# Midterm Review of RECOFTC Strategic Plan 2018-2023

RECOFTC

# Midterm Review of RECOFTC Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Resilient Forest Landscapes: Empowered Communities, Strengthened Institutions and Shared Prosperity

Report by the Dala Institute, an independent evaluator

Final

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ACIAR | Australian Center for International Agricultural Research |
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| APRIL | Asia Pacific Resources International Limited |
| BMUB-IKI | Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety-International Climate Initiative |
| CCCA | Cambodia Climate Change Alliance |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| EFI | European Forest Institute |
| EU | Europe Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FLEGT | Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade |
| FSC | Forest Stewardship Council |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH |
| ITTO | International Tropical Timber Organization |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| MRLG | Mekong Region Land Governance |
| MTR | Midterm Review |
| OECD DAC Committee | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance |
| RCF | RECOFTC Own Funds |
| REDD+ | Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation |
| SDC | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| Sida | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| Tetra Tech ARD | Tetra Tech Associates in Rural Development |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UN-REDD Degradation | United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USFS | United States Forest Service |
| VPA | Voluntary Partnership Agreement |
| WCS | Wildlife Conservation Society |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

# Executive summary

Recognising the intractable challenges posed to people and forests, RECOFTC formulated its Strategic Plan 2018–2023, building it on its extensive experience in empowering local people to find solutions for threatened forest landscapes and vulnerable communities. The plan puts people at the center of change, by empowering communities, governments and the private sector with rights, opportunities for dialogue, networking, technical expertise, tools and knowledge. RECOFTC seeks to focus on four strategic goals: (1) landscape collaboration in a changing climate; (2) governance, institutions and conflict transformation; (3) private sector engagement and enterprising communities and (4) social inclusion, gender equity and public action.

The objective of the MTR is to assess the performance of RECOFTC to date in achieving the desired results and outcomes of the Strategic Plan 2018–2023, using specific evaluation criteria with a forward-looking approach and assess its relevance in the regional context and the target countries' forest and development priorities. The MTR is intended to assist RECOFTC in gaining a better understanding of the following aspects of its interventions: (1) documenting and assessing progress and achievements, as well as any possible challenges, shortcomings and/or gaps, (2) assessing and analysing changes in the regional context and their effects on the relevance and implementation of RECOFTC's current program and (c) drawing lessons and recommendations that could guide any adjustments to RECOFTC approaches and efforts for the next three years of the strategic phase 2018–2023. The review is therefore forward-looking, providing lessons and recommendations. It addresses questions of relevance and coherence; effectiveness; efficiency, strategic implementation and resource mobilisation; impact; sustainability and the way forward. The MTR was conducted from December 2020 to February 2021.

Overall, RECOFTC has developed a participatory, relevant and comprehensive Strategic Plan and has effectively re-built the organisation around it. This work has helped to safeguard and build the reputation and credibility of the organisation and strengthened the confidence of government, development partners and donor stakeholders. While RECOFTC has a reputation for community forestry, its work is much broader given its focus on landscape approaches. The Theory of Change is relevant but may require some re-thinking, especially in the way Strategic Goal integrates with the other Strategic Goals. The all-encompassing nature of the Strategic Plan suits the organisation as a whole but presents implementation problems on the ground in focal countries.

The landscape approach resonates with RECOFTC staff and external stakeholders but is sometimes difficult to align with government notions of spaces along jurisdictional lines. Much of the work within landscapes is on governance, for example, including issues of conflict and land tenure security. This creates a significant overlap between the Strategic Goals but also provides an opportunity for collaboration. Although private-sector development is conceptually understood and supported in the organisation, there is a general lack of capacity to build the models and relationships required to advance on this Strategic Goal effectively.

There may be reputational risks for RECOFTC with respect to its association with private-sector actors (both as financial contributors and collaborators in activities) that are left unmitigated due to: (a) lack of processes to formalise collaborative alignment of the private sector with RECOFTC's ethical standards; and (b) lack of processes to monitor ongoing risks of association with corporations that may (and have) been accused of human rights and environmental violations. RECOFTC's approaches to gender equality and social inclusion have not only social benefits but also economic ones.

The management of RECOFTC is strong, relying heavily on the main (regional) office and focal country teams. While RECOFTC has a diverse array of funding sources, 72% of 2020 to 2021 project budgets come from the EU, BMUB-IKI and USAID via DAI as well as two core donors: Sida and SDC. It is regarded as a knowledge repository in the Asia-Pacific region and has a strong reputation for communication and knowledge products, resources and courses that inform policy and practice.

While RECOFTC has invested considerable energy into forming relationships at country and regional levels, there are still some gaps, especially in terms of developing relationships with private-sector actors, linking with groups that specialise in changing consumer behaviour and developing strong bonds with institutions with expertise in land tenure rights, conflict, gender equality and Indigenous People's rights.

The business development aspects of RECOFTC's work have been a major focus of the past several years. While it continues to rely heavily on three donors for project support and two for core funding, it has a business development strategy and is making strong progress in its implementation.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) reporting and data collection have improved substantially, and the organisation is balancing the need to roll up data to demonstrate collective results and allow staff to report according to the internal logics of individual projects. While indicators are tightly linked with outcomes related to Strategic Goals, the indicators are only loosely related to the SDGs. External stakeholders and donors may be more interested in indicators related to the SDGs than in those related to RECOFTC's Strategic Goals.

RECOFTC works closely with national governments and civil societies, facilitating impact in communities by magnifying support to actors in landscapes and empowering the community to access forest resources. Collaboration enables pooling together the financial, human and economic resources necessary to make progress on goals and effectively implementing program and project activities for sustainable outcomes.

While collaboration with the government has led to various successes, many respondents mentioned the need to increase private-sector engagement as a way to scale up sustainable financing mechanisms and the overall effectiveness of efforts. Using a landscape approach, RECOFTC has begun to place greater attention on engaging with private-sector actors over the past several years as part of its focus on value chains. However, such partnerships have been slow to form and require greater attention.

Core funding along with the revenue from projects has contributed substantially to RECOFTC operations, providing the essential freedom to focus on business development, communication and knowledge management. However, country offices find themselves with insufficient funding, and are calling for greater efforts towards innovative financing from diverse funders and increased engagement with private-sector actors. Reports suggest the use of key strategic geographic landscapes within focal countries as an organising principle and location to focus on-the-ground work for tangible results that could drive country office work.

RECOFTC's collection of substantial data on its operations would serve to optimise adaptive learning and operations. Rather than storing this data in institutional memory, RECOFTC has the opportunity to discuss the lessons learnt and strengthen the capacity in areas where weaknesses can be overcome with particular strategies.

The MTR provides implementation and management recommendations for the consideration of RECOFTC management. The implementation of these recommendations may be useful to micro-adjust RECOFTC's work; however, overall the organisation is moving toward successful implementation of its strategic plan. Implementation recommendations relate to refining approaches to private sector objectives, and gender and social inclusion work. This review encourages RECOFTC to continue focusing on community forestry together with landscape approaches, with the possibility of scaling up models that have been proven effective. Recommendations also include to continue to position RECOFTC as a keeper and sharer of knowledge related to forests in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond and to better position RECOFTC's climate change work.

Management recommendations include systems to better align RECOFTC outcomes with SDG targets and to ensure all Strategic Goal leaders have the capacity to apply considerations from the other strategic goals. This review also recommends enhancing the capacity of country offices to conduct and implement business development plans. Another recommendation relates to enhancing existing learning opportunities within the RECOFTC staff, especially those which meet the priorities of country offices.

Overall, the Strategic Plan is a galvanising document that unites an organisation diverse in terms of both geographical focus and accomplishments. The past three years have been characterised by regrouping, and the Strategic Plan has played an important role in that. RECOFTC has been effective and efficient in implementing the Strategic Plan and looking forward, with the planned targets likely to be achieved.

# Background

Recognising the intractable challenges posed to people and forests, RECOFTC formulated its Strategic Plan 2018–2023, building it on its extensive experience in empowering local people to find solutions for threatened forest landscapes and vulnerable communities. The plan puts people at the center of change, by empowering communities, governments and the private sector with rights, opportunities for dialogue, networking, technical expertise, tools and knowledge. RECOFTC seeks to focus on four strategic goals: (1) landscape collaboration in a changing climate; (2) governance, institutions and conflict transformation; (3) private sector engagement and enterprising communities; and (4) social inclusion, gender equity and public action. On Strategic Goal 1, RECOFTC aims to advocate and advance collaborative landscape management that respects, protects and exercises the rights of local people to manage the forest landscapes. It plans to strengthen institutions, empower local people and civil society and increase the capacity of key actors on Strategic Goal 2 as a way to advance forest governance. On Strategic Goal 3, RECOFTC works on economic value creation through alternative business partnerships and models. Lastly, it aims to enhance the rights and capacities of women and marginalised communities, while promoting transformative changes in the awareness, norms and behaviour through Strategic Goal 4. These strategic goals are interlinking pathways within RECOFTC's Theory of Change designed to consistently align with the vision and mission and are also expected to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Dala Institute, as the independent evaluation consultant, worked closely with RECOFTC to perform the midterm review (MTR) of the Strategic Plan 2018–2023. The overall objective of this review is to assess the performance in progress and achievement of the plan to date. It will help inform RECOFTC's long-term viability. Specific objectives of this MTR include documenting and assessing the progress, achievements, challenges, shortcomings and gaps; assessing and analysing the regional context changes along with their impact on the relevance and implementation of the current program; drawing lessons and recommendations for guiding the approaches and efforts to the Strategic Plan; and informing future strategic planning. The MTR was conducted from December 2020 to February 2021, addressing key questions on relevance and coherence; effectiveness; efficiency, strategic implementation and resource mobilisation; impact; sustainability and the way forward. This review triangulated multiple sources of data provided by RECOFTC, as well as primary data collected in all seven countries of operations, with a focus on Indonesia, Myanmar and Cambodia, to capture overall and focal country context.

The Dala Institute is an independent research and consulting organisation with no prior affiliation with RECOFTC programming. The individual consultants working on the review were Rodd Myers (Team Leader), Laura Kowler (Landscape Specialist), Dati Fatimah (Indonesia Evaluator), Sona Long (Cambodia Evaluator), Aung Kyaw Thein (Myanmar Evaluator) and Dyah Puspitaloka (Analyst). The consultants claim no conflict of interest nor relations that would influence their performance or quality of assessment in the context of this review.

# Purpose of the review, approach, and methodology

## Purpose of the review

The MTR's overall objective is to assess the performance of RECOFTC to date in achieving the desired results and outcomes of the Strategic Plan 2018–2023, using specific evaluation criteria with a forward-looking approach, and its relevance in the regional context and target countries' forest and development priorities. The MTR is intended to assist RECOFTC in gaining a better understanding of the following aspects of its interventions: (1) documenting and assessing progress and achievements, as well as any possible challenges, shortcomings and/or gaps, (2) assessing and analysing changes in the regional context, and their effect on relevance and implementation of RECOFTC's current program and (3) drawing lessons and recommendations that could guide any adjustments to RECOFTC approaches and efforts for the next three years of the strategic phase 2018–2023. The review is therefore forward-looking, providing lessons and recommendations (see Annex 1 for the full Terms of Reference).

## Approach

The review focuses on stocktaking and analysing the progress and achievements to date to inform the future direction of RECOFTC's approaches, efforts, partnership coordination and strategies. The key study questions were shaped by the OECD DAC evaluation criteria (detailed below). Detailed MTR questions are presented in Annex 4. For each question, secondary documents were identified and detailed data collection instruments developed for primary data collection (see Annex 3 for the list of secondary documents and primary data collection instruments used and Annex 4 for the data collection instruments). The MTR team reported to the deputy executive director at RECOFTC and was supported by the ad-hoc MTR Committee composed of key RECOFTC staff members and management.

## Methodology

### Task 1: Inception planning

The consultant and RECOFTC discussed the key issues, opportunities and challenges for the review, as well as the availability of the key documents. The consultant clarified the details of the plan, the approach to each key question and the draft of data collection instruments for the client's review in a Detailed Planning Document.

### Task 2: Document review

The consultant reviewed RECOFTC's documents as listed in Annex 3. Secondary documents were the basis for the detailed plans and reviews to triangulate primary data collected during the MTR.

### Task 3: Primary data collection

The consultant undertook a layered approach to ensure that the breadth of experience from each country was captured and that the depth required to inform change or confirm direction could be obtained (Figure 1). This entailed the following (Detailed in Table 1 below):
- Key informant interviews with RECOFTC main office and funders;
- Key informant interviews with implementers and country offices in all seven countries;
- Sampled key informant interviews in three selected countries: Indonesia, Myanmar and Cambodia. Target respondents represented the government, civil society observers, academia and private sector, who were familiar with RECOFTC and/or context;
- Sampled village-level participant (remote and in-person) group and individual interviews in Myanmar and Cambodia.

The consultant conducted key informant interviews remotely and in-person depending on the COVID-19 context in each country. The remote interviews used Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp and Telegram and were conducted in the local language or English. Relevant language

capacities of the team are Burmese, English, Indonesian and Khmer. A list of the consulted stakeholders is available in Annex 2, and the data collection instrument is available in Annex 4.

The overall framework followed the OECD DAC guidelines (2019) with the focus on the following themes:
- Relevance: is the intervention doing the right things?
- Coherence: how well does the intervention fit?
- Effectiveness: is the intervention achieving its objectives?
- Efficiency, strategic implementation and resource mobilisation: how well are resources being used?
- Impact: what difference does the intervention make?
- Sustainability: will the benefits last?
- Way forward: what are the recommendations for future implementation and approach?

Following the Terms of Reference, each criterion was scored and justified (see Annex 5).

**Figure 1**: A layered approach for primary data collection
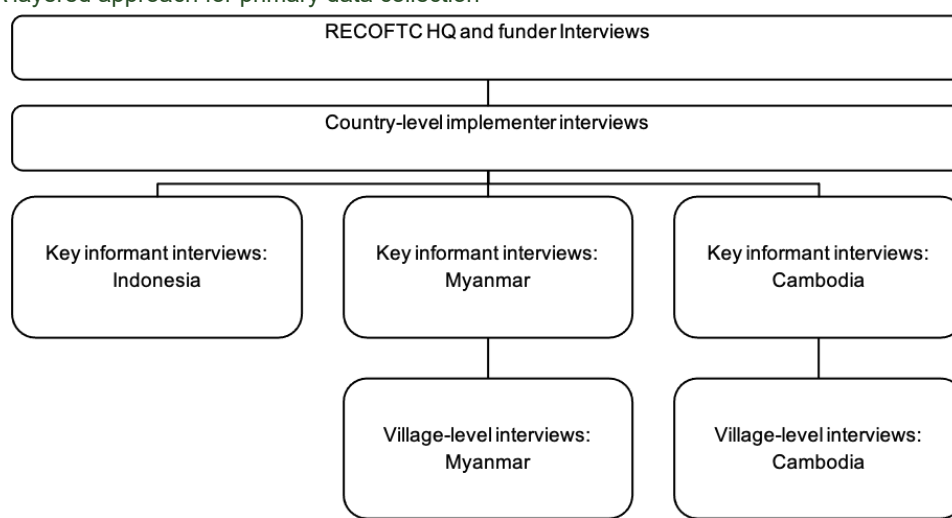


**Site selection**

At the country level, the MTR team and RECOFTCagreed to select Indonesia, Cambodia and Myanmar as RECOFTC's focal countries of work to be further reviewed for progress and implementation to date. Site selection at the village level was developed in close collaboration between the MTR team and RECOFTC as shown in Annex 4. Villages in Cambodia and Myanmar were purposively selected from a list of locations meeting the basic evaluation criteria provided by RECOFTC (see Annex 4).

**Sampling**

The Consultant purposively selected individuals to be invited as respondents in consultation with RECOFTC to ensure the representativeness of actor and project locations (Annex 4). RECOFTC made suggestions by sending lists of possible respondents, and the MTR team verified the list and then selected from it without RECOFTC's influence.

- *Key informant interview*
  Individuals for interview were selected by the MTR team from a shortlist provided by RECOFTC of key informants matching criteria provided by the Consultant. RECOFTC sent the MTR team a list of respondents from partner organisations, civil society and government, who are familiar with RECOFTC programming. Nominally, selections were made from this list using a stratified random sampling method in which at least one civil society and one government respondent were selected in each country.
- *Village-level group interview*
  Efforts were made to speak with key women and men informants. In group interviews, women and men were separated into different groups as agreed between RECOFTC and the Consultant on a case-by-case basis. In Myanmar, for example, groups were mixed based on the rationale that women played many of the leadership roles pertaining to RECOFTC interventions. In Cambodia, women's and men's groups were separated. RECOFTC was asked to address gender balance among or within groups and to ensure that invited participants included 25% youth.

