# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **INTRODUCTION** .................................................. 3

2. **REFLECTION ON THE THEORY OF CHANGE** .......... 3  
   a. Creating synergies ........................................... 3  
   b. Capacity Development ........................................ 4  
   c. Lobby and Advocacy ........................................... 4  
   d. Gender and inclusiveness .................................... 5  

3. **COUNTRY PROGRESS** ......................................... 5  
   a. Bolivia ................................................................ 5  
   b. Democratic Republic of Congo .............................. 5  
   c. Ghana .................................................................. 6  
   d. Indonesia .............................................................. 6  
   e. Liberia .................................................................. 6  
   f. Nigeria .................................................................. 7  
   g. Philippines ............................................................ 7  
   h. Uganda .................................................................. 8  
   i. Vietnam .................................................................. 8  

4. **PROGRESS ON THEMATIC PROGRAMMES** ............. 8  
   a. Agro-commodities ............................................... 8  
   b. Forest and Land Governance .................................. 9  
   c. Just Energy Transition .......................................... 9  

5. **FINAL REMARKS** .................................................. 10

cover photo: Milieudefensie - Ed Wray
1. INTRODUCTION

2017 marked the second year of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) programme: Forested Landscapes for Equity. Whereas 2016 focussed on the inception, 2017 was the first full year of project implementation. In this report we reflect and report on the progress made in 2017, our challenges and achievements. The overall aim of the GLA 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. The programme consists of landscape-based capacity development and lobby & advocacy programmes in nine focus countries, and three overarching thematic, international programmes on Agro-commodities, Forest and Land Governance and a Just Energy Transition.

The information provided in this progress report has been collected in a process in which both the Dutch GLA members and our partner organisations in the intervention countries have participated. Each country and thematic programme harvested the outcomes they achieved in 2017, and ‘learning and reflection meetings’ have been organised in all countries (2018). In April 2018, the thematic and country specialists of the three Dutch alliance members discussed the overall findings in a face-to-face reflection meeting. This laid the foundation for this overall progress report. For further details and quantitative data on the key indicators, we refer to the GLA information in IATI.

This report starts with a reflection on the progress and validity of the global Theory of Change (ToC) also referring to the Dialogue and Dissent indicators applied by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Subsequently a short description of and reflection on the progress made in each country is given, followed by the thematic, international programmes. The report closes with some remarks concerning operational space, safety and security and the planned Mid-Term Review (MTR). It goes without saying that in this summarised report we cannot fully capture all aspects of what has been achieved and everything we learned so far. However, we believe that the most essential achievements, challenges and high-level reflections are included. In case there are any questions or elements that require further elaboration, we are pleased to share additional information.

2. REFLECTION ON THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change, as elaborated in the Programme Document (2015) builds on three core strategies: (1) creating synergies between CSOs in lobby and advocacy, (2) capacity development for lobby and advocacy, and (3) lobby and advocacy interventions. Creating synergies is an overarching strategy based on the assumption that increased collaboration and complementarity of confrontational and collaborative strategies, supported by knowledge and evidence, will contribute to better results and more impact. The expected outcomes related to capacity development focus on ‘effective communication’, ‘reliable and verified evidence’ and ‘strong CSO coalitions’. The lobby and advocacy interventions contribute to improved practices and policy development and implementation for inclusive and sustainable governance of forested landscapes. Promoting gender equality and inclusiveness in our activities and desired outcomes is a cross-cutting strategy and goal that is part and parcel of sustainable governance.

A. CREATING SYNERGIES

In 2016 and 2017, the GLA members in the Netherlands and their local partners invested a lot in building coalitions and strengthening collaboration and complementarity between partners working towards the same objectives. The complementing roles of Milieudefensie, IUCN NL and TBI are starting to show their added value and create strong coalitions in the landscapes (Indicator DD6). Our local partners indicate that different organizations and civil society groups are becoming used to working together and that trust is being built. In some instances, it is mentioned that partners, applying different influencing styles, face challenges as it can be hard to orchestrate interventions in coalitions of CSOs. This was particularly mentioned for Indonesia, where partners hold different views about strategies to deal with expanding oil palm plantations. Even though there is mutual respect, it takes time to build trust, and find opportunities for truly coherent strategies. It was also mentioned for Liberia where a rights based activists group and a conservation organisation are facing challenges in the GLA setup of collaboration with complementing strategies.

