

2021 Annual Report



Forest and Farm Facility



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



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Highlights

In 2021:

- The mid-term evaluation was released, finding that the FFF is a unique, highly cost-effective programme that is expanding global forest and sustainability narratives and making laudable progress towards its outcomes. We began implementing the evaluation's recommendations.
- We were at the centre of globally important dialogues and negotiations related to climate change, biodiversity conservation and food systems and helped achieve two hugely important policy outcomes:
 - **Donors pledged USD 1.7 billion to support tenure rights** for, and forest management by, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, constituting a huge increase in financial support for climate solutions involving these groups.
 - The IUCN World Conservation Congress adopted a resolution submitted by the FFF-supported Indigenous Peoples Coordinating Body of the Amazon Basin calling for the **protection of 80 percent of the Amazon by 2025**.
- Our influence on the development and implementation of **large-scale development initiatives** scaled up – with a total value of nearly **USD 1.2 billion**. For example, the programme's DNA is now imprinted on an 11-country Global Environment Facility programme valued at about USD 900 million, which is expected to reach nearly 1 million direct beneficiaries and bring 12 million ha of drylands under sustainable management.
- We supported **144 forest and farm producer organization enterprises** based on environmentally sustainable resource use, with 115 of these increasing their value adding during the year. We worked with 90 groups led by women and with 64 groups in which the majority of members were women (including many that were both).



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- The efforts of FFF-supported forest and farm producer organizations led to **improvements in more than 80 subnational or national policies**, processes and decisions in favour of forest and farm producer organizations – such as in five regions in northern Ghana, where bylaws were developed to better protect women-led non-wood-forest-product value chains.
- **More than 167 000 ha of forested landscapes** were under **restoration** as a direct result of FFF funding, and some 66 000 people benefited from forest restoration and more-sustainable forest management.
- More than 100 of the forest and farm organizations we support implemented **climate-resilience plans and practices**. Training in climate-change mitigation and adaptation reached about 5 400 staff during the year, 45 percent of whom were women.
- FFF-backed forest and farm producer organizations ran **181 business-related training events**, and 469 staff were trained in business incubation. Eighty-nine organizations developed business plans with credible financial information.
- We convened or joined **49 online events with about 26 000 participants** (in total) and intensified our social media presence.
- We published ten data-driven reports, including on climate funding and resilience, charcoal producers and the pandemic. We also produced and **published 50 articles, webstories and success stories**, considerably expanding our outreach and helping inform and influence national and global policy dialogues.
- We designed a **stronger gender monitoring system**, which will be fully operational in 2022. By increasing field data and analysis, the system will improve our work in addressing the needs and challenges of women forest and farm producers.
- We established a **pilot programme of direct beneficiary grants**, a new mechanism well suited to channelling funding to grassroots organizations. We issued 37 grants in three pilot countries under this mechanism, at a value of about USD 584 000. If the pilot is successful, the mechanism could be used throughout FAO to boost ground-level support for forest and farm producers.



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- About **50 FFF-supported forest and farm producer organizations** provided or **improved access for members to services such as health, education and income support**, benefiting about 56 500 producers.
- Forests, Farmers and Agriculture, Sustainable Together (FFAST), the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Tropenbos International, the Lady Agri impact investment hub and the FFF partnered to **coach forest and farm producer organizations in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia to help them become investment-ready** before approaching investors for funding.
- We deployed about **USD 7.6 million**, the highest-ever annual amount and about 45 percent more than in 2020. About **56 percent of these funds went to forest and farm producer organizations** through letters of agreement and direct beneficiary grants. Thus, we delivered nearly 50 percent more funds to forest and farm organizations than in 2020.
- **A total of USD 18 367 436 was contributed** by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), IKEA and the governments of the Netherlands and the United States of America under new funding agreements, bringing the amount available for implementing the programme's phase 2 to USD 53 131 421.



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Abbreviations and acronyms

AFA	Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Development
AFFON	Association of Family Forest Owners Nepal
AMPB	Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests
APMIL	Association of Honey Producers of Lomerío (Bolivia)
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CENAREMA	Centre for Natural Resources Management
CFUG	community forest user group
CIOEC	Integration Coordinator of Bolivian Peasant Farmers Organizations
COICA	Indigenous Peoples Coordinating Body of the Amazon Basin
COP	Conference of the Parties
CTOP	<i>Coordination Togolaise des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles</i>
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users in Nepal
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FF-SPAK	Farm Forestry Smallholder Producers Association of Kenya
FILAC	Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean
GATC	Global Alliance of Territorial Communities
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHaFFaP	Ghana Federation of Forest and Farm Producers
GIZ	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</i>
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MA&D	Market Analysis and Development
MJUMITA	Community Forest Conservation Network of Tanzania (<i>Mtandao wa Jamii wa Usimamizi wa Misitua Tanzania</i>)
NACUL	National Charcoal Union of Liberia
NDFA	Nyimba District Farmers Association (Zambia)
NFGF	National Farmers Group Federation (Nepal)
PAFO	Pan-African Farmers Organization
PDFA	Petauke District Farmers Association (Zambia)
PGS	participatory guarantee system
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TTGAU	Tanzania Tree Growers Associations Union
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States dollar(s)
VNFU	Viet Nam Farmers' Union

Letter from the Chair



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Tiina Huvio

Programme Director, Finnish Agri-Agency for Food and Forest Development
Chair, Forest and Farm Facility Steering Committee

In 2021, the world started to show strong signs that it is finally hearing the diverse, colourful and urgent voices of forest and farm smallholders by giving recognition to the role of Indigenous Peoples in forest management

This was indicated by the financial pledge of USD 1.7 billion made during the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in communities. In addition, forest and farm producer organizations gained more prominent positions in discussions and negotiations at the local scale, in national forums, and globally.

Nevertheless, the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) still has a humbling task in strengthening the position and voice of forest and farm producer organizations globally and in its core countries. This is essential because smallholders manage about half the world's forests and farmlands. Given the respect, rights and resources they deserve and the capacity to organize effectively, they will help steer a course towards a sustainable future.

The increasing visibility and influence of smallholders can largely be attributed to the hard work and engagement of forest and farm organizations and their members, supported by the FFF and other like-minded bodies. Together, we are showing the power of such organizations and what their actions on behalf of their members can deliver. Strong messaging and enthusiastic campaigning supported by studious data-gathering are contributing to changes in mindsets and ultimately to increases in funding and other institutional support for the organizations.

The FFF is now about halfway through its second phase. As documented in this 2021 annual report, its impact is scaling up – via the advocacy alluded to above and in diverse other ways.

Large projects and programmes are being put in place that build directly on the FFF's successes (page 20) – for example, the Global Environment Facility is increasingly using FFF learnings and expertise in its project designs.

The Facility's work advanced on many fronts in 2021, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. It deployed its largest-ever annual budget, with well over half the funds going directly to forest and farm producer organizations.

A mid-term evaluation conducted in 2021 confirmed that the FFF is a unique, highly cost-effective programme that is making laudable progress towards its planned outcomes (page 4). The FFF is also continuing to improve. The evaluation made several recommendations, some of which have already been actioned, and others are in the pipeline. In implementing the recommendations, we are being careful to maintain the recognized strengths of the FFF and our support for forest and farm producer organizations while expanding our reach towards more landscape-oriented action.

With the world increasingly aware of the potential of organized smallholders, it is pleasing that the FFF – a body whose purpose is to nurture this potential – is efficient, effective, and having an impact far in excess of the sum of its parts. We have good reason to expect that momentum will continue to build.

1. Introduction

Forest and farm smallholders, who supply at least one-third of the world's food, are confronting increasingly difficult climatic conditions – such as temperature extremes, more variable rainfall, droughts, storms and flooding. They also face policy uncertainties and sometimes wildly fluctuating markets, among other threats to their livelihoods.

The FFF's mission is to strengthen forest and farm producer organizations representing smallholders, rural women, forest communities and Indigenous Peoples as a means for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and responding to climate change. It has been operating since 2012 and is now in its second phase (2018–2025) (Box 1).

An independent mid-term evaluation of phase 2 conducted in 2021 was overwhelmingly positive, determining that the FFF:

- Is expanding global forest and sustainability narratives.
- Is making good progress towards its planned outcomes.
- Takes gender equity and Indigenous Peoples seriously.
- Has well-organized approaches to monitoring, learning, communications and outreach.

This summary report illustrates these and other aspects of FFF work in 2021. It shows how the programme is continually improving, learning from its experiences, and adapting in the face of rapid change. It describes the big successes, such as how FFF groundwork has helped attract and shape large donor projects and programmes. It also presents more local achievements, such as the ways in which the FFF and its partners are influencing subnational policies and helping smallholders increase their incomes and resilience. It explores the programme's challenges and weaknesses and how these are being addressed.

We believe strongly in our work and its capacity to catalyse widespread positive change. We are supporting forest and farm producer organizations in their efforts to stimulate entrepreneurship and increase access to markets, finance and services; helping build resilience among smallholders and in landscapes; encouraging gender-equitable approaches and outcomes; coordinating the efforts of representative organizations globally as a means for achieving rapid widespread policy improvements; and linking with donors and other funders to place forest and farm smallholders at the centre of projects and programmes.

