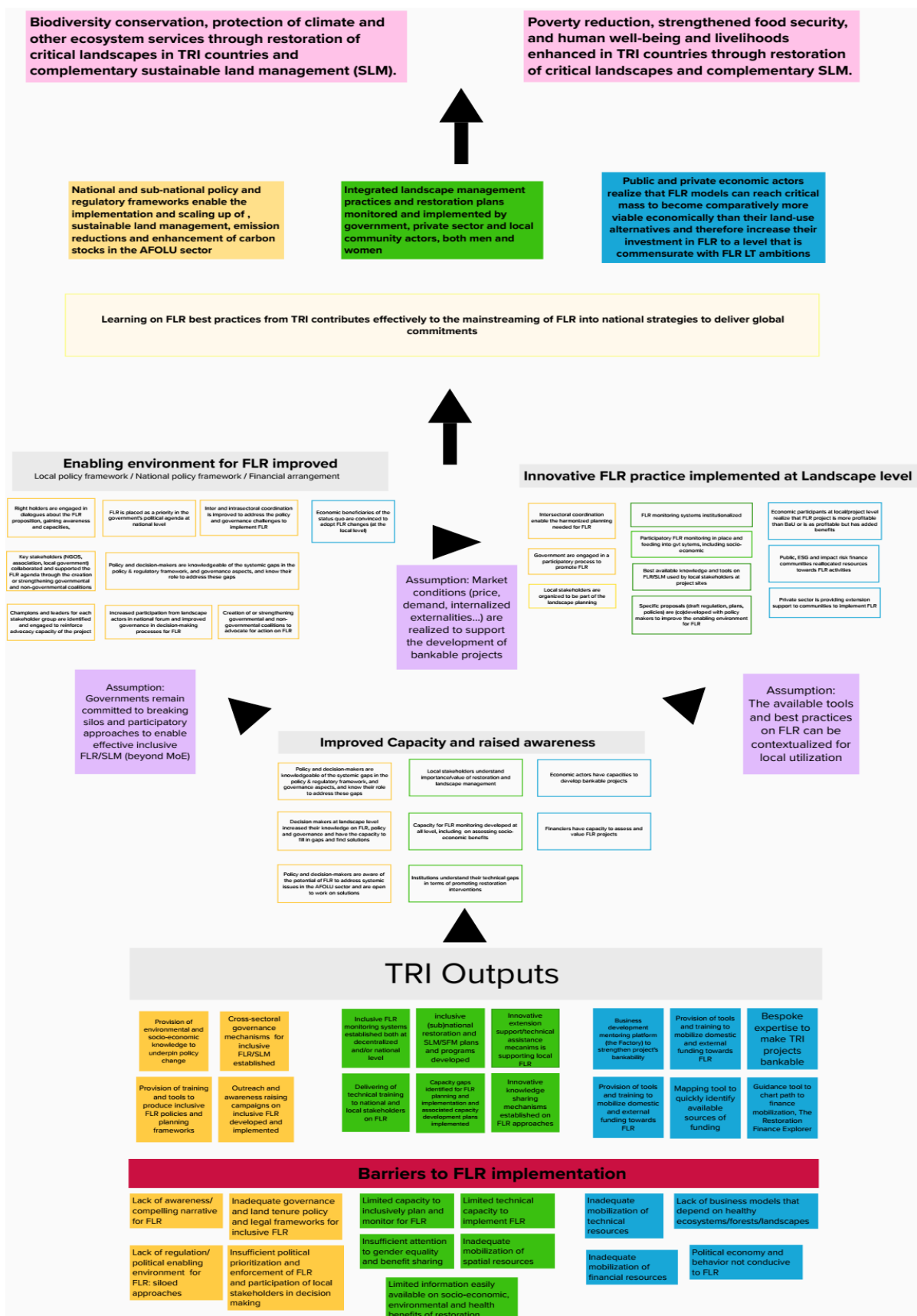
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financial and human resources)		of the progress reports. However, the delay in starting the NFLMS has meant a lot of time is needed to retrieve forestry data (such as for Tables 1-2). Moreover, the M&E plan will end at project closure.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	Unless the gaps identified are fully addressed and resolved/mitigated, the MTR believes they will continue to affect the project's ability to achieve its objectives.
<b>F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS</b>		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	The project's design places emphasis on advancing gender equality, engaging women in decision-making and registration of sex disaggregated participation rates. However, monitoring only focuses on participation rates of women and men. Although women's average participation rates are satisfactory (43% compared to 30% planned) it is not possible to assess how far women are being empowered, or if other vulnerable groups are directly benefiting.
F2. Human rights issues	S	The MTR found no evidence to indicate the project is having an adverse effect on human rights. Indigenous peoples are not present.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	HS	There is satisfactory compliance with the ESS standards in the Prodoc, but selected safeguards are not tracked by the M&E system.
<b>Overall project rating</b>	<b>MS</b>	