The international thematic programmes show good results in creating synergy and enhancing North-South and South-South collaboration. Partners from Nigeria, DRC and Uganda in the Just Energy Transition programme, have created a learning network and conducted a joint campaign which delayed licensing of new oil and gas projects. In the European biofuel campaign (Agrocommodities) there has been strong added value in Dutch alliance members each lobbying their own targets at Dutch and European level, combined with the speakers’ tour in which partners from Liberia and Indonesia participated. In Nigeria, an international petition and an international press conference against land grabbing allowed a ‘local’ issue to turn into a regional one, by raising awareness on and generating a response to land grabbing for oil palm in the West Africa region. This demonstrates a clear added value of the
thematic programme. Although these collaborations are just starting, and the partnership is learning-by-doing, the achievements are very promising and underline our assumption that creating synergies will lead to better results.

An area where more synergy could be created is collaboration with Embassies. Although there are good working relationships in some countries, for example in Uganda where the Embassy has been very supportive with the International Finance Corporation complaint and the NGO Act, it is often difficult to clearly define and materialise a role for the Embassy in the GLA. Embassies are often facing capacity constraints, but there are instances where the opinions and goals of Civil Society partners are incompatible with the role and vision of the Embassy, for example when it comes to corporate interests. Hence there is a need to explore ways of working together. We see diplomacy as an key complementary strategy to address the shrinking space for NGOs and security of environmental defenders.

B. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development for lobby and advocacy is a core element of the programme and does not only focus on CSOs and community groups (Indicator DD5), but also on local authorities to support policy development and effective policy implementation. Our partners clearly indicate that the investments in capacity development contribute to more effective communication, increased collection and use of reliable and verified evidence, building strong CSO coalitions and ultimately improved lobby and advocacy. The effects are visible not only at national but also at international level. For example, capacity development on collecting evidence in Liberia and Uganda resulted in well evidenced materials currently used in a joint campaign targeting both national legislation (Land Rights Act in Liberia) and international targets (international investors for Liberia and a mediation process in Uganda).

In 2017, two successful overarching capacity development trajectories were implemented across all countries. Landscape Governance Assessments (LGAs) were conducted in all partner countries for a total of 13 landscapes as part of the Forest and Land Governance thematic programme. The process included LGA training and coaching of the local partners. The partners indicate that the process not only significantly enhanced their skills and knowledge but that it also led to increased collaboration and trust between the partners and other stakeholders involved.

The second trajectory was on Outcome Harvesting (OH), our key monitoring and evaluation method. In July and August 2017, all GLA local partners were trained to apply this method. The ‘harvesting’ of concrete outcomes, and remote coaching by the Dutch monitoring and evaluation experts, took place during the final months of 2017 and continued in 2018. Our partners enthusiastically adopted the method as a tool for reflection, planning and monitoring. They find OH an eye-opener, user-friendly and more useful than other M&E methodologies. Some partners started using OH for other projects as well.

In the areas of operational space and security, more effort was spent on capacity development and direct protective measures than initially envisioned, due to increasingly worrisome situations in many countries. The capacity to respond in flexible ways to changing environments, which is a core part of the Theory of Change approach, is highly valuable in this context.

C. LOBBY AND ADVOCACY

In 2017, the GLA programme contributed to the implementation of laws, policies and norms for sustainable and inclusive development (Indicator DD1); the blocking, adoption and/or improvement of laws, policies and norms/attitudes for sustainable and inclusive development (Indicator DD2) and their implementation; and creating space for CSO demands and positions (Indicator DD3). Examples of these outcomes can be found under the country and thematic progress descriptions below, and quantitative details can be found in IATI.

