GREEÑ LÎVELIHOODS ALLIANCE -ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2016









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ANNEX 1: GLA Theory of Change

1.

INTRODUCTION

In this report, the Green Livelihoods Alliance reflects and reports on the progress made during the first year in which the focus was on the inception of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) Programme: Forested Landscapes for Equity. The programme consists of land-scape-based capacity building and lobby & advocacy programmes in nine focus countries and three overarching thematic, international programmes on Agrocommodities, Just Energy Transition and Forest and Land Governance.

The overall aim of the programme is to safeguard the international public goods of food and water security, climate stability and biodiversity by ensuring the inclusive and sustainable governance of forested landscapes. This is realised by strengthening civil society organisations to lobby and advocate for the integration of ecological and social standards in corporate and government policies and compliance to sustainability standards as well as mobilising local actors to adopt sustainable practices and developing innovative alternatives for sustainable and inclusive management of forested landscapes. A detailed description of how we envision change is in our Theory of Change (ToC) and elaborated in the *Programme Document* (2015). In 2016, the focus of activities was on the 'Inception Phase', which included the final selection of landscapes and international thematic programme areas, selecting and involving local partners, contextualizing the overall ToC to the local and thematic contexts and conducting baseline studies. To a limited extent, some implementation activities have started.

The results of the inception phase are described in the *Overarching Inception Report*, which was shared with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 2016. The inception reports for the thematic programmes on Just Energy Transition and Forest and Land Governance were shared in November 2016. In this progress report we will not repeat the information shared in the inception reports and baseline studies, but we provide a higher-level critical reflection on our progress on the ToC in this first year of implementation and on some relevant issues. For detailed information about country and thematic programmes we refer to the Overarching Inception Report and its annexes. Where relevant, this progress report includes activities and achievements that were not described in the Inception Report.

The contents of this progress report have been collected through a process in which both the Dutch GLA partners and a selection of partner organisations in the intervention countries have participated. The thematic and country specialists of the three Dutch alliance members conducted a face-to-face reflection meeting in February 2017. The insights gained from this meeting were complemented with information obtained from representatives of ten partner organisations, acquired through interviews held by an independent consultant in February and March 2017. Nine of these partner organisations are in the lead for the nine country programmes. For the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), two partners were interviewed to get a better overview of the progress in the different landscapes.

We trust that this progress report provides the information as requested by the Ministry. In case there are any questions or elements that require further elaboration, the partners in the GLA are more than happy to discuss or explain more. We would like to emphasize that we value the contributions of the Ministry as the engagement of the Ministry and their critical feedback helps us to further strengthen the effectiveness of the programme.

2.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON THE INCEPTION PHASE

All partners in the Netherlands and in our intervention countries recognise the inception phase as a particularly busy, but very valuable period of time. The careful selection of landscapes and partners, and the inclusive development of 12 contextualised programmes, including acquiring baseline information, was no sinecure. In addition, building partnerships and creating ownership of a large development programme requires time and a conscious effort. Many documents, materials and tools have been developed to ensure high-quality and participatory processes in each country and for the development of the thematic programmes. The process, which is described in detail in the inception report, consisted of one Global Inception Meeting, followed by in-country workshops and intense communication between the Dutch alliance members and the partners in the focus countries. Ample time was invested to explain and practice with the concept of a ToC, which was new for most of our partners, as well as for the Northern alliance partners. We found that developing a good quality Theory of Change for the first time can be difficult and often requires several cycles of adjustments and refinements. We expect that some of the ToCs will continue to develop in 2017 and forthcoming years as partners' strategic capacity grows. The partners value the concept of a Theory of Change over a logical framework approach as it allows for flexibility when contexts change and/or lessons are learned.

Tools

The development of ToCs in a relatively open (locally driven) process that responds to local and thematic contexts and partner strengths and preferences leads to divergence in the choice of priorities. To facilitate the process and ensure comparability and coherence between programmes, which is essential for Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL), we developed several tools that were used for all programmes. In the first place, the generic GLA ToC stands out as the primary backbone of the programme that structures country specific and thematic programmes. Several tools - a Capacity Analysis Tool; an Action, Commitment and Engagement Tool and PMEL guidelines – further provide common frameworks to which all programmes relate in an explicit way. Early 2017, an additional tool 'The Participation Ladder' will be developed and the PMEL framework will be finalised. The GLA will use "outcome harvesting" as the method to identify the actually achieved outcomes on a yearly basis. A consistent PMEL framework helps ensuring that information from different countries and thematic programmes, and from different partners within these programmes, can consistently be collected and analysed against our objectives, and reported in IATI.

