

A DECADE OF IMPACT: 10 YEARS OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

2014 - 2024



CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL



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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, Conservation International (CI) embarked on a transformative journey to become an Agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The GEF, a family of funds dedicated to addressing pressing global environmental challenges, was the ideal partner for CI, as this alliance had the opportunity to open up new avenues for CI to continue its mission in helping communities tackle the root causes of environmental harm.

Since then, CI has utilized its expertise to develop projects that engage all sectors of society, focusing on the essential services provided by nature—such as fresh water, food, health, livelihoods, and climate resilience. CI's commitment to innovative finance, community-based solutions, and partnerships with corporate, multilateral, nonprofit, and governmental entities has facilitated the implementation of innovative and effective projects across the globe.

Over the past decade, CI's projects have achieved remarkable results, reaching over 100 countries and benefiting more than 6 million people. These efforts have significantly contributed to conservation activities across diverse fields, including biodiversity preservation, combating land degradation, assisting with climate change adaptation, and protecting international waters.

While the work is far from complete, this ten-year impact report highlights the profound impact that a small yet mighty team like CI-GEF can achieve.

CI is incredibly proud of its accomplishments in partnership with the GEF and looks forward to another decade of success.

ORISSA SAMAROO

Vice President, CI-GEF Agency



CI-GEF AT A GLANCE

Initially starting as a team of three, the CI-GEF Agency has expanded into a dynamic team of 21 specialists. This team includes experts in technical project design, environmental and social safeguards, grants management, monitoring and evaluation, and communication. Their collective expertise ensures that projects are not only effective but also sustainable and impactful, fostering long-term environmental and social benefits.

The team has built a robust portfolio that aligns with Conservation International's overarching commitment to improving human well-being. This portfolio aims to reflect a strategic approach to conservation that involves stakeholders at all levels, from communities to the private sector and governments, all of which rely on the critical benefits that nature provides to humanity.

Since becoming an Agency, CI-GEF has developed more than 72 projects and distributed more than \$357 million in funding. These projects are meticulously designed to address the diverse environmental needs of the countries they serve, ensuring that each initiative is tailored to local contexts and challenges.

This ensuing report showcases the agency's achievements and growth as a key player in the global conservation space. Highlighting our environmental contributions, field reflections, and future aspirations, the report demonstrates how CI-GEF has advanced global conservation efforts and strengthened the resilience of ecosystems and communities around the world.



72

projects between
Fiscal Year 2014 and Fiscal Year 2024

\$357,247,367

in GEF funding* secured across
CI-GEF projects

*excludes Project Preparation Grant and other fees



Our Portfolio



North America

Europe

Asia

South America

Africa

Australia



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The GEF uses indicators to measure the progress and impact of its projects, focusing on outcomes like mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, the improved management of protected areas, restoration of land, development of sustainable practices, and reduction of chemicals and waste. Analyzing these Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) in our portfolio is crucial, as they provide measurable ways to evaluate project effectiveness and ensure tangible impacts.

Recognizing the GEBs in our portfolio underscores our commitment to the GEF's goals as well as to international sustainable development and environmental stewardship. These benefits demonstrate how our initiatives contribute to global efforts such as combatting climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation while promoting sustainable land and water use.

*GEF Core Indicators where used as the basis for the targets. GEF-5 and GEF-6 project targets where fitted based on the definitions

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Over 20.2 million hectares

terrestrial protected areas under improved management or newly created

Over 10.7 million hectares

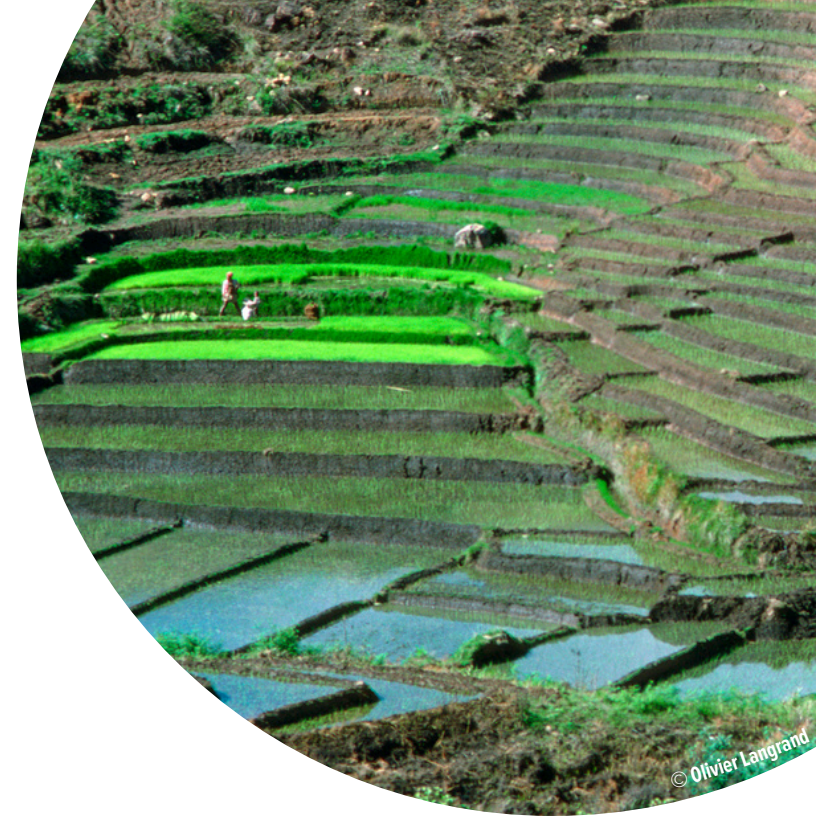
of landscapes outside protected areas under improved management, and sustainable land management to benefit biodiversity