The resulting summary of respondents is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Key informant interviews by actor type and location

| Actor type | Location | n Interviews | n Women | n Men | n Respondents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RECOFTC main office and donor | RECOFTC Staff | 6 | 5 | 7 | **12** |
| | RECOFTC Trustee | 1 | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| | Funder | 2 | 2 | 2 | **4** |
| RECOFTC country office | Cambodia | 1 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| | Indonesia | 1 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| | Lao PDR | 1 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| | Myanmar | 1 | 1 | 3 | **4** |
| | Nepal | 1 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| | Thailand | 1 | 1 | 0 | **1** |
| | Viet Nam | 1 | 0 | 1 | **1** |
| Key informant | Indonesia | 3 | 1 | 2 | **3** |
| | Cambodia | 4 | 3 | 3 | **6** |
| | Myanmar | 3 | 2 | 1 | **3** |
| Village-level interview | Cambodia | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| | Myanmar | 2 | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| Village-level focus group discussion | Cambodia | 4 | 17 | 19 | **36** |
| | Myanmar | 2 | 7 | 8 | **15** |
| **Total** | | **34** | **42** | **51** | **93** |

## Task 4: Analysis, drafting and dissemination

The MTR team performed two process analyses, primarily through the triangulation with multiple sources of data, to ensure the robustness of findings. First, the team analysed qualitative data from detailed interview notes, using qualitative content analysis methods, and processed the data manually. Second, secondary data from RECOFTC were analysed using qualitative content analysis methods. This report was subjected to the consultant's standard Internal Quality Review (IQR) in which a person with sufficient knowledge of the subject matter and evaluations reviewed the draft and provided feedback to the team prior to review by RECOFTC. The IQR used Dala's standard tools and ensured a thorough review of content and quality.

# Risks, limitations and threats to validity

■ The MTR team was able to carry out the in-person group interviews and key informant interviews in Cambodia upholding the COVID-19 protocol. However, the other interviews were carried out remotely. The MTR anticipated that the nature of remote interviews limited the extent to which the evaluator could directly explore the context and information in the field.
■ Sampling for the review was not completely random as it primarily relied on purposive sampling. The results are therefore not representative, but indicative.
■ Further, 2020 results data were being analysed by RECOFTC at the time the MTR was undertaken and therefore, the MTR could review some 2020 data but at times had to rely on 2019 data.

Note on citations:
Results are referenced using a standardised notation for secondary documents and interviews. A three-digit code connotes the source of the finding in square brackets eg. [302]. Interviews are listed in Annex 2 and documents are listed in Annex 3. The positionality of a respondent and the name of the document are written into the text as appropriate to minimise the need to refer to the annexes. The intent of Annex 2 is to indicate the positionality of the respondent whilst protecting anonymity as best as reasonably possible.

# Results

## Relevance and coherence

**Overall, RECOFTC's work is relevant and contributes to improved people/forest development outcomes in the landscapes in which it works**. There was a strong alignment and support for positive contribution of RECOFTC towards meeting forest and development outcomes, at the regional level as well as in focal countries [001–003, 006–016, 104, 108 & 302–304]. RECOFTC has built meaningful and powerful partnerships with the government and partners in the region and focal countries [001–003 & 005–016, 102, 113]. The respondents recognised RECOFTC's technical expertise and specialisation in community forestry and community-protected forest areas, with many collaborator respondents stating that it is the go-to organisation for community forestry and forest governance issues [032, 101, 202–204 & 302–304]. At the same time, programming is relevant at local levels as reported by all community-level respondents.

**The Strategic Plan has galvanised the RECOFTC team and its main stakeholders towards a common direction for the organisation** [102, 105, 107 & 109]. The Strategic Goals continue to resonate with RECOFTC staff and stakeholders, with some caveats mentioned below.

**At the regional level, RECOFTC plays a critical role in promoting rights-based participatory approaches to forest and landscape management and facilitating learning exchanges across the region by leveraging its networks and initiatives to address regional issues**. For example, it worked on strengthening the non-state actors' capacity in the Greater Mekong on national forest governance mechanisms and developing the ASEAN Guidelines for Agroforestry Development with partners [001–003 & 006].

**Within each focal country, RECOFTC plays an important, and recognised, role in the forest governance arena.** In **Cambodia**, it supported Cambodia's National Community Forestry Program and community-protected areas [001–003, 005 & 006]. In **Indonesia**, it facilitated tenure, social forestry and agrarian reform workshops—topics of concern in Indonesia's national priority agenda. It also developed the capacity and provided long-term support for village forests in Indonesia [006]. In **Lao PDR**, it provided inputs to the ongoing revisions of forest and land policy framework (the Forestry and Land Law were approved in 2019 and RECOFTC Laos played a significant role through the Village Forestry Working Group) as well as the FLEGT processes. It supported the multi-stakeholder processes and consultations on participatory land-use planning , village forest management planning and recognition of use rights in forest lands, including the issuance of teak tree certificates recognising the smallholder ownership and engagement/partnerships with the private sector [006 & 104]. In Myanmar, it provided recommendations for improving the Myanmar Selection System for timber as well as the collaboration between forestry-based community-based enterprises and the private sector. It also facilitated the sharing of experiences among these actors to improve business planning and community-forest enterprises development in Myanmar [006]. In **Nepal**, it provided long-term support to community forests and led the development of the first municipal plan, which was then approved and recognised as one of the most progressive plans in 2019. It then received requests for support from several other municipalities as well [003, 006 & 103]. In **Thailand**, it facilitated the development of a landscape strategy and management plans. It worked on feeding the lessons learnt and best practices into the development of the timber legality assurance system in Thailand. It also supported the establishment and management of the Kuan Kreng Landscape community-based learning center [001–003, 005–006 & 108]. In **Viet Nam**, it supported the Government's Forest Land Allocation process by undertaking capacity development and needs assessment. This led to the issuance of forest-titling certification, increasing the smallholder-managed forest area legally. It worked on increasing the accessibility of community-based enterprise/smallholder to market by connecting them with the private sector and building extensive capacity for CSOs on forest governance and other issues [002, 003, 006 & 110].

**RECOFTC has built strong working relationships with a diverse range of actors within regional government and civil society and at different levels in countries of operation.**
Its main office worked closely with the ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry [001–003, 005 & 006]. In **Cambodia**, it co-chaired the REDD+ Consultation Group and supported the development and facilitation of a multi-stakeholder governance platform within the National Community Forestry Program. It also worked with the NGO Forum to develop the capacity of the CSOs [001–003, 005–006 & 201]. RECOFTC in **Indonesia** supported the development of Akar Tani, a community-based enterprise, and worked closely with the University of Hasanuddin to upgrade the curriculum, resulting in the integration of community entrepreneurship. It also partnered and worked with the government and partner organisations to develop

national training modules, improving the Village Medium-Term Development Plans and Village-Owned Enterprises [001–003, 005 & 006]. In **Lao PDR**, it strengthened the National Village Forestry Working Group and supported the establishment of partnerships between smallholder and private companies in timber and non-timber forest product sourcing. RECOFTC Lao PDR served as a member of the Lao Plantation Forestry Group and Lao Rattan and Bamboo Platform. It supported the Lao CSO FLEGT Network in FLEGT and Voluntary Partnership Agreement. It also participated as a member of the multi-stakeholder Forest Sub-Sector Working Group and Land Sub Sector Working Group. It partnered with villages, government, and financial institutions to provide pilot microcredit and financing options [001–003 & 006]. RECOFTC in Myanmar was a key partner in strengthening the key institutions for the national community-forestry program. In gender issues, it supported the establishment of women leaders' networks. RECOFTC also worked closely with Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association in scaling up community-based enterprises as well as with other partners in diverse projects [001–003, 005 & 006]. In **Nepal**, it worked closely with the government due to which their 'Trees and Bees' livelihood programs have been recognised and upscaled. It also worked with the municipal government to develop the municipal plan and with grassroots women's association to build capacity and support gender champions [002, 003 & 006]. In **Thailand**, it worked closely with multiple stakeholders in different landscapes across the country. It strengthened stakeholders' capacity to develop community-forestry institutions and networks. It also supported the establishment of the women leaders' networks [003 & 006]. In **Viet Nam**, it facilitated market access for community-based enterprises by connecting them with the private sector under a partnership agreement. It partnered with the Women's Union on women-led entrepreneurship and capacity development. It also worked closely with partners on capacity building for CSOs and supporting the function of the NGO FLEGT Network, the Forest and Land Coalition, and the National REDD Network [006]. The RECOFTC Annual MEL report highlights these relationships in a table by Strategic Goal and actor type, reflecting the diversity and intensity of relationships that RECOFTC is building [017].

**The Strategic Goals face contextual constraints and interpretations influencing the extent of practice in some countries**. For instance, in Myanmar, several government and civil society respondents commented that the landscape approach is misaligned with government objectives, which are oriented toward jurisdictional boundaries [401, 402 & 403]. Similarly, in Lao PDR, issues such as gender equality and forest conflict are not government priorities [104]. In Indonesia, Strategic Goal 3 on private sector engagement was described by a respondent as "still normative" and impractical to implement. Although there have been some emerging collaborations with private sector actors in the country, the path to scaled-up collaboration with private sector actors remains opaque (see section below on private sector engagement) [301]. While overall the Strategic Goals are broad enough to encompass most relevant activities in each country, they have to be reinterpreted to be contextually relevant. In some cases, attracting the interest of governments, civil society and private sector for some goals can prove challenging [104,108 & 301]. The lack of specificity of the Strategic Plan and Business Development Plan allows each country to implement within the plans but does not provide contextual guidance [104 & 401].

**The Theory of Change offers a comprehensive framework built around the Strategic Goals**. Strategic Goal 4 was the most cross-cutting but also the least clear, especially in the public action component. The inclusion of gender equality, Indigenous People's rights and public action under a single Strategic Goal leads to some dilution of each at the outcome level (see the section below on Strategic Goal 4 for more). For example, the indicator "# of cases of local people taking action to promote local people rights "is linked to Outcome 1 on rights of local people under Outcome 1, which otherwise links to Strategic Goal 1 on landscapes [017]. Strategic Goal 4 is also of the most questionable relevance from the perspectives of government stakeholders (detailed in the Effectiveness section). For example, Strategic Goal 4 was not a government priority in Myanmar [401 & 404]. Issues of Indigenous People's rights, gender equality and public awareness are simultaneously cross-cutting long-term challenges that deal with deeply seeded cultural norms.

**The Theory of Change remains relevant to RECOFTC programming.** All of the RECOFTC respondents suggested that the Theory of Change covers what RECOFTC is and wants to do, although there were some suggestions that **some important aspects that affect the central objectives of RECOFTC are under-emphasised**. These include conflict mitigation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and land tenure security [104, 105, 110 & 401]. As a further example, it is not immediately apparent from the MEL Framework in what ways RECOFTC has influenced policy, which is a core tenet of Strategic Goal 2. Indicator 2100 addressed "# of cases of (sub)national governments adopting/implementing inclusive and gender-responsive policies/practices/structure promoting good governance in forest management (as a result of RECOFTC's and partners' actions)". RECOFTC staff explain that it contributes to these changes through actions and that attribution is not measured.

**RECOFTC's work is highly aligned with the SDGs; however, the exact contribution to the SDGs remains unclear.** Table 2, below, presents examples of alignment with SDGs. A RECOFTC respondent voiced a concern that while data collection on indicators related to the strategic goals has improved substantially over the past three years and the strategic goals are implicitly linked to SDGs, there is not

currently an explicit link between strategic goals and SDGs [113]. The Strategic Plan [031] suggests that the strategic goals lead to SDGs generally, but falls short of mapping the strategic goals to SDGs explicitly in the report [113]. The Plan then elaborates the SDGs to which RECOFTC contributes [113, p39–41], however, progress and achievement were reported using the Strategic Goals as the proxies and SDGs were reported as aggregate/cumulative [001–003, 005–006 & 017]. For example, reporting on Output 3.1, Indicator 3a shows that at least 2,200 people have enhanced their capacity in community-based enterprise and sustainable investment, disaggregated by gender and referenced to SDG targets 4.4, 8.2, and 8.5. Attribution to each SDG remains unclear in this context. There were also inconsistencies in which the landscape profiles acknowledged contribution to SDG 1, 5, 13 and 15 only [007–016], but reporting frameworks referred to a broader range. While the MEL framework [017] makes explicit reference to SDG targets within its indicators, the summation of the ways in which RECOFTC programming contributes to SDGs is disconnected from instigators related to the strategic goals, making the precise ways in which the Strategic Plan contributes to SDGs unclear however well-aligned they are in principle.

**Table 2:** RECOFTC alignment with SDGs

| SDG | Level of alignment | Justification |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1: No Poverty | Strong | RECOFTC has facilitated 12.4 million hectares of community-led management and piloted three landscape management plans (and one is ongoing) which were essential for livelihood development plans. About 7.3 million households have been involved in the local management of forests that could provide goods and services to meet the daily needs. RECOFTC also facilitated the development of community-based business enterprises [006]. |
| 2: Zero Hunger | Strong | |
| 3: Good Health and Well-being | Strong | |
| 4: Quality Education | Very Strong | RECOFTC specialises in capacity building. It has fulfilled 33% of 2023 targets on capacity building on community-based enterprises, 67% in training gender champions, and more than doubled targets in policy understanding as of the end of 2020 [039]. |
| 5: Gender Equality | Strong | RECOFTC emphasises a gender-balanced approach and builds initiatives that promote gender leadership, champions and network [001–003 & 006–016] |
| 6: Clean Water and Sanitation | None | No evidence available. |
| 7: Affordable and Clean Energy | None | No evidence available. |
| 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth | Strong | RECOFTC built the capacity of the people and facilitated community-led land management, which were essential capital for improving the livelihood and economy [006]. |
| 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | None | There is some indirect impact of RECOFTC's work such as the development of forest enterprises that led to local governments providing roads, however, there is a lack of evidence of direct impacts. |
| 10: Reduced Inequality | Strong | RECOFTC works on community-led land management and gender equality ensuring that the community has equal opportunity and access [006]. |
| 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities | None | No evidence available. |
| 12: Responsible Consumption and Production | Moderate | There was evidence where the people have enhanced their understanding on people-centred issues in general. However, there was a limited outcome in cases where the citizens played an active role in public engagement to support people-centred landscape policies and practices [006]. |
| 13: Climate Action | Strong | RECOFTC built the capacity of people in collaborative sustainable forested landscape management with many activities such as promoting good governance in forest management, sustainable landscape plans, and others which were essential to this SDG but yet to be identified or attributed [006]. |

| 14: Life Below Water | None | No evidence available. |
|---|---|---|
| 15: Life on Land | Very Strong | RECOFTC promoted, facilitated and supported strong initiatives using the landscape approach. These include the sustainable landscape plan, management and platforms. More broadly, RECOFTC's extensive work in forest areas toward sustainability is strong [001–003 & 006–016]. |
| 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions | Strong | RECOFTC facilitated the transfer of management of land/forests to the community, enabling community-led local management. There was also evidence where it supported the strengthening of the institution through building the capacity of the people [006]. |
| 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal | Very Strong | There was evidence that RECOFTC initiated collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders in community-forestry networks and other platforms, although not acknowledged specifically in the log frame [001–003 & 005–016]. |

Source: MTR Team assessment

# Effectiveness

Universally among respondents, **RECOFTC has a positive reputation with government agencies, civil society and communities alike,** facilitating the implementation of programs and the Strategic Plan. Positive outcomes and significant achievements at regional and country levels were evident [001–003, 005–017 & 032].

**Overall, the Strategic Plan is fulfilling its objectives**. Strategic Goal 1 and Strategic Goal 2 show the highest achievement with mixed results on Strategic Goal 3, depending on the country, and less clarity on Strategic Goal 4 as shown below.

## Strategic Goal 1: Landscape Collaboration in a Changing Climate

**RECOFTC works in a range of landscapes of high environmental and cultural value**, including UNESCO biosphere reserve/cultural heritage sites, national biosphere reserves, and customary territory of Indigenous People [006–017]. Figure 2 below illustrates almost 100 indigenous groups within RECOFTC landscapes. This diversity signals the challenging and valuable landscapes in which RECOFTC works. On the other hand, this may be perceived as a competitive advantage adding value to its work portfolio.