In this annual report, Chapter 2 looks in detail at the mid-term evaluation's findings. Chapter 3 presents stories of our work in 2021, illustrating the exciting advances made in the ten core countries and globally. Chapter 4 shows the progresses by outcome. Chapter 5 notes key challenges and lessons from 2021. Chapter 6 provides a budgetary overview; it also lists the FFF's resource partners and the additional funding received in 2021.



Annexes provide further detail on the work done in each core country in 2021 and list our knowledge generation and training efforts, regional and global activities, and the webinars and events we hosted or otherwise supported.

Buoyed by the successes achieved in 2021 and determined to continue enlarging our impact, we are pressing ahead in 2022.

Box 1. The Forest and Farm Facility

The FFF was established in 2012; its second phase, which began in 2018, will continue to 2025.

We aim to achieve four outcomes:

- **Outcome 1.** More enabling policy and legal frameworks for forest and farm organizations delivered through more-inclusive governance and cross-sectoral processes (SDGs 16 and 17).
- **Outcome 2.** Increased entrepreneurship, access to markets and finance through gender-equitable value chains delivered through new capacity to provide business incubation within forest and farm organizations (SDGs 1, 5, 8 and 12).
- **Outcome 3.** Improved delivery of landscape-scale mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and climate resilience through the direct engagement of forest and farm organizations and integration with inclusive livelihood approaches (SDGs 2, 13 and 15).
- **Outcome 4.** Improved and equitable access to social and cultural services (SDGs 3 and 10).

The FFF works at the local, national, regional and global scales, with on-the-ground operations in ten “core” countries and some others. It has direct impacts on forest and farm producer organizations – member organizations, such as cooperatives, that bring together communities, private smallholders and Indigenous Peoples – by providing funding, information and advice and enabling diverse exchanges among forest and farm organizations and between them and policymakers. FFF pathways for scaling up include working with grassroots apex organizations to influence narratives and policies and catalysing government, donor and private investments in forest and farm producers and the four FFF outcomes.

The FFF has four implementing partners with complementary attributes.

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) brings longstanding, trustworthy relationships with governments, a strong presence in countries, and technical experience.
- The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is a persuasive thinktank that helps shape narratives, with impressive skills and experience in participatory research, monitoring and learning related to (among others) community enterprises, forestry, and climate finance.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has strong links to the environmental world at multiple scales, especially conservation organizations worldwide; Indigenous Peoples’ organizations is one of its membership categories.
- AgriCord and its 13 member agencies have vast experience and knowhow in providing technical assistance and training to forest and farm organizations.

The FFF’s work has been made possible by the generous support of the governments of Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway through the FAO Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism, Sweden and the United States of America, the European Union, and IKEA. To date, these donors have provided USD 53.1 million for the FFF’s second phase.



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2. What the evaluators thought

This chapter presents the main findings of the independent mid-term evaluation of phase 2, which was released in 2021. The evaluation was conducted between November 2020 and March 2021 and covers the period July 2018 to December 2020.

Expanding global forestry narratives and practices

The evaluation confirmed that the FFF is a **unique, highly cost-effective programme** “that can influence global forestry narratives and practices, beyond the sum of its achievements in core countries”. Indeed, it found that the FFF is **expanding global forest and sustainability narratives** by casting light on the links between smallholder organizations, value chains and landscape resilience. Moreover, work supported by the FFF has led to projects by other institutions designed to replicate and scale up its successes.

The independent evaluators also observed **strong coherence** between the FFF’s work and the SDGs, with the FFF’s four outcomes aligning with and contributing to 11 of the 17 SDGs. The programme has also been fully involved in the United Nations Decade on Family Farming (2019–2028), including its design, and its outcomes are consistent with the Decade’s priorities. The FFF is helping the broader endeavour of sustainable development by supporting regional and global apex bodies active in forest conservation and forest rights.

Well-matched with national and producer priorities

The FFF is **consistently relevant** to the priorities of forest and farm producers and their local and apex representative organizations. It is also well-matched with government programmes – for example, the Facility’s 2021 workplan in Bolivia was aligned with that country’s five-year national development plan (which started in 2021). In Ghana, the FFF is complementing government flagship programmes such as “One Village, One Dam” and “Planting for Food and Jobs”. The evaluation concluded that the FFF’s outcome 3 is supporting climate-change adaptation policies and action plans in all the core countries and (where applicable) their REDD+ strategies and nationally determined contributions.¹

¹ In Kenya, however (as reported in the evaluation), a national ban on charcoal has undermined FFF efforts to encourage sustainable production.

Proving nimble in the face of rapid change

The FFF has had to be **agile and adaptive** in its second phase, as reported in the evaluation. In the first two years, for example, the Facility worked with a budget only about one-fifth the size originally envisaged. The shortfall was managed via various strategies, such as reducing the number of core countries and the annual allocations to these, lowering grant ceilings, and adopting incremental approaches in the design of country strategies. Togo’s FFF strategy focused initially on only two of the four outcomes (expanding to encompass all four when the programme was later extended).

The pandemic has constituted a major threat to the work, but the evaluators found that the FFF has adapted well. Country facilitators and collaborating producer organizations have implemented a wide range of adaptive management actions to maintain satisfactory levels of programme delivery.

The pandemic has also jeopardized regional FFF initiatives – with international advocacy missions cancelled and one of the calls for regional proposals delayed. Nevertheless, the adaptability of the FFF and its regional partner organizations has helped minimize the impacts, according to the evaluation.

Helping forest and farm organizations, and their apex bodies, grow stronger

Grant recipients interviewed by the evaluators considered that a key contribution of the FFF is in helping forest and farm producer organizations, and their apex bodies, strengthen internal governance. Apex organizations in core countries worldwide are developing legal statutes, strategic plans, organizational guidelines and administrative procedures, often for the first time. These bodies, in turn, are having an increasing influence on policies.



Making good progress on the four outcomes

The mid-term evaluation reported satisfactory progress towards the FFF's outcome 1 – “more enabling policy and legal frameworks for forest and farm organizations delivered through more-inclusive governance and cross-sectoral processes”. In some countries, dialogues involving such organizations have resulted in improved policy decisions.

The evaluators found that the FFF has made highly satisfactory progress towards outcome 2 – “increased entrepreneurship, access to markets and finance through gender-equitable value chains delivered through new capacity to provide business incubation within forest and farm organizations”. This involves improving entrepreneurial skills and expanding markets through product diversification and innovative marketing.

The FFF is also making progress through agroforestry, reforestation and other land restoration work towards outcome 3 – “improved delivery of landscape-scale mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and climate resilience through the direct engagement of forest and farm organizations and integration with inclusive livelihood approaches”. The evaluators noted, however, that achieving lasting change at a landscape scale is difficult given the small size and short-term nature of the grants deployed by the FFF.

The evaluation found that there has been relatively less progress towards outcome 4 – “improved and equitable access to social and cultural services”. This has stemmed partly from what the evaluators considered is ambiguity about the nature of the social and cultural services the programme is aiming to support. It is also due partly to lower demand from forest and farm producer organizations, many of which lack the capacity and financial means to provide its members with such services. Nevertheless, the FFF has helped its partner forest and farm organizations respond strongly to the hardships brought on by the pandemic, in many cases including by addressing the social services needs of their members.

Knowing that further improvements can be made

The evaluators' main conclusions about the FFF were overwhelmingly positive. It is a **unique, relevant, cost-effective flagship programme that is making good progress towards its planned outcomes, and its potential influence goes well beyond the core countries**. Nevertheless, the evaluators made clear that much remains to be done, pointing out areas where the FFF could gainfully devote more attention. These include:

- **Moving “beyond small grants”** by addressing, in the theory of change, the gap between outcomes and impacts, developing results-based monitoring to evaluate the longer-term impacts of FFF work, and leveraging the work to have greater influence on global forestry narratives and practices and on large investment projects.

- **Focusing more on priority landscapes** identified in consultation with country advisory committees to increase the cumulative impacts of the FFF at the landscape scale, increase the efficiency of grant portfolio management and environmental monitoring, and improve access to the programme by territorial organizations.
- **Revisiting the partnership between AgriCord, FAO, IIED and IUCN.** The evaluators recommended exploring the feasibility of expanding the roles of the implementing partners – for example, the more systematic participation of AgriCord affiliates in country advisory committees could strengthen agri-agency perspectives and reduce conflicts of interest.
- **Reconsidering the concepts and scope of outcome 4 to increase progress and encourage greater interest among producer organizations.** The FFF team could seek a common understanding of this outcome by clarifying what it entails and what it aims to achieve.
- **Evolving funding approaches**, such as by using more flexible grant modalities and funding longer programme phases to provide more continuity and increase the chances of achieving lasting change.
- **Increasing the reach of communication efforts** by better targeting audiences (both elite and grassroots) in outreach, developing communication capacity in forest and farm producer organizations, and increasing the number of FFF staff devoted to this aspect of the work.
- **Expanding** by growing the number of core countries, hiring more country coaches to assist in programme delivery, and working more with indigenous territorial organizations. The latter will require devoting greater attention to community forest rights and land tenure, including the implications for women and youth, which are crucial for many such organizations.
- **Striving harder to achieve gender-transformative results**, such as by strengthening the use of gender analysis tools, working to empower women in forest and farm producer organizations, and selecting value chains that promote gender equality and equity.
- **Identifying entry points that appeal to young people** – such as by involving them in the management, communication and marketing of value chains – to increase their participation in forest and farm producer organizations.