Over 1.4 million hectares

of wetlands, degraded agricultural lands, and forests under restoration

Over 1.3 billion hectares

of marine protected areas under improved management or newly created





25 million

hectares of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity

Over 180 million

metric tones of CO₂e mitigated

Over 6 million people

are direct beneficiaries of CI-GEF investment



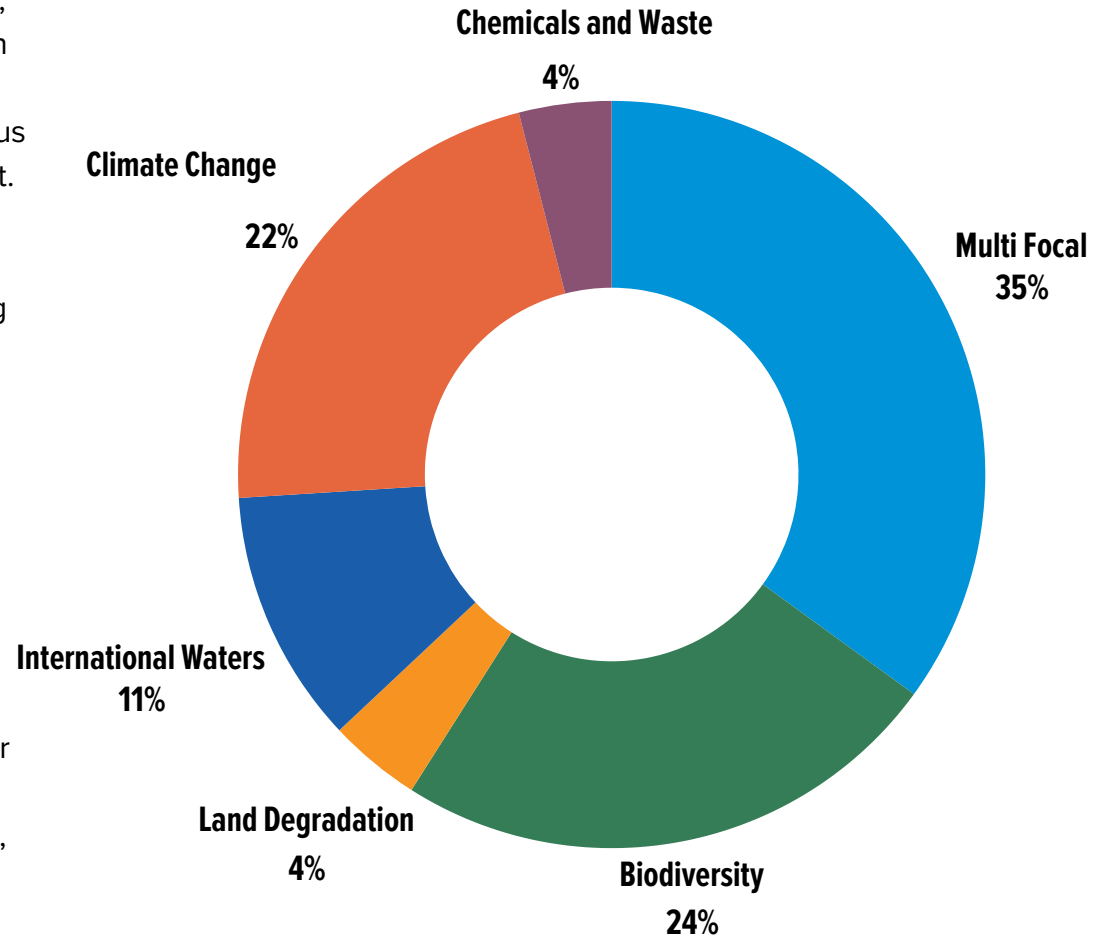
Focal Areas

The GEF addresses environmental challenges by focusing on five key areas: biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change, international waters, and land degradation. Each plays a crucial role in keeping our ecosystems balanced. Biodiversity projects, for example, focus on protecting the incredible variety of life on Earth, ensuring species and habitats are preserved and thrive. The work in Chemicals and Waste aims to reduce the dangerous impact of hazardous substances on both people and the planet.

Regarding Climate Change, these projects help communities adapt, finding ways to reduce carbon footprints, while investing in nature's ability to heal itself. International Waters projects ensure that shared lakes, rivers, and oceans are managed sustainably to continue supporting life across borders. Land Degradation initiatives focus on restoring damaged lands to ensure they can be productive once more to fight the looming threat of desertification.

But, as science shows, all of these challenges are deeply interconnected. That's why over a third of our projects tackle multiple themes at once, weaving together solutions for greater impact. As for the rest of our funding, 24% goes toward biodiversity, 22% to climate change, 11% to international waters, and 4% to chemicals and waste, and land degradation prevention.

This diverse portfolio allows us to bring our expertise across different fields, creating comprehensive and lasting solutions because protecting the planet isn't just about one issue—it's about addressing the bigger picture, together.



FIELD REFLECTIONS

This section offers a glimpse into the on-the-ground experiences from some of CI-GEF's most impactful work, including the Adaptation SME Accelerator Project (ASAP), Liberia's National Conservation Area (NCA) project, experiences from the Oaxaca and Chiapas initiative in Mexico, and the Meloy Fund. These projects span diverse regions and environmental challenges, reflecting the real-world application of CI-GEF's mission, and showcasing the tangible lessons learned in the field.