In addition, as part of our effort to assess impacts within our sphere of influence, we have invested in the development of a methodology for assessing landscape governance in the GLA landscapes. This was done in collaboration with EcoAgriculture Partners, and involved Alliance staff and a range of experts from other organisations working with the landscape approach, such as IDH, Solidaridad and Oxfam. In the first half of 2017, landscape governance assessments will be conducted in all nine countries in order to establish a baseline against which changes in landscape level decision-making can be assessed. The assessment will be repeated at the end of 2020. By doing so we provide information about the assumption underlying our ToC that improved governance of forested landscapes will safeguard the identified international public goods of water and food security, biodiversity and climate resilience, while we tie changes we observe in landscape governance to outcomes related to GLA activities that have happened, through outcome harvesting techniques.

Governance and ownership

In 2016, we developed the governance structure of the programme, clearly defining different bodies and their roles and responsibilities. The aim of the governance structure is to enable decision-making, organise and balance the roles, responsibilities and risks among Alliance Members and between them and our partners in the countries of implementation. A leading principle in the governance model is that 'responsibilities are placed at the 'lowest' level possible'. In practice, this means that our local CSO partners take responsibility and ownership over the programme. Within the framework of the GLA, the local partners develop the programme, strategize, create synergy, facilitate exchange and learning and monitor progress. They are also in the lead to identify risks and opportunities, as well as to initiate necessary adaptations in the contextualised ToC. A Country Contact Person, based at one of the GLA Alliance Members, is available to offer guidance and support. This way of working fosters mutual capacity building and requires flexibility and learning-by-doing at both ends.

Over the past year, the Contact Persons worked closely with our partners to promote inclusive processes in countries. Workshops and consultative meetings were held with key stakeholders to inform and co-develop the ToC. We observed that in various meetings, partners made a deliberate effort to engage commonly excluded groups, such as women, young people and indigenous peoples. This is also reflected in the identification of additional collaborating partners by some of our local partners, that often include indigenous organisations and women's groups.

No one-size-fits-all model

The inception phase has taught us valuable lessons about the challenges of setting up a partnership-based programme in different countries and on different themes. Although joint, standardized tools and materials are useful, each context and partner also requires tailored approaches. The Dutch Alliance Members need to be able to adapt their approach to local needs, while, at the same time, keeping the agreed standards and basic requirements in mind. An example of flexibility and sensitivity to the practical situation on the ground can be found in the selection of landscapes: e.g. in the DRC two landscapes were selected where different partners are involved. Ideally, we would have selected one landscape where each partner has a role. However, due to the size of the country and the previous involvement of different partners in different areas, this was felt to be a less-than-ideal option. By selecting two landscapes, each partner can fully benefit of past relationships and achievements without having to invest time and effort in building new relationships in a new area. We expect that the added value of being experienced in a certain landscape is higher than ensuring that each Alliance Member has a partner in the landscape. To cover for gaps in expertise, our partners identified additional collaborating partners in the landscapes. Another example of the need to be able to adapt to the local context is that sometimes the ToC workshop was done before the context analysis and sometimes the other way around, depending on our experience in the country, our collaboration with local partners and the available information.

Large number of programmes

Perhaps to no-one's surprise, it also proved to be challenging for Alliance Members to effectively start up a large number of programmes at the same time. This has contributed to the later selection of new partners in some countries, for example in Liberia. Over the next period of time, we will seek ways to improve effectiveness and task division. An important lesson is that sometimes it is more effective to spread activities over a longer time period and make sure everything is done well than to spread ourselves

too thin. We also need to constantly remind ourselves that building a partnership and forming coalitions takes time, and that we are only at the beginning.