**Figure 2:** Indigenous groups in RECOFTC landscapes
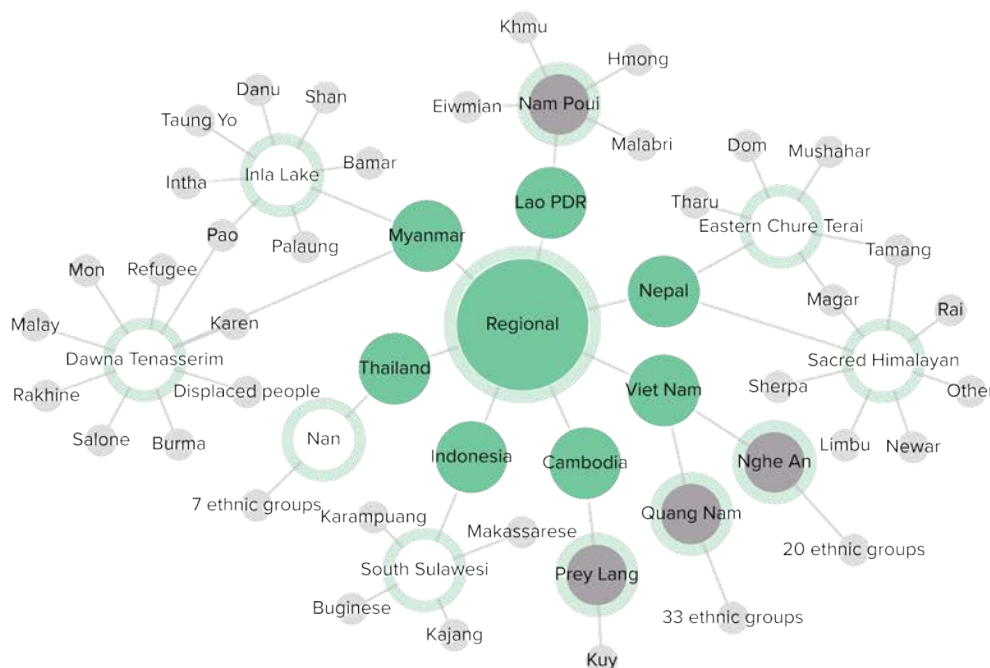
Adapted from: [007-016]

**RECOFTC has established and operationalised forest landscape management plans in Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand** [006 & 017]**.** The projects in Indonesia and Nepal were well-recognised by the government and other organisations [006]. In Indonesia, RECOFTC facilitated the development of a long-term forest management plan for the Forest Management Unit Jeneberang II, which received a provincial award for the best long-term forest management plan from the governor of South Sulawesi [006]. Its work in Nepal was adopted and scaled-up as a government-led programme [006 & 013]. It also facilitated the development of a municipal master plan for the Thakurbaba Municipality, the first approved master plan in the province and recognised as the most progressive plan by the provincial Municipality Committee [006].

**RECOFTC promoted local people's rights in inclusive sustainable landscape management and enhanced the capacities in collaborative forest landscape management.** It documented cases where local people acted to promote local rights in inclusive sustainable landscape management [017]. It carried out various training sessions, including training to enhance collaborative forested landscape management [006 & 017]. About 61% of its representatives have enhanced their capacity as a result of this training [017]. The training then combined with research, communication products, and support for multiple platforms and networks [006].

**The landscape concept is complex and may be understood differently by different actors, thereby suiting local contexts differently.** Generally, respondents understood the notion of landscapes to be about working with multi-sectoral actors on an area of land defined by geographical conditions. However, some respondents signalled the challenge of working with the government on the concept when the government is more concerned with jurisdictional boundaries than landscapes [101]. As one respondent mentioned, the landscape concept "is a bit messy in field implementation because the government authorities here understand only administrative boundaries, especially in coordination and getting permission from the local authorities." [401].

**Landscape approaches have been well-integrated into programming at all levels, although larger landscapes were underrepresented**, e.g. the Mekong basin [104]. Landscape management plans, collaborative landscape fora, and other collaborative groups have been initiated and supported by RECOFTC in most, if not all of the focal countries at landscape levels [001–003 & 006]. These were excellent entry points to be scaled-up and -out. However, implementation of the landscape approaches was not without its challenges, especially pertaining to long-term planning when only project funding is available, coordinating different jurisdictions, and making commitments with no clear resources. More diverse expertise will therefore be required, especially in terms of conflict resolution and prevention, as the landscapes are highly complicated and cannot be all managed by the foresters.

**There is sometimes a perceived lack of representation of climate change (including adaptation, mitigation and resilience) as strategic goals.** While there is an implicit fit with RECOFTC's work on forests and climate change, the theme of climate change is often under-pronounced. For instance, under Strategic Goal 1, only one outcome explicitly addressed climate change in 2018–2019 [017, 101]. While some respondents suggest that despite this disconnection, there is strong alignment with climate change objectives [402], there are some calls for RECOFTC to be more directly engaged in climate change work [404].

## Strategic Goal 2: Governance, Institutions and Conflict Transformation

**RECOFTC facilitated the enactment and implementation of improved policy and legal instruments related to forest governance.** The policy and legal instruments were related to the growth in the local people's benefits from sustainable forest management, improvement of natural resource governance and a fairer share of the benefits. One of the policies was the approved Forestry Law (2019) and development of a Forest Strategy until 2030 (on-going) in Lao PDR that improved the legal framework for village forestry [006].

**RECOFTC also promoted the adoption/implementation of inclusive and gender-responsive policies/practices, good governance in forest management.** Its alliances/networks have been influenced to take action in holding the government and related organisations responsible for promoting good governance of forest landscape management.

**RECOFTC strengthened the capacity of the actors as a part of the efforts in developing the stakeholder collaboration in forest governance.** Landscape-level forest governance monitoring systems

were in place and managed by non-state actors in an independent manner [017]. Nearly all the focal countries have a functioning multi-stakeholder committee supporting the implementation of governance and policies working to prevent or transform conflicts. Under this Strategic Goal, RECOFTC documented 10 outcomes related to good governance.

**Some respondents raised concerns that RECOFTC was under-equipped to deal with conflict in landscapes.** There was an absence of a conflict transformation outcome under Strategic Goal 2 [017]. Other respondents confirmed that conflict expertise is generally lacking in the organisation and the field staff working directly with local communities are often under-equipped to deal with conflict that arises both within communities and those related to complex issues related to customary land claims, which can sometimes be exacerbated by bringing actors such as the private sector, government and customary users together in a landscape approach [104, 304 & 401].

**Approaches to governance vary considerably in different countries, which may appear to be achieving fewer results, but small steps can signal large advances.** For example, in Myanmar, the enabling environment for CSOs to work with the government and private sector is relatively nascent. There the extent of conflict in new governance arrangements is still materialising [401].

## Strategic Goal 3: Private Sector Engagement and Enterprising Communities

**RECOFTC worked closely with community-business enterprises and played a pivotal role in incubating them.** It worked with 134 (as at 2020) community-based enterprises which mostly were in the early stage. RECOFTC and partners piloted and demonstrated a variety of feasible community-based models for sustainable community forest and forest-based livelihoods. It also facilitated equitable business partnerships between forest entrepreneur groups/smallholders and private sector actors. RECOFTC made agreements between the community-based forest enterprises and the private sector in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam [017].

**RECOFTC promoted the adoption or implementation of inclusive and gender-responsive policies/practices, community-business partnership and community-business enterprises.** It worked to enhance capacity in community-business enterprises and sustainable investment, which includes building the capacity of women. Of the 30% of the training mentioned in the most recent annual report, RECOFTC has accomplished 20% of the target (446 persons), in which 30.5%were women, trained have enhanced their capacity in community-based enterprise and sustainable investment [006 & 017].

**RECOFTC practices some innovative approaches to private sector engagement and enterprising communities.** In Cambodia, community-forestry credits allowed members to access credit for creating and improving livelihood options such as poultry production, home gardens, crop diversification and linkages with markets [201]. However, the indicators under Outcome 3 are not seen as suitable in this country's context and were reported as very challenging to achieve. In Indonesia, RECOFTC worked to facilitate the development of a coffee co-operative called "Akar Tani Co-operative", which strengthens community livelihoods with the participation of women and young people. The co-operative received funding support from the local government budget for the construction of coffee roasting facilities and road rehabilitation.

**RECOFTC supported the community-based business enterprises through research, communication and capacity development.** It carried out pilots and demonstrations that fed the inputs for the community-forestry platforms and networks. The lessons learnt were used to support the community-based business enterprises in the focal countries. It also conducted capacity-development training covering key topics such as forest-based enterprise development, private sector engagement, value chain and many more in several countries [006].

**Building private sector linkages is one of the more challenging Strategic Goals for RECOFTC to implement** according to several country director respondents. Several respondents noted that private sector engagement is difficult due to misaligned priorities with private sector actors and a sometimes unnatural fit to working together [104 & 108].

## Strategic Goal 4: Social Inclusion, Gender Equity and Public Action

**RECOFTC mainstreamed gender equality efforts to other organisations' (government and CSO) strategies, action plans, and capacity development resources and tools**. This effort was carried out by supporting gender champions and gender leaders' networks in the focal countries. RECOFTC promoted the representation of marginalised groups in the Community Forest User Group governance body [all country interviews]. A part of the work has enhanced people's understanding of people-centred land policies, certification, gender and social inclusion through public action [017].

**Gender equity is important to all respondents, but the key mechanisms to integrate it fully into programming is still a work in progress.** RECOFTC has been working to improve its capacity to integrate gender equity into programming. Sida provided additional funding for the Weaving Leadership for Gender Equality (WAVES) programme, designed to ramp-up the capacity of the organisation to meet gender equity objectives. However, some respondents questioned the extent to which the organisation has sufficiently mainstreamed gender in programming and that gender-specific funding results are not as clear as funders had expected [109]. WAVES is prominent in the 2020–21 Action Plan [003], and there is an institutional will to move the programme forward and demonstrate results.

**Public action has perhaps been the most unclear concept in the Strategic Plan**. The concept was inserted into RECOFTC planning in this Strategic Plan and was founded on the notion that consumers have a role to play in how forest resources are used. Some country programs were unclear on what constitutes a public action, but they performed activities relevant to public action such as raising awareness and facilitating dialogues [017 & 113]. Some respondents argued that while the rationale behind this notion is not wrong, RECOFTC has not been able to position itself to have any impact in this area [102 &113]. A RECOFTC manager suggested that changing consumer behaviour is extremely difficult and any resources RECOFTC applies to it are wasted, due to the lack of financial and human resources to adequately influence consumers [033 & 113]. Similarly, most RECOFTC respondents suggested that RECOFTC is not a 'campaigning' organisation. One respondent explained that RECOFTC's main competitive advantage was its position in relation to governments, civil society and communities. While it is in a good position to influence the government (of which there are several examples), campaigning against the government could compromise that position [113]. Another respondent suggested that public action is not limited to 'campaigning' but could be better understood as aiming to influence the government [106]. The draft organisational communication strategy comprises a full digital strategy that aims to build the capacity of civil society organisations, communities, and other stakeholders to communicate effectively and engage in public action and influence policymakers [037 & 038].

**RECOFTC carried out comprehensive research, communicated lessons learned and established platforms for dissemination**. RECOFTC developed a new website, with a learning gateway, which houses an institutional class document repository, contextualised learning modules, e-learning courses and other resources. In addition, it applied a full digital strategy using social media and other tools to reach, influence and support those working on issues that affect people and forests. It produced relevant communication and knowledge products. For example, it issued several analyses of forest governance and FLEGT in the Mekong countries and special reports on forest policy reform. These major undertakings have played an important role in supporting key governance institutions at the national and local levels in addressing various issues, including co-ordination of community forestry development and the mitigation and resolution of potential conflict. RECOFTC also supported the functioning and capacity building of actors and national and sub-national multi-stakeholder community-forestry working groups in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar and community-forestry user-group networks in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand [006 & 017].

## Sample Country Summary

For **Myanmar,** one of the major achievements has been improving forest governance in the target communities by enabling the community members to obtain access to their forest legally through new community-forestry agreements under new forest laws. With the facilitation and technical support of RECOFTC, the national level working group has been well-established and involves key actors and organisations in the forest sector including community members, the government, private sector and CSOs. Many department officials, staff from partner organisations and community members have been well-trained, and they have been empowered to sustain their current practices even though they need further follow-up technical support such as strategic planning, review and follow-up field visits by RECOFTC experts. RECOFTC is a highly credible technical agency for its technical strengths; neutrality; community members and officials' trust; good networks and relationships with local organisations, networks and donor agencies; community-forestry advocacy and ability to engage with the private sector.

In **Cambodia**, RECOFTC supported policy developments through research, documentation of lessons learnt, best practices and strengthening of the gender strategic plan for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Administration/Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery. Moreover, it co-operated with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to develop leadership for Gender Equity and provided capacity building for students to conduct field research at the ground level for improving women's roles in communities. In terms of the challenges, Goal 2 and Goal 3 regarding conflict transformation and private sector engagement are the most challenging, especially in conflict-prone areas. Another challenge is that it has to rely on funded projects to achieve these goals.

In **Indonesia**, RECOFTC is a trusted partner of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in capacity-building related to communities and social forestry. Government respondents appreciated

RECOFTC's expertise in training and manual development on community/social forestry, which have been adopted by the Ministry. RECOFTC Indonesia has succeeded in developing a model of community-based enterprises as shown in South Sulawesi. Through the co-operative developed by the facilitation of RECOFTC, a collaborative landscape approach is carried out involving the participation of women and young people. The initiative received support from the sub-national government for strengthening community livelihoods. Collaborating with large corporations has been a challenge, especially related to strengthening the position and recognition of community rights.

## Efficiency, strategic implementation, and resource mobilisation

**RECOFTC has been cost-effective in managing its funding.** It has overall met planned results within its available resources [102 & 301]. There was evidence of tangible results in program activities at the country level because most of the funding goes to interventions with target beneficiaries [001–003 & 006–017]. Operational and administrative budgets were low at country levels [001–003, 006 & 020], which RECOFTC country director respondents mentioned was at the minimum required level required to operate. The focal countries were able to manage multiple projects [020] despite the limited human resources [003] (see Figure 3 below). Projects have consistently been one of the largest sources of funding to RECOFTC at 47–54% [001–003] (Figure 4). As of fiscal year 2020–21, Viet Nam was the single focal country to hold the highest projects in terms of value (17%), followed by Cambodia (10%) and the Main Office (8%). The largest project values were for those in multiple locations, which include Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Viet Nam and regional [020] (Figure 6).

**There is consistent communication between the main office and country staff.** Focal country managers reported regular communication with the RECOFTC main office on a variety of topics ranging from administrative processes to programming. While most country managers suggested that the level of communication was helpful and that the main office was accessible, one respondent hinted that the main office is "in telling mode, not listening mode, [and that] some people get defensive at different levels" [101], suggesting that while the regularity of communication is productive, there may be some internal communication issues to work out so that all staff feel heard and the perception of power imbalances between regional and country staff is minimised. This issue is already being addressed through a new internal newsletter and planning for a new Intranet.

**Most of the human resources are centred in the main office (62%) with less than 10% in each focal country** [003] as shown in Figure 3. Respondents from the RECOFTC country offices shared that staff accept heavy workloads and undocumented overtime because they are committed to the work; however, country staff work in excess of full-time workloads to produce results, and are often under-resourced [104, 108 & 301] and expansion could be considered given their crucial role in supporting the operationalisation of projects. The respondents expressed the hope and need for the transfer of capacity around business development from the national to regional and the regional to the country offices through capacity-building programs of staff so that the country office has the technical expertise to support more effective program implementation [101, 301, 303 & 304].

**Figure 3:** Human resources distribution plan (by person) in regional and focal countries as of October 2020
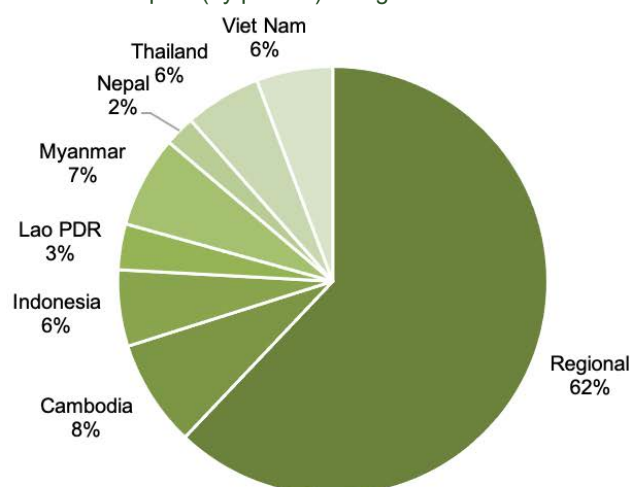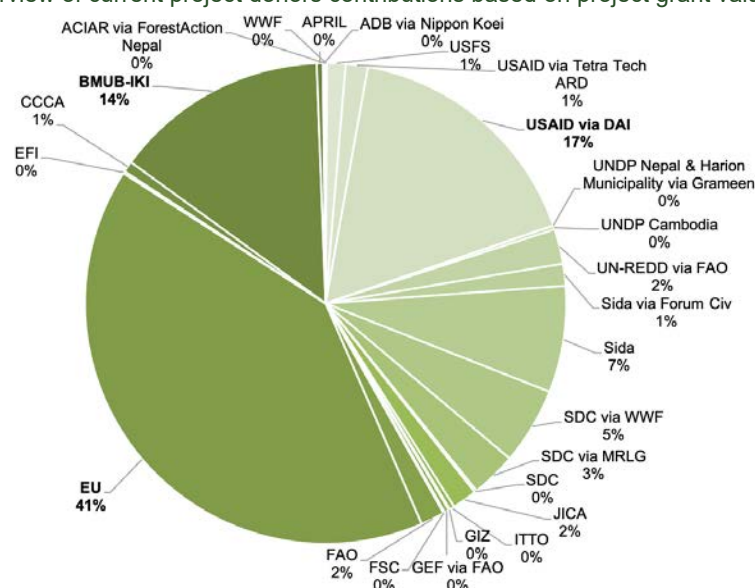


Source: [003]

**Landscape approaches require a diverse skill set among staff, both at the regional and national levels, and historically, RECOFTC technical staff have been foresters**. Senior managers recognised that landscape approaches require a broad skill set that may not have been well-represented at RECOFTC before. However, this is on the minds of managers as new human resources are brought in, such as those with backgrounds in social studies, economics and law [101, 105, 106 & 107]. Senior leadership has also re-organised the responsibilities in the organisation to enable technical experts to focus on technical issues and competent managers to concentrate on management [105]. Overall co-ordination with the newly reinstated deputy executive director position has assisted with overall internal co-ordination. Moreover, it has freed up the executive director to focus on business and strategy development.