The Adaptation SME Accelerator Project (ASAP)

The Adaptation SME Accelerator Project (ASAP), led by The Lightsmith Group and supported by CI-GEF and the Inter-American Development Bank, drives climate resilience by supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in emerging markets that provide climate change adaptation technologies and services.

Agriculture is particularly vulnerable to weather extremes due to climate change, including severe droughts, flooding, temperature variation, and changes to precipitation patterns. These reduce crop yield and quality, leading to food insecurity. Water insecurity is a closely linked and similarly vulnerable sector in communities worldwide.

To combat these challenges, ASAP supported three companies from the Adaptation SME Accelerator to pilot their solutions: a post-harvest management and grain storage facility in Nigeria, a rural off-grid water treatment solution for school children in Colombia, and an initiative developing a digital platform for crop monitoring and climate risk assessment for smallholder farmers in India.

These three companies are among 500+ identified in the ASAP market scoping to define and encourage wider investment into climate adaptation solutions.



*Pictures from trainings for farmers in Madhya Pradesh, India

The Lightsmith Group

Agtuall's Digital Platform Shows Promise for Smallholder Farmers

The ASAP Project has been crucial in supporting Agtuall's mission to empower smallholder farmers through digital innovation. In 2023, the GEF-funded program provided technical assistance that allows Agtuall to develop and deploy a digital platform delivering agronomic services to over 20,000 farmers across Madhya Pradesh, India. This initiative included 7,774 women farmers and spanned 1,656 villages and 54,912 acres of farmland. The platform facilitated the dissemination of vital agronomic advice and the creation of innovative financial products, including parametric insurance tailored to the needs of smallholders. Encouraging feedback from financial institutions has validated the platform's utility, prompting pilot projects to further refine its capabilities for streamlining insurance underwriting processes.

Beyond India, the technical assistance has catalyzed new opportunities for Agtuall, enabling them to extend their services internationally. A notable outcome is a partnership with the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, which has expanded the platform's use to smallholder farmers in Eastern Africa and Southeast Asia. This collaboration includes developing livestock index insurance in Sudan, highlighting the platform's versatility in addressing diverse agricultural and climate-related challenges. These advancements underscore the platform's potential to improve access to financial products, thereby enhancing the climate resilience of smallholder farmers worldwide.



Conservation and Sustainable use of Liberia's Coastal Natural Capital

In Liberia, mangroves are crucial for coastal resilience, biodiversity, and community well-being. However, they are under threat from urbanization, resource overexploitation, pollution, and climate change. Despite some policy recognition, the full value of these ecosystems is not yet adequately considered in national development planning.

To address this, the 'Conservation and Sustainable Use of Liberia's Coastal Natural Capital' project aims to enhance the capacity of key agencies to collect and analyze environmental data, incorporate these insights into decision-making, and develop policies that incentivize sustainable practices. Additionally, it promotes financing mechanisms and benefit-sharing models to support long-term conservation efforts at the local level, particularly in southeastern Liberia, while building on existing work in the northwest.

A key project component focuses on enhancing community-level conservation and the sustainable use of coastal resources through performance-based payments linked to conservation agreements. By actively involving community members in conservation activities, the project ensures that they directly benefit from project funds, thereby fostering local ownership and long-term commitment to protecting and conserving coastal ecosystems.

2,278
people

voluntarily
committed to
protect natural
resources for the
project: 47% male
(1,062) and 53%
female (1,216)

“Before the coming of CI into this community, I was involved in catching crabs in the mangroves and in the lake and I could take them for sale in Robert sport to get food for my children and myself but since I have become part of this project, I have been able to procure food from my business and even help my husband pay for my children’s school fees.”

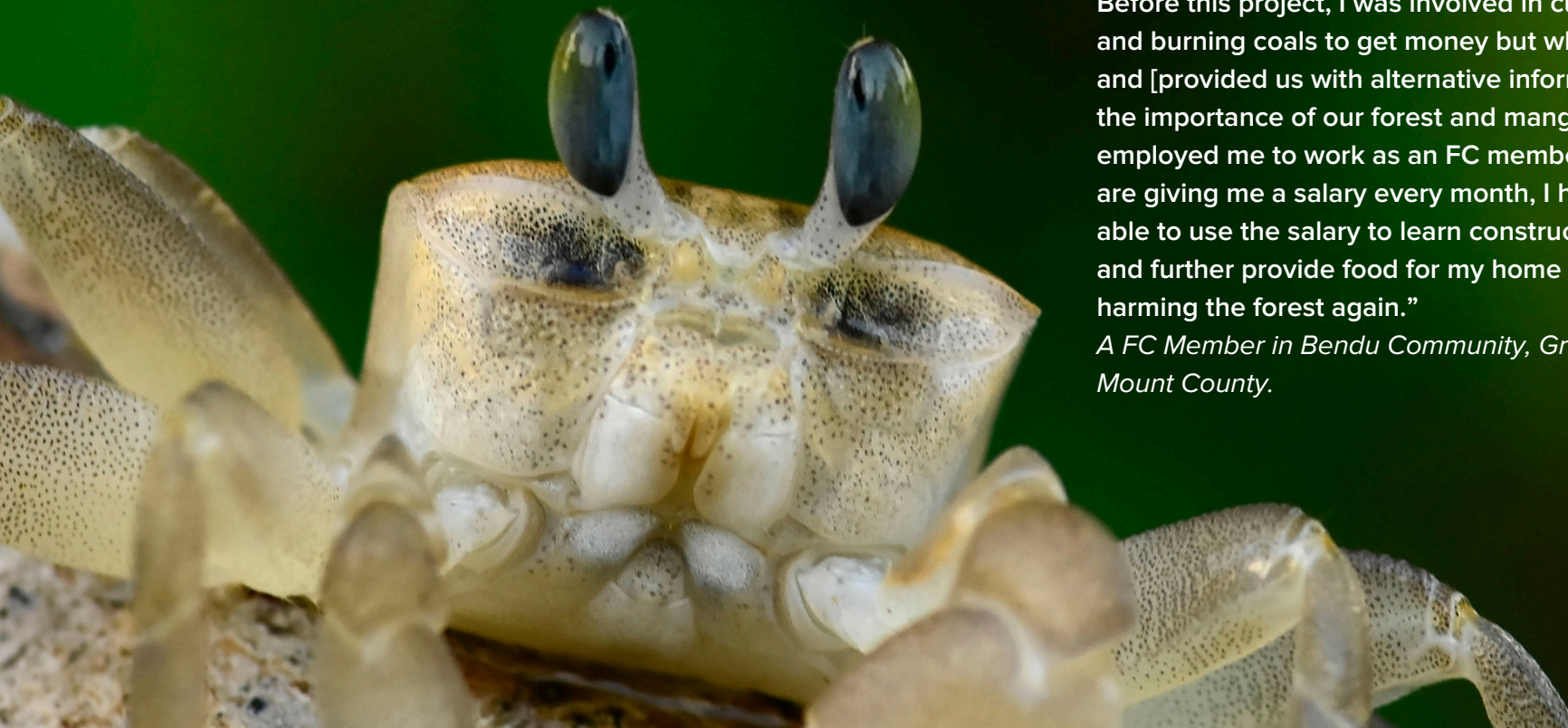
A Member of the Village Savings and Loans Association in Bendu Community, Grand Cape Mount County