The inception reports for the international themes *Just Energy Transition and Forest and Land Governance* were finished a bit later than the other inception reports, due to the high workload. The Just Energy Transition ToC has been developed with key partners from Nigeria, Uganda and DRC. The partners strongly emphasized the added value of working together on this international programme and of South-South learning. The Forest and Land Governance programme was developed by the Dutch GLA members and the role of Southern partner organisations still needs further developing.

3.

PROGRESS ON THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change¹, as elaborated in the Programme Document (2015) is built around three core strategies: (1) creating synergies in lobby and advocacy, (2) capacity development for lobby and advocacy, and (3) lobby and advocacy interventions. 'Creating synergies' is an overarching strategy which contributes to achieving better results and more impact throughout the ToC. The expected outcomes related to 'capacity development' are focused on 'effective communication', 'reliable and verified evidence' and 'strong CSO coalitions'. The 'lobby and advocacy' interventions evolve around confrontational and collaborative strategies and their expected intermediate and long-term outcomes contribute to the inclusive and sustainable governance of the forested landscapes.

In the first year of the programme, our main focus has been on creating synergies and capacity development, particularly in relation to building 'strong CSO coalitions' and 'reliable and verified evidence'. In addition, we have been able to achieve several early advocacy results at intermediate outcome level, which is an indication that we are on the right track.

3.1 CREATING SYNERGIES

The inception phase has been crucial in creating synergies between partners and between their interventions. Building the partnership in itself, including clearly defining roles and responsibilities, has been the starting point for enhanced collaboration and synergy between different CSOs. In addition, the thorough context analyses that were done for all programmes and that laid the foundation for the contextualised ToCs, include the necessary information to build a comprehensive programme in which different partners and activities all contribute to achieving the same goal. Moreover, the work on a common ToC has provided the basis for collaboration and synergies.

At the end of the inception phase, the partners that were consulted indicated that they see an added value of working in a partnership, in which different experiences, expertise and focus areas come together. The context analyses and broad, strategic ToCs were also seen as promising building blocks for an effective programme. In Bolivia, the collaboration and joint development of the ToC inspired the partners to develop a funding proposal together for a different donor. The proposal was approved and the funding will be used to complement the GLA programme. This shows the eagerness of partners to collaborate as well as the potential sustainability of partnerships. In addition, many partners in our intervention countries are excited by the international, thematic programmes and how they link to their work at national level.

In conclusion, 'building synergies' has been at the core of the inception phase and synergy among partners and interventions has been sought in all programmes and between country and thematic programmes. The assumed effects of increasingly inclusive and comprehensive programmes will be monitored over the next years of programme implementation. The GLA members and local partners recognise that creating synergies, and particularly building partnerships, takes time, which has sometimes led to frustration and impatience. Nevertheless, it is still expected that in the end the programme outcomes will greatly benefit from increased synergy and that the benefits will largely exceed the initial investments.

3.2 CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

As mentioned above, the capacity development in the first year, mainly evolved around building 'strong CSO coalitions' (in the Netherlands, in all intervention countries and internationally) and 'reliable and verified evidence'. The inception reports provide a comprehensive overview of the different coalitions, their common goals and strategies, their capacity gaps and baseline information. All partners recognise the development of the coalitions and the inception reports as the most important achievements of 2016. They provide the foundation for realising the overall ToC and the next 4 years of programme implementation. However, coalition building is not a "one time achievement". Both building and maintaining coalitions needs continuous effort and we will pay specific attention to this in the years to follow. The baselines, the overall PMEL framework and preparatory work for conducting landscape governance assessments in all countries are further necessary initial steps.

Dutch GLA members

2016 has been a capacity strengthening experience for both the Dutch Alliance Members and our partners in the intervention countries.

At the Dutch level, capacity was strengthened in terms of improved understanding of local contexts and potential for change. The extensive process of developing a *Theory of Change* for the different landscapes, with the involvement of key stakeholders, and based on a thorough context analysis, increased our knowledge base to a large extent. Guiding partners through the process using a learning-by-doing approach also contributed to strengthening our own capacity to set up large-scale partnership-based programmes. However, this learning-by-doing approach also caused delays at times and sometimes processes were not optimal. In retrospect, a proper Theory of Change Training for Dutch country and thematic specialists in advance of the national workshops would likely have been beneficial. We see the scheduled regular yearly *reflection and learning meetings* as important moments to consolidate our learnings and ensure that they are used for future programming or challenges.