The lobby and advocacy outcomes are highly dependent on the context in which the partners operate. In general, we can say that partners have been able to realise significant initial results both at the national and the local level. Still, lobby and advocacy is often a long-term process that requires endurance. In some cases, a restrictive or unstable political situation (e.g. Bolivia, DRC) must be overcome to realise achievements.

As CSOs are making progress in influencing decision-making processes for new policies, the key challenge is often the enforcement of laws and policies. Different partners take different approaches to support implementation: they train local authorities to strengthen their capacity to implement a policy; use campaigning and advocacy strategies to demand implementation; or (strengthen local communities to) monitor and report infractions.

The thematic programmes achieved promising lobby and advocacy results and proved to create an excellent combination of developing capacity of Southern CSOs and engaging in lobby and advocacy. The North-South collaboration also contributed to increased visibility and recognition of the impact of environmental crimes and the need to protect environmental defenders in Europe and partner countries.
D. GENDER AND INCLUSIVENESS

Partners in all countries invest in promoting and ensuring gender equality and inclusiveness. Also, the involvement and leadership of local and indigenous communities in the landscapes is a priority in all countries and works well. The local GLA partners strengthen the capacity of the local and indigenous communities to effectively engage in policy dialogues and campaigns.

For gender we noticed that, although gender receives a lot of explicit attention, it is often limited to ensuring equal numbers of men and women or a single focus on women’s activism (e.g. Nigeria, Liberia) or the formation or strengthening of (indigenous) women’s organisations (e.g., Philippines). These are important steps, but a broader gender lens is needed to realize the transformation we aim for. An exception is seen in Uganda, where our local partners worked with men to increase women’s involvement and decision-making power in land rights issues. To stimulate gender transformative approaches, the IUCN Global Gender Office was contracted to support GLA partners to fully integrate gender in their workplans during 2018.

3. COUNTRY PROGRESS

A. BOLIVIA

Over the past year, legislation requiring CSOs to align their mission and vision to the government’s agenda in order to be legally recognized has made it more challenging for our CSO partners to operate. This policy affected one of our partners that had to change its name and organizational structure to be able to continue operating. Additionally, the upcoming elections and the economic crisis drive an accelerated exploitation of resources at a rate that is faster than our partners had envisioned.

Nevertheless, our CSO partners were able to flexibly adjust their activities to the changing context and achieved some noteworthy results in the Gran Chiquitania region. For example, they started a new initiative, the Comité Científico de Biotecnología (CCB), to balance the one-sided information disseminated by proponents of the use of biotechnology in agriculture. The CCB was able to initiate debate on agricultural production practices and government policies. The committee was established despite a change in government officials with whom our partners had good working relations.

Another positive outcome achieved by GLA interventions is a growing capacity of the committees for the management of protected areas (Chaco, Pantanal, Chiquitanía) and the ‘Indigenous Territories of Conservation and Protected areas by local Communities’ consortium, to participate in local and international debates and advocacy. The municipality of Robore incorporated environmental guidelines addressing ecosystem services, livelihoods, protected areas, indigenous peoples and land use in its Territorial Plan for Integral Development. This plan is legally binding, meaning that municipalities incorporate it in their annual planning and budget. By working more closely with media, our partners achieved more critical media coverage of the national agricultural and extractive policies. As a result, indigenous communities requested and received technical advice from one of our partners and were able to better sustain their opposition to mining activities in their region. Partners also successfully supported the establishment of an agroecological market in Santa Cruz to promote agroecology as an alternative for consumers and producers. In a partnership with the Bolivian Forestry Service, GLA partners helped modify norms related to the expansion of the forest frontier and to increase the competitiveness of forest management compared with agriculture.

B. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The largest challenge in DRC remains the social and political situation. The ongoing instability leads to security issues for communities and our partners. It generates distrust between different stakeholders and challenges in implementation of the programme. Coalition building, reconciliation and multi-stakeholder engagement were the central strategies to enhance collaboration and reduce duplication, dispersion and conflict. In some areas, the programme was able to realise more collaboration between protected area managers and communities (e.g., Virunga), but in other areas this remains a challenge (e.g. Kahuzi-Biéga). In general, local authorities became more aware of the importance of protected areas, but mainly from an economic perspective instead of a conservation or climate perspective. This requires further attention.

In East Congo, the partners contributed to large mobilisation in Virunga against environmental crimes and for the establishment of environmental justice. They trained local authorities on legal aspects and managed to collaborate with a wide range of actors, including UN organisations, to address impunity of environmental crimes. One complaint of illegal extraction of natural resources by armed groups was acknowledged, and a legal procedure will follow in 2018. In addition, the partners were able to contribute to the enhanced visibility of environmental defenders and the risks they take. In North Kivu a decree was signed to protect human rights and environmental defenders and journalists by law.
In Central Congo, the start-up of activities in 2017 has been challenging due to the security situation, but they caught up later in the year. In Tshopo and Ituri Provinces, artisanal loggers were legalised and the GLA programme supported community members, including women, to organise themselves into enterprises/cooperatives around artisanal logging, community forestry and non-timber forest products. Three forest concessions for local communities were formalised. As a result, 28 small and medium forest (women) enterprises were registered for artisanal loggers to operate as legal businesses. Artisanal loggers organised in 7 associations decided to establish a province-level platform, which has already called Provincial Governments to account. This work will continue and expand in 2018 in order to enhance the collaboration between these community groups and the provincial administration and authorities.

C. GHANA

In January 2017, a new government was installed in Ghana. At the end of June 2017, the new government signed a $10 billion Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China to develop its bauxite industry. The plan includes bauxite mining in the Atewa Forest reserve, an international biodiversity hotspot, and a GLA landscape. In addition to a major impact on environment and livelihoods, the planned bauxite mining will have large consequences for the water supply to many people in Ghana, including Accra. Our partners immediately stepped up to the plate and started designing a campaign to influence popular opinion and revert the mining plan. The implementation will be supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs granted from the 1% ‘flexible fund’ for issues that demand an immediate response. Interestingly, from the beginning of 2017, local media, with support from our partners strongly campaigned against illegal small-scale gold mining, locally called ‘galamsey’, and raised awareness on water, forest and environmental destruction in Ghana. As a result, the new government launched the operation ‘Vanguard’, tasked to enforce the government’s policy against illegal mining activities in the country. This decisive action of government resulted in halting of almost all illegal gold mining activities.

A major achievement in 2017, has been the consideration of International Public Goods in the Medium-Term Development Plans (2018 - 2021) of 10 municipal and district assemblies in the Atewa and Juaboso Bio landscapes. Our partners have facilitated this inclusive and participatory process. The process and results raised the interest of other municipalities and prompted them to request support from GLA. Last but not least, CSOs were able to influence the responsible Parliamentary Committee on the need to include provisions on community management of natural resources in the Wildlife Resources Management Bill. The CSO concerns were addressed in the draft Bill submitted to the Attorney General.

D. INDONESIA

In 2017, the GLA partners in Indonesia made progress in strengthening communities, and influencing oil palm Management Units and District and Provincial Governments of three provinces. GLA partners supported several Village Forest Management Units to gain Social Forestry permits. These permits are significant in providing the legal right of communities to manage their forest area and defend it against illegal activities. Increasingly large areas of land are now managed by communities. The next step was to ensure that the Management Units have the capacity to manage the forest sustainably. The GLA partners collaborated with other CSOs and government authorities to develop and conduct trainings on forest management and forest-based business development. To provide a sustainable basis for local forest management, partners convinced some village governments to allocate funds from the village budgets to forest management groups. Across all three landscapes CSOs have supported and empowered women’s groups on alternative livelihoods and supported them to engage in decision-making.