“From the [benefits] I received from [this project] as a Focal Community (FC) member, I have been able to buy zinc and cement to modernize my house and make my family happy”.

A FC Member in Bendu Community, Grand Cape Mount County.

Before this project, I was involved in cutting wood and burning coals to get money but when CI came and [provided us with alternative information on] the importance of our forest and mangroves and employed me to work as an FC member and they are giving me a salary every month, I have been able to use the salary to learn construction skills and further provide food for my home without harming the forest again.”

A FC Member in Bendu Community, Grand Cape Mount County.





The Meloy Fund

The Meloy Fund: A Fund for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia

The Meloy Fund for Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries is an initiative designed to address the challenges faced by small-scale fishers in Indonesia and the Philippines. These nations heavily depend on fishery production, with 95% of Indonesia's fishery output coming from small-scale fishers and municipal fisheries contributing to half of the Philippines' production. The fund aims to promote sustainable fisheries practices through targeted investments in both countries, guided by innovative Environmental and Social Guidelines. The project focuses on a 1.2 million-hectare impact area in coral reef ecosystems, aiming to enhance conservation efforts.

Funded by the GEF and other investors, this non-grant pilot project has the potential to become a global model for combating environmental degradation in small-scale and coastal fishery habitats. This work has the opportunity to significantly contribute to the preservation of marine biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable fishing practices worldwide.

Agromar Enterprises

Philippines

“... as the world experienced the pandemic, extreme quarantine restrictions were implemented, and most businesses were facing difficulties. During this time, Meloy Fund has assisted us through their rapid response loan program, which has helped us bridge our receivables gap... with Meloy Fund, they also helped us promote COVID-19 protocols in our work area, helping us take better care of our employees and suppliers. With Meloy Fund, we have secured our continued business operation during this challenging time.”

Soraida Omar, Agromar CEO

Agrita

Indonesia

“Meloy is giving us funds to help us [with our operations and focus on sustainable practices]. First, we want to have our own facility which is based on our standards, based on our buyer requirements, and to make sure that the quality is based on the highest requirements because many of our buyers are European. With this fund, we make our dreams come true.”

“During COVID-19, we were the only company not leaving (the communities) alone. We’re giving them help, giving them food. Helping our fisherman to understand that sustainability is very important in this business. The bigger octopus you can get, the biggest money you can get. Meloy and Rare, are giving me this information, and then I give it to the fisherman.”

Anita Njoo, Agrita CEO



Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas

In 2018, the GEF approved the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas project. Conservation International Mexico collaborated with the Mexican government’s National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) to execute the project on the ground.

The project focused on 2.6 million hectares in Oaxaca and Chiapas, two regions known for their rich biological and cultural diversity. Its goal was to strengthen biodiversity conservation within the National System of Protected Areas and related corridors by protecting 15 key species. The project had three main components: integrated landscape management, sustainable production models, and financial sustainability. Through these efforts, the project aimed to ensure long-term conservation and sustainable use of the region’s biodiversity. The project closed at the end of 2024.



© Olivia Reed



© Rito Chocolatería



© Rito Chocolatería

In Oaxaca City, artisanal shop owner Flor Heras shares her deep connection to the city's longstanding history of chocolate. As a third-generation chocolate maker, Flor's family has over 30 years of experience in this craft.

Oaxaca is renowned as a chocolate capital, though most cocoa traditionally comes from Chiapas or Tabasco. "That's why we wanted to work with the project," Flor explains. "It was important to produce chocolate that was all-Oaxacan." Rito Chocolatería, Flor's shop, sources raw cacao from Oaxacan producers collaborating with the project like UCIRI (Unión de Comunidades de la Región del Istmo) and processes it locally in Oaxaca City.