**Business development strategies have improved substantially over the past two or three years.**
Prior to the change in its senior leadership and development of the Strategic Plan, RECOFTC was experiencing some challenges in finance and organisational direction [019]. The Strategic Plan signalled a move toward more participatory management, increased independence of country offices and planning with a greater focus [102, 105, 108, 109 & 111]. These efforts have helped to regain the trust of key stakeholders and to build staff morale toward a more common approach to achieve collective objectives. Critically, the business development plan has helped to re-shape the stability of the organisation, but this is still a work in progress. The organisation has largely recovered from its financial challenges and demonstrates greater stability. At the organisational level, there is a wide range of funding from a variety of sources, as shown in Figure 4 below. Although the EU is responsible for 41% of the overall project funding, there are 24 other funders, all but three of which contribute less than 5% to the overall budget. Some respondents have signalled this as problematic in the sense that although there is a diverse range of funders, most tend to be small [105 & 107]. RECOFTC management notes that small grants are a good way to start a relationship with a donor and therefore can be strategic in leading to larger funding opportunities. RECOFTC has been able to mobilise grants from various sources, mainly international development agencies, to date [020]. There was an increase in revenue from projects in the fiscal year of 2020–2021 compared to that of 2018–2019 [001–003]. SDC and Sida, who are core donors to RECOFTC, also contributed to project granting through Forum Civ (formerly Forum Syd and funded by Sida), WWF or Mekong Region Land Governance Program (both funded by SDC) [020].

**Figure 4:** Overview of current project donors contributions based on project grant value as of FY 2020–2021
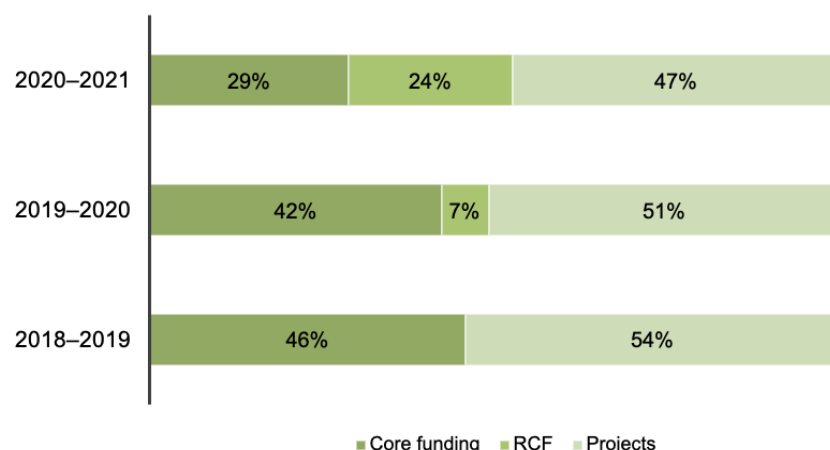


Source: [020]

**Core funding is crucial to the operations of RECOFTC and leverages revenue generation from other sources**, as shown in Figure 5 [001–003, 102 & 105]. Core funding from Sida and the SDC enables the organisation to maintain core functions independently from overhead that is generated from projects, which may vary over time. This funding supports core administration, management, business development, communications and knowledge management functions, which catalyse business development throughout the organisation and therefore, leverage development outcomes [109]. This type of funding also allows for more flexibility in developing core competency gaps that do not have ties to any specific project [102]. Further specialised core funding has been provided by Sida to support gender equality objectives under Strategic Goal 4, for which, as RECOFTC and other donors have recognised, it is more difficult to secure funding than is the case for the other Strategic Goals [105 &109]. This funding has enabled RECOFTC Indonesia, for example, to develop innovative approaches to address issues of gender and social inclusion

in forest management, which has become an important achievement of the program [301]. Figure 5 below shows that RECOFTC's dependence on core funding has been decreasing as a proportion of budget over the past three years.

**Figure 5:** Contribution of the different types of funding to the overall work plan budget in 2018–2021 (secured)

**Single-country projects comprise 37% of all programming by contract value**, as shown in Figure 6 below. This demonstrates the importance of the main office in terms of generating revenue and securing new contracts. The capacity to conduct business development is much weaker at the national level than in the main office [103, 104, 108, 113 & 401]. While country directors confirmed that business development expertise from the main office is available and is of great benefit to them, they expressed that they continue to struggle to secure contracts, especially larger ones, for country programming [all].

**Figure 6:** Project distribution (by grant value) across the regional and focal countries as of FY 2020–2021
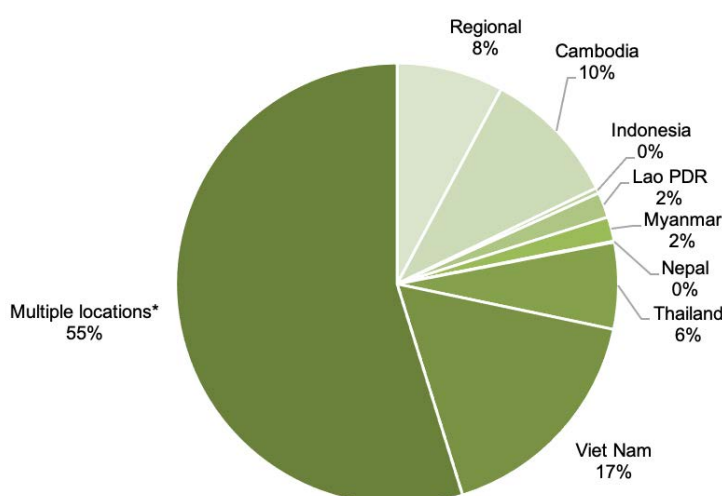


*Multiple locations: 1) Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Viet Nam, 2) Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, 3) Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, Regional, 4) Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam, Regional, 5) Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam

**Private Sector Engagement was an important addition to RECOFTC's strategy** [102 & 302]. RECOFTC has a history of working with forest sector companies, investors, technology start-ups and others [001–006 & 030]. The engagement was guided with upholding the Environmental, Social and Governance Standards and the principles of relevance, additionality, development and risk [030]. **However, engaging with the private sector remains a challenge** [020, 101, 102, 104, 107, 108, 301 & 401]. RECOFTC found challenges in communicating in an understandable language with private sector actors. Although very small–about 0.4% of the overall project grant value (Figure 4)–RECOFTC Indonesia has confirmed co-operation with APRIL, one of the largest pulp and paper giants in the country, for a community forestry social assessment and framework [020]. In Myanmar, where private sector engagement is minimal,

the country office has created working groups that focus on forest enterprises that can be beneficial for both resource mobilisation and sustainability [401–404]. In Viet Nam, the country management respondents suggest that collaboration with the private sector in the value chain is of increasing importance. They have been advancing relationships through programming but have not yet received substantial financial support from the private sector. At the landscape level, RECOFTC Lao PDR acted as a facilitator to develop partnerships between local enterprises and communities. From 2019-2020, RECOFTC successfully facilitated the signing of two business agreements between teak-smallholder groups and a local sawmill in Bokeo province. The agreements helped secure incomes for teak growers. To achieve this result, RECOFTC conducted a series of training sessions on sustainable plantation management and tree certificate application for the smallholders and supported the establishment of teak smallholder groups. RECOFTC also organised dialogues between the smallholders and the private sector for sharing and negotiation. This effort was recognised by the local governments. The country team is expecting more business agreements will be signed this year in Bokeo and Xayabury provinces. The country office also collaborated with the Burapha Agroforestry Company to deliver training on facilitation skills and FPIC for the company's workers to help them work better with the local outgrowers. The country office plans to continue to provide capacity building training for the company's workers on community engagement and communications. Other countries signal that working with private sector actors remains difficult, let alone generating revenue from them [104, 108 & 401]. The Private Sector Partnership document is a useful guiding document, the implementation of which takes time to foster relationships that result in formal partnership [105].

**Annual organisational plans and reports are robust and clearly communicate the aspirations, accomplishments and lessons learnt.** The annual plans and reports capture country-by-country plans and progresses, although due to the cumulative nature of the documents, the country-specific sections remain fairly high-level, dealing in changing contexts, key opportunities and programming priorities [001–003 & 006].

**RECOFTC has mechanisms to determine reputational risk and overall social and environmental responsibility of potential or existing private sector collaborators.** Central to Strategic Goal 3 and part of the Business Development Plan, a due diligence system of assessment for private sector collaborations has been established, according to RECOFTC respondents, although a demonstration of the system was not made available to the MTR team. The Private Sector Partnership document [030] outlines the standards and principles guided by Environmental, Social and Governance Standards that determine whether or not RECOFTC engages with private sector collaborators. The document states the following:

> Before entering a partnership, we ensure that the initiative will:
> - Contribute to achieving RECOFTC's strategic plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
> - Respect global, national and other environmental and social safeguards as well as free prior and informed consent
> - Provide transparent access to information for all stakeholders while respecting the privacy of individuals and the corporate requirements for confidentiality
> - Empower stakeholders, reduce conflict, respond to community aspirations, respect legitimate decision-making roles, promote sustainable natural resource use and foster local ownership
> - Not violate human rights, harm community well-being, engage in illegal activities, lead to landscape degradation or produce human, animal or plant health hazards

Prospective private sector collaborators are assessed by the Private Sector Engagement Committee, comprising selected Strategic Goal leads, management members and the partnerships officer. The prospective collaborator is assessed by the criteria mentioned above as pertains to the proposed initiative. The assessment is conducted by the Committee, and a reputational risk assessment is conducted. Further due diligence is conducted using Meltwater and Google searches, in addition to enquiries with the RECOFTC networks. Specific communications plans are developed around private sector partnerships that help to mitigate risks to RECOFTC of the private sector collaborators' malfeasance in social or environmental practice.

**The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system has developed rapidly over the past few years and presented a clear picture of the organisation's advancement toward achieving its strategic goals**. RECOFTC is also expected to pilot a Participatory MEL (PMEL) at several priority landscapes in the immediate future. There was evidence that RECOFTC was using and reporting on lessons learned to influence decisions, and the main offices have displayed a clear ambition and interest to learn. It harvested outcomes and documented the lessons learnt or the context used to develop the annual working plan. It also highlighted critical issues such as the relevancy of the forest landscape restoration issue as a key entry point approaching working with partners at a landscape level and identified the more prominent social inclusion and gender issues.

**The organisation has demonstrated a commitment to institutional learning**, including systematic means of collecting, discussing and learning from success and challenges. Respondents who are not from the main office suggested that these learning events were primarily of benefit to the main office, but respondents from the main office commiserated that country office staff often attended but did not engage that deeply overall [107, 108 & 301].
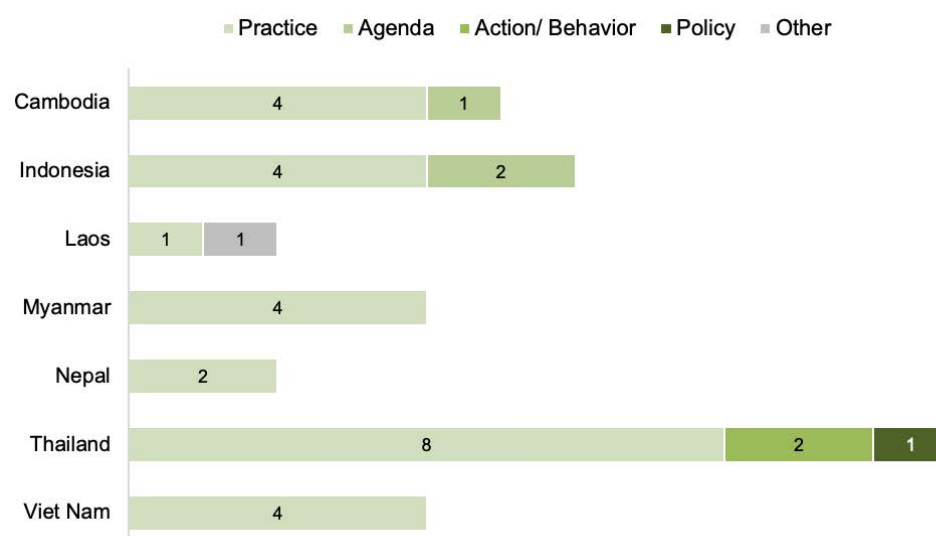
# Impact

**RECOFTC works closely with governments, which has facilitated positive impact in communities by magnifying the support to actors in its target landscapes.** RECOFTC has influenced the policies and practices of the government of all focal countries. The influence also generated changes in the target's group practices and agenda (Figure 7).

- In RECOFTC in **Cambodia**, a representative of the gender team from the government's Ministry of Women's Affairs adopted the training module into the national training plan on gender (agenda). Moreover, there were changes influenced by RECOFTC work and intervention where the local government (i.e. Chairman of Provincial Community Forestry Partnership Coordination Committee in Kampong Thom) has facilitated and taken action in resolving community forestry conflict, Community-Based Organisations in Koh Kong Province piloted sustainable harvesting, Alung Svay Community Protected Areas received funds to implement the community forestry management plan and Chief of Community Forestry Credit to resolve the non-performing microcredit loan (practices) [018].
- In **Indonesia**, RECOFTC influenced a Sulawesi Community Foundation to include gender in the organisation's vision and mission and Hasanuddin University to integrate community entrepreneurship into the curriculum (agenda). RECOFTC also influenced the local government of Ketapang to use a participatory approach in the village plan development, the Akar Tani Cooperative to receive the second instalment from the Center for Forest Development Financing, the Forest Management Unit Jeneberang II to create and publish the long-term management plan, which then awarded by the South Sulawesi Governor for the management plan (practices) [018].
- In **Lao PDR**, RECOFTC facilitated the local government of Kokuang Village, Houaysay District and Houaythong Village, Paktha District to enter a partnership agreement with the private sector for the fair trade of timber (practice) and the issuance of smallholder's tree certificates by Xayabouly District Governor (other) [018].
- RECOFTC in **Myanmar** influenced the Myanmar's Forest Department and NGO partner to adopt participatory training methods for community engagement, the "Myaing Kankaung" CFUG to exercise their authority and Dar Thway Kyauk Village CFUG to secure their land tenure rights, as well as the journalists of broadcasting and print media of Myanmar to continue disseminating issues on governance (practice) [018].
- In **Nepal**, the local government of Hariwon Sarlahi Municipal established a nursery to support RECOFTC's initiative and develop the municipality as a beekeeping pocket area. In addition, RECOFTC in Nepal was able to influence the government-led 'President Chure-Tarai Madhesh Conservation Development Committee' to adopt their project as a government-led livelihood program (practice) [018].
- In **Thailand**, RECOFTC's influence has increased women's participation in community forestry network activities as well as the interest and contribution of members of the CSO in the FLEGT Network on public land issues (action/behaviours). RECOFTC also influenced the local government of Santisuk District, Nan Province and Mae Tha District, Chiang Mai Province to consider adding the Supply Chain Control principle in public land management policies (policy). The work of RECOFTC in Thailand also influenced the local communities in Santisuk District, Nan Province to develop a recording template for securing land ownership and tree and database on the tree and land database; the smallholder of Nan and Chiang Mai Province to do plantation registration; the local communities of Bo Kluea and Pua District to develop and propose the "Public Disclosure of Timber Trade" agreement; the community of Khuan Khreng landscape to set up landscape plan and management; and the primary school in Khuan Khreng to adopt peat swamp conservation in the curriculum. Additionally, RECOFTC influenced the Community Forestry Networks (CF-NETs) to announce the strategic plan and mission statement; the local communities of Phu Ka National Park to work together with Dong Phaya Local Authority Organization in developing the forest/public land management plan and the national government (i.e. Royal Forest Department's sub-committee for Community Forest sub-ordinance) to accept the proposal submitted by the Community Forestry Network (practices) [018].
- RECOFTC in **Viet Nam** influenced the national level media to publish an article on strengthening forest governance. They also influenced teachers and students of Chau Hanh Secondary School to shift attitudes on forest value and landscape restoration. REFOFTC work influenced practices, where the local governments of the District People Committee of Que Phong issued the forest

titling certification and household groups of Chau Thang Commune, Quy Chau District, Nghe An Province to enter a partnership agreement with the private sector (practice) [018].