The work to implement these recommendations began almost immediately after the evaluation was delivered. For example, the FFF has already put in place a pilot programme of direct beneficiary grants, which is an innovative, flexible form of financial assistance that can go directly to grassroots organizations for works such as the construction or rehabilitation of productive assets. In 2021, 37 of these grants were awarded in three pilot countries – Bolivia, Ghana and Togo – at a total value of about USD 584 000.

As described in Chapter 3, the FFF has also adopted an improved FFF gender monitoring process, as recommended by the mid-term evaluation.

3. Major themes in 2021 illustrating our work

The previous chapter took a strategic look at the FFF's work based on the findings of the mid-term review. Work to achieve the four outcomes continues on all fronts (see next chapter), but this chapter focuses on seven themes where the FFF is increasing its efforts and which may not have been fully drawn out in previous annual reports.

The themes are:

- (1) influencing subnational policies and governments;
- (2) building climate resilience through diversity;
- (3) getting to scale by linking to large investment projects;
- (4) helping turn charcoal businesses green;
- (5) linking forest and farm producers with social protection programmes;
- (6) encouraging majority-women producer organizations; and
- (7) raising local voices through global and regional initiatives and outreach.

Each is illustrated by representative (but by no means comprehensive) examples.

Influencing subnational policies and governments

We are making headway in improving conditions on the ground

From the beginning, the FFF has been helping forest and farm producer organizations engage more effectively with governments at all levels to ensure that grassroots voices and needs are better reflected in policies. Working with national governments and globally is important, but policies at the level of municipalities, districts, provinces, departments and traditional authorities can also have major impacts on rural people's livelihoods and the resilience of their territories. Moreover, most forest and farm organizations find it easier to gain access to these more local levels of government and obtain faster results.

Eighty-one FFF-assisted forest and farm organizations in the core countries developed clear advocacy agendas in 2021 (bringing the total to 184) representing their members' interests. Backed by the FFF's resources and strategic knowhow, they are having an increasing influence on subnational governments through dialogues, roundtables, one-on-one meetings and the election of their members to local governance institutions. In total, we helped strengthen or launch 83 subnational policy processes in our core countries in 2021. As a result, such governments are increasingly providing land, funding and physical infrastructure for producer organizations and helping them obtain access to capital; supporting COVID-19 response efforts; building roads to enable farmers to get their products to markets; and purchasing seedlings and other products from local cooperatives.



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The **Viet Nam** Farmers' Union (VNFU) is prompting and facilitating policy roundtables to influence subnational policies and governance in favour of local producer organizations at the commune, district and provincial levels. In the five Vietnamese provinces in which the FFF is working, 51 roundtable discussions or focus groups involving producer organizations, governments and private-sector representatives were conducted in 2021, with a total of about 2 000 participants (half of whom were from producer organizations).

These discussions have enabled the development of conducive local regulations, produced action to improve local roads, and increased farmer access to finance. For example, the Tran Yen district people's committee approved a budget to build and repair 3.5 km of forest road in the Dao Thinh commune.

The provincial policy roundtables have been so successful that the VNFU has expanded the model to 13 other provinces (thus covering nearly one-third of the country's provinces).

The FFF-VNFU team helped 14 forest and farm producer organizations prepare advocacy strategies in 2021 to promote policies favouring higher-value, long-rotation forestry, organic production, and cooperative development at the commune, district and provincial levels. Successes included the issuance of new land-use certifications on 266 ha; the construction of 17.5 km of village and forest roads to improve market access; and the enabling of farmer access to USD 2.1 million in new capital from private-sector enterprises, government programmes and development banks.

In **Nepal**, the FFF is working closely with district-level governments, which have considerable autonomy and are increasingly passing laws affecting forestry and agriculture. The Federation of Community Forest Users in Nepal (FECOFUN), the Association of Family Forest Owners Nepal (AFFON) and the FFF are working to further the interests of forest users via this means – helping formulate, to date, about 100 local forest-related Acts, including 35 in 2021.

The National Farmers Group Federation (NFGF), assisted by the FFF and others, is also helping shape subnational policies by supporting multistakeholder mechanisms known as *kishan chautaris* in 39 municipalities. The work, which began in 2017, enables effective

collaboration among smallholder producer groups, community forest user groups (CFUGs), government line agencies, local FECOFUN representatives, dairy cooperatives, agroforestry groups and local government bodies.

Kishan chautaris are now fully mainstreamed in local government plans and budgets in 11 of the 39 municipalities. Through this mechanism, the NFGF, with FFF support, has had a positive influence on agricultural Acts in 30 municipalities, with improvements including the allocation of funds to support the adoption of diversified nutritional gardens, scaling up agroforestry, and provisions for climate-resilient farming on leasehold land.



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In quarterly roundtables in **Ghana's** savannah region in 2021, women complained that male outsiders are harvesting their shea and baobab trees for charcoal, with negative impacts on their livelihoods. The Organisation for Indigenous Initiatives and Sustainability – with FFF support – held dialogues with the regional house of chiefs and traditional councils to develop bylaws aimed at protecting non-wood forest products and women-led value chains in the five regions of northern Ghana.

Most land in **Zambia** is under customary rule, and local chiefs have the mandate to allocate land. The FFF has helped five forest and farm producer organizations become more involved in subnational policy platforms such as district development coordinating committees, district forestry commodities committees and ward development committees. Working with these institutions, and advocating for tenure with several chiefs, has brought small but significant wins: for example, the Nyimba District Farmers Association (NDFA) received 10 ha of land for its processing facilities.

The Choma Charcoal Association's engagement with the local district development coordinating committee enabled them to obtain space in the market for their sustainable charcoal. Interactions with traditional leaders and ward development committee members helped promote the adoption of guidelines for participatory guarantee systems (PGSs) (Box 2).



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Box 2. The FFF is working with producers to develop participatory guarantee systems

PGSs are locally focused quality assurance systems for certifying producers. They are based on broad stakeholder participation, with farmers, consumers, enterprises, producer organizations, rural advisers, local authorities and others jointly making decisions, visiting farms, supporting each other and deciding which producers can be awarded a PGS certificate. The FFF and its partner forest and farm organizations are working with many local and provincial-level governments to provide the enabling conditions for such systems. For example, we worked closely with the Zambia Forestry Department, WeEffect – a national-level forest and farm producer organization – and the Kasisi Agriculture Training Centre to develop a PGS for certifying sustainably produced charcoal. Pilot work in Zambia's Choma District has produced guidelines for sustainable charcoal production validated by stakeholders.

Sources: Moura e Castro, F., Katto-Andrighetto, J., Kirchner, C. & Flores Rojas, M. 2019. Why invest in participatory guarantee systems? Opportunities for organic agriculture and PGS for sustainable food systems. Rome, FAO and IFOAM – Organics International.

Grouwels, S., Kitema, A., Wanjira, E.O. & Ziba, V. Undated. From laissez-faire to organized groups – A short history of sustainable charcoal producer associations in Kenya and Zambia. Sustainable Woodfuels Brief No. 3. CIFOR-ICRAF.

In **Ecuador**, the FFF-supported producer organization Sumak Pacha worked with provincial governments and the Imbabura Local Consultative Council for Environmental Education to develop a PGS in the Imbabura and Otavalo provinces.

The Farm Forestry Smallholder Producers Association of **Kenya** (FF-SPAK) supported the engagement of forest and farm producer organizations in county-level multisectoral platforms in 2021, including climate-smart agriculture platforms and environmental committees.

In **Tanzania**, two FFF-backed forest and farm producer groups, the Tanzania Tree Growers Associations Union (TTGAU) and *Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima na Wafugaji Mkoa wa Arusha*, trained 75 farmers, more than half of whom are women, in public social accountability monitoring as part of efforts to track public expenditure. The scrutiny is proving effective in accelerating the completion of local governmental social, agricultural and infrastructure projects, including for improving schools, roads and health centres.



Building climate resilience through diversity

Vive les différences!



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The FFF is working to help smallholders build resilience in the face of climate change, including by encouraging them to diversify and improve their production systems, landscapes, infrastructure and institutions.² Moreover, 72 FFF-supported forest and farm producer organizations mainstreamed climate resilience into their plans and practices in 2021 and some 5 400 staff received training in climate-change mitigation and adaptation, including about 2 430 women.

FFF partners FAO, IIED and AgriCord developed and published four products on smallholder climate resilience in 2021, drawing on learnings from the field (Box 3). Collectively, the four publications show that forest and farm producer organizations are at the forefront of efforts in rural communities to adapt to climate change and require more support.

² Diversity is important for resilience because systems have greater buffering capacity when they involve multiple elements capable of performing similar functions; then, if one element is knocked out – by climate change, for example – the functions can still be maintained.

