Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative

Review of implementation 2015-2017
Outlook 2018-2020

Thanks to the generous support of

Korea Forest Service
Figure 1 – Map of countries invited to capacity-building workshops on ecosystem restoration since the beginning of the FERI

Photo 1 – Participants to the Bangkok workshop on a field visit to a mangrove restoration project in Thailand
Capacity-building activities

A key component of the FERI is the building of capacity of CBD parties on the restoration of degraded ecosystems. From 2015 to 2017, a total of 5 workshops were held in the following UN regions: Accra, Ghana – October 2015: Western Africa; Bogota, Colombia – April 2016: South America, Central America, Caribbean (only Cuba); Bangkok, Thailand – July 2016: Eastern Asia, Southern Asia, Southeastern Asia; Agadir, Morocco – March 2017: Northern Africa, Southern Europe; Durban, South Africa – September 2017: Middle Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa.

‘Country dossiers’ have been prepared for each of the participant countries prior to workshops, summarizing their national targets and commitments with regards to ecosystem loss and restoration. These dossiers are then used as support for interactive sessions during the workshops, whereby participants are invited to reflect on improvements that could be made to their national targets to make them more specific and better aligned. All individual country dossiers can be accessed at: www.feri-biodiversity.org/country-data

In 2017, the Initiative organized its largest workshop to date, gathering participants from three regions of Africa. The Durban workshop also saw the introduction of a new format called ‘restoration clinics’, whereby a panel of restoration specialists was invited to each present their area of expertise, before leading small breakout group discussions tailored to the needs of the participants. The success of this approach is reflected in the results of the workshop evaluation by the participants, which show a clear progress in the stated knowledge gain in this area (see Figure 2).

Capacity-building activities will continue in 2018 with a workshop in the Pacific region, with a likely focus on the restoration of coastal mangrove ecosystems and their role in climate adaptation and disaster-risk reduction. The remaining regions (Central Asia and Eastern Europe, Caribbean and other SIDS) will be covered by an additional two workshops in 2019 and 2020.

Figure 2 - Results from the post-workshop evaluation questionnaire to participants
Figure 3 – Map of FERI direct support projects around the world. Projects in red have already started, while projects in yellow are in the pipeline for funding in 2018.

Photo 2 – Successfully established seedlings of native tree species in the Antioquia province of Colombia, a project funded by the FERI and implemented by Bioversity International and the Humboldt Institute.
Direct support

One of the main implementation channels of the FERI is to provide direct financial and technical support to pilot restoration activities in countries parties to the CBD. These pilot projects should serve to test a variety of innovative restoration techniques and compile and disseminate lessons learned that can be used in similar restoration contexts.

The selection of projects funded by the FERI follows a competitive process. Following the call for FERI project submissions, launched by the CBD Secretariat in February 2017, a total of 85 submissions were received from 41 countries. On July 3, 2017, the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative decided on granting funding up to 100,000 US$ to six restoration projects in Bhutan, Cambodia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, and Peru.

The projects were selected by an expert committee for their strong local community involvement, long-term monitoring approach and focus on critical ecosystem services. More information about the projects can be found on the FERI website, which will be updated with new project profiles in 2018 as new funding agreements are signed).

Implementation of the direct support projects is already well under way in Colombia and Chile and has started in Lebanon and Peru. In 2017, visits by the FERI team were given to the projects in Colombia, Chile and Peru. The visits offered an opportunity to better define the objectives of the projects and discuss the linkages with national restoration frameworks, in direct consultation with national and regional authorities.

Further funding agreements have been signed at the beginning of 2018 with Aghrymet, for a research project on the benefits of restoration in Burkina Faso and Niger, and in Kenya with Brackenhurst botanical gardens on capacity-building of local government staff on ecological restoration. The remaining funding agreements will also be signed with Guatemala, Mexico, Madagascar and Cambodia in Q2 2018.

Follow the progress of FERI pilot restoration projects on Twitter:

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Field visit to the FERI project in the Coquimbo region of Chile, led by CONAF
Outreach and communication activities

This category covers meeting costs including any travel of staff and consultants, as well as FERI project representatives, for ‘outreach events’ aimed at coordinating with relevant initiatives and showcasing the impacts of FERI. This includes side-events at meetings of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies and Conference of the Parties (SBSTTA 20 in Montreal, April 2016; COP 13 in Cancun, December 2016; SBSTTA 21 in Montreal, November 2017), as well as FERI representation at various events such as meetings of the Bonn Challenge (Honduras, May 2016), Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration and Global Landscape Forum (Bonn, December 2017).

In 2017, the FERI also organized its first ‘FERI Academy’, in partnership with the World Conference on Ecological Restoration organized by the Society for Ecological Restoration in Iguazu, Brazil, from August 27 to September 1. The SER 2017 conference program featured world-renowned keynote and plenary speakers as well as numerous symposia, training workshops, concurrent sessions, and technical field trips. FERI sponsored the participation of 8 representatives from its direct support projects. Through five days of seminars, training sessions and participative forums, this activity aimed to further develop the knowledge of FERI project leaders on restoration science and standards of best practice, but also their capacity to disseminate the findings of their projects and promote the scaling-up of restoration activities with their national governments and other partners.

In 2018, the results of the consultative sessions held at the conference will be used to develop an evaluation framework for monitoring the projects’ impact. Interviews with the FERI-sponsored participants during the conference have also been used to develop video communication material on each project for the website (see links below).

For the period 2018-2020, as FERI direct support projects start to bear fruits, the increased allocation should also allow for the travel of implementation partners to these meetings to showcase results and share lessons learned from the restoration models tested on the ground.

Watch the video presentations of FERI project by scanning the codes below
Products

In 2017, the FERI also collaborated with SER and PARTNERS for the publication of a policy brief on Natural Regeneration. Titled ‘Partnering with Nature: The case for natural regeneration in forest and landscape restoration’. The document aims at increasing awareness of the cost-effectiveness and benefits of natural regeneration as a restoration intervention. It makes specific recommendations for policy changes that could enhance the role of natural regeneration in ecological restoration interventions and as an integral component of forest and landscape restoration. The document can be downloaded at www.feri-biodiversity.org/resources in English, Spanish and French.

Overview of expenditure and forecast to 2020

The below figure shows the relative importance given to different components of the implementation of FERI as it moves from the first to the second half of the overall 6 years for which funding is planned so far. While the first implementation period gave priority to capacity building activities and analytical groundwork on existing restoration commitments, the focus of the second period is squarely on direct support to the implementation of restoration projects on the ground, with over half of the budget dedicated to this component.

The budget for outreach activities has also been increased in order to communicate more widely on the results and impact that the FERI will start to generate as projects arrive at maturity.

Figure 4 – Share of expenditure by category for the 2015-2017 implementation period and share of forecast expenditure for the 2018-2020 period.