**Figure 7:** Number of outcomes by the types of influence FY 2018–2019



Source: [018]

**RECOFTC has been able to produce meaningful impacts in the target landscapes**. Impacts were strongest in the areas of capacity building and the gender approach [007–016]. The beneficiaries perceived the capacity building to be useful in improving their skillset and practices in managing forests [032, 205–207 & 405–407]. There was evidence of where RECOFTC built and strengthened the capacity of the government, the CSOs and the community in community forest management, sustainable natural resources management and others [007–016, 202 & 402–403]. At least 30% of the trainees were women [007–016]. RECOFTC mainstreamed gender into other organisations' plans [008] and built a gender leadership network [013]. Some of the notable impacts are shown below in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Summary of key impacts in 2018–2020 by country

| Country | Notable Impacts | Sources |
|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Cambodia | ■ Built the capacity of the community in community forest management and sustainable management of natural resources; 30%–46% were women<br>■ Innovated new financing schemes  using low-interest loans for community-led businesses<br>■ Supported major policy development such as Prey Lang Wildlife Sanctuary Decree<br>■ Facilitated the formalisation of community forestry group rights | [006, 007 & country director] |
| Indonesia | ■ Built the capacity of and supported the community in the sustainable management of natural resources; 27%–30% were women<br>■ Increased the capacity of the Forest Management Unit in business development<br>■ Facilitated the establishment of community-based enterprises and social forestry entrepreneurship groups<br>■ Supported the establishment of an inclusive business partnership action plan<br>■ Contributed to the establishment of the forest landscape management plan | [006, 008 & country director] |
| Laos PDR | ■ Built the capacity of the community in community forest management and sustainable management of natural resources; 30% were women<br>■ Strengthened the capacity of CSOs and government organisations<br>■ Formalised community forestry groups<br>■ Supported community-led natural resource management | [009 & country director] |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Myanmar | ■ Built the capacity of community in community forest management and sustainable natural resources management; 12%–25% were women<br>■ Advanced the security of land tenure rights<br>■ Established community forestry network<br>■ Built the capacity of government officials, the forest users' group and the staff of partner organisations<br>■ Piloted innovative credit schemes | [003, 010, 011 & country director] |
| Nepal | ■ Built the capacity of community in natural resources management; 35% were women<br>■ Supported the establishment of the forest landscape management plan<br>■ Upscaled the program as a government-led program<br>■ Upscaled the community-led model for climate change adaptation<br>■ Built gender leader's network | [006, 012, 013 & country director] |
| Thailand | ■ Built the capacity of the community in community forest management and sustainable natural resources management; 35%–46% were women<br>■ Supported the formalisation of community groups rights and establishment of the forest management plan<br>■ Piloted innovative credit schemes<br>■ Piloted the smallholder timber control in line with the FLEGT<br>■ Established community forestry networks | [006, 014 & country director] |
| Viet Nam | ■ Built the capacity of the community for the sustainable management of natural resources; 30% were women<br>■ Raised awareness on community forestry in seven provinces<br>■ Built the capacity of civil society stakeholders on forest tenure, land use, social inclusion, gender equity and transparent forest management<br>■ Supported the revisions of laws on harvesting timber and non-timber forest products<br>■ Facilitated the implementation of policy on payment for ecosystem services for forests in the REDD+ action plan<br>■ Facilitated the development of an information-sharing platform for community forestry | [015, 016 & country director] |

There are a wide range of variables that determine the success of challenges in terms of why some countries were able to produce some sorts of impacts and others were not. **Many of the successes came from building relationships with government officials with shared interests**. This is somewhat outside the control of RECOFTC in many ways and may change depending on the positions of key government officials. Respondents also mentioned that the opportunities available in each country are largely dependent on the interests of donors, so that explains in part why some projects are difficult to replicate [104, 108 & 301].

# Sustainability

**RECOFTC has pioneered various community forestry networks and collaborative forums and was recognised for its technical expertise and close collaboration with the government.** These relationships are seen by some RECOFTC managers as the organisation's key competitive advantage [113]. RECOFTC has provided an essential role for advocating for community forestry, convening discussions on the topic and shaping forest regulations that respond to real issues on the ground [101, 105]. There were many examples of government-led programs that were initiated and/or influenced by RECOFTC [104, 108, 103 & 110].

**RECOFTC country offices in most countries have forged strong ties with the local and national governments**. The government of Royal Thailand, Union of Myanmar, and Lao PDR were founding members of RECOFTC. Further, there was evidence on MoUs with the government at all focal countries [006]. Respondents from country offices indicate that their strategic goals are highly aligned with those of the government, thus facilitating their collaboration and coordination in projects and activities on-the-ground [103, 110, 201 & 301]. According to respondents, by collaborating, they are able to bring together the financial, human and economic resources necessary to make progress on goals and effectively implement programs and project activities. For example, RECOFTC in Nepal and one municipal government are aligned in their prioritisation of a landscape approach. In 2019, they were able to work together to produce a municipal plan with a landscape approach, after which they received a request from three other municipalities to implement this work [103].

RECOFTC Myanmar has been supporting and facilitating the Community Forestry National Working Group, which has been very effective in addressing issues and challenges in community forestry and community forest enterprise development, all of which are key to sustainable institutions. The working group has played a critical role in including community forestry in the revised 2018 Forest Law [401]. Similarly, RECOFTC Viet Nam works closely with the national government and facilitated the implementation of policy on payment for ecosystem services and REDD+ in addition to supporting the revisions of laws on harvesting timber and non-timber forest products [110; from impact table above].

In the words of one respondent in Nepal, "RECOFTC alone cannot do anything. It is a vehicle. We don't have a big budget, but RECOFTC can play a key and important role in leading projects in coordination with a government entity" [103].

**Although it is recognised as a reputable organisation in terms of community forestry, RECOFTC's relationship with the Indonesian government has experienced challenging dynamics in recent years** [301 & 303]. From the government's perspective, communication problems and administrative procedures related to the extension of the partnership between the Indonesian Government and RECOFTC resulted in delays in extending the memorandum of understanding for about three years [304]. Current government respondents in the Ministry of Environment and Forestry acknowledge improvements in RECOFTC's communication with the government in recent years, which has positioned RECOFTC well for commencing resource mobilisation toward scaling up in cooperation with the government.

**While collaboration with the government has led to various successes, many respondents mentioned the need to increase private sector engagement** as a way to scale up sustainable financing mechanisms and the overall effectiveness of efforts [101, 202, 103, 104, 107, 108, 301 & 401]. Most recently, RECOFTC has placed more attention on the importance of engaging with the private sector as part of its focus on value chains using a landscape approach. Such partnerships have been slow to form. A number of respondents pointed to the challenge of "speaking the same language" as private sector actors and the need to increase its in-house capacity on business development, particularly related to its work on community forest enterprises [101, 103].

**The sustainability of RECOFTC initiatives, however, cannot rely on partnerships with the private sector or the government alone** [104, 108 & 401]. One respondent commented, "RECOFTC does not have enough resources to maintain engagement sometimes on a project… so we say we want to have a long-term engagement and landscape approach, but we don't know what we would do if a project ended… it might mean minimal involvement" [401]. So, on FLEGT, if the Thai government can adopt it as a policy, it could be continued [and although] it might be less intense, at least the mechanism will run. But for landscape restoration, if local people and private sector [actors] develop the business then it will be sustainable" [108].

**Core funding has provided an essential freedom to think about sustainability and focus on business development for which the resources would not have existed without it.** Core funding has also been essential for communication and knowledge management, enabling RECOFTC to function as a knowledge hub for the Asia Pacific region. Core funding was used minimally for direct piloting or projects

but extensively, to provide the infrastructure that project and prospective projects needed to take shape [102]. Core funding, in addition to the revenue from projects, has contributed substantially to the operation of RECOFTC [001–003] (see also Figure 4). However, 2020–2021 will be the final year of Sida's core funding agreement And SDC's funding agreement will end in September 2023. Only a few of the countries have been securing grants to 2025 [003 & 020] (see also Figure 8). Thus, immediate action for continuation, identifying or leveraging the existing partnership or mobilising for other sources of funding will be crucial. Further, there was a need to engage in different activities in addition to the forestry issue at the landscape level, for example, forest landscape restoration which RECOFTC has seen as a key approach in all focal countries [003, 006], winning government support for phasing out the programs/projects and engaging with the private sector.

**Figure 8:** Overview of current projects contract end dates (number of projects)
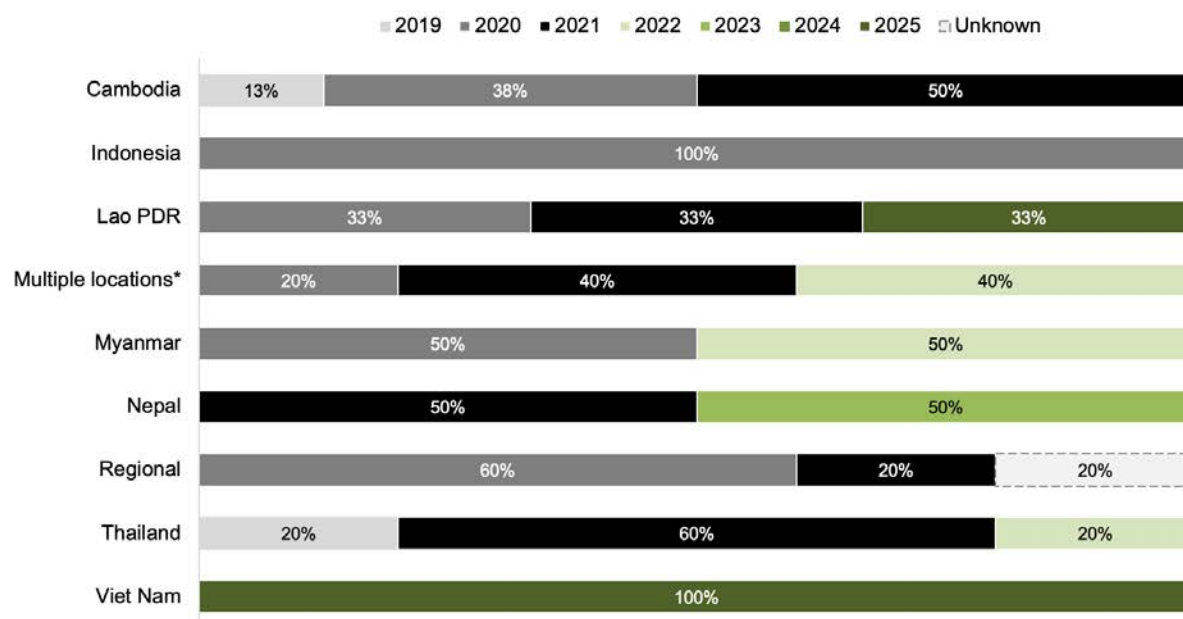


*Multiple locations: 1) Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Viet Nam, 2) Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, 3) Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, Regional, 4) Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam, Regional, 5) Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam

Source: [020]

# Conclusions

**Overall, RECOFTC has developed a participatory, relevant and comprehensive Strategic Plan and has effectively pivoted the organisation around it.** The Plan effectively captures the work that RECOFTC is undertaking and is meaningful not only to internal stakeholders but also to funders. **This has helped to safeguard and build the reputation of the organisation and has strengthened the confidence of the government and donor stakeholders.** It has been instrumental in catapulting the organisation into a broader vision for people and forests that is rooted in the realities and needs of the region and focal countries.

**While RECOFTC has a reputation for community forestry, its work is much broader, especially considering its focus on landscape approaches.** The shift to a full commitment to landscape approaches means that community forestry needs to become just one of many instruments to improve the condition of people and forests in landscapes. As several RECOFTC documents explain, the overall understanding of community forestry as participatory natural resource management (including ecological restoration) is used as an entry point to broader forest and land-use objectives [see 017 & 031].

**The Theory of Change is relevant but future iterations might add focus on key issues**, especially related to conflict, land tenure and climate change. For example, because Indigenous People's rights intersect with gender, it might be better placed in Outcome 4 rather than its current placement in Outcome 1. Similar to gender equity, Indigenous People's rights apply also to Outcome 2 and 3, placing the only indicator dealing with it under Outcome 1 links it only to the logic of landscape engagement. Similarly, there are a number of key issues that are underrepresented in the Theory of Change, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, land tenure security and conflict. Climate change is not represented in the Theory of Change, and conflict is represented in the indicator for Output 2.2, but focus only on the presence of multi-stakeholder processes rather than the results relating to the processes of conflict transformation.

**The all-encompassing nature of the Strategic Plan suits the organisation as a whole but presents implementation problems on the ground in focal countries**. While there is broad buy-in to the plan (in part because it is sufficiently general enough to be subject to interpretation), country staff have difficulties making it work for them in a way that would help direct their strategies in country. Several respondents signalled that they continue to be opportunistic when calls for proposals arise and can generally make the calls fit with the RECOFTC Strategic Plan.

**Although private sector development is conceptually understood and supported in the organisation, there is a general lack of capacity to build the models and relationships required to advance this Strategic Goal effectively.** Respondents recognise recent efforts made to reach out to private sector actors and funders but note the need to support RECOFTC employees and those in country offices to form partnerships with relevant private sector actors to strengthen and support the effective implementation of activities, such as the formation of community forest enterprises.

**RECOFTC's approaches to gender equality and social inclusion not only have social benefits, but also economic ones.** Promoting gender equality and social inclusion (such as young people or indigenous groups) through community-based enterprises has enabled support and resource mobilisation from various parties. The cross-cutting nature of gender programming is clear in planning, but is a work in progress in terms of fully integrating into RECOFTC programming.

**The management of RECOFTC is strong.** Financial, MEL and governance systems have been developed and are continually re-visited and revised. Management team members are collaborative and comprise a blend of technical specialists and project managers conducive to effective institutional and project management. Organisational changes over the last three years have been effective, perhaps most notably with the appointment of a deputy executive director, as well as hiring specialists with a range of skill sets needed to address complex landscapes.

**There remains a heavy reliance on the main (regional) office among focal country teams**. While country directors are competent and knowledgeable about their own contexts, they lack the resources to propel business development, develop more private sector relationships that can be leveraged into financing and conduct robust monitoring and reporting.

**While RECOFTC has a diverse array of funding sources, it continues to rely on three sources for the bulk of programming and two for core funding.** Core funding donors may be challenging to secure or diversify and ensuring core funding leverages additional resources is critical to the sustainability of the organisation.

**There may be reputational risks for RECOFTC with respect to its association with private sector actors that are left unmitigated** due to a (a) lack of formally documented processes to assess private sector alignment with RECOFTC's ethical standards and (b) lack of formally a documented process to monitor ongoing risks of association with corporations that may (and have) been accused of human rights and environmental violations.

**RECOFTC is regarded as a knowledge hub in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond and has a strong reputation for the development of high-quality content, tools and training for advocacy, policy development and community forestry practice.  RECOFTC is also now well regarded for its extensive reach, networks and convening abilities.**

**While RECOFTC has invested considerable energy into forming relationships at the national and regional levels, there are still some gaps,** especially in terms of developing relationships with private sector actors, linking with groups that specialise in RECOFTC aspirations like changing consumer behaviour and developing strong bonds with institutions with expertise in land tenure rights, conflict, gender equality and Indigenous People's rights.

**Business development has been a major focus of RECOFTC over the past several years.** Additional human resources have been applied and both regional- and national-level programming staff appreciate these resources. There remain some issues in terms of internal co-ordination among the Strategic Goal leaders in which some Strategic Goals may not have the opportunity to participate effectively in project design and implementation. This results in lost opportunities for the projects to contribute toward the Strategic Plan through multiple Strategic Goals.

**MEL reporting and data collection have improved substantially** and the organisation is balancing the need to roll up data to show collective results and allow staff to report according to the internal logics of individual projects. **While indicators are tightly linked with outcomes that relate to Strategic Goals, they are only loosely related to SDGs**, which is a roll-up in which external stakeholders may be more interested in than the Strategic Goals.

**RECOFTC has strong working relationships with national governments**, which has facilitated the impact in communities by magnifying the support to actors in landscapes. While collaboration with the government has led to various successes, **there is a need for increased private sector engagement as a way to scale up sustainable financing mechanisms and the overall effectiveness of efforts**. RECOFTC has begun to place greater attention on engaging with private sector actors over the last several years as part of their focus on value chains using a landscape approach. However, such partnerships have been slow to form and require greater attention.