Partners carried out a variety of complementing strategies on palm oil: increasing communities’ decision-making power by strengthening their capacity and engagement; building partnerships between companies and communities; management of High Conservation Values in oil palm management units; national and international advocacy. Partners, as part of a broader consortium, were successful in mobilising villages, oil palm companies and local governments in a joint effort to protect remaining forests, re-establish ecological connections and get this recognised in a local decree in the Gunung Tarak Landscape. At the national level, the partners successfully campaigned against the softening of a regulation on preserving natural forests in the environmental law, that was proposed by the Indonesian Oil Palm Association. Internationally, the Indonesian GLA partners collaborated with the Dutch GLA members in the EU campaign against the use of palm oil as biofuel to be counted towards the fulfilment of the EU renewable energy goals for transport from 2021.

E. LIBERIA

For this programme, two of the three country programme partners were selected at the beginning of 2017. After that, plans were made and the programme got on track. The partners invested a lot in developing the capacity of communities to strengthen their voice on issues around palm oil, land rights and the protection of Sapo National Park. Despite strong pressure from CSOs, the draft Land Rights Act (LRA), which was presented to the legislature in 2014, has still not been passed. The passing of the LRA is high on the list of our partners in Liberia as the country is experiencing expansion of agricultural concessions, potentially leading to landgrabs and deforestation of high value forests.
Related to oil palm, the first communities were trained in mapping the land areas that are currently cultivated by locally operating oil palm companies, including Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL). This has empowered communities to carry out real-time monitoring and engage directly with GVL in a community meeting. Unfortunately, although regular contact with GVL has been established, no clear improvements were made in implementing the corporate social agreement. Another interesting result highlights the crucial role that a women’s group - supported by the GLA - played in resolving disputes between members of a local CSO and a local logging company on a social agreement that both parties signed. The ending of the dispute was the starting point for renewed dialogue.

The Forest Development Authority, together with a number of stakeholders, including local chiefs and civil society, prepared the Sapo Declaration that aims to improve the conservation of the Sapo National Park and the removal of illegal occupants. However, communities around the Sapo National Park are calling for opportunities for alternative livelihoods and co-management. Due to the lack of alternatives, the occupation of the park is supported by several communities. The situation makes it very clear that if the livelihoods of the communities are not improved, there will be no sustained solutions for the park management. GLA partners are monitoring the situation and working with local communities to identify and promote co-management solutions.

F. NIGERIA

In 2017, the GLA programme invested in building strong coalitions and strengthening unified voices. The effect of this strategy became most visible in addressing land grabbing for oil palm in Edo State. The GLA brought communities and CSOs together to demand the State government to uphold the revocation order issued against a locally operated oil palm company. An international petition (33,000 signatures), protest march and concert were organised and contributed to the establishment of a Committee, set up by the State government, that is supposed to look into the issue.

The clean-up of the oil spills in the Ogoni landscape is another priority of the programme. In 2016, Shell made a commitment for the payment of one billion dollars for the clean-up. However, early 2017 only 10 million had been released. To address this, the GLA partners in Nigeria advocated for, and worked with media to demand, the immediate release of the rest of the funds and the start of the clean-up. In July 2017, Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) advertised for qualified consultants and contractors, and in August HYPREP requested United Nations Environment Programme to become the Technical Partner for the clean-up of Ogoni land. Thereby signalling one of the first concrete steps towards the actual clean-up. To monitor the clean-up process, once started, 50 youth have been trained to measure and report on the soil, water and air quality in the landscape.

An important process is happening in Cross River State where a member of the House of Assembly, who was trained on Environmental Impact Assessment through the GLA, has sponsored a motion for a bill on regulating extractive industries. The bill has now passed its second reading. The partners in Nigeria have also contributed to a Renewable Energy Bill for the promotion of renewable energy alternatives, which is supposed to go to Parliament in 2018. Furthermore, the GLA partners are involved in providing evidence and information to inform an on-going litigation case against an oil company, in which communities demand compensation and clean-up.

Last but not least, as a result of gender training by the GLA, 28 communities started a women’s group and are planning a joint protest in 2018. Also, much attention is given to ensure that women and youth are active members of coalitions and CSOs and make a meaningful contribution.