Southern partners

All consulted partners in the focus countries described the inception phase as highly valuable and a great learning experience. Especially the development of a Theory of Change, and context analysis was highly appreciated. Many partners had never developed a ToC before and although they considered it challenging, they all agreed on the value of first envisioning the long-term goal and then working out the different steps towards the goal. Most partners have been used to working with logical frameworks or just develop time-bound workplans but have not necessarily been used to expressing themselves at a more strategic level, including exploring and naming assumptions underlying the change models. Hence, the process has not always been easy and the quality of the ToCs that have been developed differs between different countries. Despite the fact that the Dutch GLA members consider some ToCs less strong than others, we also recognise that in order to promote ownership it is necessary to sometimes accept imperfect documents and allow more time for partners to recognise the gaps themselves before improvements can be made. 'You cannot make the grass grow by pulling at it'.

The partners in the focus countries saw 'flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances and environments' as a key advantage of working with a Theory of Change in comparison with a logical framework. However, it remains to be seen how easily organisations are able to adapt the activities in their year plans to changing circumstances. The Dutch alliance partners recognise that for some partners, adaptation of activities due to changes in the context may sometimes be difficult due to strict or bureaucratic internal (financial) systems that partners have developed over the past years. Ironically, these systems and structures have often been developed to comply to regulations and requirements of international donors. At the moment it is too early to say whether this will indeed be an issue, however, it is important to closely monitor the true ability of partners 'to adapt' and find workable solutions if internal rules and policies get in the way.

Quite a large number of partners also indicated that they had never done a capacity analysis before or had never done such a complete and comprehensive analysis. Some partners mentioned that as a result of the analysis they now recognised capacity gaps in areas where they had always assumed to be strong. The partners felt that the process was done well and the support from the Dutch partners was good. In many countries, a next step is to work on an overview of strengths and capacity gaps within the full country alliance to further explore joint capacity building options and areas where partners can strengthen each other.

Lastly, setting up a partnership in country and developing the programme together, strengthened the capacity of southern partners, particularly of the focal point CSO, that assumes the task of stimulating alignment and matching of CSO roles and strategies in order to realize the ambitions in the ToC. In some countries, building the partnership is seen as quite challenging (e.g. in DRC due to long distances; in Liberia due to the later selection of two new partners), whereas in others partners merely see it as an opportunity to learn and achieve more (e.g. Vietnam). Especially in countries where different CSOs have been working together in the past or when organisations are quite experienced in working in collaborations (e.g. Nigeria), the advantages are exceeding the disadvantages.

3.3 LOBBY AND ADVOCACY

In most countries it is too soon for any lobby and advocacy results in 2016. Influencing policies and standards usually requires a longer-term investment, which is further confirmed by the fact that countries that have been able to achieve results, could build on advocacy activities and strategies that started before the GLA inception and that were continued during and after the inception phase.

The majority of countries, with the exception of Liberia, where two of the three partners were only recently selected, indicate that the foundation for successful joint advocacy has been laid in the inception phase. They feel confident about the next steps and the strength of the different partners in the partnership.

One interesting advocacy result comes from Nigeria: In this country, the partners have been demanding for implementation of the UNEP report 2011, particularly the clean up of Ogoniland, Rivers State in the Niger Delta. In June 2016, the kick-off of the clean up finally took place. So far, however, the necessary budget for the clean up has not been released. At first, the clean up was to be conducted by the Federal Ministry of Petroleum, but after pressure from CSOs, including the GLA partner, the responsibility is now moved to the Federal Ministry of Environment. Our partners are also pushing to remove Shell from the Board of Trustees and the Governing Council. In addition, partners are working with local communities to enable them to monitor the level of toxic substances in their environment and track the clean up once it starts.

Even though the actual clean up has not started yet and there are multiple irregularities in the process, our partners describe the main success being 'a shift from denial of the problem to the acceptance of responsibility by Shell'. The next step would be a shift from accepting responsibility to accepting liability.