**Core funding has contributed substantially to RECOFTC operation** and has provided an essential freedom to focus on business development, among other topics. Country offices, however, have insufficient funding, which calls for **greater efforts toward innovative financing from diverse funders and increased engagement with private sector actors.**

**RECOFTC has collected substantial data on its operations, which would serve to optimise adaptive learning and operations.** Rather than holding this data in institutional memory, RECOFTC has the opportunity to **discuss the lessons learned and strengthen the in-house capacity** in areas where weaknesses can be overcome with particular strategies for greater impact and more sustainable efforts on the ground.

# Key recommendations and the way forward

## Implementation

1. **Clarify operational strategies to deliver on private sector objectives.** While the strategy to develop private sector partnerships and community capacity is sufficiently clear in the Strategic Plan, greater support is needed for implementers, especially in focal country offices, to operationalise the plans. In order to do this, RECOFTC could (a) hire one or more specialists on private sector development, communities and natural resources, (b) clarify its value proposition to private sector actors, (c) further develop relationships with groups who have access to private sector actors and models and (d) develop concrete steps at the national and regional levels to not only engage with private sector actors but also to help them understand what collaboration could be like.

2. **Gender and social inclusion work should be intensified** by encouraging local women leaders and young people in community-based enterprises. This approach allows for a viable economic scheme that is linked to strengthening the livelihoods of marginalised groups and investing in young people in forest areas. This may require forging formal partnerships with CSOs that are particularly adept at gender equality and Indigenous People programming.

3. **Strengthen relationships with regional organisations working on issues of gender equality and Indigenous People's rights.** While there was evidence that this is taking place already, there were also calls to strengthen these relationships such that both informal and formal working relationships mutually benefit regional collaborators and RECOFTC. While some of this work needs to be done at the regional level, the country offices could also be involved as their national counterparts may be members of regional associations. A preliminary list of target organisations might include ASEAN, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SE Asia).

4. **Continue to explore the relationships between community forestry, the landscape approach and governance within landscapes.** This would help to address the dualism both within the organisation and among external stakeholders about RECOFTC's current speciality and how they relate with one another.

5. **Leverage existing partnerships to initiate programs in larger landscapes.** RECOFTC has extensive experience in engagement with diverse stakeholders and the establishment of networks and collaborative partnerships. This can be advanced for programs with larger landscapes to attract donors and development partners and generate a more visible impact. The example provided by respondents was the Mekong Basin as a landscape.

6. **Continue to position RECOFTC as a keeper and sharer of knowledge related to forests in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.** This requires strengthening the organisation's ability to collect, store and share data and publications and a continued diversification from 'foresters doing community forestry' to an interdisciplinary team engaged in landscapes with forests. This shift is already underway and should be continued.

7. **Better position RECOFTC's work in terms of climate change.** While there are clear linkages with climate change in RECOFTC programming, achievements and alignments are not very explicit. Current work with REDD+ is clearer than others, but there are no institutional targets related to climate change. Framing and developing more expertise on how community-level work links with climate change could open up doors to major donors such as Norad, the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund, and private foundations that are emphasising climate change such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Bezos Family Foundation.

## Management

8. **Clarify the analysis and reporting of SDG contributions.** While there is a clear alignment of RECOFTC programming and the SDGs, the organisation is not able to explicitly show in what measurable ways it has contributed to the SDGs. The data have already been collected within the existing MEL framework and log frame indicators are aligned with one or more SDG targets. The remaining step is to be able to (a) parse out when one indicator relates to more than one SDG and (b) cumulate SDG target indicators into a report that shows to what extent RECOFTC contributes

to each SDG target. The result would be a report that pivots the existing Strategic Goal-based reporting to be mapped to SDG targets.

9. **Ensure all Strategic Goal leaders have the capacity to apply considerations from the other strategic goals.** This recommendation is based on the assumption that the Strategic Goal leaders don't have the time or headspace to review all proposals. Especially considering the cross-cutting nature of Strategic Goal 4 and the extent to which Strategic Goals 1 and 2 are key approaches under which the majority of programming occurs, systematic collaboration is required to ensure that opportunities are not missed to address multiple Strategic Goals. This is not to say that all projects must address all Strategic Goals. However, if, for example, all Strategic Goal leaders are able to provide even basic filters on gender equality, indigenous rights or public action early on in the design process so that specialists could be called in to explore opportunities and/or at least opportunities to address all strategic goals have been considered, projects could address Strategic Goals more optimally and opportunities to advance them might not be missed. This is especially important as some of the cross-cutting elements of the Strategic Plan have been challenging to secure financing.

10. **Develop country-specific strategic and business development plans.** This could be done in at least two ways. One option would be to use the existing organisational-wide plans as the starting point and the country plans would elaborate the plans within their own contexts and set their own objectives that would feed into organisation-wide plans. The second option would be to develop the country plans and then modify the organisation-wide plan to cover all the country plans, plus specific regional plans (which would be very similar to the core content of the current plans). In either scenario, the connection points between organisation-wide and country plans should be clear. The country plans could be substantial sections of the organisation plan but should also serve as stand-alone documents that would become a constant point of reference for country managers. The current Strategic Plan could serve as a generic starting point in either scenario, as it resonates in principle across the organisation. Business development plans could share the format of the current business plan but would require more specificity in country contexts. These processes would require substantial support from the main office, but each country office should likely take the lead in developing its own plans.

11. **Better engage country offices in learning opportunities to develop their capacity on key issues** such as business development, developing private sector partnerships that could be leveraged into funding and MEL. Assuming that hiring specialists in these fields in the country would require resources that take time to acquire, building the capacity of existing staff on these issues may help and more opportunities for country offices to learn from one another would likely be welcome. For example, the Cambodia team could present its lessons learned from its credit scheme and Thailand could share how it implemented a strategy to better engage with the private sector. While some of this has been tried, there seems to be an institutional willingness from all sides so it may be worth trying it in a different way.

12. **Enrich the development of knowledge management systems and expertise**. RECOFTC is widely recognised as a go-to resource for forest-related issues in the region and focal countries. Current developments of data retrieval systems that capture not only RECOFTC content but also content produced by other parties will advance the utility of RECOFTC in the knowledge hub and 'keeper of forest knowledge' of the Asia-Pacific region. Further, RECOFTC is well-positioned as an expert on forest-related issues. With regards to its solid portfolio in strengthening the capacity of people, RECOFTC may consider developing broader expertise within focal countries to contribute to knowledge management.

13. **Share lessons learned to optimise operations and accelerate adaptive institutional learning within RECOFTC.** A data management system that stores data on RECOFTC's projects and integrates with an MEL system would serve as an important platform to facilitate communications, institutional learning and capacity-building by providing the ability to better analyses successes and failures.RECOFTC currently does this largely through the institutional memories of key long-term staff.

The MTR Team notes that the scope of this review was not conducive to collecting sufficient data to make recommendations for each RECOFTC focal country, while the focus of the review, in the terms of references, is on the organisation as a whole. However, there are some recommendations here that apply to the countries sampled for more in-depth enquiry in the MTR. They are as follows:

14. **Cambodia:** Strengthen private sector engagement by increasing engagement with REDD+ mechanisms and expanding the credit and small enterprises for community-protected areas and facilitate government ownership by supporting communities through the Commune Investment Plan.

15. **Indonesia**: In the context of strong community/social forestry policies that have been adopted by the state, a community-based enterprise model could be strengthened by connecting with the national and sub-national governments as well as with private sector actors. RECOFTC has an opportunity to play a key role in bridging communities and smaller NGOs with government and

private sector actors so that the implementation of policy can better reflect local realities. The Landscape approach is well-suited to this objective and RECOFTC's regional reputation will be useful in the development of the relationships required to do this effectively.

16. **Myanmar:** Respondents called for increased communication and collaboration at the field level with local government bodies. Key respondents also recommend that RECOFTC expand interventions beyond community forestry to ensure tenure security and environmental protection. RECOFTC is positioned to widely engage in broader social and environmental issues, particularly against large-scale natural resource exploitation initiatives that are proposed in Myanmar that may conflict with RECOFTC principles of sustainable landscape management.

# Annex 1: Terms of Reference

The consultancy of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 midterm review is previously announced [here](here)

**Consultancy announcement**
**Mid Term Review of RECOFTC Strategic Plan 2018–2023**

**Application deadline: 5 November 2020**

At RECOFTC, we believe in a future where people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. We take a long-term, landscape-based and inclusive approach to supporting local communities to secure their land and resource rights, stop deforestation, find alternative livelihoods and foster gender equity. We are the only non-profit organization of our kind in Asia and the Pacific. We have more than 30 years of experience working with people and forests, and have built trusting relationships with partners at all levels. Our influence and partnerships extend from multilateral institutions to governments, private sector and local communities. Our innovations, knowledge and initiatives enable countries to foster good forest governance, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

RECOFTC is now inviting applicants for a consultancy to conduct a Mid Term Review (MTR) of the implementation of RECOFTC's Strategic Plan 2018–2023.

**Background**
RECOFTC has a main office in Bangkok, Thailand and country offices in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. RECOFTC's Strategic Plan 2018–2023 aims to empower local people to effectively and equitably engage in the sustainable management of forested landscapes through enhancing capacities for stronger rights, improved governance and fairer benefits for local people in the Asia-Pacific region. The Plan focuses on four Strategic Goals, which can be considered as four interlinking pathways of change:

- Landscape collaboration in a changing climate
  Rights of local people in forest landscapes are protected and exercised through collaborative management. Local people will manage forests integrated together with other sectors within their landscapes to meet climate change mitigation commitments and address adaptation challenges and opportunities as part of their livelihood strategies.
- Governance, institutions and conflict transformation
  Governments, the private sector, communities and others in forest landscapes adhere to the principles of good governance, which include being accountable for their actions and transparent in their processes. RECOFTC will strengthen relationships through mutually beneficial strategies, and develop appropriate skills and responsive services to prevent and transform forest-based conflicts through strong institutions, relationships, strategies and services.
- Private sector engagement and enterprising communities
  Economic value of forests and landscapes for communities is increased through sustainable investment, community-based enterprises, certification schemes and/or mutually beneficial partnerships between governments, the large-scale private sector and community enterprises.
- Social inclusion, gender equity and public action
  Rights, capacities and economic opportunities of women and other marginalized people are enhanced. Public awareness is raised, and norms and behaviours are changed to support people-centred forests and land policies.

**Objective of the consultancy**
The overall objective of the MTR is to assess the performance of RECOFTC to date in achieving the desired results and outcomes of the Strategic Plan 2018–2023, using specific evaluation criteria with a forward-looking approach and its relevance to the regional context and target countries' national forest and development priorities.

Specifically, this will assist RECOFTC in gaining a better understanding of the following aspects of its interventions by:

- Documenting and assessing progress and achievements, as well as any possible challenges, shortcomings and/or gaps
- Assessing and analysing changes in the regional context, and how they might affect the relevance and the implementation of RECOFTC's current program
- Drawing lessons and recommendations that could guide any adjustments to RECOFTC approaches and efforts for the next three years of the strategic phase 2018–2023

- Informing future RECOFTC strategic planning

The review will therefore be forward-looking, providing lessons learned and recommendations. It will assess the limitations and/or risks to the successful implementation of RECOFTC's overall program and projects, and recommend ways for (i) making the program and projects more relevant; (ii) increasing the effectiveness and resource efficiency of planning, implementing, and monitoring and learning from activities and results; and (iii) making any necessary adjustments in program design, planning and delivery that will address the limitations and risks to program and project implementation and help to ensure RECOFTC's long-term viability.

The evaluator will report to the Executive Director and work closely with an MTR committee appointed to oversee the evaluation. Members of the MTR committee are RECOFTC's Deputy Executive Director and Unit Directors, the Senior Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer, and the Senior Program Coordination Officer. The MTR committee will provide overall management and assist in the MTR process. Other RECOFTC staff will also be assigned as necessary to support the MTR process in terms of data collection, scheduling, and logistical arrangements for travel and appointments with relevant informants.

**Scope of work and time frame**
The MTR will assess all aspects of organizational work delivered by RECOFTC during the period October 2018 to September 2020, and progress towards desired outcomes during the first two years of the Strategic Plan 2018–2023. The MTR should also focus on how RECOFTC has integrated lessons learned and results from the implementation of its previous Strategic Plan 2013-2018 and its previous External Evaluation undertaken from May to July 2017 and covering the period October 2013 to March 2017. Finally, the MTR should also look at interventions in the forest sector by other relevant national and regional actors, and assess the extent to which RECOFTC and partners have built on each other's respective strengths to achieve the outcomes or have been overlapping.

The MTR will address the following questions:

Relevance and coherence
1. To what extent do RECOFTC target groups and stakeholders perceive that RECOFTC interventions, products and services are contributing to improved people/forest development outcomes?
2. To what extent do RECOFTC strategies complement and synergize with those of relevant government and nongovernment organizations working in the forest sector in its focal countries and regionally?
3. To what extent are RECOFTC strategies contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
4. RECOFTC has developed its Strategic Plan 2018–2023 around four Strategic Goals. Is the organization's theory of change and approach still relevant at both regional and country program levels? Do the four Strategic Goals effectively interlink and complement one another?

Effectiveness
1. What progress has RECOFTC made in the implementation to date of its Strategic Plan 2018–2023? What have been the major achievements and challenges?
2. To what extent are the key objectives and desired results of each Strategic Goal being achieved through RECOFTC's target interventions? Which RECOFTC approaches and interventions are effective, and which might be improved?
3. Landscape engagement has been an overarching approach that RECOFTC has taken in its focal countries. What have been the key results and how might RECOFTC's approach be improved in this regard?
4. What have been the main achievements to date in RECOFTC's focal countries? How effectively are RECOFTC country programs designed and implemented? How do key stakeholders in focal countries assess the value addition of RECOFTC work? How does the work in the focal countries contribute to the regional level (and vice versa)? And how might the links and synergies between regional and country programs be more effective?

Efficiency, Strategic Implementation and Resource Mobilization
1. To what extent has RECOFTC's use of its various sources of funding (core, project, and own income) been cost-effective?
2. What resources (financial, human, institutional, partnerships) have been used in the implementation of the Strategic Plan? Were the costs involved justified, given the changes/effects which have been achieved?
3. Assess the relationship between the main office units and country programs. Is the current distribution of functions and resources strategic and adequate for achieving optimal results? How

efficient are RECOFTC's internal coordination and communication mechanisms? How might this be improved?
4. To what extent has RECOFTC been able to innovate, identify lessons learned and put this learning into action in order to address key issues and challenges for people and forests regionally and in its focal countries? Is the organization's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system effectively catalyzing institutional learning and innovation?
5. Has core donor support contributed to RECOFTC's overall efficiency and added value? How so?
6. How has RECOFTC's private sector engagement strategy contributed to resource mobilization?

Impact
1. What (expected) impacts are RECOFTC interventions having or likely to have in relation to the current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests?
2. Which countries are reporting the most impact as a result of RECOFTC interventions, and why? How might such impacts be replicated in other countries?

Sustainability
1. Provide a critical reflection on the sustainability of outcomes and processes that RECOFTC interventions have helped to achieve so far, and provide recommendations for greater sustainability. What actions need to be taken to increase the likelihood of RECOFTC program results being sustainable? How might RECOFTC scale up engagement with sustainable financing mechanisms to support community forestry within the integrated landscape management?
2. How has core donor support helped in enhancing the sustainability of RECOFTC outcomes and processes? How can this be further scaled up?

The way forward
1. What outcomes should RECOFTC aim to produce in the remaining period of the Strategic Plan in order to effectively accomplish results and contribute to the achievement of RECOFTC's outcomes?
2. What changes (programmatic and organizational) might RECOFTC make in order to make its interventions more relevant, sustainable, effective, and efficient considering its comparative advantage?
3. Given the current financial landscape and future funding trends for international development, what business development and partnership strategies should RECOFTC prioritize going forward? Is the organization's business development strategy still relevant?

The MTR consultancy will involve up to a total of 35 working-days over a three-month period between November 2020 and January 2021, including pre-evaluation and post-evaluation time for general preparation and finalization of the evaluation report. The evaluation mission will take place in November and December 2020 (if travel conditions allow). The final report will be completed and submitted by 29 January 2021. The evaluator may be invited to present and discuss the key findings from the MTR to the RECOFTC Board of Trustees and core donor representatives in March 2021.

**Expected deliverables**
The consultant will deliver the following outputs:
■ MTR design (after desk review and discussions with MTR task team) outlining key methods, data collection tools and plan for data collection process, is developed by 30 November 2020.
■ Draft MTR report is submitted by 15 January 2021.
■ Final MTR report (English) including key findings, conclusion, and recommendations. The report should not exceed 30 pages and be submitted by 29 January 2021.