G. PHILIPPINES

Despite the challenging socio-political situation, our partners proceeded with the implementation of activities and achieved some promising results at the local and national level. In 2017, the interventions focused on capacity development and on coalition and constituency building in the three landscapes. To strengthen the partnership, the GLA invested in exchange visits between the three alliance members and between CSOs in the landscapes. In CDO River Basin, the latter has already led to demonstrable improvements in implementing the corporate social agreement. Another interesting result highlights the crucial role that a women’s group played in resolving disputes between members of a local CSO and a local logging company on a social agreement that both parties signed. The ending of the dispute was the starting point for renewed dialogue.

As all three landscapes are largely covered by indigenous peoples’ (IP) ancestral domains, strengthening IPs’ voice and role in forest governance is at the core of the program. In Maguindanao, a key advocacy outcome was the approval by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples of the Certificate of Recognition of the Timuay Justice and Governance organisation as an Indigenous Political Structure. This recognition provides the Timuay with the right to be asked for their Free, Prior and Informed Consent for any activity that will be conducted within their ancestral territory. At the national level, a major advocacy outcome, particularly relevant to IPs, is the approval of the Indigenous and Communities Conservated Areas (ICCA) Bill by the Congress-led Technical Working Group. In the Sierra Madre, where the forest is threatened by unregulated agricultural expansion, road building
and dams, the strengthening of Indigenous leaders around Mount Irid, a key biodiversity area, led to the formation of an alliance to protect their forest from external pressures. They are now working to also have it declared an ICCA.

H. 
UGANDA
In Uganda, the restrictive NGO Act, approved in 2016, poses a serious hindrance to the work of the NGOs in Uganda. The Act poses a threat to the right to freedom of association and has led to the closing of NGOs offices in the country, violence towards NGOs, increased bureaucracy and administrative burdens. The reduction of NGOs’ operating space is further aggravated by anti-democratic tendencies in national policies. On the positive side, in 2017 recommendations by CSOs were included in the NGO regulations. It was the very first time a legislation process was jointly worked on by both Government and CSOs. Some activities of our GLA partner were delayed due to the requirement of entering into a memorandum of understanding with the NGO District Monitoring Committees. In addition, the political environment is not supportive of environmental issues, which are framed as anti-development. For example, article 26 of the constitution is up for amendment to enable the government to acquire land without prompt and adequate compensation and without Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

Nevertheless, in 2017, the GLA has been successful in strengthening communities and raising awareness at district level on the impact of oil palm. Farmers started to unite to resist oil palm development, more men involved their wives in decision making on land transactions by accepting their wives as signatories to their bank accounts, a documentary was shot and community drama groups popularised the impacts of oil palm. The increased awareness convinced a range of landowners (from farmer to landlord) not to sell their land for oil palm expansion. The GLA programme also contributed to the passing of a resolution against buffer zone encroachment by the Kalangala district government.

Also, our GLA partner issued a complaint to the International Finance Corporation (part of the World Bank group) against a palm oil company. As a result, the responsible Compliance Advisor Ombudsman initiated a mediation process between the palm oil company and affected communities. The process was closed in January 2018 and resulted in communities being compensated and land titles arranged. Currently, our GLA partner is assessing the mediation outcomes and identifying next steps, including a litigation case before the courts of law.

I. 
VIETNAM
The political environment in Vietnam displays both promising as well as challenging aspects when it comes to the protection of forested landscapes. The Prime Minister is strong on forest protection, as shown by the new Forest Law (see below). On the other hand, the government is working on a new policy for NGOs, which may include additional checks for NGOs supported by foreign donors.

In November 2017, after two years of preparation and discussions, the National Assembly approved a new Forest Law. The GLA partners played a crucial role in the development of the law. They actively joined and organized dialogues, consultation workshops and technical meetings and produced policy recommendations for the policy makers. Many recommendations were included in the final law. For example, the recommendations to recognise local communities as legal forest owners and the need to strengthen forest governance were taken into account. The close cooperation between government and CSOs in the Forest Law revision marks a milestone in public hearing by Vietnam Government. However, although the new law represents a step forwards in some aspects, our partners stand divided on how effective the law will be in practice.