A second advocacy outcome that is worth mentioning here comes from the DRC. One of our partners has been working with local CSOs and the organization of artisanal loggers on the implementation of the artisanal logging law in Tshopo Province. They engaged in meetings with decision makers (a.o. the Provincial Minister of Forests), wrote a technical note to the provincial government and worked closely with media. In January 2017, the requested artisanal logging permit has been released. It entails reduced costs for artisanal loggers: instead of 3000 USD, they pay 600 USD for a period of 5 years. These reduced costs for legal logging discourage illegal activities. In addition, legal and formal activities contribute to improved local community livelihoods as artisanal loggers have to pay customary tax to the community where they log. Also, legal loggers tend to comply with regulations, aiming at forest protection, better governance and sustainable management of forests. For instance, regulations determine the diameter of trees that can be logged, which aims to protect young trees and favour regeneration of forests. The local authorities can use the tax revenue to provide public services or conduct development actions.

These examples show that partners are able to achieve important results in line with the ToC, to act in a flexible way (e.g. in the second example, the technical note was not planned for in advance) and prioritise activities based on what is needed in the specific circumstances. It also shows that advocacy processes are not always linear in time and sometimes difficult to plan for. That is why flexibility is crucial. A final example of this comes from Bolivia, where partners were working closely with the Minister for Environment and Water on a Law for Biosecurity. Everything looked very positive until, unfortunately, the Minister resigned before the law was final. As a result, our local partners now need to invest time to build new, trusted relationships with the new Minister before they can make progress on the law.

3.4 FLEXIBLE ADJUSTMENTS OF THE THEORIES OF CHANGE

The inception reports include context analyses of the different landscapes. So far, these context analyses are still considered to be relevant and no major changes occurred that would require adjustments of the ToCs. In addition, our work and achievements in 2016 confirm the strategic choices, priorities and assumptions as described in the overall ToC. At this point in time, we have no reason to assume that major adaptations would be needed. However, as explained above, the ToCs differ in quality and comprehensiveness, which is mainly a result of the capacity of local partners and the introduction of the new concept. Over time, the ToCs will be refined and strengthened where needed based on new knowledge and insights.

For the baseline studies, the partners used the 'Engagement, Commitment and Action tool' to rank different private and public actors on their level of current involvement on the issues and their potential for change. This exercise was not completely finalised in all countries and in these cases, (additional) actors will be ranked in the course of 2017.



COLLABORATION AND OWNERSHIP

One of the aims of the inception process has been to ensure that the contextualized Theories of Change are owned by the local partners. After the Global Inception Meeting, workshops and meetings were held in the focus countries and the selected landscapes to analyse the local context, involve key stakeholders and develop a ToC for the landscapes. The Dutch GLA members provided technical support and guidance on the process where needed, but the local partners were in the lead of ensuring the development of the inception report. Our local partners have indicated that they were content with the process, although they did feel a lot of time pressure and sometimes struggled with new concepts. In general, they felt the provided support was sufficient and that there was enough space and freedom to really take the local context into account. Country ownership is also assured in the governance model.

The other side of the coin of local ownership is that capacity gaps of local partners are reflected in the ToCs. A Theory of Change requires a high level of strategic thinking and a thorough understanding of contexts, stakeholders and potential for change. Not all partners showed to be fully capable to do this as they are often specialised in one thematic area or engaged in a Theory of Change process for the first time. In addition, it often takes time to completely understand the work and strengths of all the partners in the partnership before this is fully integrated in the change models. As the capacity of partners is strengthened and the partnerships grow, the ToCs will be strengthened.

The interviews with partners clearly showed that the collaboration between Dutch Alliance Members and their long-term partners is most effective. In these cases, trust and mutual understanding has already been developed before the start of the GLA programme and partners could easily build on past experiences and ways of cooperation. This is particularly valuable within a relatively complex partnership and a new way of working. Where new partners were selected, trusted relationships are still developing. In some countries, the focal point CSO indicated difficulties in communication with new partners. The GLA Alliance Members are well aware of these issues and invest in facilitating collaboration and further strengthening partnerships where needed.

5.