The MTR shall conform to the OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. The evaluator shall use the OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation, and shall specify how quality assurance, in accordance with DAC's quality standards, shall be handled during the MTR process.

**Qualifications and experience**
The evaluator(s) must have the following qualifications and experience:
Essential
■ Background in forestry or related development subjects, with extensive experience in community forestry or community-based natural resource management and understanding of social, economic, cultural and political dimensions of forestry
■ Experience in and understanding of issues facing the management of forest and other natural resources in the Asia-Pacific region, of current approaches to addressing these issues, and of organizations working in Asia in these fields, particularly in RECOFTC's focal countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam
■ Understanding in the policy and direction of international development assistance, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region

- Experience in institutional programmatic evaluation and impact assessment of an international development program or organization working in the field of natural resource management
- Experience in program management and strategic planning of development organizations
- Proven competence in participatory approaches to natural resource management and the challenges and issues involved in working with different stakeholders
- Sensitivity for intercultural and inter-personal communication issues  Professionalism and proven ability to meet deadlines and respond to requests and feedback appropriately and in a timely manner  Excellent analytical and strategic writing skills in English

Desirable
- Demonstrated capacity and willingness to work as part of a team
- Knowledge of the institution would be relevant for assessing how RECOFTC has evolved
- Knowledge of one or more regional languages would be an asset
- If a team, there should be an appropriate gender balance within the team, and at least one member should come from the region

General
At RECOFTC, our core values are the foundation of our culture and guide all our work. In addition to job specific skills and experience, the applicant should possess the following characteristics, attitudes and skills:
- Embrace innovation
- Adapt to, and learn from, challenges
- Collaborate with partners and stakeholders
- Nurture commitment, responsibility and ownership
- Prioritize sustainability
- Cultivate participation, social inclusion and gender equity

**How to apply**
Applicants are requested to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) containing the following documents to RECOFTC Human Resource Office at hr@recoftc.org:
- Introduction of the Consulting Firm (if applicable)
- The applicant's expertise referring to the qualifications mentioned above
- The applicant's understanding of the assignment and related questions
- Preliminary approach and methodologies (key considerations) to conduct the assignment. This should include alternatives to field or onsite visits if the COVID19 situation restricts travel in RECOFTC focal countries.
- Estimated cost of services (please note RECOFTC will directly book and cover all MTR costs related to travel, accommodation, and per diem costs using its own cost norms)
- Work-sample of a report that is written by the applicant (relevant to the scope of work of the MTR)
- Applicant's CV including contact details of at least three referees

Please quote the consultancy title in the subject line of the email. Only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

To learn more about RECOFTC, please visit our website www.recoftc.org

# Annex 2: List of stakeholders consulted

| Interview code | Actor type | n women | n men |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 101 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | 2 | 1 |
| 102 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | | 1 |
| 103 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | | 1 |
| 104 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | | 1 |
| 105 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | 1 | 1 |
| 106 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | 1 | 2 |
| 107 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | | 2 |
| 108 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | 1 | |
| 109 | Funder | 1 | 1 |
| 110 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | 1 | |
| 111 | Funder | 1 | 1 |
| 113 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | 1 | |
| 201 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | 1 | |
| 202 | Collaborator | 2 | 1 |
| 203 | Collaborator | 1 | 1 |
| 204 | Collaborator | 1 | |
| 205 | Community | 9 | 4 |
| 206 | Community | 5 | 7 |
| 207 | Community | 5 | 6 |
| 208 | Collaborator | 1 | |
| 208 | Collaborator | 1 | |
| 301 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | | 1 |
| 302 | Collaborator | | 1 |
| 303 | Collaborator | 1 | |
| 304 | Collaborator | | 1 |
| 401 | RECOFTC Staff/Trustee | | 1 |
| 402 | Collaborator | | 1 |
| 403 | Collaborator | 1 | |
| 404 | Collaborator | 1 | |
| 405 | Community | 4 | 3 |
| 406 | Community | 4 | 2 |
| 407 | Community | 1 | 1 |

# Annex 3: List of documents consulted

| CODE | File Name |
|------|-----------|
| 001 | 2018-2019_Annual Work Plan.pdf |
| 002 | 2019-2020_Annual Work Plan.pdf |
| 003 | 2020-2021_Annual Work Plan.pdf |
| 004 | Key contacts and Interview schedules.xlsx |
| 005 | RECOFTC IAR 2017-18_final_9May2019.pdf |
| 006 | RECOFTC Operational Report 2018-2019_Final.pdf |
| 007 | Cambodia_Prey Lang landscape.pdf |
| 008 | Indonesia_South Sulawesi landscape.pdf |
| 009 | Lao PDR_Nam Poui landscape.pdf |
| 010 | Myanmar_Dawna Tenasserim landscape.pdf |
| 011 | Myanmar_Inle Lake landscape.pdf |
| 012 | Nepal_Eastern Chure Terai Complex landscape.pdf |
| 013 | Nepal_Sacred Himalayan landscape.pdf |
| 014 | Thailand_Nan landscape.pdf |
| 015 | Viet Nam_Nghe An landscape.pdf |
| 016 | Viet Nam_Quang Nam.pdf |
| 017 | MEL Report 2018-19.docx |
| 018 | Outcome harvesting 2018-19.xlsm |
| 019 | Evaluation Report 2013-2018_FINAL.pdf |
| 020 | Current projects 30Nov2020.xlsx |
| 021 | Section 2.6 Gender Equity and Sexual Harassment v2018.12.pdf |
| 022 | Section 2.6a Guidelines on Gender Equity and Sexual Harassment v2018.12.pdf |
| 023 | Section 3.1d Social Media Policy and Guidelines v2020.05.pdf |
| 024 | Section 3.4a Staff Handbook.pdf |
| 025 | Section 3.6a Guidelines for organizing live events_during the COVID-19 pandemic 2020.07.01.pdf |
| 026 | RECOFTC_evaluation question.docx |
| 027 | Report outline.docx |
| 028 | SDC_assessment-grid-evaluations_EN.docx |
| 029 | Business development strategy - RECOFTC - May 2019.pdf |
| 030 | Private sector partnership _ RECOFTC.pdf |
| 031 | RECOFTC strategic plan 2018-2023.pdf |
| 032 | Web stories |
| 033 | RECOFTC communication strategy [draft] presentation |
| 034 | A - RECOFTC SP MEL Framework - Regional.xlsm |
| 035 | Output Report FY 2019-2020.xlsx |
| 036 | Outcome Harvesting 2020 |
| 037 | Communication, knowledge & IT.pptx |
| 038 | Communication strategy 16 September 2019 BoT version 3 approved |
| 039 | Progress against indicators 18020 Original.xlsm |
| 040 | Swiss Cooperation Programme Myanmar 2019 – 2023 |
| 041 | Swiss Cooperation Strategy Mekong Region 2018–2021 |

# Annex 4: Methodology

*Approach to verification of key study questions for the MTR*

| RECOFTC MTR Questions | Document Review | Primary Data | Note |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A. Relevance and coherence** | | | |
| 1. To what extent do RECOFTC target groups and stakeholders perceive that RECOFTC interventions, products, and services are contributing to improved people/forest development outcomes? | Stories from website. | A/B/C/D | Based on interviews with all actors and expert opinion of secondary literature. |
| 2. To what extent do RECOFTC strategies complement and synergize with those of relevant government and non-government organizations working in the forest sector in its focal countries and regionally? | 001-003, 005-019, 031 | A/B | Based on interviews with RECOFTC staff, partners, government officials, other civil society groups, and expert opinion of secondary literature. |
| 3. To what extent are RECOFTC strategies contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? | 001-003, 005-019, 029, 031 | - | MTR Team assessed both primary and secondary data |
| 4. RECOFTC has developed its Strategic Plan 2018–2023 around four Strategic Goals. Is the organization's theory of change (ToC) and approach still relevant at both regional and country program levels? Do the four Strategic Goals effectively interlink and complement one another? | 001-003, 005-019, 031 | A/B | MTR Team included a strategy and ToC specialist who conducted this review based on document review. |
| **B. Effectiveness** | | | |
| 1. What progress has RECOFTC made in the implementation to date of its Strategic Plan 2018–2023? What have been the major achievements and challenges? | 001-003, 006, 017-020, 029-031 | A/B/C/D | |
| 2. To what extent are the key objectives and desired results of each Strategic Goal being achieved through RECOFTC's target interventions? Which RECOFTC approaches and interventions are effective, and which might be improved? | 001-003, 006-019 | A/B/C/D | Due to the limited scope of the MTR, an assessment of each country using primary data will also be limited. Secondary data used as a basis analysis for all countries, and limited primary data can be collected from all countries. |
| 3. Landscape engagement has been an overarching approach that RECOFTC has taken in its focal countries. What have been the key results and how might RECOFTC's approach be improved in this regard? | 001-003, 006-019 | A/B | Specific questions to key informants concerning landscape approaches and the extent to which RECOFTC's programming contributes to that can be assessed. |

| 4. What have been the main achievements to date in RECOFTC's focal countries? How effectively are RECOFTC country programs designed and implemented? How do key stakeholders in focal countries assess the value addition of RECOFTC work? How does the work in the focal countries contribute to the regional level (and vice versa)? And how might the links and synergies between regional and country programs be more effective? | 001-003, 006-019 | A/B/C/D | Questions in all instruments aimed to clarify experiences to date of respondents and to think about the future of the project and engagement with RECOFTC. |
|---|---|---|---|

**C. Efficiency, Strategic Implementation, and Resource Mobilisation**

| 1. To what extent has RECOFTC's use of its various sources of funding (core, project, and own income) been cost-effective? | - | A/B (funders) | We used a combination of expert assessment and the opinions of management and funders. An external comparable was outside the scope of this review. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. What resources (financial, human, institutional, partnerships) have been used in the implementation of the Strategic Plan? Were the costs involved justified, given the changes/effects which have been achieved? | 001-003, 005-006, 019 | A | |
| 3. Assess the relationship between the main office units and country programs. Is the current distribution of functions and resources strategic and adequate for achieving optimal results? How efficient are RECOFTC's internal coordination and communication mechanisms? How might this be improved? | - | A | |
| 4. To what extent has RECOFTC been able to innovate, identify lessons learned and put this learning into action in order to address key issues and challenges for people and forests regionally and in its focal countries? Is the organization's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system effectively catalyzing institutional learning and innovation? | 001-003, 005-019 | A/B | |
| 5. Has core donor support contributed to RECOFTC's overall efficiency and added value? How so? | - | A | |
| 6. How has RECOFTC's private sector engagement strategy contributed to resource mobilization? | - | A | |

**D. Impact**

| 1. What (expected) impacts are RECOFTC interventions having or likely to have in relation to the current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests in Asia-Pacific region? | - | A/B/C/D | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Which countries are reporting the most impact as a result of RECOFTC interventions, and why? How might such impacts be replicated in other countries? | 001-003, 007-019 | A/B | |

**E. Sustainability**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Provide a critical reflection on the sustainability of outcomes and processes that RECOFTC interventions have helped to achieve so far, and provide recommendations for greater sustainability. What actions need to be taken to increase the likelihood of RECOFTC program results being sustainable? How might RECOFTC scale up engagement with sustainable financing mechanisms to support community forestry within the integrated landscape management? | 001-003, 017-019 | A/B/C/D | |
| 2. How has core donor support helped in enhancing the sustainability of RECOFTC outcomes and processes? How can this be further scaled up and scaled out? | - | A/B (funders) | |
| **F. The way forward** | | | |
| 1. What outcomes should RECOFTC aim to produce in the remaining period of the Strategic Plan in order to effectively accomplish results and contribute to the achievement of RECOFTC's outcomes? | 001-003, 017-020, 029-031 | A/B/C/D | Based on a gap analysis of claims made in primary data collection and the theory of change in the document. |
| 2. What changes (programmatic and organizational) might RECOFTC make in order to make its interventions more relevant, sustainable, effective, and efficient considering its comparative advantage? | 001-004, 017-020, 029-031 | A/B | Based on interviews with RECOFTC staff, partners, government officials, other civil society groups, and expert opinion of secondary literature. |
| 3. Given the current financial landscape and future funding trends for international development, what business development and partnership strategies should RECOFTC prioritize going forward? Is the organization's business development strategy still relevant? | 019-020, 029-031 | A/B | Compare with broad funding trends and any literature pointing to future issues related to COVID-19. |

**Site selection**
*Summary of locations identified for selection*

| Village Name & intended respondents | List of themes of RECOFTC programming (a) | Indigenous population engagement (b) | Women engagement (c) | List of formal groups (d) | Performance (e) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cambodia** | | | | | |
| Khbal Bey (1 women's group and 1 men's group) | Landscape collaboration in a changing climate Governance Social inclusion and gender equality | No | Yes | community forestry credit group Eco-tourism group Agro-forestry group | Exceeding targets |
| Trapeang Prey (1 men's / mixed group) | Governance Landscape collaboration in a changing climate Gender and social inclusion | No | Yes | community forestry credit | Meeting targets |
| Tom Por (1 women's group) | Gender and social inclusion Landscape collaboration in a changing climate | Yes | Yes | Agriculture group | Meeting targets |
| **Myanmar** | | | | | |
| Heinze (1 men's/ mixed group) | Capacity building for CF Strengthening land tenure rights Participatory patrolling in CF | No | Yes | N/A | Exceeding targets |
| Mayan Chaung (1 women, 1 men's group) | Capacity building for CF Strengthening land tenure rights Livelihood development related to community forestry (community forestry Enterprise Development) | Yes | Yes | N/A | Not meeting targets |
| Eain Da Yarzar (1 women's group) | Capacity building for CF Strengthening land tenure rights community forestry for water resources management | Yes | Yes | N/A | Meeting targets |

**Data Collection Instruments**

**Disclosure and Consent**
All data collection sessions will be introduced using an opening remarks script and will end with a closing remarks script. The scripts read roughly as follows:

**Opening Remarks**
Hello, my name is [*insert interviewer name*] and [I am/we are] happy to speak with you today about the [*insert project name*] project that operated from [*insert time period*] to [*insert time period*]. You might be familiar with [*insert name of local partner or facilitator working in the area*] who worked on this project. The focus was on the midterm review for RECOFTC Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

This is a normal part of good project management. RECOFTC has contracted the Dala Institute to conduct an independent review of the project to both better understand how the RECOFTC activities went and to learn from your experience with them. Your participation is completely voluntary.

This is a chance for you to share your views about the RECOFTC initiatives and how well they have been working for you and your [*insert organisation, community, work areas*]. We really appreciate your honest feedback to improve programming. The Dala Institute is independent from RECOFTC and will only share anonymous data with them. Your name will not be associated with anything you say in the report.

[For Key Informants: Your organisation will be listed in the groups we talked with, but your name won't be in the report or available to RECOFTC]

The final report will be drafted by the Dala Institute and presented to the RECOFTC and its donors. The report will include the perspectives of other people and the ideas will be represented as findings and conclusions, and recommendations will be made by the Dala Institute to RECOFTC.

Before we proceed, I would like to invite you to ask any questions.

Okay, so, are we okay to proceed? This will probably take about [*insert estimate*] minutes.

[Consent must be confirmed verbally]

**Closing Remarks**
Thanks for your time to speak with us today. If you have any follow-up thoughts, want to change your response, or withdraw your responses, you can do so before [five days after the last day of fieldwork] by contacting the Team Leader as follows, or myself: [provide contact details].

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The data collection instruments are designed for a semi-structured interview. This means that while the questions generally will apply to respondents, there may be other issues into which the respondent has more insight. Skilled interviewers will therefore use the instruments as a reference for interviews, but needn't strictly follow the questions in each interview.

The names, locations and roles of each respondent will be recorded in all interview notes.

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## A. RECOFTC Interview

This tool will be used with RECOFTC staff, managers and/or the board of directors. Estimated time: 75 minutes.

At different points in this interview, we will refer to the RECOFTC strategic goals, namely:
- **Landscape Collaboration in a Changing Climate**, which is about protecting, exercising, and compensating the rights of local people in forest landscapes through collaborative landscape management.
- **Governance, Institutions, and Conflict Transformation**, which is about promoting good governance and preventing conflicts through transformation of strong institutions, relationships, strategies, services, and skills.
- **Private Sector Engagement and Enterprising Communities,** which is about increasing the economic value of forest landscapes for local people through sustainable investment and Community-Based Enterprises (CBE).
- **Social Inclusion, Gender Equity, and Public Action**, which encourages active participation and empowers women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable people in forest management.

