

Forests4Future

Project Description	Global project on forest landscape restoration and good governance in the forest sector (Forests4Future)
Commissioned by	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)
Countries	Germany, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Laos, Vietnam, Benin, Cameroon
Duration	2020 - 2027

Background

Around one third of the earth's surface is covered by forests, which are invaluable as they are home to about 80 percent of known animal and plant species outside the oceans. Forests also support the livelihoods of one fifth of the world's population and enhance resilience to climate change.

However, more than 7.6 million hectares of forest are lost annually, primarily in the tropics and subtropics due to agricultural expansion. This not only results in the loss of vital carbon stores but also leads to the release of climate-damaging greenhouse gases.

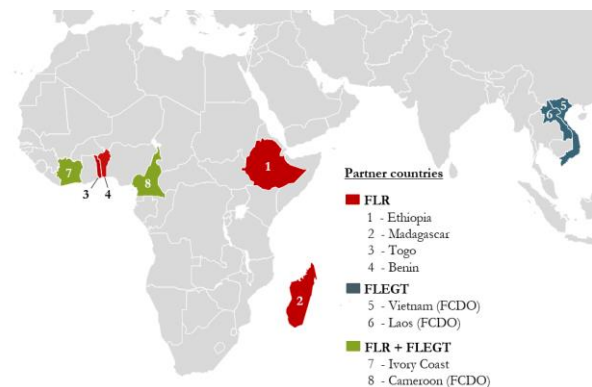
Forest and landscape restoration (FLR) measures, including natural regeneration, afforestation, and agroforestry, significantly contribute to climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources. These practices enhance water availability, combat desertification, and strengthen sustainable development, ultimately improving living conditions.

Numerous international agreements focus on the protection, sustainable use, and restoration of forests. Notable among these is the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF) from 2014, which commits to halting deforestation and restoring 350 million hectares of forest and tree-rich landscapes by 2030, aligning with the objectives

of the Bonn Challenge. Despite these ambitious targets, implementation has been limited. Partner countries possess the political will, but challenges such as weak governance in the forestry sector, lack of resources and poor coordination of measures impede progress towards these goals.

Objectives and Approach

The "Forests4Future" project, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ, focuses on strengthening forests' and trees' vital role in rural development and food security. Key objectives include implementing FLR in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire; enhancing forest governance; and promoting the legal timber trade and the EU's FLEGT process in selected countries. The project targets forestry and environmental policymakers, including decentralized agencies as well as the rural population, with a focus on women and youth. In close collaboration with the BMZ, F4F works together with the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) in its second phase. It helps lead the initiative together with the AFR100 Secretariat at AUDA-NEPAD, and strengthen governance in the forest sector, supporting partner countries in implementing their national FLR goals.



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The project fosters an integrated approach to forest and landscape management that combines protection and productive use, thus increasing forest and tree cover for a sustainably managed environment encouraged by active stakeholder engagement.

Preliminary Results (2020-2024)

The global project works closely with partner institutions in the six FLR countries to strengthen community participation in planning and implementing FLR measures. In Ethiopia, participatory land use plans that integrate approaches for FLR and Sustainable Forest Management have been piloted in eight villages, focusing on the watershed areas of Lake Chamo and Lake Abaya. Efforts in Madagascar focus on renewing resource management contracts within the DIANA region. In Togo, FLR measures have been integrated into the land use and development planning of local municipalities, with a draft development plan in the Tchamba prefecture incorporating these initiatives.

The government of Côte d'Ivoire is supported to enhance legality in timber supply chains. As part of FLEGT and Voluntary Partnership Agreement negotiations, forest governance was strengthened, and laws were reformed to improve transparency, legal clarity, enable public participation in decision-making, and support the rule of law. A timber legality definition and a traceability system were developed, alongside enabling independent forest monitoring. These efforts culminated in the signing of the agreement with the EU in February 2024, paving the way for its implementation. Furthermore, we supported the further development of the Forest Governance Index (FGI) to conduct assessments in several countries, including Côte d'Ivoire. These assessments were published on the FGI website, enabling stakeholders to use the information for policy formulation, decision-making, and progress monitoring.

FLR initiatives across F4F countries have brought 6,849 hectares under restoration, improving ecological impacts. In Ethiopia, sustainable practices like agroforestry and reforestation are

showing positive changes in forest cover. Togo has developed a regional action plan with local stakeholders, focusing on biodiversity enhancement and landscape restoration through community-driven agroforestry and forest management. Madagascar's efforts include reforestation and mangrove restoration, which contribute to improved biomass, soil structure, and water retention. Côte d'Ivoire's FLR efforts integrate diverse tree species into cocoa plantations to boost biodiversity and soil health. In Benin, participatory planning and reforestation activities are underway around the Mékrou River catchment, with additional focus on restoring gallery forests and integrating trees into agricultural systems.

FLR interventions across F4F regions have stimulated socio-economic development through diverse capacity-building efforts and the creation of small enterprises, aiming to enhance local economies and community welfare. The project's activities have generated employment opportunities in various sectors, including bamboo processing, seedling production, beekeeping, and vanilla cultivation. Training in sustainable agricultural practices and agroforestry, conducted in Ethiopia, Togo, Madagascar, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire, is designed to improve local skills and empower communities. Notably, the further development of honey value chains in Togo, Benin, Ethiopia and Cameroon aims to enhance income, with emphasis on including women and young people in entrepreneurship. Additionally, Côte d'Ivoire's project is diversifying cocoa plantations through agroforestry, which is expected to further improve producer sales and sustainable income opportunities.



*Extraction of honey, Tchamba Prefecture, Togo
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Further Information: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/85060.html>