The project has been crucial in connecting the community and cocoa producers with buyers like Flor. In her shop, Flor transforms the cocoa into a variety of products, including bars, ice cream, and chocolate drinks. While most chocolate in Oaxaca is consumed as a beverage, Rito Chocolatería aims to introduce new varieties for locals to enjoy. Flor has also created specialty products such as Reina Negra bars to celebrate the African influence on chocolate's history in Oaxaca.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) serves as a comprehensive guide to ensure that CI's projects safeguard the people working on the project and the environment. As a partner of the GEF, CI aligned to its ESMF to meet the GEF's rigorous standards and ensure that potential environmental and social risks are meticulously managed.

The ESMF enhances project planning and outcomes by emphasizing fairness and rights protection. The framework also includes crucial guidelines on gender equality, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and community engagement.

The ESMF is built around four key policies: protecting the environment and people, promoting gender equality, involving stakeholders, and providing mechanisms for raising concerns. The primary goal is to prevent or minimize harm from CI's projects and responsibly manage risks. Additionally, the ESMF underscores the importance of precaution, advocating for proactive measures to prevent harm even when all risks are not fully understood.





Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) Indicators

Conservation International has a system to handle complaints related to the project. This system addresses specific concerns about compensation, relocation, or restoring livelihoods that affected individuals and communities might have. The AGM provides a way for people to voice their concerns and get them resolved. This helps ensure the project is fair and responsive to the community's needs, building trust and reducing conflicts.



Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP) Indicators

The Gender Mainstreaming Plan explains the gender roles within the project, identifies activities that consider these roles, and outlines measures to ensure the project respects the different needs of women and men while reducing any negative impacts. It also includes a plan to monitor and evaluate progress using gender-specific indicators. GMP indicators are important because they help track how well the project is addressing the different needs of women and men. These indicators ensure that the project is fair and inclusive, helping to identify and address any gender-related issues that arise.



Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) Indicators

SEPs are tailored to the project's risks and impacts and consider the unique traits and interests of the affected communities, including language barriers. The plan covers all project phases from design to closure. SEP indicators are crucial as they measure the effectiveness of community engagement, ensuring concerns are addressed, communication is clear, and the project remains transparent and accountable, building trust and support.



Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Indicators

The Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) includes 10 standards that all CI-GEF/GCF funded projects must meet. These standards cover environmental and social impact assessments, protection of natural habitats, resettlement, indigenous peoples, resource efficiency, cultural heritage, labor conditions, community health and safety, private sector investment, and climate risk. ESS indicators are important because they help measure whether projects meet these standards. They ensure that projects are environmentally and socially responsible, protecting people and the planet.



100%

of conflict and complaint cases reported to the Agencies' Accountability and Grievance Mechanism have been resolved



13,009

stakeholder groups (government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector, Indigenous peoples and others) have been involved in the project implementation phase



46%

of those involved in project implementation phase activities such as meetings, workshops, and consultations, have been women



259,266

individuals who have willingly agreed to change how they access or use natural resources, aimed at preserving natural resources or biodiversity.

INSIGHTS FROM CI-GEF'S EXPERIENCE

Over the past decade, CI-GEF has faced various challenges while implementing projects worldwide. From applying complex safeguards in remote areas to navigating diverse cultural and environmental contexts, the journey has been demanding. However, CI-GEF has turned these challenges into successes through adaptability and strong partnerships.

This section highlights key obstacles and strategies for overcoming them, featuring insights from Senior Directors Ian Kissoon and Daniela Carrion. They share their experiences with implementing safeguards and achieving sustainable outcomes, emphasizing the importance of flexibility, local engagement, and community involvement.



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INSIGHTS FROM IAN KISSOON SENIOR DIRECTOR OF CI-GEF'S ESMF

This account features Ian Kisson, the Senior Director of CI-GEF's Environmental and Social Management Framework. Ian has been instrumental in developing the framework that ensures CI-GEF projects are both environmentally sustainable and socially responsible. Ian shares his experience and insights, reflecting on his challenges while implementing safeguards across diverse global projects. He also highlights the importance of partnerships within CI and external agencies in overcoming obstacles and achieving impactful results.



“OUR SUCCESS AT CI-GEF IS ROOTED IN THE STRENGTH OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS—BOTH WITHIN CI AND WITH EXTERNAL ENTITIES LIKE THE GEF”

At CI-GEF, the foundation of our success is the strong partnerships we've built both internally and externally. Ian Kissoon, a key figure at CI-GEF, shares. "Our success at CI-GEF is rooted in the strength of our partnerships—both within CI and with external entities like the GEF." These collaborations have been essential in integrating our safeguards and monitoring requirements across various projects, enabling us to lead on key environmental and social priorities.

However, Ian points out that one of the significant challenges has been adapting a one-size-fits-all policy to real-world conditions. The diverse conditions on the ground require practical adaptability to maintain the integrity of our safeguards while addressing these varied circumstances. "The ESMF is designed to mitigate risks and remove barriers to participation," Ian emphasizes, "particularly for women, marginalized groups, and Indigenous Peoples." This approach ensures these communities are included and protected in our projects, fostering a more inclusive and equitable impact.



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INSIGHTS FROM DANIELA CARRION SENIOR DIRECTOR, CI-GEF

In this piece, we hear from Daniela Carrión, Senior Director of Technical Oversight at CI-GEF, who leads the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) portfolio and oversees global projects within the Blended Finance Program. Daniela has been instrumental in developing the CI-GEF portfolio, working with partners to create technically robust projects that aim for scalable impact and ensuring successful implementation. She discusses the power of partnerships in scaling impact and driving global conservation efforts, sharing insights from her leadership of both the global and the LAC portfolio. Daniela highlights how collaboration across agencies, countries, and delivery partners leads to meaningful solutions, even facing challenges.

“DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF PARTNERING WITH CI-GEF TO ACHIEVE SCALABLE IMPACT IS KEY TO OUR SUCCESS IN THIS ROLE”

Reflecting on her experience, Daniela highlights how important it is to build strong relationships with other implementing and executing agencies. “At first, we didn’t focus much on integrated partnerships, but now we’re seeing their value,” she says. These partnerships are key to sharing knowledge and scaling up impact, but they also require careful management to balance different goals and priorities.

One major achievement was manifest as CI became the lead agency for the GEF-8 Ecosystem Restoration Program, which brings together the values and goals of more than five GEF agencies and over 20 countries. Daniela is the project lead for two initiatives in the Program, led by CI in Mexico and Brazil. “It’s not easy to align such a wide range of needs, but we managed to come together for the shared goal of restoration in varying contexts,” Daniela shares. Collaborating at this scale has helped CI-GEF not only partner on diverse projects but also expand its impact globally. While competition for resources can create challenges, partnerships like this show how teamwork can amplify results. Daniela adds, “making sure communication flows smoothly across teams, delivering timely adaptive management, and showing the value of working in partnership with CI-GEF is absolutely crucial to the success of our work.”

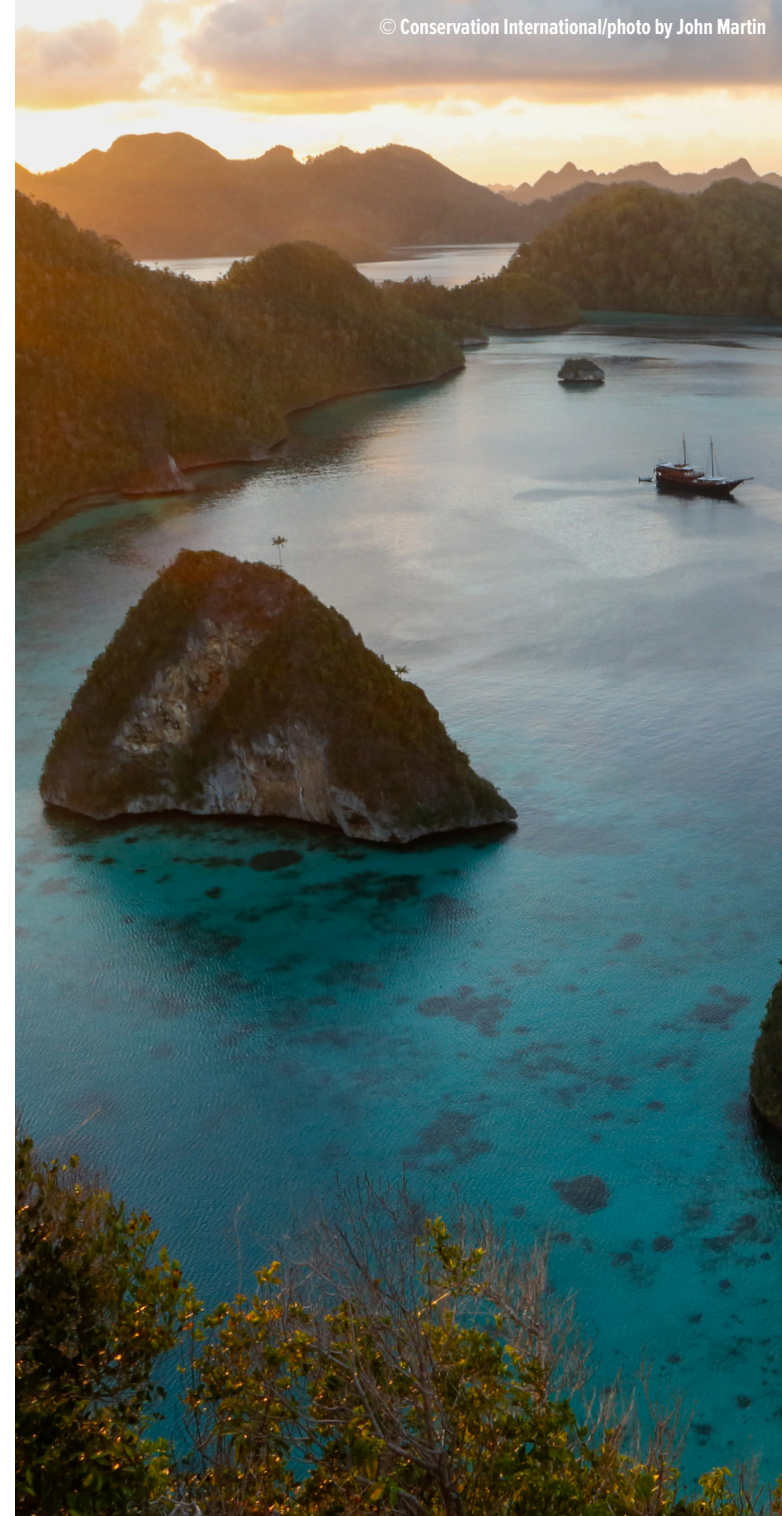
Daniela is optimistic about what's ahead despite the hurdles of being a small team. “We’re building a solid track record as a GEF Agency, which makes us even more appealing to partners,” she explains. By strengthening collaborations internally and externally, CI-GEF is poised to grow its impact showing positive results for people and our planet. Daniela’s commitment to fostering partnerships and finding common ground demonstrates how CI-GEF continues to make a positive difference through teamwork and innovation.