Other relevant outcomes are the implementation and proposed expansion of the participatory spatial planning approach to other communes at the request of the district authorities, and the multi-stakeholder development of policy recommendations on forest protection in the Central Highlands. On the other hand, some activities are lagging behind. For example, despite training provided on coffee rehabilitation/reconstruction, there has been limited progress in companies and farmers actually realising climate smart agroforestry. GLA conducted a restoration opportunities assessment, but restoration of forests may be an issue, as there seems to be more interest in converting degraded forest into production land rather than restoring it.

4. 
PROGRESS ON THEMATIC PROGRAMMES
A. 
AGROCOMMODITIES
The international, thematic programme on agro-commodities invests in capacity development of local partners, international advocacy and enhancing North-South collaboration in advocacy. In 2017 key successes were achieved in a campaign to ban the
use of palm oil to be counted as the fulfilment of renewable energy goals in the EU renewable energy directive 2021-2030. Dutch GLA members lobbied the Dutch government and European Parliament and co-organised a speakers tour with delegates from CSOs partners in Liberia and Indonesia. Dutch citizens were mobilized, which resulted in over 5,000 citizen letters to the Dutch government and a petition garnering 36,000 signatures. 174 Scientists decided to support our plea by writing and signing an independent academic letter to halt destructive biofuels. Thereupon, the Dutch government vowed to plead within the EU Council negotiations for the position to ban the use of palm oil as biofuel. Early 2018, a big majority of the European Parliament voted for a ban on palm oil in biofuels in transport, to be implemented from 2021 onwards.

Although the campaign was successful, there were also challenges and learnings: The Malaysia and Indonesia governments and palm oil sector provided strong opposition and actively started lobbying EU governments. The issue still needs to be discussed in the European Council, which is much harder to influence for NGOs. The counter-lobby then poses a real threat. The ban on palm oil in biofuels could also result in more palm oil being used in food and cosmetics, whereas other vegetable oils will be used for biofuels. Ongoing monitoring and action is important.

Capacity development activities on collecting verified evidence of deforestation and landgrabs have led to the increased use of evidence by communities to resist oil palm expansion in Liberia and to a stronger position of the Bugala Farmers Association in mediation and court cases in Uganda. In Cameroon, where policy and legal frameworks on agro-commodities set examples for other countries in the Congo Basin, FoE Cameroon managed to get the dialogue on a national palm oil policy back on track. A think tank on land reform was started. They achieved crucial wins for communities when an extension of a plantation lease was reduced to 5 years and community complaints were taken up in a government commission.

The large number of advocacy initiatives in the Netherlands and the EU have also contributed to noteworthy results: The adoption of an EU shareholders directive with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria; The establishment of a High Level Expert Group on sustainable finance; the active engagement of the Dutch government in the start of the Dutch IMVO covenant on plant protein; and the inclusion of soy and cocoa in the Amsterdam Declaration. On a less positive note, progress on the EU Action Plan on deforestation is lagging behind. The planned feasibility study was published in 2018, but political will remains limited. There is clear support from the Dutch minister for voluntary measures. The GLA partners are advocating for more stringent binding regulations that stop import of deforestation products and that are included in the EU feasibility study. Voluntary measures alone will not effectively reduce the EU’s deforestation footprint.

B. FOREST AND LAND GOVERNANCE

The Forest and Land Governance thematic programme consists of several different activities and priorities, ultimately contributing to enabling local communities to sustainably manage their land. GLA members invest in capacity development of local partners and (joint) international advocacy. A key international advocacy outcome achieved in 2017 are the adoption of a favourable position of the Committee on World Food Security and Nutrition (CFS) on the rights of forest dependent people and women to land, food and governance. A decision by the CFS to organise a conference on monoculture tree plantations in 2018 was another result. Friends of the Earth International was chosen by the civil society mechanism to lead a working group for civil society inputs in the negotiations.