Box 3. New reports show the urgency of building climate resilience among forest and farm producers

Climate resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, resist, recover from and reorganize in the face of hazards related to climate change. Four reports (listed below) published by FFF partners in 2021 draw attention to the urgent task of building climate resilience among forest and farm producers and the crucial role of member-based representative organizations in this. Several key messages arise from the reports, including the following:

- Climate change is occurring at a speed outside the range of past experience, with smallholders under pressure to maintain their productivity – and livelihoods – in the face of this change.
- Climate resilience requires attention to four key areas of development – social, ecological, infrastructural and economic.
- A new analysis of ten case studies found 30 ways in which smallholders are increasing their resilience.
- Forest and farm producer organizations are already highly operational in promoting the resilience of smallholder livelihoods and landscapes. They are effective, efficient and extraordinarily resourceful – but need backing.

The publications

- [Forest and farm producer organizations building resilience – Strength in numbers and landscapes](#) - FAO/AgriCord
- [Diversification for climate resilience – Thirty options for forest and farm producer organisations](#) - IIED/FFF
- [Forest and farm producers – Climate-change sentinels](#) - FAO policy brief
- [30 resilience options – Diverse ways for grassroots organizations to flourish in the face of climate change](#) - FAO/IIED infographic

The following examples show how FFF-supported forest and farm organizations are helping their members increase the diversity of their production systems, landscapes, infrastructure and institutions and thus their climate resilience.

In **Ghana's** savannah zone, the forest and farm organization Tele-Bere has installed solar-powered irrigation, underground pipes and sprinklers at four demonstration sites to ensure the year-round supply of water for agricultural production. Women's groups have been allocated portions of the land, on which they have established multipurpose gardens and are growing diverse traditional vegetables as well as fruits such as papaya.

A key outcome has been the increased deployment of agroforestry approaches

– to date, about 35 000 tree seedlings of various species (e.g. cassia, mahogany, parkia, mango, cashew and albezia) have been raised and distributed to Tele-Bere members for planting on their farms. The increased production of grasses and tree foliage has also enabled a boost in livestock production by women farmers. Overall, the pilot scheme to diversify production systems and improve infrastructure is estimated to have increased farmer incomes by 15 percent and enhanced the food security of 350 members.



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In Bac Kan Province in **Viet Nam**, climate change is causing numerous problems for the Yen Duong Agroforestry Cooperative, such as landslides and hail- and storm-damaged crops. The cooperative's members are building climate resilience by diversifying their

production through agroforestry (including long-rotation timber production), organic farming and the use of drought-resistant plant varieties. FFF-supported demonstration sites in Viet Nam feature diverse land-use models on nearly 5 700 ha.

In **Ecuador**, six forest and farm organizations trained about 2 600 of their members (with nearly 3 000 ha of land) in agroecology and sustainable production practices as means for increasing landscape diversity and resilience. The FFF also helped the Andean Farm Bio-knowledge Center establish plant nurseries to serve communities, benefiting at least 300 households, who were able to diversify their crops as a result. Five biofactories were installed to produce fertilizer and other inputs for 134 households, putting 254 ha under more sustainable production. Sixty-three households adopted practices such as rainwater harvesting and the use of diverse varieties of Andean crops, fruit trees and timber species. Partner forest and farm organizations are selecting

native varieties of cacao for planting as a means for increasing productivity and conserving biodiversity. For example, Kallari has renovated 32 ha of cocoa



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plantations using native varieties with high productivity and disease resistance, with the potential to triple productivity while increasing resilience.

In **Nepal**, four FFF-supported forest and farm organizations began adopting new technologies in 2021 as a means for increasing their adaptability and resilience in the face of climate change and other uncertainties. One of these was the Chepang indigenous minority

group in the Raksirang municipality, which brought in new processing technologies for the fruit of the Chiuri tree (*Diploknema butyracea*), enabling the production of diverse high-quality products such as religious lamp oil, shampoo, soap and edible oil.

The tree nursery business of the Choma District Tree Nurseries Association, an FFF-supported forest and farm producer organization in **Zambia** with 52 members (70 percent women), took off in 2021. The installation of a bore to provide a stable water supply enabled the nursery to increase and diversify production from fewer than 1 000 seedlings of two main species in 2020 to 160 000 seedlings of 23 species in 2021. The enterprise is now also expanding and diversifying its customer base, thereby adding further buffering capacity against future shocks.



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Getting to scale by linking to large investment projects

Increasingly we have the ear of funders

Forest and farm smallholders are great innovators. By backing them and their representative organizations, we enable them to put their good ideas into practice; when they succeed, they can often attract additional investment and so start to scale up. The FFF has been working with on-the-ground innovators for ten years, and our influence on large development projects is growing (Table 1). In addition, our expertise – at the global level and among our national coordinators – is helping guide the design of project proposals to incorporate the learnings gained through our work. AgriCord, FAO, IIED and IUCN all have highly developed relationships with funding bodies such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), increasing our ability to bring FFF successes to scale.



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Table 1. National projects that FFF has influenced

Funder	Country	Amount	Commencement year
GEF project on community-based sustainable dryland forest management	the Gambia	USD 3.1 million in GEF funding and USD 12.7 million in counterpart funding	2016
GEF Drylands Impact Programme	11 countries (Africa, Asia)	USD 104 million in GEF funding and more than USD 800 million in co-financing	2022
GEF project to strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and communities	Togo	USD 10 million	2021
Global Green Growth Institute shea production project	Togo	USD 30 million–50 million	2022
GEF project on biodiversity conservation	Madagascar	USD 57 million	2022
GEF project to enable rural people to adapt to climate change	Zambia	USD 39 million	2021
GCF project to increase climate resilience among smallholder farmers in the Lake Victoria region	Tanzania	USD 30 million	2022
GEF project on integrated landscape management in the Mount Elgon region, coffee and maize value chains	Kenya	USD 5.3 million	2022
Ministry of Rural and Territorial Management	Bolivia	USD 9 million + USD 11 million	2021
GIZ World Wide Fund for Nature Proamazonia project (ministries of Environment and Agriculture and Livestock)	Ecuador	+ USD 50 million	2021
Total funds influenced by the FFF		USD 1 161 million	

From its early days, the FFF has been collaborating with the GEF in project development, such as one in **the Gambia** in 2015 on community-based sustainable dryland forest management. This project, which was approved in 2016 and is still going strong, received USD 3.1 million in GEF funding and USD 12.7 million in counterpart funding.

The FFF's influence on such larger projects has expanded greatly since then, even beyond its core countries, such as the GEF's Drylands Impact Programme, which has attracted more than USD 900 million in funding (Box 4).



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Box 4. The design of a large programme spanning 11 countries draws on the FFF's theory of change and experiences

The aim of the Drylands Impact Programme, which is being led by FAO and co-executed by IUCN, the World Wildlife Fund-US and the World Bank, is to transform dryland management in **11 countries in three geographical clusters** – miombo and mopane ecosystems in southern Africa; savannah and grasslands in East and West Africa; and temperate grasslands, savannahs and shrublands in Central Asia. The programme, which will start in 2022, will receive USD 104 million in funding from the GEF and more than USD 800 million in co-financing. Over its five-year duration it is expected to reach nearly 1 million direct beneficiaries; bring 12 million ha of drylands under sustainable management; prevent the deforestation of 10 000 ha of high-conservation-value forests; improve management effectiveness in 1.6 million ha of protected areas; and restore 0.9 million ha of degraded land in the drylands. All these activities will result in a reduction of 34.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide equivalent).

The FFF was closely involved in developing the programme's theory of change, objectives and activities. FFF staff worked with the design team on the overall programme framework and successfully proposed that it use the FFF's approach of strengthening producer organizations as one of the models for project implementation. Collaborative design missions visited, selected and worked out the shape of each project within the programme.

The FFF was involved in the design of a USD 10 million GEF project to strengthen the resilience of coastal ecosystems and communities in **Togo** in the face of climate change. FFF staff helped design the project, were part of the inception mission, and supported

the review of project documents. Drawing on FFF successes working with women shea producers, the Global Green Growth Institute is developing a USD 30 million–50 million project to promote shea production in Togo.

A USD 57 million GEF project on biodiversity conservation, restoration and integrated sustainable development in the Mongoky catchment in southern **Madagascar** will adopt the FFF model of focusing on forest and farm organizations.

National and global-level FFF staff helped design a USD 39 million GEF project aimed at enabling rural people in eastern and western **Zambia** to adapt to climate change. It is based largely on the FFF's theory of change and will work closely with forest and farm producer organizations, thus scaling up the FFF approach. The FFF's facilitator in Zambia will oversee implementation.

The FFF has helped strengthen the Community Forest Conservation Network of **Tanzania** (MJUMITA) by providing training in the use of a climate resilience toolkit developed by AgriCord,

which MJUMITA then applied in its area of influence. MJUMITA is conducting technical studies in four regions that will provide essential inputs to the design of a USD 30 million GCF project to increase climate resilience among smallholder farmers in the Lake Victoria region.