GENDER EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS

In all countries a gender analysis and an analysis of marginalised groups was done as part of the inception report. Interestingly, for many partners, this was the first time they ever conducted a gender analysis (e.g. DRC, Ghana, Indonesia, Uganda, Vietnam) and therefore this had a real added value to their understanding. It was also found in the capacity analysis that a thorough understanding of gender is a capacity gap for many of the partners and this is being addressed in the capacity building plans. In the intervention countries, the partners aimed to ensure a gender balance in meetings and consultations that were organised during the inception period. Efforts were also taken to engage marginalised groups, particularly indigenous peoples, rural communities and sometimes disabled people in meetings and consultations.

Although the selected partners are experienced in working with local communities, including indigenous groups in the land-scapes where they work, a full understanding of the meaning and impact of inequality is not always present. For example, simply ensuring a gender balance in meetings does not necessarily mean that women are able to meaningfully participate; young women or disabled women of specific marginalised communities are often even more disadvantaged. Throughout the course of the programme, strengthening partners' capacity to ensure inclusivity is an area of focus. Capacity strengthening activities are included in the annual plans for 2017.

6.

LOOKING FORWARD

The first year of the GLA programme 'Forested Landscapes for Equity' has laid a solid foundation for the upcoming four years of programme implementation. It has been a busy year, in which both the Dutch Alliance Members and our local partners went through a growth spurt in terms of learning new concepts, developing tools and materials and setting up effective coalitions both in the Netherlands and abroad. In 2017 we will focus on the implementation of the Theories of Change, focusing on capacity strengthening and lobby and advocacy, while at the same time strengthening synergies, consolidating the partnerships and filling existing gaps in the theoretical frameworks. Hence, we expect 2017 to be a very full and busy year again.

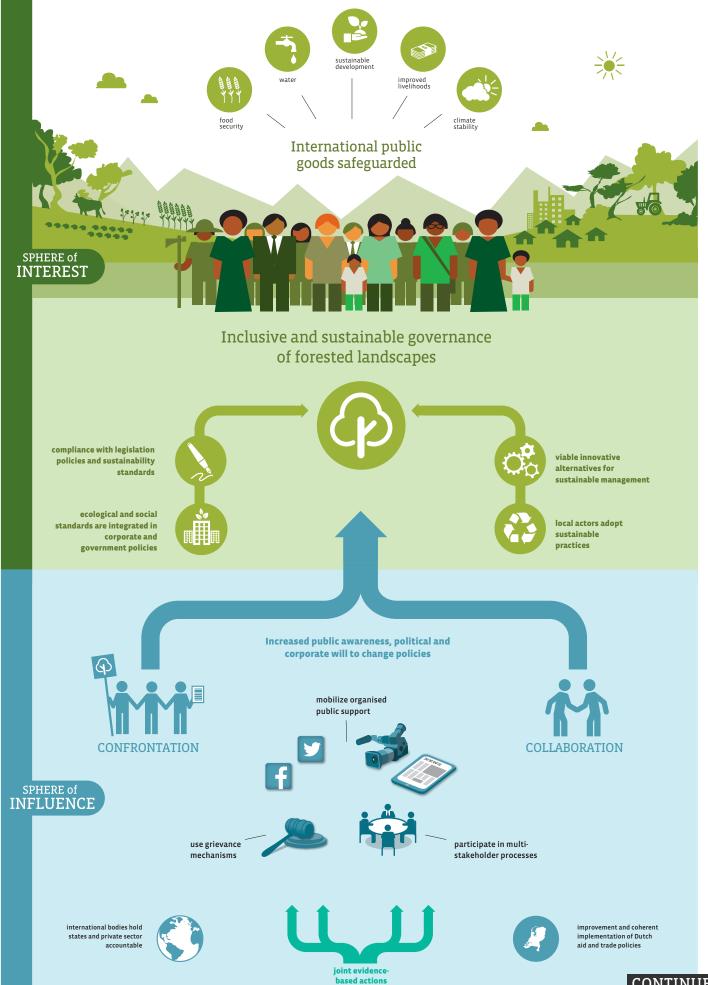
Different programmes are at different stages, which has mainly to do with our ability to build on previous programmes. Some programmatic elements are entirely new and require more time to develop and take shape than the continuation of previous work. Especially for the thematic programmes on Just Energy Transition and Forest and Land Governance, that were finalised in November 2016, we foresee that more groundwork is necessary in 2017 to fully involve partners and find effective and efficient ways of collaboration and synergizing. In addition, the programme in Liberia is developing a bit slower than other countries as two new partners had to be selected. Although most partners have now been selected, partnership building will take time. On the other hand, we are also working in countries where we build on extensive past work and where changes may occur quickly now that the foundation is there. This is particularly the case in Uganda, Nigeria, Philippines and DRC.