An important outcome is a reference to the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT). It was achieved by the working group charged with the development of the new Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) benchmark standard. This is significant, because the VGGT guidelines are state of the art in land governance and their inclusion in other standards increases the chance they will be implemented.

During 2017, the GLA completed a participatory assessment of the status of landscape governance across 13 landscapes in the nine GLA focus countries (Landscape Governance Assessment (LGA)). This effort set a baseline for GLA to assess changes in inclusive and sustainable governance, and it built the capacities of partners and stakeholders to consider issues at a larger, landscape scale. Several GLA partners have embraced ideas emanating from these multi-stakeholder workshops in their workplans, and several non-GLA CSOs have requested information on the LGA approach, as a method to address governance issues at landscape level. The Landscape Investment and Finance Tool (LIFT) is receiving much interest too. Directly after its launch, it has been downloaded 150 times and the tool is used by Solidaridad and WWF. In the Philippines, a local bank that advises the Cagayan de Oro (CDO) landscape initiative, is contributing to the development of business cases using LIFT and is willing to engage other local banks and possibly international investors to join. This highly increases the chance that LIFT will lead to new types of landscape financing in the CDO Basin.

C. JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

The Just Energy Transition (JET) focuses on the Niger Delta, the greater Virunga landscape and the Ituri landscape in the border
region between DRC and Uganda. The programme focuses on lobby, advocacy and campaigning work coupled with capacity development of CSOs. The development of the programme has been a bit slower than the other two driver programmes. However, in 2017, the programme was launched and implementation started. The most notable outcome is the delayed licensing of new oil and gas projects in the Virunga and Albertine regions, as a result of a joint DRC/Uganda campaign and petition demanding national governments to halt oil exploration in these vulnerable ecosystems. We also started building a strong coalition of partners working on the just energy transition in the African and European region. One of the initial activities is the development of a consensus document, which will form the basis for joint advocacy.

In the area of capacity development, exchange visits between partners and landscapes have shown to be an effective strategy to strengthen knowledge and skills as well as building more successful collaborations. For example, a Dutch alliance member and local partners in DRC visited Nigeria and produced a documentary on the impacts of oil exploitation on the environment and people’s livelihoods. This film is used to mobilise CSOs in other countries against oil extraction.

Challenges for this programme include the lack of availability and affordability of renewable energy in local communities. There is a need to create affordable alternative renewable energy sources. In addition, there is still little government and corporate investment in renewable energy, maintaining a high demand for ‘dirty’ energy.

5. FINAL REMARKS

The first two years of the programme have laid a solid foundation for the rest of the programme period. The inception period in 2016 has provided the essential information on context and partners’ capacity, needed for priority setting and activity planning. In 2017, capacities and the collaboration in coalitions have been strengthened and we see promising effects of our lobby and advocacy. The international thematic programmes effectively build bridges between countries and different policy making levels, which is highly valued by the partners at all levels. We expect that these effects will expand over the next three years and that important outcomes will be achieved.

At this point, based on GLA progress until 2017, we see no need to make changes in the global ToC.

In most countries where we work, however, our partners face an increasingly restrictive operational environment and safety and security is worrisome. These issues will remain a risk and a challenge in the years to come and require ongoing attention and flexibility. We raised international awareness on environmental crimes and environmental defenders, but our partners are still far from safe when they undertake their brave and tireless efforts. Ironically, the more partners capacities are built and effectiveness is enhanced, the bigger the risk they run. We think collaboration with the Dutch Embassies on these and other issues is important and can be strengthened.

In the second half of 2018, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) is planned. Its main objective is to learn from what has been achieved and how, and to formulate recommendations for adjustments in the implementation of the programme where necessary. An MTR-report and next year’s annual report will include an analysis of the validity of the global ToC and its underlying assumptions as well as possible adaptations in strategies and outcomes for the final two years of the programme.

We would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassies for their support and collaboration. We look forward to an even better partnership in 2018.