The FFF is a partner in a GEF project in **Kenya** on integrated landscape management in the Mount Elgon region, due to begin in July 2022. The project, which has a budget of USD 5.3 million, will focus on coffee and maize value chains working with farmer cooperatives, community forest associations and Indigenous Peoples. The FFF is already working in the area, including with indigenous pastoralist communities and the Kenya Forest Service. One of the community forestry associations with which the FFF has been working will be part of the GEF project.



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An apex forest and farm organization in **Bolivia**, the Integration Coordinator of Bolivian Peasant Farmers Organizations (CIOEC), worked closely with government officials and *Asociacion de Organizaciones de Productores Ecologicos de Bolivia* to formulate a national integrated sectoral plan for agriculture. The plan features national programmes on urban and peri-urban agriculture, ecological production, and family farming; some USD 9 million in government funds has been allocated to the first of these programmes, which is already operating, and USD 11 million has been budgeted for the second.



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In **Ecuador**, the growing confidence and administrative capacity of three FFF-supported Amazonian forest and farm producer organizations – Wiñak, Kallari and Tsatsayaku – has enabled them to gain more access to resources for productive activities by linking to large investment projects. These include two projects funded by GIZ and the World Wide Fund for Nature and the USD 50 million Proamazonía project managed by the ministries of Environment and Agriculture and Livestock.



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Bringing big funds to the ground level is challenging. In the GEF, for example, it has not proved possible to provide subgrants directly to forest and farm organizations. This means that projects must support these organizations in other ways, such as through training and technical assistance. Nevertheless, there is huge scope for increasing financial support for forest and farm producers via their representative bodies, including by tapping more into climate finance (Box 5).

Box 5. FFF studies explore ways to unlock climate funding for forest and farm producers

Only 10 percent of climate funding globally is reaching the local level and just 1.7 percent is accessible to locally controlled organizations. The aim of a new toolkit developed by the FFF is to help connect national forest and farm organizations with climate-change finance globally. A new brief calls on donors to recognize locally controlled organizations as a force for climate resilience – globally as well as locally – and to scale up this approach to support millions of members through collective investments.

Connecting forest and farm producer organizations to climate change finance
<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb0276en>

Local climate resilience finance – How can mirage become reality?
<https://pubs.iied.org/20446iied>



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Helping turn charcoal businesses green

It's an opportunity for sustainability at a huge scale

Charcoal production is commonly seen as a “lose-lose” endeavour. The unfettered exploitation with which it is often associated is destroying forests, and government policies are reducing incomes for – and often criminalizing – charcoal producers. But charcoal also presents a major opportunity, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Woodfuel, including charcoal, is one of Africa's main sources of energy and is likely to remain so for decades, and it is also a source of cash for millions of people. It is feasible to produce charcoal sustainably, and the market is growing rapidly. But seizing the opportunity will require new policies, more accurate information, adaptive management, sound technologies and, most importantly, well-organized and well-supported producers. It might also require courage, given the controversy around charcoal because of its high levels of informality and unsustainable practices and a consequent reluctance among some donors and stakeholders to become involved.

The FFF is working on charcoal on many fronts – documenting and exchanging local experiences, influencing policies, supporting technological change and market access, and helping organize farmers. The following examples illustrate the breadth of our work in this crucial area.



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The FFF is helping farmer organizations in **Zambia** improve access to private capital and marketing channels to increase incomes and sustainability. For example, the Choma Charcoal Association collaborated with a private investment firm called Frontier Capital Partners in 2021 to explore the market for sustainable charcoal. The nascent venture is also attracting interest from ZANACO, a commercial bank.

A PGS for charcoal created in Choma with FFF guidance now involves 40 groups and more than 900 people; the work expanded to a second area, Moshindomo, in 2021. PGS-certified charcoal brings much higher prices,

thereby providing strong motivation for producers to pursue this approach.

In **Togo**, the FFF supported the introduction of an improved charcoal production method, which increases efficiency, produces higher-quality charcoal, reduces production time, and generates a marketable byproduct that can be used as fertilizer. Twenty-six charcoal producers (21 of whom are women) received training in this method. A Togo research institute involved in the work shared the method at the regional woodfuel conference held in Kumasi, Ghana, in November 2021 (Box 6).

Box 6. Regional conference gives voice to charcoal producers, policy brief explores the role of member organizations in charcoal sustainability

In partnership with CIFOR-ICRAF, Tropenbos, FAO Africa, GIZ and the University of Copenhagen (Kumasi), the FFF convened a regional conference on sustainable woodfuel chains in Africa in Kumasi, Ghana, in November 2021, bringing together leading organizations, researchers and practitioners in Africa working on this pressing challenge. Community producer groups are showing a sustainable way forward for charcoal, and the conference was an important forum for ensuring that their voices are heard and listened to.

The conference provided a rare opportunity for charcoal producers and traders to speak directly to policymakers, advisors, donors and researchers. They highlighted the misconception that woodfuel use always leads to environmental degradation and showed that coming together as cooperatives has enabled them to increase their skills in sustainable wood harvesting and adopt improved charcoal kilns. Conference participants heard that local cooperatives have set up tree nurseries for native species and explored the use of invasive trees to help meet charcoal demand.

Read more at: <https://www.fao.org/africa/news/detail-news/en/c/1457527/>

Charcoal production is still one of the biggest (and most destructive) forest uses in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. A promising approach is to move from laissez-faire, open-access production systems to organized groups based on clear territorial control and responsibility. In a policy brief published in 2021, the FFF and CIFOR-ICRAF documented the advantages of forming charcoal groups, such as the Choma Charcoal Association in Zambia and the Kenya Charcoal Producer Association, which are leading efforts to put charcoal production on a sustainable footing and improve the livelihoods of members. The brief was presented at international conferences and meetings in Africa in late 2021.

Read the brief at: https://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/Brief/8283-SWB-Brief-3.pdf

In **Ghana**, the FFF was closely involved in the development of the Ghana Federation of Forest and Farm Producers (GhaFFaP)'s [Green Charcoal Strategy](#) in 2021. GhaFFaP is now partnering with the Forestry Commission's REDD+ Directorate and GIZ to support sustainable charcoal production and forest and landscape restoration as well as the development and implementation of GhaFFaP's Green Charcoal label.

Supported by the FFF, GhaFFaP expanded its partnerships on charcoal in 2021 to include practitioners, policymakers, traditional authorities, higher-education

institutions and civil-society organizations. It convened the two-day National Dialogue on Sustainable Charcoal and Wood Fuel Production to bring these actors together to promote and scale up sustainable woodfuel practices and policy alternatives. One outcome was a commitment to create a permanent multistakeholder core group working on charcoal issues, which will meet quarterly. Participants also agreed on the need to test field and policy options in 2022 and developed an action plan to mobilize resources for this.

In **Kenya**, FF-SPAK provided inputs to the formulation of a national strategy and action plan for managing *Prosopis juliflora*, an invasive species. The intervention convinced the government to make a partial exception to a moratorium on charcoal production to allow producers to harvest the species for this purpose (as well as to help control its spread).

In **Tanzania**, MJUMITA is promoting the development of sustainable charcoal enterprises. With FFF assistance, operations in village forests are harvesting and processing more sustainably, eliminating intermediaries and accessing new markets. Forest and

farm organizations are also achieving higher prices, despite initial market resistance. Training in the Market Assessment and Design (MA&D) methodology supported by the FFF enabled organizations to develop enterprise plans and better identify market opportunities in Dar es Salaam, ultimately raising prices from USD 2 per 50 kg bag to as high as USD 17 (while also reducing marketing costs through cooperative approaches). This success is encouraging other producers to get more organized, with the FFF helping create and develop four new charcoal-based enterprises in Tanzania in 2021.



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The FFF is supporting the 3 200-member National Charcoal Union of **Liberia** (NACUL) in its efforts to represent and develop the capacity of charcoal producers nationwide and to promote sustainable charcoal production. In 2021, NACUL helped charcoal producers in Grand Bassa county establish and obtain legal recognition for three district producer associations and to broaden awareness and membership through

live radio talk shows and advertising. More than 300 producers (including 92 women) participated in a consultative process in May 2021. Also in Liberia, the FFF supported research in 2021 designed to contribute to ongoing government discussions on charcoal. An outcome was a recommendation that government adopt policies that support sustainable charcoal production by farmers, in line with best practices.

Linking forest and farm producers with social protection programmes

Producer organizations are increasing member access to government services

FFF-supported forest and farm producer organizations were active again in 2021 in responding to the wide-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 56 000 forest and farm producers benefited from services such as food relief, and increased access to hygiene products and government social protection programmes thanks to the work of 47 FFF-supported forest and farm producer organizations.



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In **Nepal**, for example, CFUGs continue to play a crucial role in the pandemic. Many had dipped into their savings in 2020 to fund emergency COVID-19 responses, but these had largely been exhausted by 2021. Nevertheless, FECOFUN provided pandemic support in 2021 to more than 32 500 of the most

vulnerable households, who received emergency food relief as well as masks and other hygiene materials. FECOFUN also allocated 1 400 buildings in local communities to be used as quarantine and isolation centres. Many of those housed were migrants returning to their villages due to the pandemic.