THE FUTURE OF CI-GEF

CI-GEF is driving Conservation International's vision forward through groundbreaking initiatives that address climate change and empower Indigenous communities. Initiatives like the Blue Nature Alliance's ambitious goal to double protected ocean areas exemplify CI-GEF's commitment to sustaining marine ecosystems. The newly launched Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program underscores CI-GEF's dedication to building conservation-based economies that are both sustainable and self-sufficient. Additionally, leading the Small Grants Programme with CEPF acts as an incubator of innovation, fostering growth and stronger collaborations within the GEF and with other partners, all working to uplift marginalized communities for a sustainable and inclusive future.

Looking ahead, CI-GEF is energized by the potential to expand its impact even further. The following initiatives explore innovative partnerships and new finance models that support our ambitions to deepen contributions to climate resilience and a sustainable future for people and nature.



GEF-8 INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

2023 marked an important time for CI-GEF. For the first time, we became the lead agency for two of the GEF's Integrated Programs - the Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program and the Guinean Forests Integrated Program.

Spanning 20 countries, the Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program focuses on restoring critical ecosystems—forests, mangroves, wetlands, peatlands, and grasslands—while supporting the communities that depend on them. Aligned with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, it drives global restoration commitments through policy, finance, capacity building, and international collaboration. With ambitious goals, the program aims to restore 2.2 million hectares, enhance 700,000 hectares of protected areas, improve practices across 10.6 million hectares, mitigate 133 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and benefit 1.8 million people. A global partnership including IFAD, UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, IUCN, and FAO powers this effort.

The Guinean Forests Integrated Program (GFIP) works to halt and reverse forest loss across Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo through a whole-of-biome approach. It strengthens policies, builds capacity, promotes sustainable financing, and fosters regional collaboration to address threats from agriculture, resource extraction, and infrastructure development. This program enhances conservation efforts while benefiting local communities by supporting sustainable livelihoods, improved land use, and better forest governance.



BLUE NATURE ALLIANCE

The Blue Nature Alliance is a global partnership dedicated to conserving 1.25 billion hectares of ocean within five years. This ambitious initiative collaborates with local organizations, Indigenous peoples, and governments to achieve measurable conservation outcomes.

What sets the Blue Nature Alliance apart is its focus on significant areas for people and nature. The Alliance fosters sustainable and inclusive conservation efforts by involving local communities and ensuring strong political support. The program emphasizes the importance of local stakeholders and champions, working together to protect vital marine ecosystems.

Through these collaborative efforts, the Blue Nature Alliance aims to create lasting impacts on ocean conservation, benefiting the environment and the communities that depend on it.





MILLION

hectares of ocean conservation areas created or under improved management since 2021 with support from the Alliance.



INCLUSIVE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

In 2019, the GEF launched the Inclusive Conservation Initiative (ICI) to support Indigenous and local communities in protecting biodiversity and fostering development. With over \$22.5 million invested and \$90 million anticipated in co-financing, ICI positions Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs and LCs) as key conservation actors. Supported by Conservation International and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), ICI combines investments with capacity building and policy influence.

The Inclusive Conservation Initiative stands out for its unique approach to conservation, prioritizing the leadership and knowledge of Indigenous and local communities. 80% of project funds go directly to IPs and LCs. By integrating cultural and environmental priorities, ICI addresses immediate conservation needs and promotes long-term sustainability and resilience. This innovative model has the potential to reshape how conservation efforts are funded and implemented globally.



TARGETS OF THE INCLUSIVE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

GEF ICI Core Indicators

Terrestrial Protected Areas (PAs) created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

4,551,701 ha

Area of Land restored

14,314 ha

Area of Landscapes under improved practices (excluding PAs)

2,883,851 ha

Greenhouse Gas Emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO₂e)

20,862,368 mt

Area of Marine Habitats under improved practices (excluding PAs)

165,200 ha

Number of direct Beneficiaries disaggregated by Gender as co-benefit of GEF Investment

166,295
50% men, 50% women

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

In December 2023, Conservation International (CI) was approved as a new implementing agency for the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) Small Grants Program (SGP), with the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) serving as a delivery mechanism for the grants.

The SGP, launched in 1992, provides financial, technical, and capacity-building support to civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations. To date, the program has administered more than \$750 million in direct financing to local communities and CSOs across 136 countries.

Historically, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been the sole implementing agency for the SGP. However, during the current GEF funding cycle (GEF-8), the GEF has expanded its roster to include CI and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This new role for CI offers a unique opportunity to leverage its expertise and further its mission by supporting grassroots initiatives. CI and the GEF are among six global donors to CEPF, alongside l'Agence Française de Développement, the European Union, the Government of Japan, and the World Bank. This collaboration enhances CI's capacity to foster sustainable development and conservation efforts worldwide.

GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK FUND

MEx30x30

In February 2024, the GEF announced the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) to support countries in achieving their Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets. CI-GEF was one of the first Implementing Agencies to respond to the first call to develop projects to reverse biodiversity loss. The Agency successfully obtained its first GBFF project with Mexico.

The project MEx30x30: Conserving Mexican Biodiversity through Communities and Their Protected Areas (MEx30x30) is a groundbreaking \$18.5 million initiative to strengthen biodiversity conservation across Mexico. This project is particularly exciting for GEF 8, representing a significant investment in the country's natural heritage.