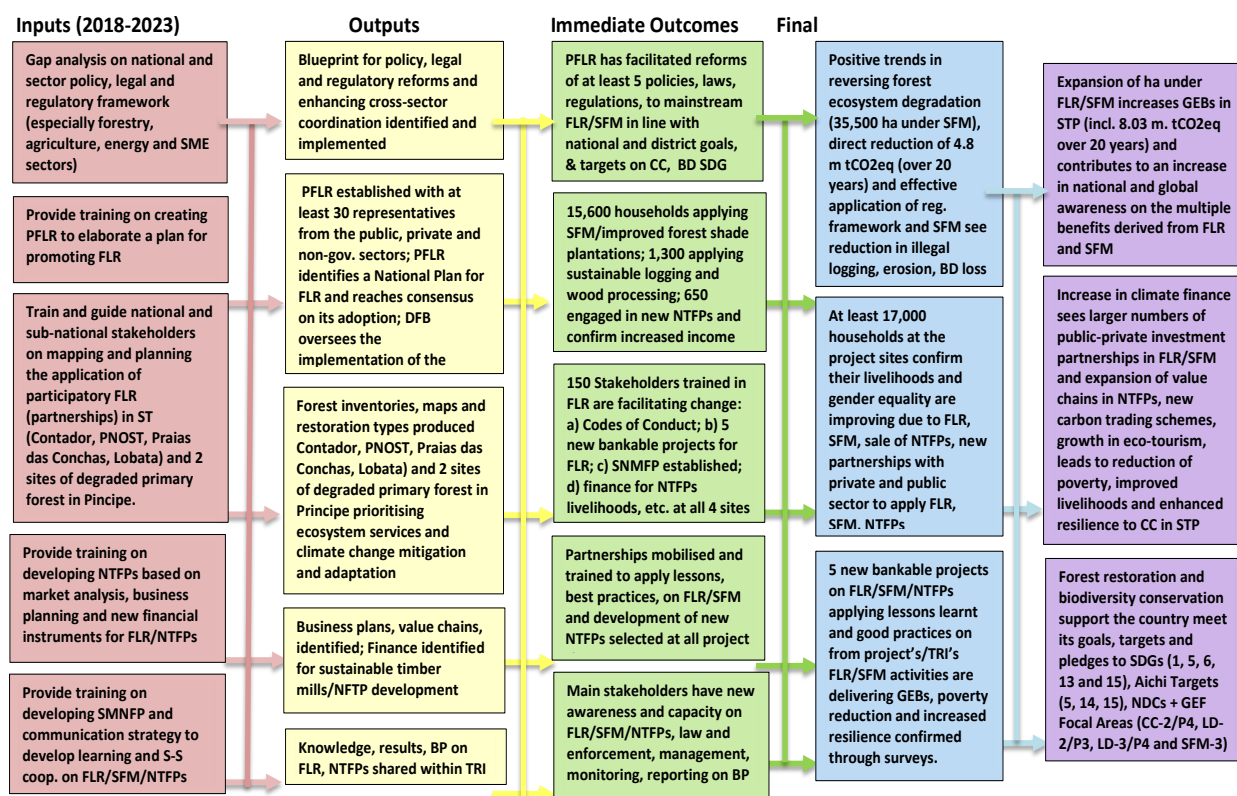
*Ratings: Highly satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately satisfactory (MS), Moderately unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U) Highly unsatisfactory (HU) Unable to assess (UA). Additional ratings for Section E: Likely (L),*

## **Appendix 9a Theory of change for The Restoration Initiative (2018)**

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## Appendix 9b. Theory of change for project 9517 (November 2021)



**Assumptions:** → political willingness to support PFLR, cross-sector coordination and participatory approaches on reforms, funding, upscaling of FLR/SFM/NTFPs; private sector agrees to apply inclusive value chains for NTFPs; tools and methods of FLR/SFM/Finance adapted to local needs; SMEs reinvest profits to sustain/expand NTFPs; laws on FLR/SFM, illegal logging, charcoal are enforced

**Cross-cutting priorities:** → gender equity and equality (focus on access to services); rights-based approach; local knowledge/customs integrated into planning/governance; risk management applied.