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Many forest and farm producer organizations also increased efforts in 2021 to help members gain access to government social protection services. An illustrative case is that of charcoal producers in **Kenya**, who have been disadvantaged during the pandemic by, among other things, transport restrictions, a ban on charcoal production, and limited access to social protection services. With FFF support, the Centre for Natural Resources Management (CENAREMA) and FF-SPAK assessed the social protection needs of vulnerable organizations, especially charcoal producer associations in arid areas. The assessment found that 70 percent of charcoal producers were eating only one meal a day, and more than 40 percent were earning less than USD 20 per month. A database was established of vulnerable communities affected by the charcoal ban and pandemic in Baringo, Kitui and Turkana counties.

Collecting and presenting these data have made a difference. Many government officials had come to regard charcoal producers as

Six forest and farm organizations in **Tanzania** received training on the social services they could provide their members and how these might be delivered. The organizations prepared action plans for improving access to such services for their members and started implementing them. For example, as a result of work by the



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environmental destroyers, but the CENAREMA/FF-SPAK assessment and awareness-raising convinced them otherwise. The Government Social Protection Secretariat agreed to list the identified vulnerable groups in its social protection programme and to register the charcoal associations so they can receive benefits. The assessment will be extended to other counties in 2022.

TTGAU, 377 of its members (35 percent of whom are women) in Njombe, Makete and Ludewa districts had (as of November 2021) received improved pension, savings and health services through the National Social Security Fund.

In **Ghana**, the FFF is partnering with GhaFFaP, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and others to create social protection profiles of forest and farm producer organizations and link them to suitable social protection programmes. As a first step, ten FFF-supported producer organizations conducted needs assessments and established contact with district-government social service providers. In 2021, 11 forest and farm producer organizations each accessed at least one social service from district service providers on behalf of their members.

In **Nepal**, the apex organizations AFFON and NFGF, and Mount Everest Botanicals, conducted social services needs assessments of their members, providing the government with useful data on poor and vulnerable communities.

In **Togo**, *Coordination Togolaise des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles* (CTOP) developed a communication plan in 2021 for informing vulnerable rural people about the social services offered by government.

The **Zambia** National Forest Commodities Association, the NDFA and the Petauke District Farmers Association (PDFA) reached out to the ministries



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of Community Development and Social Welfare and Agriculture on the various social services their members might qualify for. They also contacted a member of parliament and local authorities to discuss possible access to these services, and the PDFA used its information centres and community radio programme to inform its members. As a result, 1 100 members received support from the Farmer Input Support Programme, and 375 were able to access benefits from the Victim Support Unit. Another forest and farm organization, Kampamule, enabled elderly citizens to be included in the social cash transfer programme.

Also in 2021, IIED conducted an important study on how forest and farm organizations were reacting to the pandemic (Box 7). Its findings will help shape longer-term narratives on the roles of such bodies in responding to and recovering from crises and building back better.

Box 7. Forest communities have shown considerable resilience in the pandemic, thanks largely to their representative organizations

An FAO Forestry Working Paper, *COVID-19 and Forest Communities*, draws on data from reported COVID-19 impacts and responses, lessons from previous crises (such as human immunodeficiency virus infection/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, Ebola, the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, and national-level disasters) and five primary case studies from forest and farm producer organizations. It found that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on forest communities were shaped by pre-existing social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities. Despite these, forest communities have shown considerable resilience, due largely to the social capital embedded in their representative organizations. The study identified seven key pathways for building back better.

Studies such as these are important for their rigorous analysis of FFF partner activities and also because of their capacity to influence policy narratives and donor policies. This study provides clear evidence that support for local organizations is a means for increasing resilience in the face of external economic, environmental and health shocks.

Covey, J. & Bolin, A. Forthcoming. *COVID-19 and forest communities – The role of social organisations in response, recovery and building back better*. Forestry Working Paper 28. Rome, FAO.



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Encouraging majority-women producer organizations

Addressing gender equity is fundamental to the success of our work

The FFF worked with 90 groups led by women and 64 majority-women groups (many of them are both) in 2021. Supporting women producers has become even more important in some countries in recent years, with more men than women migrating to cities in search of work. Women are increasingly left to manage the land, often with little formal status as landholders and therefore with even bigger hurdles to overcome than their male counterparts.

Majority-women groups are important for our work because they:

- **Are best placed to articulate and address challenges specific to women producers**, such as a lack of documented land rights, which inhibits access to formal finance and government support programmes.
- **Empower and support women and build confidence among them** in cultural contexts where women's entrepreneurial challenges may be underappreciated.
- **Bring rigour, efficiency and professionalism to group management** because of their strong family commitments, leadership styles and social networks.
- **Elevate family security and resilience in organizational priorities**, for example by increasing the prominence of nutritional security and family health during crises.



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Increasing understanding of our impacts on women.

Also in 2021, at the recommendation of the mid-term evaluation, we began strengthening our gender monitoring system, drawing lessons from the experiences of other organizations on this aspect of the work. Under the revised system, each participating forest and farm producer organization in each core country will annually complete a (mobile-device-based) gender questionnaire. A consultant will be hired in each country to oversee the data-gathering process; compile and analyse the results; convene an annual meeting of stakeholders to discuss the

survey results; and produce an annual national report to feed into the FFF's overall reporting process. At the regional and global levels, the existing reporting format for letters of agreement will be modified to include designated sections on gender-related information, with questions designed to capture the gender-related work of regional and global partners. We expect that, by generating much more field data and analysis, the improved monitoring system will strengthen our work in addressing the needs and challenges of women forest and farm producers.

Most of the women's groups with which we work are small, and some are mostly-women subgroups of larger mixed-gender groups. Majority-women groups tend to work in areas that are traditionally the domain of women, such as honey, vegetables, poultry, handicrafts, baobab, shea butter and medicinal plants. Our small and direct-beneficiary grants programmes are important for targeting such groups.

Majority-women organizations with which the FFF works made important progress in 2021.

In **Bolivia**, for example, the Association of Honey Producers of Lomerío (APMIL) – more than half of whose 43 members are women – helped formulate a municipal “ecological and sustainable” beekeeping management plan, which is now part of the municipality’s climate-change adaptation and mitigation strategy and includes the protection and conservation of 1 500 ha of forest.

APMIL and two women’s groups are also working to strengthen the role of women in organic honey production. They partnered with the Municipal Government of San Antonio de Lomerío to establish a new extraction and manufacturing plant, which is producing diverse honey products, such as edible and medicinal honey, propolis, ointments, shampoos and soaps.



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In **Zambia**, the FFF-supported Tubeleke and Masopo women’s clubs were granted 15 ha and 10.9 ha of land, respectively, to assist in operating their businesses.



©FAO/Helena Lehtonen

In **Madagascar**, the FFF is working with district governments and subnational offices of the Ministry of Environment to obtain land for women for reforestation and support for their nurseries. A successful outcome in 2021 was via a women’s advocacy

network on land tenure law in the Boeny region, with the government providing the National Platform for Women, Sustainable Development and Food Security with about 1 000 ha for reforestation, along with financial support for nursery development.

Raising local voices through global and regional initiatives and outreach

2021 was a year of global and regional influence

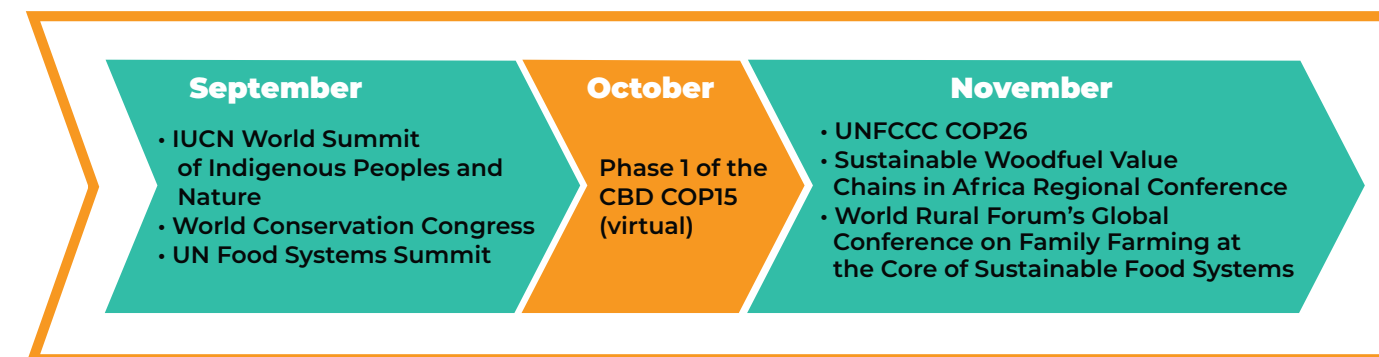
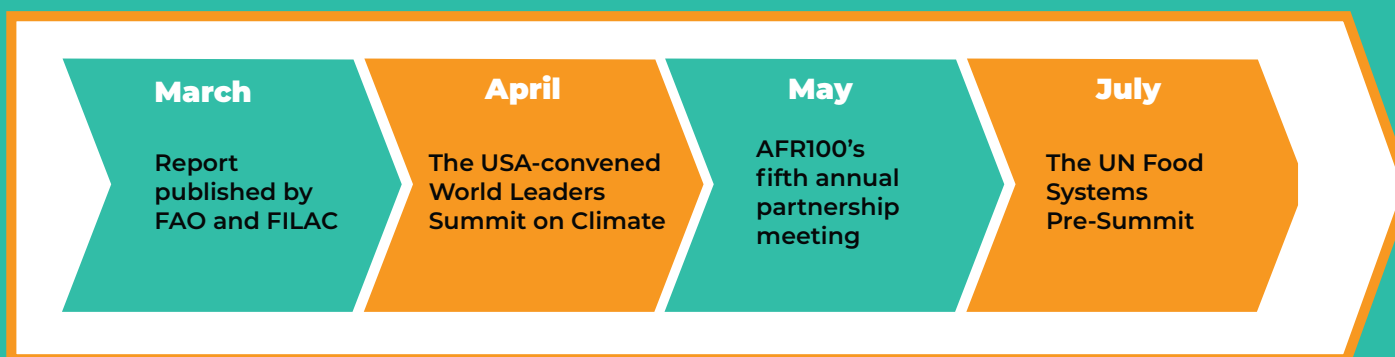
An important way in which the FFF is achieving substantial impact at scale is by influencing narratives and policies. We do this by enabling organizations of farmers, Indigenous Peoples and local communities to amplify their voices and messages. We also help analyse and present evidence that supports those messages. In an earlier section we looked at how the FFF is influencing subnational policies and programmes; this section focuses on its regional-to-global work.