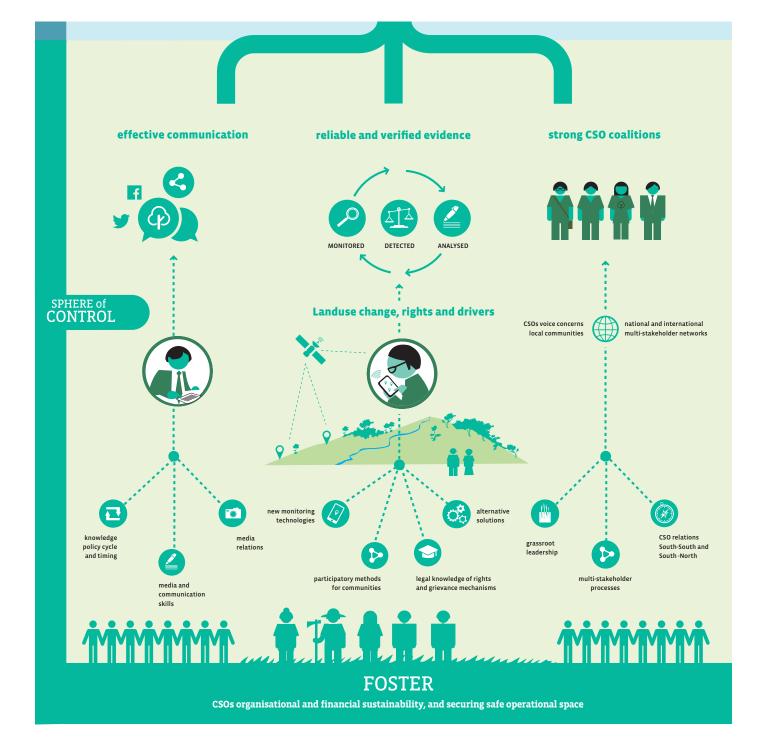
One area of constant attention is the issue of security and shrinking space for CSOs to participate in decision-making processes. The expertise of Milieudefensie and IUCN NL in addressing security issues through the *Defending Environmental Defenders* is highly valued. In addition, in all countries partners have established linkages with the Royal Netherlands Embassy, with the exception of Liberia where there is no Dutch Embassy. The Embassies can play a role in addressing the issue of space for Civil Society and the safety of activists in their diplomatic relations.

At the level of the Dutch GLA members, our different working cultures, priorities and interests have made collaboration challenging at some points during 2016. This is a normal aspect of working in a partnership and we feel that over time, we have grown more and more together. We are also able to discuss our differences openly, which is an important starting point for finding constructive solutions. Overall, we believe that our collaboration is strong and based on trust and respect, despite our differences. We trust that in 2017 we will further strengthen the partnership and deliver the envisioned measurable capacity strengthening and advocacy results.

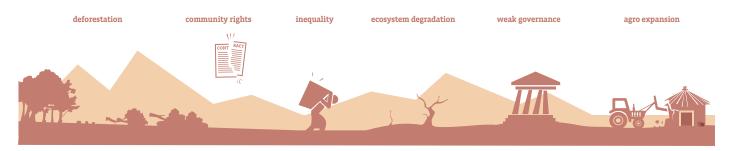
GREEN LÎVELIHOODS ALLIANCE

THEORY OF CHANGE





CHALLENGES



Vereniging Milieudefensie

Nieuwe Looiersstraat 31, 1017 VA Amsterdam mail address: Postbus 19199, 1000 GD Amsterdam telephone: 020-5507300

contact person: Inge Vianen

e-mail address: inge.vianen@milieudefensie.nl