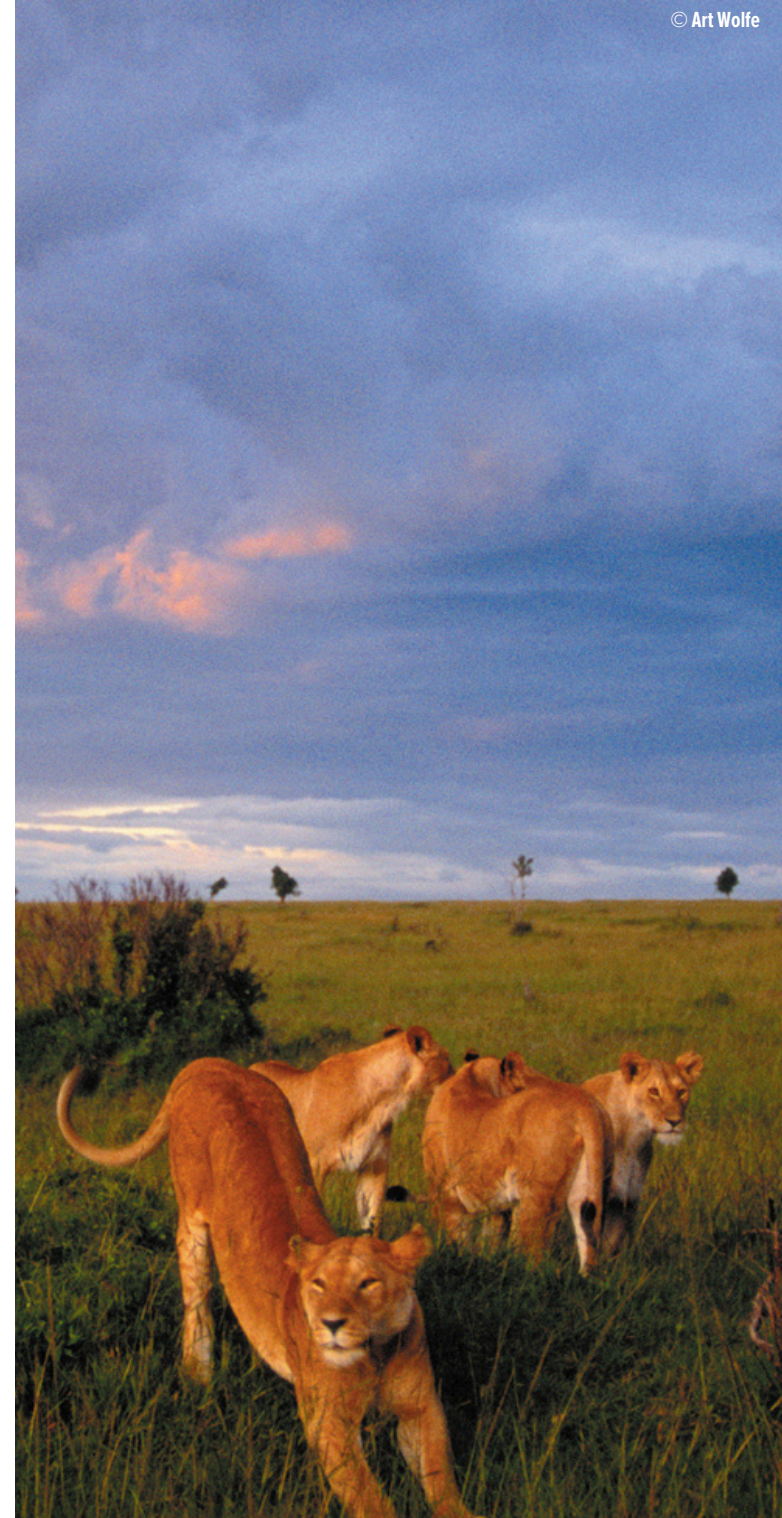
MEx30x30 will support Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LCs), who manage 51% of Mexico's land and safeguard 83% of its biodiversity, to lead conservation efforts. By reinforcing the capacity of the National Commission for Protected Areas and utilizing the Project Finance for Permanence approach, MEx30x30 will enhance the management of over 25 million hectares of terrestrial and marine protected areas. It aims to mitigate 9.43 million metric tons of CO₂e emissions and provide inclusive, gender-equitable benefits for over 163,000 people.

Aligned with the visions of Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature and Conservation International, this initiative marks a monumental step towards a sustainable and resilient future for Mexico's people and nature. The project's comprehensive approach and significant scale make it a key highlight of GEF 8, promising substantial environmental and social impacts. CI-GEF envisions to help more countries in designing projects like MEx30x30 that align to the GBFF.

CONCLUSION

As we reflect on our journey since 2013, CI-GEF takes immense pride in the strides made towards advancing global environmental goals. Starting with a vision to align to the GEF's mission, CI-GEF has successfully leveraged its expertise to implement impactful programs that address climate change, protect biodiversity, and uplift communities. Over the past decade, CI-GEF's efforts have touched over 100 countries, benefiting millions and demonstrating the profound impact organizations like CI and the GEF can achieve when they combine their missions and resources. The work has been defined by innovation, partnerships, and a deep commitment to protecting nature's essential services, all while collaborating communities worldwide.

Looking ahead, CI-GEF is more energized than ever to build on this strong foundation. The organization is committed to expanding its reach and deepening its impact through innovative partnerships, conservation finance, and continued collaboration with the GEF and new global partners. The focus remains steadfast on creating sustainable, inclusive solutions that harmonize conservation with development, ensuring a thriving future for both people and nature. With a robust portfolio and a clear vision, CI-GEF is poised to continue driving positive change and fostering a healthier, more resilient planet.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not be made possible without the contributions of the CI-GEF team who has worked tirelessly on the projects mentioned within. Below, is a list of names of those who have helped contribute to this Impact Report:

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Ian Kissoon, Senior Director, Environmental and Social Management Framework

Juliana Rios, Manager Environmental and Social Management Framework

Daniela Carrion, Senior Director, Project Design and Oversight, CI GEF Project Agency

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