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Given the large number of planned high-profile influential international events, some people had dubbed 2021 as a “super year” for international environmental policy. Ultimately, some of the scheduled events, such as the World Forestry Congress and components of the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), were postponed due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, several regional and international policy processes in 2021 in which the FFF and its partners were leading players had major impacts on global narratives and funding (Box 8).

Box 8. A timeline of relevant global and regional events in 2021



The FFF was especially successful in 2021 in supporting the efforts of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to influence global climate and conservation discussions and funding. This contributed to two notable outcomes:

1. The historic pledge of USD 1.7 billion made during the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s COP26** to support tenure rights for, and forest management by, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, which constitutes a huge increase in financial support for climate solutions involving these groups. The FFF facilitated the efforts of representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities – especially the [Global Alliance of Territorial Communities](#) (GATC) and its member networks – to catalyse the pledge, and the FFF manager was also directly involved from beginning to end.
2. The adoption by the **IUCN World Conservation Congress** of a resolution submitted by FFF partner the Indigenous Peoples Coordinating Body of the Amazon Basin (COICA) calling for the protection of 80 percent of the Amazon by 2025. This was the first IUCN World Congress in which Indigenous Peoples' organizations participated as such (rather than being categorized as non-governmental organizations), and the resolution was adopted amid growing recognition that Indigenous Peoples are essential for successful conservation. The participation of farmer organizations in the Congress was more limited but, nevertheless, their increased presence in conservation discussions was a positive sign.



FFF partners had a single aim at UNFCCC COP26 – to raise the profile and voice of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and farmers as stewards of nature who are indispensable for solving societal challenges such as climate change. In the leadup, around 20 FFF-facilitated events with representatives of farmers, Indigenous Peoples and local communities contributed to achieving this aim.

The outcomes of COP26 for Indigenous Peoples and local communities were generally positive. Indigenous leaders, including several FFF partners, spoke at more official high-level events than at any previous climate summit. Many national presidents, business leaders and other opinion leaders publicly recognized the outsized contributions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to forest and biodiversity conservation.

In conjunction with the COP, 20 indigenous, farmer and community leaders visited the Kilfinan community in Scotland to observe community forestry efforts and discuss land rights and the similarity of challenges faced by grassroots groups in diverse contexts; the visit received major coverage in the international press.



Three regional or global grassroots networks at the centre of policy advocacy actions in 2021 were the GATC, the Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO) and AFA. Many national-level FFF-supported farmer, community and Indigenous Peoples' organizations also participated in regional and global events, bringing their voices and ground-level knowledge. The FFF assisted several other policy-influencing efforts by partners, such as AFA's We Are Watching social media campaign and the Resilient Women campaign waged by AMPB's women's coordinating body. Such efforts helped reinforce the message that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are the main guardians of forests and nature and that it is crucial they have seats at the negotiating table on issues affecting them.



The FFF helped identify speaking and media opportunities for indigenous and farm leaders, funded their participation in events, organized and participated in virtual dialogues and webinars, helped publish and promote relevant reports, and disseminated information through traditional and social media. We also intensified our own communication and knowledge-management activities through information mailouts, webpages, videos, webinars, presence in first-tier media, and greater coordination on communication among FFF partners.

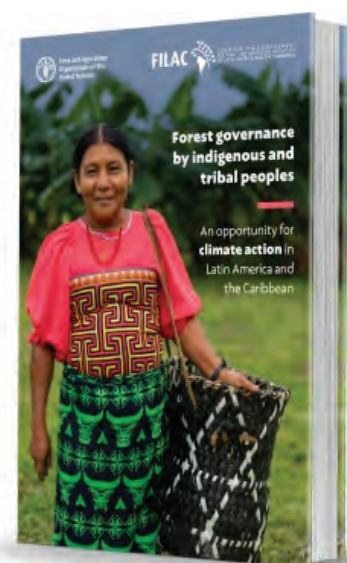
We published a monthly newsletter on the FFF's work, and IUCN developed the "Stewarding the Earth" website and newsletter around its World Congress. Overall, we produced and published 50 articles, webstories and success stories, considerable expanding our outreach. We ramped up our social media presence, such as by using a common hashtag among FFF partners and creating a [new social media account](#) under the name of the FFF manager, which generated up to 30 000 impressions per month.

Two other outreach efforts with influence at scale in 2021 were the following:

1. A report by FAO and the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC)

written by the FFF manager presented compelling evidence for an increase in funding for indigenous land rights, community forestry and agroforestry, payments for ecosystem services, and traditional knowledge and organizational support, with an emphasis on women and youth. The report showed that Indigenous Peoples and local people are effective forest guardians and that deforestation rates and carbon emissions are lower in areas where governments recognize their land tenure. This was a centrepiece of FFF messaging in events and activities throughout 2021.

In a wide-ranging interview published by Mongabay, the FFF manager expounded on the vital role of smallholders and secure communal tenure rights in forest management and conservation. <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/the-world-awakens-to-the-true-guardians-of-the-forest-interview-with-david-kaimowitz/>



2. The UN Food Systems Summit provided opportunities for farmers and Indigenous Peoples to share their views on issues related to food and agriculture. Representatives of AFA and PAFO, respected indigenous leaders and FFF staff participated in many leadership and advisory committees, virtual dialogues and events leading up to the summit and in the summit itself. AFA is a member of the UNFSS advisory committee and was involved in action tracks 1, 3 and 4, and the FFF manager was involved in action tracks 1 and 3. AFA and PAFO mobilized resources from the International Fund for Agricultural Development to support an independent regional dialogue among farmer organizations. The FFF management team and partners organized several events to share lessons on resilient grassroots food systems.



4. Summary of indicators of progress in 2021, by outcome

Outcome 1

More inclusive governance and cross-sectoral processes leading to enabling policies

- 82 direct changes made in policies, processes or decisions in favour of forest and farm producer organizations (up from 58 in 2020), included 35 subnational changes in Nepal
- 184 forest and farm producer organizations now have their own written advocacy agendas (up from 103 in 2020)
- 162 strengthened or new policy processes (up from 128 in 2020) – 8 international, 71 national and 83 subnational processes
- 4 816 forest and farm producer organization representatives (up from 2 998 in 2020) participated in these processes in 2021, of whom 2 100 were women

Outcome 2

Increased entrepreneurship and access to markets and finance through gender-equitable value chains delivered through new capacity to provide business incubation within forest and farm organizations

- 144 forest and farm producer organization enterprises (62 percent run by women – up from 40 percent in 2020) based on environmentally sustainable resource use supported in 2021 (down from 162 in 2020). Of these, 115 obtained new or enhanced value addition (up from 80 in 2020)
- 64 majority-women groups supported
- 71 supported forest and farm producer organizations with systems for assessing business skills needs
- 181 business related trainings run for members of forest and farm producer organizations; 469 staff trained in business incubation across all forest and farm producer organizations (up from 200 in 2020)
- 89 forest and farm producer organizations developed business plans with credible financial information (up from 58 in 2020)
- 102 organizations received support services from third-party providers (up from 76 in 2020)



Outcome 3

Improved delivery of landscape-scale mitigation, adaptation and climate resilience for climate change through direct engagement of forest and farm organizations and integration with inclusive livelihood approaches

- 167 349 ha of forested landscapes under restoration (up from 70 020 ha in 2020)
- At least 65 891 people benefited from restoration or more-sustainable forest management
- 125 partnerships with climate and landscape-restoration programmes formed at the national and subnational levels (up from 27 in 2020)
- 107 forest and farm producer organizations developed climate-resilient plans and practices (up from 99 in 2020)
- 5 372 forest and farm producer organization staff trained in climate-change mitigation/adaptation (up from 2 159 in 2020), of whom 45 percent were women (up 37 percent in 2020)

Outcome 4

Improved and equitable access to social and cultural services

- 47 forest and farm producer organizations provided or improved access to services to many more than 56 528 producers (up from 43 organizations serving 6 646 members in 2020), much of this linked to COVID-19-related services
- 59 forest and farm producer organizations conducted service needs assessments of their members (up from 38 in 2020)
- 53 new or improved social or cultural services offered (up from 29 in 2020)
- 56 forest and farm producer organizations with formal outreach and communication plans (up from 49 in 2020)
- 26 representatives of forest and farm producer organizations participated in national SDG processes (down from 50 in 2020)



5. Challenges and lessons learnt

Several new and existing challenges particularly affected FFF work in 2021.