1. Please explain your role in the RECOFTC activities briefly.

**Relevance and coherence**
2. In what ways, if any, has the context changed between 2018 and now for the implementation of the RECOFTC strategic goals?
3. To what extent have RECOFTC plans and programming aligned with the priorities of the countries with which you are most familiar? Please explain why you see them as aligned or misaligned.
4. Are the strategic goals still the most relevant ones today? If not, how should they be changed to better reflect current conditions?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current Strategic Plan with regards to the progress and implementation to date?
6. To what extent do the four Strategic Goals effectively interlink and complement one another?

**Effectiveness**
Programming
7. To what extent are RECOFTC [approaches, interventions, products, and services] contributing to improved people/forest development outcomes? [note local, country or regional level]
8. What have been the biggest successes for you between 2018 and now in terms of the RECOTC strategic goals? Please provide examples.
9. What have been the biggest challenges for you between 2018 and now in terms of the RECOFTC strategic goals? Please provide examples.
10. What have been some of the results so far of working with the landscape engagement perspective in RECOFTC programming? Where has the landscape approach been applied? How has it been applied? What are some missed opportunities?

Management
11. To what extent has RECOFTC been effective in (a) increasing grant funding from non-core sources, (b) increasing diversity in income sources and (c) improving processes, tools, and culture for business development?
12. To what extent has RECOFTC been effective at recruiting the right talent and developing a culture of learning and self-improvement within the organisation?
13. How effective has the relationship between main office and country offices been to achieve the strategic goals? What can be improved in terms of synergy/coordination and resources distribution between the main office and country program?
14. How are the lessons learned being documented and disseminated and used?

**Efficiency, Strategic Implementation, and Resource Mobilization**
15. In what ways has RECOFTC made use of strategic partnerships to extend its abilities to reach its strategic goals? Please provide examples.
16. In what ways have you seen the reflection of results, successes and failures incorporated into changes in programming of ways of managing RECOFTC?
17. Can you please explain how core donor support for RECOFTC influences your work? What are its advantages and disadvantages?
18. Do you think RECOFTC is under or over-using any financial/ human / partnership resources to fulfill the strategic plan?

19. To what extent does RECOFTC have the human resource capacity to be effective and efficient? If different human resource capacities are needed, what are they?
20. To what extent have you seen private sector engagement lead to resource mobilisation or assist RECOFTC to achieve its strategic goals? Please provide examples. Have there been any disadvantages or challenges to working closely with the private sector?
21. To what extent do you consider RECOFTC programming good value for money? What do you compare it to, and how do you assess it against its comparables?

**Impact**

22. In what ways, if at all,  do you see the RECOFTC interventions having longer-term impacts on current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests? [probe for each strategic goal].
23. What are the main limitations in terms of RECOFTC achieving longer-term impacts?
24. What do you think are the best ways to scale-up and out the RECOFTC interventions?

**Sustainability**

25. Can you please give some examples of how RECOFTC prepares participants for the end of the programming in a given community, district, or the country depending on the scale of programming?
26. Do you think that at the end of the current implementation period, the results produced by RECOFTC will be continued to be used / capitalised on by participants? Please explain.
27. Are there opportunities for scaling-up or handing-over RECOFTC programming that have not been taken advantage of? Please explain.
28. What does core donor support mean for your work? What would happen if it was increased or decreased?

**The way forward**

29. How do you think RECOFTC could improve the way that it addresses needs related to people and forests?
30. How do you think RECOFTC could improve its longer-term impacts on current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests?
31. What would you like to see RECOFTC do differently in the way that it manages and conducts its programmes?
32. Are there any examples from RECOFTC in other countries that you think would work well in [this country]? Why or why not is this a good idea? What would the main challenges be?
33. Are there any examples from other implementers that you think RECOFTC could replicate or do better? How would RECOFTC do that? What would the main challenges be?
34. Are there any partnerships that RECOFTC should be pursuing (generally or specifically) in order to advance its work? Please describe.
35. Reflecting on the business development strategy, how do you think management could better position itself to meet objectives?
36. What do you think are the most important underfunded opportunities in the focal countries that are consistent with the RECOFTC Strategic Plan?
37. Are there any particular elements in the current political context that RECOFTC should consider integrating  into its approach/intervention/programs?

**B. Collaborator Interview**

This instrument will be used for government respondents, partners, and non-aligned observers. Estimated time: 60 minutes.

At different points in this interview, we will refer to the RECOFTC strategic goals, namely:
- **Landscape Collaboration in a Changing Climate**, which is about protecting, exercising, and compensating the rights of local people in forest landscapes through collaborative landscape management.
- **Governance, Institutions, and Conflict Transformation**, which is about promoting good governance and preventing conflicts through transformation of strong institutions, relationships, strategies, services, and skills.
- **Private Sector Engagement and Enterprising Communities,** which is about increasing the economic value of forest landscapes for local people through sustainable investment and Community-Based Enterprises (CBE).
- **Social Inclusion, Gender Equity, and Public Action**, which encourages active participation and empowers women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable people in forest management.

1. Please explain your role in the RECOFTC activities briefly.

**Relevance and coherence**
2. In what ways, if any, has the context changed between 2018 and now for the implementation of the RECOFTC strategic goals?
3. To what extent have RECOFTC plans and programming aligned with the priorities of the countries with which you are most familiar. Please explain why you see them as aligned or misaligned.
4. Are the strategic goals still the most relevant ones today? If not, how should they be changed to better reflect current conditions?

**Effectiveness**
Programming
5. To what extent are RECOFTC [approaches, interventions, products, and services] contributing to improved people/forest development outcomes?
6. What have been the biggest successes for you between 2018 and now in terms of the RECOFTC programming? Please provide examples.
7. What have been the biggest challenges for you between 2018 and now in terms of the RECOFTC programming? Please provide examples.
8. Are familiar with the landscape approach? If so, how is RECOFTC working with this model? What have been some of the results so far of working with the landscape engagement perspective in RECOFTC programming (If any)? Where has the landscape approach been applied? How has it been applied? What are some missed opportunities?
9. Do you think that women and men are able to benefit and participate equally or differently from [RECOFTC/partner] activities? [probe for both]
10. Do you think that indigenous communities or other marginalised groups are able to benefit from and participate in [RECOFTC/partner] activities?
Management
11. To what extent has RECOFTC been effective at recruiting effective people?

**Efficiency, Strategic Implementation, and Resource Mobilization**
12. In what ways has RECOFTC made partnerships with relevant institutions and groups? Please provide examples. [Probe for government, private sector and civil society].
[Funders only]
13. To what extent do you consider RECOFTC programming good value for money? What do you compare it to, and how do you assess it against its comparables?

**Impact**
14. In what ways, if at all,  do you see the RECOFTC interventions having longer-term impacts on current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests? [probe for each strategic goal].
15. What are the main limitations in terms of RECOFTC achieving longer-term impacts?
16. Do you think RECOFTC programming is scalable? What do you think are the best ways to scale-up and out the RECOFTC interventions?

**Sustainability**

17. Can you please give some examples of how RECOFTC prepares participants for the end of the programming in a given community, district, or the country depending on the scale of programming?  [ie what happens then the RECOFTC intervention ends?]
18. Do you think that at the end of the current implementation period, the results produced by RECOFTC will be continued to be used / capitalised on by participants? Please explain.
19. Are there opportunities for scaling-up or handing-over RECOFTC programming that have not been taken advantage of? Please explain.

**The way forward**

20. How do you think RECOFTC could improve the way that it addresses needs related to people and forests?
21. How do you think RECOFTC could improve its longer-term impacts on current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests?
22. What would you like to see RECOFTC do differently in the way that it manages and conducts its programmes?
23. Are there any examples from other implementers that you think RECOFTC could replicate or do better? How would RECOFTC do that? What would the main challenges be?
24. Are there any partnerships (with other organisations , companies or government units)that RECOFTC should be pursuing (generally or specifically) in order to advance its work? Please describe.
25. Are there any particular elements in the current political context that RECOFTC should consider integrating into its approach/intervention/programs?

**C. Village-level Interview**
This instrument will be used with village-level key informants. Estimated time: 60 minutes.
[Invite RECOFTC rep to also give some examples of these in the context of the village(s) represented)]

0. What is [RECOFTC / Partner] doing in your village?
[Link back to strategic goals to check which apply and use these throughout]
- **Landscape Collaboration in a Changing Climate**, which is about protecting, exercising, and compensating the rights of local people in forest landscapes through collaborative landscape management.
- **Governance, Institutions, and Conflict Transformation**, which is about promoting good governance and preventing conflicts through transformation of strong institutions, relationships, strategies, services, and skills.
- **Private Sector Engagement and Enterprising Communities,** which is about increasing the economic value of forest landscapes for local people through sustainable investment and Community-Based Enterprises (CBE).
- **Social Inclusion, Gender Equity, and Public Action**, which encourages active participation and empowers women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable people in forest management.

[Check with RECOFTC staff to make sure respondents got everything]

1. Please explain your role in the activities supported by [RECOFTC/partner] briefly.

**Relevance and coherence**
2. What are the most pressing issues related to people, land and forest in your community at this time?
3. How have the issues mentioned above changes since 2018. Are they more or less important? Is their condition better or worse?
4. Does [RECOFTC/partner] programming aim to improve any of these challenges? If so, how?

**Effectiveness**
Programming
5. To what extent are [RECOFTC/partner] [approaches, interventions, products, and services] contributing to improved people/forest development in your village?
6. What have been the biggest [RECOFTC/partner] successes between 2018 and now? Please provide examples.
7. What have been the biggest [RECOFTC/partner] challenges between 2018 and now? Please provide examples.
8. Do you think that women and men are able to benefit and participate equally or differently from [RECOFTC/partner] activities? [probe both]
9. Do you think that indigenous communities or marginalised groups are able to benefit from and participate in [RECOFTC/partner] activities?

**Impact**
10. In what ways, if at all, do you see the [RECOFTC/partner] interventions having longer-term impacts related to people and forests in your area? [probe for each strategic goal].
11. What are the main limitations in terms of [RECOFTC/partner] achieving longer-term impacts?
12. What do you think are the best ways to build on [RECOFTC/partner] interventions in your area?

**Sustainability**
13. Can you please give some examples of how [RECOFTC/partner] prepares participants for the end of the programming in a given community, district, or the country depending on the scale of programming?  Have they ever told you about when or if the activities will end and what will happen when it does?
14. Do you think that at the end of the current implementation period, the results produced by [RECOFTC/partner] will be continued to be used / capitalised on in your village? Please explain.

**The way forward**
15. How do you think [RECOFTC/partner] could improve the way that it addresses needs related to people and forests? [probe for both]
16. How do you think [RECOFTC/partner] could improve its longer-term impacts on current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests?
17. What would you like to see [RECOFTC/partner] do differently in the way that it manages and conducts its programmes?

18. Are there any partnerships that RECOFTC should be pursuing (generally or specifically) in order to advance its work? Please describe.

**D. Village-level Focus Group**

This instrument will be used with village-level group discussions. Estimated time 60 minutes.

0. What is [RECOFTC / Partner] doing in your village?
[Link back to strategic goals to check which apply and use these throughout]
- **Landscape Collaboration in a Changing Climate**, which is about protecting, exercising, and compensating the rights of local people in forest landscapes through collaborative landscape management.
- **Governance, Institutions, and Conflict Transformation**, which is about promoting good governance and preventing conflicts through transformation of strong institutions, relationships, strategies, services, and skills.
- **Private Sector Engagement and Enterprising Communities,** which is about increasing the economic value of forest landscapes for local people through sustainable investment and Community-Based Enterprises (CBE).
- **Social Inclusion, Gender Equity, and Public Action**, which encourages active participation and empowers women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable people in forest management.

[Check with RECOFTC staff to make sure respondents got everything]

**Relevance and coherence**
1. What are the most pressing issues related to people, land and forest in your community at this time?
2. How have the issues mentioned above changes since 2018. Are they more or less important? Is their condition better or worse?
3. Does [RECOFTC/partner] programming aim to improve any of these challenges?

**Effectiveness**
Programming
4. To what extent are [RECOFTC/partner] [interventions, products, and services] contributing to improved people/forest development in your village?
5. What have been the biggest [RECOFTC/partner] successes between 2018 and now? Please provide examples.
6. What have been the biggest [RECOFTC/partner] challenges between 2018 and now? Please provide examples.
7. Do you think that women and men are able to benefit and participate equally or differently from [RECOFTC/partner] activities?
8. Do you think that indigenous communities or marginalised groups are able to benefit from and participate in [RECOFTC/partner] activities?

**Impact**
9. In what ways, if at all,  do you see the [RECOFTC/partner] interventions having longer-term impacts related to people and forests in your area? [probe for each strategic goal].
10. What are the main limitations in terms of [RECOFTC/partner] achieving longer-term impacts?

**Sustainability**
11. Do you think that at the end of the current implementation period, the results produced by [RECOFTC/partner] will be continued to be used / capitalised on in your village? Have they ever told you about when or if the activities will end and what will happen when it does? Please explain.

**The way forward**
12. How do you think [RECOFTC/partner] could improve the way that it addresses needs related to people and forests?
13. How do you think [RECOFTC/partner] could improve its longer-term impacts on current and emergent overall development needs related to people and forests?
14. What would you like to see [RECOFTC/partner] do differently in the way that it manages and conducts its programmes?

# Annex 5: OECD DAC performance

A table which summarizes the findings according to the OECD key development criteria - including a rating for each criteria using the following ratings: Highly satisfactory (HS) ; Satisfactory (S) ; Unsatisfactory (U); Highly unsatisfactory (HU), and SDC' assessment grid

| Key aspects based on DAC Criteria | Score | Justification |
|---|---|---|
| **Relevance** | | |
| 1. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of the target group. | HS | Strong alignment with government and civil society priorities. Addressed key issues related to forests. |
| 2. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of indirectly affected stakeholders (not included in target group, e.g. government, civil society, etc.) in the country of the intervention. | HS | Strong alignment with government and civil society priorities. Addressed key issues related to forests. |
| 3. The extent to which core design elements of the intervention (such as the theory of change, structure of the project components, choice of services and intervention partners) adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the target group. | S | The design is well organised and strategic, but some key issues such as climate change, land tenures security, and conflict transformation are underrepresented or defined in the theory of change. |
| **Coherence** | | |
| 4. Internal coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions of Swiss development cooperation in the same country and thematic field (consistency, complementarity and synergies). | HS | High alignment with SDC transversal themes of gender equality, good governance, and climate change through forestry. |
| 5. External coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors in the country and thematic field (complementarity and synergies). | HS | Strong collaboration with civil society and government, fill a gap in offerings of other groups and provide a strong bridge between government and non-governmental actors. Especially in landscape approach and in gender programming. Brought in conservation organisations to broader perspectives. |
| **Effectiveness** | | |
| 6. The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results. | HS | The Strategic Plan is comprehensive and addresses the main strategies that are likely to lead to sustainable results for people and forests. |
| 7. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended objectives (outputs and outcomes). | S | While most targets are moving forward, some are stalled or delayed (note: data up to 2019 were available to the consultant) |
| 8. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes. | S | Substantial progress with SDC transversal themes good governance, and showing positive results in gender equality. Climate change-related achievements are strong in terms of interventions in forests, even when achievements are not explicitly linked to climate change in RECOFTC reporting. |

**Efficiency**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively. | S | There are no indicators of financial concerns of cost inefficiency. |
| 10. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe). | S | There are manageable delays, notably on gender programming, which has accelerated in the last year but data is not yet available. |
| 11. The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation. | S | The Strategic Plan and Annual Plans are comprehensive, but lack specificity in country contexts. There are extensive communication, private sector development plans, and business planning at regional levels. |

**Impact**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12. The extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention. | HS | Strong impact with government, including influencing policy change, and affecting government priorities. Landscape focus ensures long-term vision for a range of actors. |

**Sustainability**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 13. The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes. | HS | Strong capacity-building of government and non-government actors. High motivation of staff, and collaborators. Work on policy likely to sustain intervention and engage government and non-government actors. Multi Stakeholder forums engage many actors. |
| 14. The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes. | S | Some sense that the government is able to take on some activities after projects are finished, but perhaps not at the same level of intervention. Country offices struggle with core funding, but overall, RECOFTC has been improving its financial position and diversity of funding base. |
| 15. The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) is conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes. | S | While every country is different, RECOFTC works closely with government to mitigate against risks and align with government priorities. The nature of forest works requires working in some sensitive areas, which is important, but also presents some risks. |

# RECOFTC

At RECOFTC, we believe in a future where people live equitably and sustainably in and beside healthy, resilient forests. We take a long-term, landscape-based and inclusive approach to supporting local communities to secure their land and resource rights, stop deforestation, find alternative livelihoods and foster gender equity. We are the only non-profit organization of our kind in Asia and the Pacific. We have more than 30 years of experience working with people and forests, and have built trusting relationships with partners at all levels. Our influence and partnerships extend from multilateral institutions to governments, private sector and local communities. Our innovations, knowledge and initiatives enable countries to foster good forest governance, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

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