- **Structural challenges in the contexts in which we work.** Many of these challenges relate to the limited access of producers to land, capital, information and decision-making and also the limited funding available for rural grassroots organizations. Although the FFF is designed to address such challenges, they nevertheless present immense barriers to progress. In 2021, country facilitators and the mid-term evaluation highlighted how gender inequities permeate the challenges. Women have lower levels of literacy, less familiarity with the dominant languages and fewer rights to land, and many cultural and social norms also limit their participation.
- **COVID-19.** The FFF has observed and raised awareness about the surprising capacity of rural grassroots organizations to respond to the pandemic and to help their constituencies in meeting health, food security, income and organizational needs. Even so, the pandemic has posed huge challenges to these organizations and their members, which have negatively affected their ability to achieve their goals. Although we have been able to maintain support for these organizations via remote means, this is a second-best solution that does not fully compensate for face-to-face interactions. The 2021 results must be understood in that context.
- **Institutional challenges to FFF performance.** The mid-term evaluation identified certain institutional challenges that the FFF must overcome to improve its performance. These include aspects related to the difficulty in monitoring financial contributions to dispersed organizations, the types of funding mechanisms used by FAO, the programme's approaches to training and knowledge management, and existing arrangements for collaboration among the FFF's four implementing partners. The evaluators made recommendations to address these challenges, which we have begun to implement.

- **A lack of ownership of outcome 4.** This aspect, which was also identified by the mid-term evaluation, related to a general lack of understanding of, and guidance on, “social and cultural services” as they relate to FFF work. At various times, the term has been used to refer to communications, financial services, cultural tourism and handicrafts, sports and cultural events organized by forest and farm organizations, and the role of such organizations in providing social-support services and infrastructure and accessing government services. Country facilitators have found it hard to determine which aspects of the work to include and emphasize in their reporting of outcome 4 and concretely how they are supposed to approach implementation. In 2020, outcome 4 essentially became synonymous with FFF efforts to respond to the pandemic, especially those aspects not directly related to finding markets. In 2021 and in light of the mid-term evaluation, we started work to provide more clarity on this outcome and to develop approaches for achieving it in the core countries.

Lessons from 2021

- 1. Indigenous Peoples have benefited from a high international profile in recent years. Smallholder farmer organizations have a much lower international profile and can learn from the success of Indigenous Peoples.** For example, Indigenous Peoples were prominent at UNFCCC COP26 and came away with funding of USD 1.7 billion. In contrast, smallholder farmers, who are also fundamentally important for climate-change adaptation and mitigation, barely had a seat at the table and gained much less. There is a need to direct more resources towards developing capacity so they – and their representative organizations – can engage more effectively in international advocacy.
- 2. Farmer organizations have an important potential role in helping their members gain access to national social protection programmes.** The pandemic helped bring this into focus. Many smallholder farmers could qualify for such programmes but lack information about them, and the social protection programmes themselves often have no easy way to engage with this group. Farmer organizations can help fill the gap as an important service for their members.



6. Budget highlights

Planned and actual expenditure

Table 2. Summary of global expenditure, 2021

GENERAL LEDGER BUDGET LINE	APPROVED	ACTUAL	REMAINING BALANCE
SALARIES			
PROFESSIONAL SALARIES	928 170	990 514	(62 344)
GENERAL SERVICE SALARIES	285 798	200 548	85 250
CONSULTANTS	848 792	732 064	116 728
TOTAL SALARIES (a)	2 062 760	1 923 126	139 634
CONTRACTS (LETTERS OF AGREEMENT)			
COUNTRY	3 750 000	3 370 411	379 589
DIRECT BENEFICIARY GRANTS	0	584 421	(584 421)
REGIONAL	225 000	149 460	75 540
GLOBAL	75 000	121 868	(46 868)
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS	444 000	498 198	(54 198)
TOTAL CONTRACTS (b)	4 494 000	4 724 358	(230 358)
OTHER EXPENSES			
LOCALLY CONTRACTED LABOUR	3 000	359	2 641
TRAVEL	434 024	128 767	305 257
TRAINING	162 000	264 532	(102 532)
EXPENDABLE PROCUREMENT	24 830	17 044	7 786
NON-EXPENDABLE PROCUREMENT	23 000	15 027	7 973
HOSPITALITY	6 100	-	6 100
TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES	105 000	39 251	65 749
SECONDMENTS FOR STAFF TIME	105 000	39 251	65 749
REPORT COSTS	-	-	-
MID-TERM EVALUATION	-	-	-
GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES (GEO)	40 100	20 722	19 378
GOE (EXTERNAL)	5 432	-	5 432
GOE (INTERNAL)	5 000	11 006	(6 006)
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES (c)	808 486	496 707	311 779
SUBTOTAL (a + b + c)	7 365 246	7 144 191	221 055
PROJECT SERVICING COSTS (5.9%)	439 931	413 152	26 779
TOTAL	7 805 177	7 557 344	247 834

Note: The total is for GCP/GLO/931/MUL and FMM/GLO/147/MUL.



Table 2 shows that we spent roughly the planned amount in 2021, at USD 7.56 million (we intended to spend USD 7.81 million). This was the FFF’s highest-ever annual expenditure, and 45 percent more than in 2020 (USD 5.2 million).

Fifty-six percent (USD 4.23 million) of the expenditure in 2021 went to forest and farm producer organizations via letters of agreement and direct beneficiary grants (the latter is a novel approach piloted in 2021). Overall, we delivered 48 percent more to grassroots organizations in 2021 than in 2020 (when the amount was about USD 2.86 million).

The slight underexpenditure (i.e. we spent 97 percent of the planned amount) in 2021 was due largely to less-than-expected travel (with a saving of USD 305 000) in light of the pandemic, and we also saved USD 117 000 on consultants. Conversely, we exceeded the budgeted amounts for training (USD 102 000), contracts (USD 230 000) (mostly because of new opportunities to expand in the Gambia, Liberia and Tanzania), salaries (USD 62 000), and general operating expenses (USD 6 000).

FFF’s resource partners and the additional funding received in 2021

Table 3 shows the FFF’s total revenue (to date) in its phase 2. Of note in 2021:

- New funding agreements were signed with BMZ, IKEA and the governments of the Netherlands and the United States of America for a total of USD 18 367 436, bringing the amount available for implementing the programme’s phase 2 to USD 53 131 421. In particular, the new pledge from BMZ (USD 17 835 910 to 2025) will enable us to substantially expand our work.
- We have already secured firm commitments for sufficient funding for annual budgets of about USD 8 million for the remaining four years of FFF Phase 2. If the funding of GBP 6.5 million from the United Kingdom’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, which has been tentatively approved for the FFF, is reaffirmed, the annual budget will increase to more than USD 10 million.

Table 3. Total revenue, by donor, 2018–2025

GCP/GLO/931/MUL CONTRIBUTIONS									
GCP/GLO/931/MUL	JUNE–DEC 2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
Sweden	2 780 558	3 674 541	2 588 997	2 987 215	1 992 230				14 023 541
Finland		1 579 466	760 043						2 339 509
IKEA	-	128 475	-	143 198					271 673
GIZ	849 934		-	1 824 818					2 674 752
Netherlands		100 000	170 000	298 329					568 329
United States of America			200 000	100 000					300 000
BMZ				2 911 695	2 649 165	2 386 635	2 124 105	1 861 575	11 933 174
BMZ (2)				5 945 303	4 161 712	2 615 933	2 615 933	2 497 027	17 835 910
TOTAL (a)	3 630 492	5 482 482	3 719 040	14 210 557	8 803 107	5 002 568	4 740 038	4 358 603	49 946 888
CONTRIBUTIONS BY PROJECT									
	JUNE–DEC 2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
FMM/GLO/147/MUL			500 000	500 000	500 000				1 500 000
GCP/GLO/397/EC	454 104	279 975	621 471						1 355 550
GCP/INT/054/GER	153 759	175 224							328 983
TOTAL (b)	607 863	455 199	1 121 471	500 000	500 000	-	-	-	3 184 533
GLOBAL CONTRIBUTIONS, ALL RESOURCE PARTNERS									
	JUNE–DEC 2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
GRAND TOTAL (A + B)	4 238 355	5 937 681	4 840 511	14 710 557	9 303 107	5 002 568	4 740 038	4 358 603	53 131 421

Forest and Farm Facility

www.fao.org/partnerships/forest-farm-facility
www.fao.org/forestry

Resource partners:

