

ODS GREATER IMPACT

External Learning Review WWF - Voices for Diversity Programme

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Glossary of Terms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EHRD	Environmental Human Rights Defenders
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GPAT	Global Policy Advocacy Team
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IC	Inclusive Conservation
ICA	Inclusive Conservation Academy
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IPR	Independent Panel Review
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade
LC	Local Community
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
ND4NP	New Deal for Nature and People
ODS	Organisation Development Support
OH	Outcome Harvesting
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToC	Theory of Change
VfD	Voices for Diversity
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Introduction

The programme

The Voices for Diversity (VfD) programme, coordinated by WWF Sweden, began implementation in January 2020. The programme is implemented in collaboration with WWF global functions (Global Policy and Advocacy Team (GPAT), the Governance Practice and Wildlife Crime Hub), WWF Offices in Myanmar, Vietnam, Mozambique, Madagascar, Kenya, and Tanzania and consequently with their Civil Society Organisation (CSO) partners and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Local Communities (LCs) at the local level in addition to regional and global IP representative organisations and networks. The programme is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The long-term objective of VfD is to ensure that biodiversity and natural resource management policies and frameworks at local, national, regional and global levels are inclusive and responsive and contribute towards the reduction of inequalities, exclusion and poverty, and the enhancement of the environmental sector. VfD's Theory of Change (ToC) is articulated in five domains as shown in Figure 1 below.

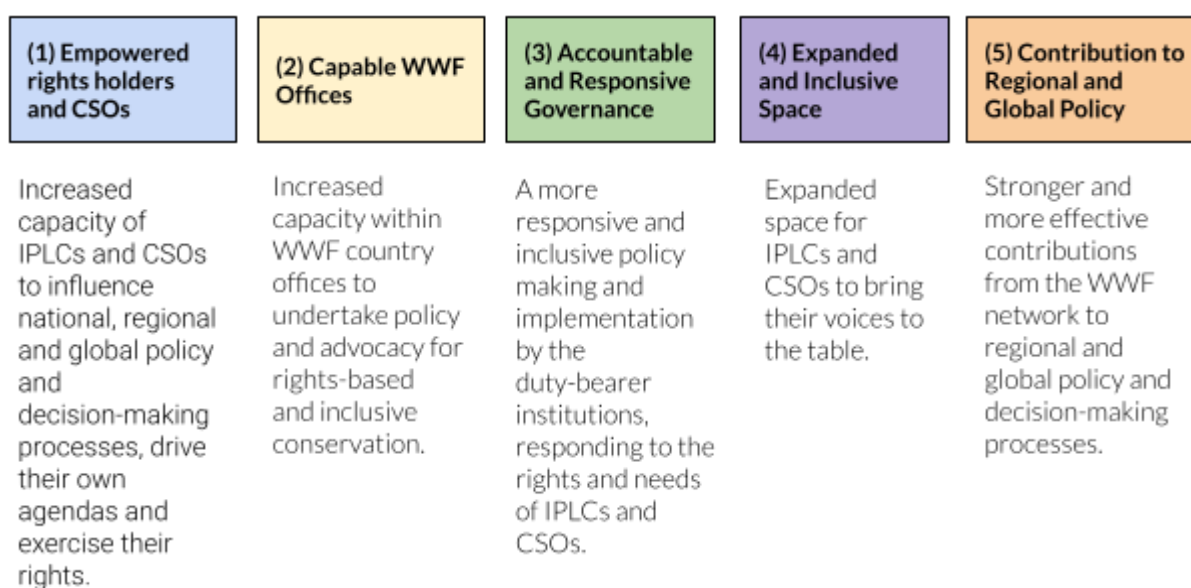


Figure 1 - VfD Theory of Change domains

The pathways of change are as follows:

1. Empowerment and capacity building of IPs, LCs and CSOs to advocate for their rights in policy and decision-making processes at national, regional and global levels, and hold duty-bearers to account
2. Policy advocacy by the WWF Network for inclusive, human rights-based conservation from national to global level and vice versa

3. Enabling space for IPs, LCs and CSOs to influence decisions and policy at all levels
4. Strengthening the WWF Network to advocate for inclusive and human rights-based conservation.

The Programme is rooted in three core thematic issues: equitable and human rights-based Nature-based Solutions (NbS), Inclusive Conservation (IC) and Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT - also referred to as Wildlife Crime).

The External Learning Review

The External Learning Review has been commissioned by WWF Sweden, as part of the contract with Sida. The aim of the review is to ensure accountability to the programme's key stakeholders by substantiating positive and negative outcomes harvested in 2021 and 2022 across the five domains of change of the ToC, in addition to surfacing learning insights and promising practice to further improve the programme beyond 2022.

The learning review took place between October 2022 and February 2023, covering the implementation period of January 2020 to October 2022. The review sought to assess the internal and external relevance and effectiveness of the programme from national to global levels. The key users of this review are WWF Sweden, WWF's Country Offices, WWF International's Global Policy & Advocacy Team, Governance practice as well as the Wildlife Crime Hub (of the Wildlife Practice), Sida and VfD's external partners, including IPs, LCs and their CSOs, networks and movements at national, regional and global levels.

The learning review was conducted by **Organisation Development Support (ODS)**. The team was composed of Lisa Marie Salley (Project Lead, Senior M&E Consultant), Anna Cesari (Senior Evaluation & OD Consultant), Zayar Lynn (Research Consultant), Hans Wolters (Advisor) and Zdena Middernacht (Quality Assurance). The team conducted this review independently following ODS' ethical research practices. It was informed by both internal and external consultations as defined in the methodology section below.



Methodology

The analytical framework

For the external review of the VfD programme, WWF has been experimenting with the sign of change approach, which is similar to the outcome harvesting approach. This type of inquiry is a promising methodology for explaining non-linear and complex change and seeks to focus on applying contribution analysis to observed signs of change and generate actionable learning and promising practices. The analytical framework was based on four broad iterative stages:

1. **Setting the evidence base:** WWF has harvested a set of signs of change across the five domains of the ToC. ODS conducted a review of these signs of change, complemented by an in-depth desk and literature research to identify most significant signs of change for the learning review. This resulted in

the development of a learning framework (see annex 1) which included critical research questions. The learning framework was discussed and tested during the VfD learning event which took place in Nairobi in October 2022.

2. **Substantiation of the evidence:** The most significant signs of change identified for this learning review were then substantiated through an intensive literature review, desk research and a total of 35 internal and external key informant interviews. The informants included WWF staff, CSOs, LCs, IPs, and duty-bearer institutions at national and global levels.
3. **Testing the theory of change:** Evidence generated through the key informant interviews and learning events were used to test the causal pathways of the ToC to validate whether the initial hypothesis between the 5 domains are still valid.
4. **Generating learning insights and promising practice:** Based on the analysis of ToC and the associated evidence, a set of learning insights and promising practice were identified which are synthesis around the domain pathways.

The proposed methodology in ODS' initial work offer included 4 focus group discussions (FGDs). However, due to difficulties in finding a time that worked for all participants, these were replaced with individual interviews upon agreement with WWF Sweden.

The data was **analysed** in three key steps:

1. The consultancy team conducted an **internal analysis session**. This involved those that had been involved in all areas of data collection and a thematic expert who had not been involved. This allowed us to bring the team's expertise and findings together and discuss the emerging insights, learnings and recommendations.
2. In a **sensemaking session** with internal stakeholders across the global functions, practices and country teams, the review team presented the initial findings for feedback and discussion on whether the findings resonate, what gaps exist and how usable and realistic the recommendations are.
3. Finally, the team conducted a focus group discussion with the **External Reference Group**, made of representatives from IP network organisations where we discussed what the initial findings mean for the future of the programme and to gather their recommendations for the future in order for WWF to reach its objectives.

The following principles were key to the **review approach**:

- **Co-design and participation** - The team designed the learning review with the principles of co-design and participation to the greatest extent possible. While the review team remained independent, key stakeholders informed the evaluation at each stage including design (briefings with key stakeholders during the VfD learning event), data collection and analysis (sensemaking with stakeholders across WWF). The aim was to ensure buy-in from key users but also to ensure the consultants fully understood the nature of the programme.

- **Focus on internal learning** - Throughout the review and in this report, the consultants focused on sharing constructive learnings related both to successes and opportunities for improvement to ensure the programme can reach its objectives.
- **Embedded in an understanding of the context in each region** - The team prioritised gaining thematic and regional knowledge while also listening to the experiences of key stakeholders at each stage of the review.

The following **limitations** were at play during the learning review:

- The nature of the activities have a long term perspective, often making it difficult to assess changes - especially in policy change. Further, as change at this level takes place as a result of a long term effort through a combination of pressure by multiple actors it is challenging to assess or attribute the individual contribution of one programme.
- Most signs of change are in a 'journey' stage and are to be completed by the end of 2023. Due to the timing of the review it was not possible to fully understand the scope of the impact.
- Despite several attempts it was difficult to get in touch with and schedule interviews with some of the rights holders and duty bearers indicated as key informant interviews for certain signs of change. This is partly due to the fact that this was a particularly busy time of the year (CITES and CBD Conferences of the Parties (COP) taking place in November/December 2022), and because some were located in remote areas, with limited access to internet connections. It is notoriously difficult to speak to duty bearers during any review or evaluation, this was no different. The team made several attempts to contact duty bearers but were only able to speak to five at the national and global level.
- The suggested interview sample of WWF offices and representatives mostly included those who are working to integrate HRBA in the work of the wider Network, and it did not include those in the Network who are less supportive of this agenda.



Key findings

Relevance

This section responds to the research questions related to the extent to which the VfD programme and its implementation are responding to the policy priorities of stakeholders and rights-holders. These questions include whether the programme has been able to adapt to different contexts, if its priorities are in line with the ones of rights holders and CSO partners and of the WWF Network. In addition, this section explores the project's added value and whether it has achieved its potential in this initial period of implementation.

The programme adapted well to different contexts. VfD focused on providing WWF country offices (and consequently the local actors working with them) with technical and financial support. External stakeholders (CSO partners, duty bearers etc) reported that the support provided is aligned with their current work and needs of the context. The adaptability to the local contexts is also ensured by the fact that work plans have been designed in close cooperation with local WWF offices, who therefore have been able to factor in the complexities of each reality and to propose adjustments when needed.

WWF offices participating in the programme were not asked to work on all the thematic issues of VfD, but they are able to decide which priority to include in their work. All country offices are working with inclusive and rights-based conservation, some are working with NbS or IWT only (Vietnam for instance), while others work with all of them (Tanzania).

The programme has been able to adapt to contexts where there has been an increased openness towards the work of CSOs, IPs and LCs in policy work (such as in the case of Madagascar) and to contexts where an extreme reduction of the space for civil societies or even a closing down of civic space have been experienced. In Madagascar for example (3.1), given the willingness of the Malagasy government to increase participation of both local communities and CSOs in reviewing the 1996 law on Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), WWF Madagascar focused on the facilitation of a multisectoral dialogue between local authorities, community representatives, CSOs and sector representatives. The dialogue aimed not only at the text revision but also at bringing them together and empowering them to work on legal frameworks.

Contrary to the Madagascar example, multiple countries in Southeast Asia have experienced shrinking civil space in recent years. In one of these countries, WWF has moved its advocacy from national to local level, and focused on capacity building of CSOs and staff, while advocating at a global and regional level. This approach has been led in consultation with local CSO partners, defining what support they need most, and amplifying this regionally and globally.

As in many contexts across the world, COVID-19 has had a severe impact on civil society in the countries of intervention. Besides limiting physical gatherings, in settings where civil society actors are not equipped to work remotely, the pandemic contributed to instances of delays at the administrative (government) level, where

policy processes stalled or were postponed to 2022. This implied the need for budget review and realignment in certain countries, for instance in Mozambique. This was possible due to the flexible work plans, as well as the support from and ongoing dialogue with WWF Sweden. In addition, these delays have provided an opportunity for WWF to spend time developing its internal policy positions, to further develop Network-wide policy advocacy capacity and build partnerships and coalitions with relevant CSOs, IPs and LCs in countries and at the global level.

The programme is implemented in contexts where local organisations do not work on policy advocacy and working with authorities is not yet common practice. In some cases, bringing representatives of local organisations to the table with decision-makers proved to be a long process (for example in Kenya). Changing CSOs' advocacy work from reactive to proactive was also a challenge due to the lack of coordination between the CSOs and an overall low level of preparedness (in Mozambique for example). This means that the timeline for the achievement of results will be longer than the programme timeline as capacities needed to be built from the ground up.

The design of the programme is relevant to the priorities of rights holders/CSOs, and where these priorities were not explicitly formulated, research and consultation with those groups helped to focus those priorities. Working with rights holders and CSOs is at the core of the programme. WWF has been working internally to build capacity to understand and apply the human rights of IPs and LCs in conservation programming, working with them to build evidence on the gaps in legislative frameworks that affect them and their communities and supporting advocacy to improve these frameworks. It is essential that this work is in line with the priorities of the rights holders in each country. In some of the countries many of the CSOs did not have structured advocacy 'priorities' previous to working with the VfD programme. This is largely due to the limited possibilities to engage or a lack of knowledge amongst CSOs on the processes in place and available to engage with governments. This was further impacted by COVID-19 which prevented many engagement opportunities with duty bearers. The programme focused on increasing and/or building this advocacy capacity where it did not exist, thus ensuring the programme's relevance. This has been the case in Mozambique for instance through the Forest Operators assessment, CSOs were brought together and for the first time produced a list of priorities for their collective work, while until now their work had focused on reacting to the approval of unfavourable government policies, without taking a strategic advocacy approach. In Tanzania, the need for concrete capacity building activities arose in helping individuals realise that they are rights holders, as well as in making sure that they have a full understanding of Nature based solutions and the implications of those.

In addition, the programme is relevant to the rights of IPs and LCs (and the CSOs that represent them) to claim their rights in national and global policy processes, such as in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and contributed to increasing global south representation in international settings such as at the CBD COP, and to the enabling environment for IPs and LCs to engage in CITES processes.

The review shows that the programme interventions are relevant to the work of the WWF offices involved in the programme, and to WWF's global conservation mission. The review concludes that the focus of the programme in building awareness and internal capacity on policy advocacy for inclusive and rights-based conservation is a key added value for the WWF offices involved - and the WWF Network as a whole - and that most of the offices involved showed a clear interest in working on advocacy initiatives since the start of implementation, when preparation meetings took place. In these settings, representatives of the WWF offices came prepared and willing to start a learning process on advocacy toolkits and approaches. In addition, building internal capacities is relevant, given the long term aspect of the programme objectives: for instance, in WWF Mozambique, the programme helped to create a policy unity/area of work where WWF staff come together to plan and implement policy and advocacy work at the country level, while previously this area of work was not the office's primary focus. VfD constituted an important opportunity for the team to focus on policy advocacy work while most of the traditional WWF interventions focused on field work only. As part of the programme, staff members received training on how to best support CSOs in building their own agenda and formulating collective requests at the national level. Finally, the programme's flexibility - where country offices are able to choose pillars/priorities - increased the ownership of interventions and enabled sustained relevance over time, as each office was able to choose emerging policy issues and adapt and course-correct during the implementation period.

In terms of the **relevance to the WWF Network, the programme joins a series of efforts** focusing mainly on policy advocacy. It contributes to the WWF's New Deal for Nature and People (ND4NP), which aims to ensure an integrated approach to climate, nature and sustainable development in the key upcoming policy fora. In addition, the programme is aligned with other initiatives such as the People Protecting Landscape and Seascape (PPLS). The programme works in synergy with the Leading the Change and other programmes across the WWF Network such as the Dutch funded Voices for Climate Action, and increasingly the work of other Practices, i.e., Food, Forest.

Importantly, the programme was designed in times when WWF was facing a challenging moment prompted by the BuzzFeed controversy¹ and resulting allegations. In its report, the Independent Panel Review (IPR) called for the integration of WWF's human rights responsibilities and commitments in the Network's work as well as increasing WWF's institutional expertise and capacity on human rights compliance. **A programme such as VfD is necessary and instrumental in developing Network-wide capacity to further understand WWF's human rights responsibilities and to integrate a human rights-based approach (HRBA), including gender equality and other social dimensions, in its work at the national, regional and global levels.**

The interest from the wider Network in VfD-specific issues is strongly reflected in the Network-wide attendance at and sign-up to the capacity building 'Spotlight Series', coordinated by the Global Policy

¹ In March 2020, BuzzFeed published a series of articles accusing the WWF of funding "vicious paramilitary forces to fight poaching". When the reports were raised, WWF commissioned an independent panel of global human rights and conservation experts to conduct a review of WWF's practices and provide recommendations.

Advocacy Team (GPAT) and the Governance Practice. Beyond this interest and beyond the need for the Network to understand and act in compliance with its human rights responsibilities, which are necessary starting points for culture change, there are some limitations with regard to the wider WWF Network's understanding of the relevance of the programme. Most interviewees found the approach relevant to help the Network in making stronger human rights commitments and in working with IPs, LCs and other rights holders, but also pointed to how the full realisation of these commitments is challenging as it is context-dependent (i.e., it will be difficult to implement in some countries and contexts). While some noted that HRBA is increasingly embedded within the programming of the WWF offices involved, the External Reference Group consulted during the review indicated that HRBA is seen as a WWF's Global Advocacy-owned area of work rather than a Network-wide initiative. The review notes that, the integration of HRBA across policy and advocacy initiatives in the broader WWF Network still encounters resistance: currently mechanisms in place to roll out the approach across the Network are still being defined and it is not yet clear that there is Network-wide agreement on the exact approach to be taken.

In terms of the added value to the work of rights holders, the review shows significant value thus far, as the programme brought added value thanks to the localised focus of its thematic areas. In Myanmar, through the work with CSO partners, WWF has been able to support activities at the local level and provide funding for an eco-leadership training aimed at facilitating dialogue between different communities who live along a major river. Gathering those groups together to discuss problems that affect different areas is central to enabling communities to play a key role in environmental protection. In Mozambique, the programme contributed to the strengthening of a national forum of CSOs, where members set their own priorities. This space has supported members to identify existing gaps in their capacities, request targeted training and establish a venue to discuss the definition of their policy advocacy agenda.

In Vietnam, the post-covid period opened up opportunities for CSOs and rights holders to work with government leaders and national assembly. This was due to the fact that a popular concern among different sectors of the population, including individual citizens, is the spreading of the virus due to their proximity to wild animals and a lack of regulation of wildlife trade. Many local CSOs focused on this topic. Also, thanks to the programme, WWF Vietnam and its local partners have been able to provide knowledge specifically related to IWT to government leaders and national assembly champions. In addition, the team conducted an assessment of the government directive on the measures of wildlife management after its second year of implementation.

In Madagascar the programme added value by providing an opportunity to build the capacity of rights holders and CSOs and to ensure their meaningful participation in policy processes. Through the contribution provided to update the text of a law and through the development of a monitoring tool, a framework for exchange with the administration was put in place, which can be considered a significant change for the communities.

In some contexts, internal stakeholders reflect that the **unexplored potential** lies in the fact that due to their reduced capacity they were unable to focus equally on all policy priorities. All country offices are working with inclusive and rights-based conservation, some are working with NbS or IWT only, while others work with all

three priorities. In general, the number of offices focusing on IWT is lower, this is due to the lack of capacity on IWT in the offices. Finally, there is appetite in the WWF offices involved - and beyond those offices directly involved - to increase the work on human rights and gender at the country level, and to increase more bilateral collaboration and knowledge sharing at the country level.

Conclusion The programme is highly relevant to the contexts in which it operates. Its relevance is ensured due to its ability to plug into the existing work of the WWF country offices, providing technical and financial support to their work rather than bringing a pre-defined agenda. This helped to take into consideration the challenges and opportunities stemming from each of the country's context and to tailor the intervention accordingly. Further, its support has been key for CSO partners, strengthening and building capacity in order to prioritise and organise around certain policy agendas.

The capacity building aspect contributing to the work of WWF offices, IPs, LCs and rights holders is relevant, as this is key in ensuring an overall strengthening of civil society and the possibility to ensure sustainability of the results moving forward. As which will be explored in the effectiveness section, results under this area are necessary and relevant contributions to the pathways of change. The programme helped the formulation of rights holders and CSOs' priorities in those contexts where these were not formulated or where there was a need to review them due to the volatility of the political environment, for example in Southeast Asia. The localised focus as well as the possibility of choosing which thematic area to focus on added value to the work of right holders, for example in Mozambique.

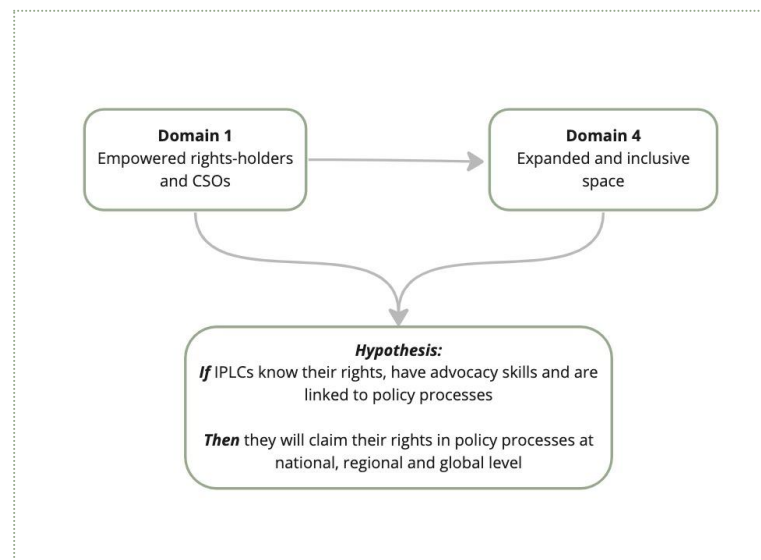
VfD's design and priorities are in line with other WWF interventions focused on the integration of HRBA and human rights compliance and responds to a need that emerged in different contexts. The programme made progress in building WWF local offices' internal capacity to either embed the HRBA in existing work or to further structure interventions already focusing on this, and there is appetite to do more. However, it is not possible to state the full extent of its relevance to the wider Network, as the HRBA is not yet a formalised priority of the Network and it lacks mechanisms to ensure that the approach can be rolled out to all offices and that learnings can be distributed, systematised and followed up on - this will be explored in the sections below.

Effectiveness

This section explores to what extent the programme has contributed to the change foreseen across the domains of the Theory of Change and what learnings can be drawn from this contribution to support the programme's possible future implementation. Further, it tests the hypothesis of the connections between the domains of the Theory of Change and explores both the challenges and promising practices identified during the learning review. The section uses examples of signs of change that were harvested for the learning review, using a reference number indicating the domain of change i.e. 3.1 - domain 3, sign of change 1. Please find the detailed harvest in Annex 1.

Empowerment and Space: Domain 1 → 4

This subsection focuses on Domain 1 and Domain 4 of the Theory of Change. **Domain 1** focuses on empowering IPs, LCs and CSOs to claim their rights in national, regional and global policy and decision making processes. **Domain 4** aims at improving opportunities for IPs, LCs and CSOs to take active part in national, regional and global policy and decision-making processes - promoting their own agenda and influencing policy frameworks at all levels. As shown in the visual below, the domains are connected and the programme's hypothesis is that *if* IPs and LCs know their rights, have advocacy skills and are linked to policy processes, *then* they will claim their rights in policy processes at all levels, provided that the conditions allow this (i.e., space is available).



Domain 1 The evidence shows the programme has made an important **contribution to the work of IPs, LCs and CSOs acting to influence decision making processes**. The Signs of Change harvested show a number of effective mechanisms of support. WWF's financial support to **facilitate convenings** and bringing together IPs, LCs and their CSOs to deliberate on issues that affect their rights is one key area of support. Further, financial support for trainings to build knowledge and awareness of the rights of IPs and LCs has been an important contribution. The **technical support that WWF provides is also seen as effective**. Stakeholders reflect that WWF often participates in the convenings they support at the country level and are present in working groups and in other fora providing key technical insight on areas of conservation but also on the rights of communities and the responsibilities of duty bearers. For example, as discussed below WWF Kenya takes part in the Kenya Forest Working Group providing technical advice. This presence and strong positioning has facilitated WWF's

ability to provide **timely and relevant interventions**.

The contributions made by WWF through the programme have supported CSOs to become **more strategic in their policy and advocacy efforts**. The evidence shows that support for convenings has facilitated dialogue and increased space for stakeholders to be more strategic in their thinking and in advocacy efforts. Further, by

In Kenya in 2022, the national parliament halted a second reading of the proposed amendment of the Forest Conservation & Management Bill. This development is significant as the Bill would have resulted in a change to the decision making process on how forests are divided - potentially gravely affecting IPLCs in forest areas. WWF provided funds to facilitate meetings of the Kenya Forest Working Group to strategize on how to halt the progress of this bill which led to a successful advocacy campaign. Working Group members point to the importance of these convenings to ensure the campaign had ownership across communities and key stakeholders. WWF Kenya also took part in technical discussions as a member of the Working Group (1.1).

funding and supporting the building of evidence that seeks to identify gaps in the implementation of laws supports both WWF and CSOs to focus their advocacy efforts. Further, technical support to provide **more structure and improved organisation to the work of CSOs** also contributed to changes. For example, in Mozambique WWF worked with a CSO platform supporting them in demanding increased transparency and accountability of forest operators operating illegally through consultations with the government on the issue. WWF supported the platform to prepare recommendations that were strategically fed into consultations with

In Myanmar, in 2021, IPs, LCs and CSOs have documented the impact of the use and management of natural resources. These collective efforts have helped inform regional and global advocacy efforts. The programme has supported this work through financial and technical assistance to IP and LC partners, resulting in mobilisation, knowledge and capacity building.

the government. This led to a situation where the CSOs are acting as a watchdog to ensure that government officials have a realistic assessment of how the forest operators are operating (1.3).

Domain 4 It is clear from the evidence above that the programme has made an important and necessary **contribution to supporting IPs and LCs, while there is some evidence that this has then led to them claiming their rights and to expanded space it is still too early to see a strong connection.**²

The initial evidence shows necessary and important **efforts by WWF to increase participation** of IPs and LCs in national, regional and international fora. However, it is not yet clear to what extent this is sufficiently *meaningful* participation and will result in sustained change and contribute to increased space and IPs and LCs claiming their rights. At the national level, in Tanzania for example, CSOs have been invited to take part in consultations to inform the country's position on the CBD (4.2). However, the review was unable to assess to what extent this was *meaningful* participation and whether their inputs were taken into account in the final document. WWF's work with IPs and LCs at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Congress was collaborative and inclusive and led to motions to guarantee their rights among other rights based considerations. This reflects how WWF is prioritising true collaborations, yet at this point in time, it is not clear

² While beyond the scope of this learning review, the team notes that some signs of change related to the GBF, COP and CITES COP taking place in December 2022 showed further examples of increased participation of IP networks and IPs and LCs claiming their rights. This should be noted in the monitoring and explored in future learning moments.

whether this will result in increased space in policy processes and IP and LCs claiming their rights. Similarly, the programme's contribution to increasing the engagement of IPs and LCs in the negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is significant but again, it is not yet clear and will only become clear with time whether this results in *claiming* rights rather than just increased visibility.³

Testing the hypothesis

At this stage in the programme, there are credible indications that if IPs and LCs know their rights, have advocacy skills and are linked to policy processes at all levels, they will apply this knowledge and capacity to engage further in processes at the national, regional and global levels, where possible. **However, while it is necessary to expand space and ensure it is inclusive, it is not sufficient as other conditions are necessary to expand space including, breaking down institutional barriers (rules for example) that remain in place. In order to do so, advocacy to transform participation is essential in order to move observatory participation towards meaningful participation.** For example, in Tanzania representatives of the Global Biodiversity Youth Network were supported with increased knowledge of the CBD process and financially supported to access the CBD Open-Ended Working Group in addition to the COP27 (4.9). While the representative agreed that with this knowledge, they had an increased understanding of the context and how processes are conducted, as observers to the process, they were not able to 'claim their rights'. Further, as indicated, it may be too early in the programme's journey to tell to what extent the signs of change identified will lead to IPs and LCs being able to claim their rights.

In 2022, IPLCs declaration on their rights, knowledge and role in conservation in protected areas was adopted and acknowledged in the Asia Park Congress. While this is not a policy nor a law, this sign of change is significant as it shows progress towards official recognition of the rights and role of IPLCs in conservation. Further, the messaging it includes will be used in other regional fora including COP27 and COP15. Through the ICCA Consortium, the programme supported the participation of IP youth and leaders and ensured their active participation (4.7).

Promising practices & lessons learned

- The signs of change reflect that **WWF is well positioned** to understand the needs of CSOs and the opportunities for them to claim their rights - this allows WWF to make timely and effective technical and financial interventions.
- The evidence also shows that success happens when **CSOs are involved from the outset**, in the design and development of activities ensuring ownership amongst IPs and LCs. Focusing on self-strengthening approaches to capacity building are essential when working with IPs, LCs and CSOs. This is an important practice that is essential to ensuring that IPs and LCs, once they have the tools and access, will then claim their rights.
- It has been shown to be highly important to build evidence and **listen to the needs of communities** in order to understand how best to support them. Building **equitable relationships and solidarity** with

³ As noted previously, despite being beyond the scope of this review, it is important to further emphasise that WWF reflects on the success of advocacy to create a transformative GBF in terms of HRBA - with targets agreed. The contribution of the HRBA Biodiversity Working Group, on which WWF sits, was important. This should be noted for future learning moments.

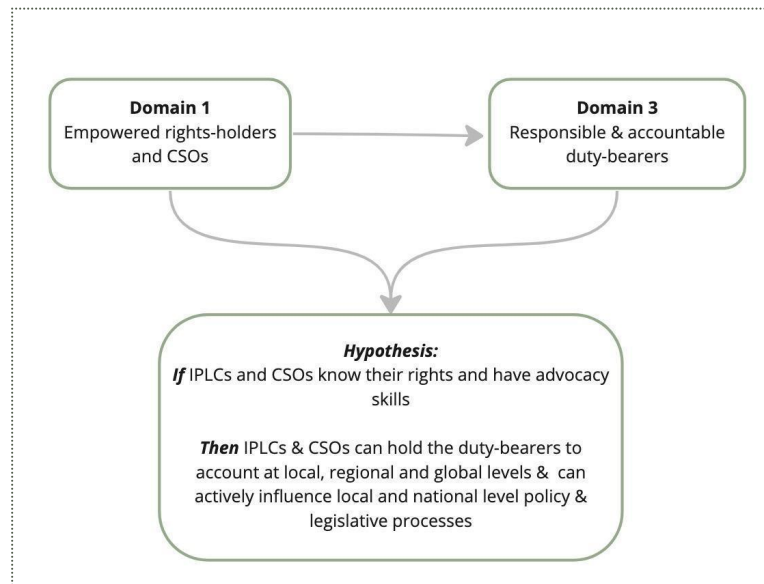
IPs, LCs and their CSOs is essential and should be the continued focus of the programme. By inviting the full range of voices to the table for planning, programme design and decision making also alters the power dynamic.

- Continuing to support collaboration between IPs and LCs at the local level with their national, regional and global level networks is important to **enhance collective voices**. This is particularly relevant for countries where civic space is limited.
- In order to increase the likelihood that building the capacity of IPs and LCs and facilitating access to space will lead to them claiming space and rights, it is essential the programme ensures that **IPs and LCs participate in a meaningful way** directly in decision making processes rather than simply observing discussions and speaking at side events. Starting from the bottom up, the framing and agenda setting of policy advocacy issues at national, regional and global level should be co-created by WWF and IPs, LCs and their CSOs. WWF should continue to support these policy agendas and highlight the institutional power structures and rules that persist to prevent meaningful participation in policy processes. This will strengthen the link between Domain 1 and Domain 4.

The Inclusive Conservation Academy (ICA) is a key example of a promising practice supported under the programme. The initiative aims to strengthen the capacities internally at WWF through training, focusing on communities and committing to put people at the centre of WWF programmes. Currently, the ICA remains driven internally by WWF stakeholders but is establishing a Steering Committee of IPLCs to guide the design, implementation and the future direction of the ICA services to IPLCs and the wider conservation community (1.6).

Empowerment and Accountability: Domain 1→ 3

This subsection focuses on Domain 1 and Domain 3 of the Theory of Change. **Domain 1**, as discussed above, focuses on empowering IPs and LCs to claim their rights in national, regional and global policy and decision making processes. **Domain 3** aims at influencing duty-bearers and holding them to account. As shown in the visual below, the domains are connected and the programme's hypothesis is that *if* IPs and LCs know their rights, have advocacy skills and are linked to policy processes, *then* they can hold duty-bearers to account at local, regional and global levels and can influence local and national level policy and legislative processes.



As discussed above, the **evidence under Domain 1 reflects the strong contribution of the programme to the building of awareness and knowledge of rights** through the technical and financial support from WWF. A key component of the contributions to the signs of change under Domain 1 is the building of evidence to bolster and strengthen both advocacy by WWF but also the work of CSOs. This reflects that it is important to not only know their rights, but to also have the evidence to claim their rights. This combination is an essential part of empowering rights holders, and often needs financial support that they do not have. We can see examples in Kenya (1.4), Myanmar (1.5) and Madagascar (3.1, 3.12). As discussed in the sections above, the evidence suggests that the strongest contribution in this initial period of implementation lies **not in the increased knowledge of rights but rather in supporting the work of CSOs through convenings and providing**

In 2021, the **Malagasy Forest administration** agreed to conduct a participatory revision of the law on Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in Madagascar, reflecting a commitment to strengthening the role of local communities in managing natural resources. This is significant as the law has been in place since 1986 and there is widespread consensus on the need for its review. WWF Madagascar and Tafo Mihaavo conducted research highlighting the areas of the law that require revision, the findings of which were presented to the Ministry and discussed in a workshop (3.1).

technical support to be more strategic and structured in advocacy and in holding duty bearers to account.

There is evidence to show the programme has **contributed to IPs, LCs and CSOs holding duty bearers to account**. The signs of change reflect commitments by duty

bearers in addition to concrete shifts in support for issues of interest to IPs and LCs. Some of the contributions to the signs of change show that WWF has provided timely support to ongoing processes and facilitated the building of momentum either through evidence building, the convening power WWF has and technical support to prepare resources to inform work with duty bearers. While it is challenging to fully comprehend WWF's contribution as it must be assumed that changes could be a result of work started prior to the programme and other work conducted by organisations in the policy/advocacy ecosystem, it is clear that WWF has had a role, facilitated by both connections with civil society and its positive rapport with duty bearers.

Testing the hypothesis

There is some evidence to show the connection between Domain 1 and 3, empowering rights holders and those rights holders holding duty bearers to account (see text box detailing an example). **The hypothesis is highly dependent on the agency of those involved and the political context.** Agency includes skills, information, education, organisational capacity, psychological resources and other resources including financial and material. The

In April 2022, a local authority in Southeast Asia forbid gold mining by private companies in three locations. This is significant as it demonstrates a concrete response to concerns raised by local communities on the significant environmental and social impact of mining. Through the programme, WWF supported a CSO to build their capacity on forest management and wildlife conservation. **The organisation then engaged in policy dialogue with the local authority to stop the gold mining (3.1).**

political context refers to the space that is available to operate, the laws, regulations, norms and customs that determine access for IPs, LCs and CSOs and whether they can use the knowledge to hold duty-bearers to account. The evidence reflects the programme's contribution to building the IPs, LCs and CSOs agency through building skills and knowledge. It reflects how WWF is able to intervene and support CSOs to build momentum on ongoing advocacy (for example - the Madagascar CBNRM Law, 3.1 and 3.2). In these cases, **WWF's role has not been to inform the groups of their rights but rather to support evidence building, add strength to the voices of CSOs and help them to be more strategic.** At this moment in time, it is too early to see evidence of change in the institutional context and also WWF's contribution will not be sufficient in order to create this change, but rather the combined contribution of multiple stakeholders over time will have an impact in this area. Even then, in some contexts change at this level will not be possible.

It is important to **reflect on the content of trainings and the risks associated with IPs and LCs claiming their rights in high risk contexts**, including conflicted-affected areas with limited space, **for example defining what is safe to do and what is not safe to do with the information that has been shared during the trainings.**

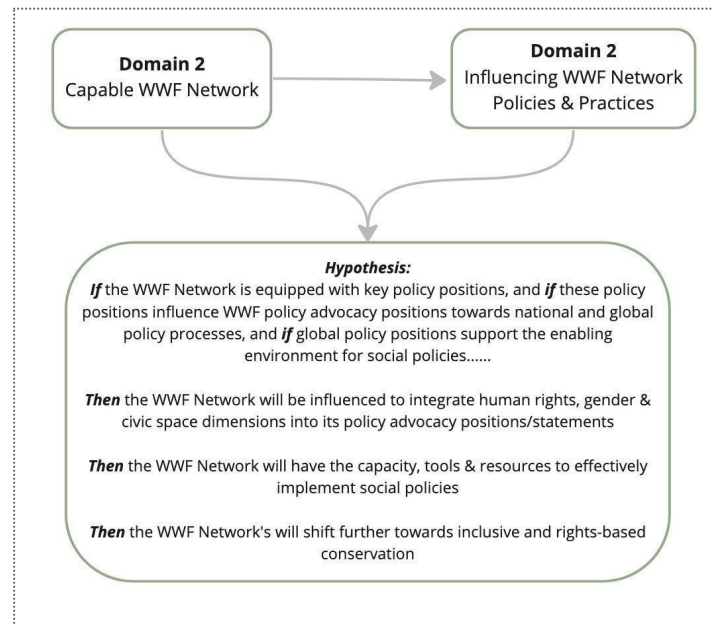
Promising practices & lessons learned

- The evidence suggests that facilitating and strengthening the forging of **collective action** by communities and CSOs increases the responsiveness of governments (Kenya, Mozambique, Southeast Asia, Madagascar). However, it is not clear whether this represents systematic change.

- It will be important for the programme to **follow the contribution made** to the work of IPs, LCs and CSOs in terms of capacity building and whether this is directly leading to those organisations claiming their rights.
- Reflecting on the **contextual and structural conditions needed to create change**, the programme's contribution should continue to focus on influencing institutional rules which facilitate governments recognition of the rights, roles and knowledge of IPs and LCs, procedural roles that define the process of engagement and finally how the governments can be held to account for fair distribution of benefit sharing from nature among IPs and LCs.
- In order to have an impact on these contextual and structural conditions, WWF, CSOs, IP and LC partners should work to hold governments to account by **leveraging international normative frameworks** including the UPR process, binding global commitments (for example the right to a healthy environment).
- Lessons have also been learned, through the negative sign of change discussed above, on the importance of further integrating both a **risk assessment and a conflict-sensitivity approach** when working in contexts that may put communities at risk when claiming their rights.
- In order to have further impact, WWFs and CSO partners should conduct a power analysis to identify both **allies and blockers** and based on this produce a relevant strategy on how to collaborate and produce relevant counter narratives.

Influencing internal policies and practices: Domain 2 → 2

This subsection focuses on Domain 2 of the Theory of Change. **Domain 2** focuses on building a capable WWF Network and influencing practices and policies. The hypothesis is that *if* WWF is equipped with key policy positions which impacts advocacy and if these position support enabling environments for HRBA, *then* the whole WWF Network will be influenced to integrate human rights, gender and civic space into its policy advocacy positions, it will implement HRBA effectively and will shift further towards inclusive and rights-based conservation.



The evidence under Domain 2 is strong, reflecting the impact of the programme in terms of the resources and space it has facilitated to build internal capacity on HRBA with the programme's key stakeholders.

There is clear progress towards building the internal debate and introducing new narratives on issues including gender, civic space and EHRDs, mostly among those involved in the programme and who are showing an openness to change policies and practices for inclusive and rights-based conservation. Capacity building series including those on HRBA and inclusive conservation have also reached the wider Network, based on the

WWF's Global Governance Practice has led and framed the internal debate and introduced new narratives around civic space, EHRDs and human rights based NbS. More specifically, the governance practice conducted a series of consultations across the network to develop a white paper on EHRDs, there are plans to produce guidance on working with EHRDs to complement WWF's new Human Rights Policy Statement and has opened dialogues on NbS to address the full complexity of the concept. WWF has not had positions on some of these areas before and it is therefore significant and has been made possible due to the Voices for Diversity Programme (2.1).

interest of those in the wider Network to take part in knowledge sharing activities. These are clear and necessary steps in achieving change under this domain, however **evidence on whether the broader Network has institutionalised these approaches is not yet clear, more time is needed for this to take place.** It is clear that to a large extent the capacity to work and

develop positions on the HRBA remains with the Global Functions. This is not surprising considering these positions are being developed for the first time and the expertise has been further developed through this programme. . A clear example of the potential impact of this ongoing work of preparing policies and positions is shown in the text box below (sign of change 2.10) detailing the integration of HRBA principles into the monitoring tool (the Wildlife Crime Prevention Framework) of the Zero-Poaching Framework, as this will guide the work of the Network moving forward and reflects acceptance of the principle by a wide group of internal stakeholders. **Positively, the global functions have shown a strong effort to share the resources produced at this level with the country offices involved in the project and beyond.**

Further, as we understand it, once the policy positions are in place, the aim is to continue sharing capacity and strengthen advocacy on these issue areas from national to global areas and vice versa. An area where significant progress has been made is the development of a clear gender transformative lens and area of expertise concerning IWT - this will be discussed in the sections below but should be noted here. In terms of the evidence at the country level, it is less significant but there are signs of change where it is clear that country offices involved in the programme are integrating inclusive conservation and rights-based perspectives into policy advocacy initiatives at national and global levels. This will also be discussed in the sections below specifically related to advocacy. However, as mentioned above, at this stage while efforts to build expertise at the level of the 6 countries involved is clear, the **expertise largely remains and is owned at the level of the global functions.**

In late September 2022, the 6 regional wildlife crime hub leads, including TRAFFIC, agreed to integrate HRBA principles into the evaluation and assessment framework (Wildlife Crime Prevention Framework) of the Zero Poaching Framework (ZPF), which is WWF holistic anti-poaching strategy. Through work over a long period of time including capacity development an understanding of the importance of these principles to the strategy has been accepted. This is significant as it adds contributes to a more inclusive, rights-responsive and gender-responsive ZPF which may not have been possible in previous years (2.10).

Testing the hypothesis

Currently, despite the relevance of working on the HRBA not only in the context of the IPR but also in line with the narrative in the movement and the reality of conservation work, there is a hesitancy within the broader Network to develop this area of work further. This led to considerable **slow-down and push-back on strengthening the guidance and capacity building on HRBA and inclusive conservation** including on issues such as EHRDs and civic space. The progress shown in the evidence above reflects the necessary incremental change required to create a shift in culture and practice across the Network. The WWF Network is a complex organisation which will take time and consistent effort in order to bring about change.

Further, **a key part of becoming an organisation that has clear rights-based positions is also the external perspective and how the organisation is seen.** Currently, according to external stakeholders, the internal work to build these approaches and capacity is not clear beyond the CBD and CITIES workstreams. It is not something that the WWF Network is seen to be doing but rather an area that is only explored in global advocacy and not across all areas of work where the original controversy was identified. During discussions with IP networks, it was clear that there remains a hesitancy to work with WWF due to controversies but also

due to a lack of clarity on whether the work by the Global Functions in global advocacy (i.e., focus on rights in CBD, UNFCCC etc) is shared by the Network. External stakeholders reflect that they are happy to work with WWF in their global advocacy or with this specific programme but they may not be able to work with other offices considering the lack of clarity over their positioning on certain issues for example on the Net Zero related campaigns. WWF notes that during the preparations for COP15, they witnessed increased openness to collaborate amongst the major groups including in regular calls, thematic dialogues, workshops and drafting sessions - this is out of the scope of the review and therefore we were unable to explore further but should be noted for future learning moments.

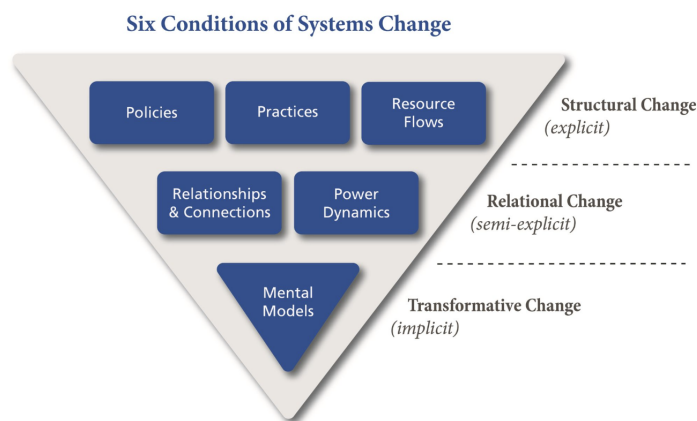
Further, as noted, building capacity and policy positions on HRBA is necessary, in order to create a shift in culture, it will be essential to **avoid disproportionate development of capacities wherein those involved in the programme have increased capacity which is not equally shared across the Network**. The Global Functions must seek to further share the ownership of the HRBA with the VfD programme coordinators at the country level but also outside of the programme, beyond sharing resources but rather creating more of a community of practice that can reach a critical mass to create this culture shift.

Promising practices & lessons learned

- The **Spotlight Series is seen as a highly successful activity** which should continue as it has facilitated outreach to a vast number of WWF staff across many offices and thematics. A key aspect of its success lies in the strategy to first assess the most relevant topics of interest to the WWF Network which ensured a high attendance to the series. Further, the work as a whole **reflects a strong inter-practice/team collaboration and collective action to cultivate a constituency of change for inclusive and rights-based conservation across the Network**.
- A promising practice that supported the development of the work on gender equality was the decision to procure external support. In this case, the **support was provided by an influential and highly experienced external expert consultant**. The results in this area of work show the benefits of such a process, especially in relation to the work on the gender toolkit on IWT. Sourcing external support to build tools could also be done in other areas where progress is slower, for example in the case of work on the tools for EHRDs etc.
- Internal stakeholders also reflected that a lesson from the programme is that an improvement could be made in **how knowledge is managed** - which will be a key part in building the capacity of stakeholders and sharing the experience of the programme. Further, to support the external communication and internal sharing of resources creating a website/platform where the resources should be made openly accessible would be a promising practice.
- Externally, a sentiment that was shared was that **WWF needs to become a 'better listener' which will also support internal changes**. While we note that informal mechanisms exist to collect feedback and individual staff are involved in conversations and discussions - this is not formally recognised nor

are there formal mechanisms in place to capture the lessons learned. A far more active learning practice needs to be developed. Something that could support this learning exercise could be to conduct an **After Action Review** discussion with collaborators asking key questions related to the partnership, practice etc. WWF would benefit from learning how practices, policies and key messages are interpreted externally and how they impact collaborations and partnerships.

- Finally, for this pathway to effectively unfold, the programme should consider **focusing on the three levels of systems change conditions**, as outlined in the ‘inverted triangle’ framework which is an actionable model for programmes seeking to bring about systemic change.⁴ In this logic, the programme should focus on the following:

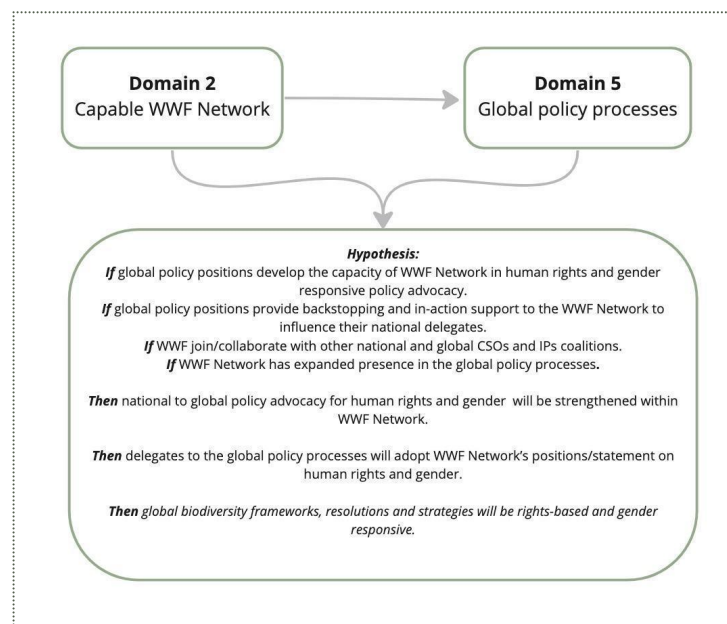


- Influence **structural change** by continuing to advocate internally to influence the development and adoption of social policies and HRBA, to continue to advocate for the operationalisation of inclusive conservation principles in both policy advocacy work and conservation work at all levels and continue to produce and share tools across the Network.
- Influence **relational change** by building on the success of the collective advocacy supported under the VfD programme with IPs, LCs and CSOs and expand this practice across the Network and continue to advocate for the shifting of power internally to rights holders and build the capacity for practising equitable partnership.
- **Transformative changes** through framing internal narratives and thinking around inclusive and rights-based conservation. Potentially this could be done through the Inclusive Conservation Academy or similar initiatives, providing IP-led advice and support to the WWF Network, combined with the technical backstopping of global policy positions.

⁴ Water of Systems Change: https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/

Linking national to global policy advocacy: Domain 2 → 5

This subsection focuses on Domain 2 and Domain 5 of the Theory of Change. **Domain 2** aims to build a capable WWF Network while **Domain 5** seeks to contribute to regional and global policy and decision-making processes. As shown in the visual below, the domains are connected and the programme's hypothesis is that *if* the Network develops its capacity in human rights and gender-responsive policy advocacy, impacts national delegates, joins coalitions and expands its presence in global policy processes *then* this will strengthen national to global policy advocacy, delegates to global policy advocacy will adopt WWF's positions and global biodiversity frameworks, resolutions and strategies will be rights-based and gender-responsive.



The **evidence** shows that the collaboration on the programme has led to strengthened advocacy on rights-based approaches, with a clear link reflecting how developing the capacity in human rights and gender has led to strengthened advocacy positioning but also **successes in advocacy on the global stage**. There is still much progress to be made, but the results reflect significant and necessary progress especially considering the short time frame of the programme.

WWF's global functions (governance, IWT and GPAT) have strengthened rights-based perspectives in WWF's internal policy agenda (2.6). This reflects a **strong internal movement to move the rights-based agenda forward as well as increased capacity and space within the global functions to develop and prioritise rights-based positions**. The contribution to this sign of change is the production of internal position papers, convening dialogues internally and linking with other groups to conduct advocacy.

The work on **gender** reflects a strong example of the connection between developing capacity and positions and the strengthening of global policy advocacy, contributing to global policy positions/statements and rights based frameworks and resolutions. Under **Domain 2 (2.5)**, evidence shows how the programme has facilitated the development of capacity on gender especially in its application to the framework of IWT. Hiring - and working with - a gender expert to identify gaps, to co-develop a framework to guide conservation practitioners to think about how to integrate gender into conservation planning was a key part of the programme's contribution. This area of work was particularly significant as it speaks to the increased interest in and recognition of the importance of gender. Further, this work has seen to be 'revolutionary' in the sector. This work has also facilitated work under **Domain 5 (5.6)** where WWF has made a clear contribution to integrating gender dimension in the language of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife. While it is difficult to fully attribute WWF's work in this area to this resolution, before WWF's report on gender and IWT, gender hadn't previously been discussed to this extent in this context. Further, WWF actively advocated through a direct channel of communication with the Friends of IWT Group (responsible for drafting the resolution) by sending a summary of the report and sharing the report through key channels. While not the focus of this review, other evidence also indicates that through technical support to CITES Parties, the programme has supported signs of change related to a resolution on gender in CITES and an agreement to develop a **CITES Gender Plan of Action**.

A key factor in the success of these policy positions is the **building of alliances with IP networks, alliances and movements and with other rights-based organisations**. These alliances are essential in order to build further legitimacy with communities globally and to consolidate advocacy efforts across the conservation movement. While there is still a hesitancy to partner with WWF in some respects, the programme is contributing to building a willingness to do this. The benefits of these alliances can be seen in two ways. For example the partnership with Women 4 Biodiversity specifically on the gender equality target (5.4) both added strength to an ongoing effort to bring about a significant progress for the conservation sector while also supporting WWF's reputation and legitimacy as an advocate in these spaces.

Evidence related to the programme's contribution to the 2022 resolution on a **Right to a Clean, Healthy & Sustainable Environment (5.2)** shows the importance of joining coalitions in order to connect the internal capacity building work and the global advocacy contribution. The resolution is a recognition by the UNGA of the importance of this addition to the human rights framework and will help to reduce environmental injustices, close protection gaps and empower people including IPs and EHRDs. Through the Governance Practice and GPAT, WWF engaged in civil society strategy meetings working in a broad coalition to achieve this change including with BirdLife and Amnesty International. WWF also worked behind the scenes to increase pressure on delegations that were not supported through country offices. This sign of change is significant as it reflects WWF's contribution to advances in rights-based global advocacy processes and reflects how internal positioning on the rights-based perspectives.

There are key examples, including in the text boxes above which reflect on the work on gender and IWT and the contribution made to the resolution on a Right to a Clean, Healthy & Sustainable Environment. These also highlight successes in the connection between Domain 2 and 5 i.e., internal capacity building and global policy processes and shifts in the biodiversity frameworks. At the same time there are other examples that perhaps reflect more 'seeds of change' including the new positioning on rights based NbS that seeks to influence negotiations on the post-2020 GBF (2.9).

Promising practices & lessons learned

- Coalition **building and alliances** are essential in achieving both internal change and success in terms of influencing delegates, global policy frameworks, resolutions and strategies. It is also essential to learn

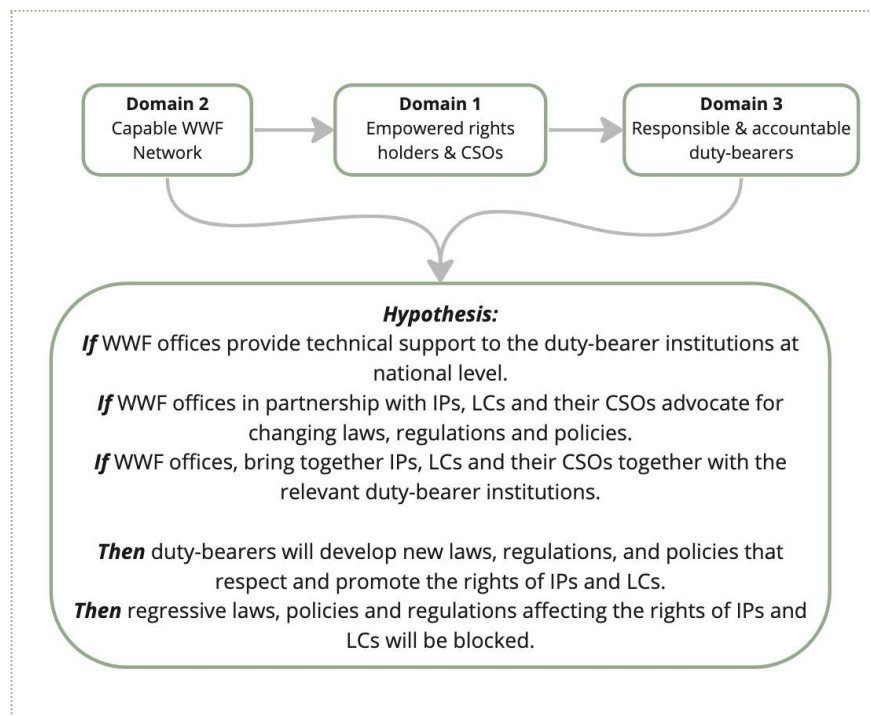
from these alliances and continue to build the reputation of the organisation as this will determine progress under this domain in the future.

- In order to ensure success, those involved in the programme must **continue and expand the support for the global policy positions** on human rights, gender, civic space and EHRDs to the other policy advocacy processes of the WWF Network.
- The work on building the **gender perspective and expertise** in the organisation has resulted in clear successes. This work should be built on across other Practices and also at the country level in order to champion these issues.
- Success at the regional level in Asia in terms of influencing policy spaces is less clear. However, the programme has adapted to changing circumstances, which has resulted in a focus at the global level and this should continue while also **looking for opportunities at the regional level as they arise**.
- **Capacity sharing** is essential. Global policy practice should expand its support to country offices on global normative frameworks (e.g., CBD and CITES). In the meantime, country offices should provide evidence and best practices to global policy positions to influence other global policy frameworks.
- The VfD provides a **much needed space** for the offices in the global south to have a say in the creation of WWF's advocacy positions. This process should continue in the run up to the planned initiatives to influence other policy processes, NBASPs, CITES etc at national levels.

Rights based and responsive policies, legislations and strategies: Domain 2→ 1→ 3

This subsection focuses on the connections between **Domain 1, 2 and 3 of the Theory of Change**. The programme's hypothesis is that *if* WWF offices provide technical support to duty bearers at the national level and *if* WWF partners with IPs, LCs and other CSOs to advocate for changing laws, regulations and policies and link those IPs, LCs and other CSOs with duty-bearer institutions *then* duty-bearers will develop new policy frameworks that respect the rights of IPs and LCs and regressive laws will be blocked.

As the evidence for these domains has already been discussed, this section will mostly explore the connection between the different aspects of the domain.



The **evidence** shows some progress under Domain 3, specifically in the connection between capacity building and providing technical support to duty bearers, advocating with ILPCs and bringing together IPs, LCs and CSOs with the development of new laws and blocking regressive laws. **These are necessary contributions, however, as this process takes a considerable amount of time before progress can be made - the evidence is not yet conclusive.**

In 2021 in Vietnam, five members of the national assembly agreed to champion the effort against illegal wildlife consumption and requested contributions from CSOs. This sign of change reflects progress in **increasing support from the highest legislative body** which will have a direct say in policies on illegal wildlife trade. While the number of members is not significant (5 out of a total of 500), it represents a change in the level of support as a result of WWF's provision of technical support including information, coaching sessions and presentation of strategies to inspire the policy makers (3.4).

The evidence that exists, including in the case of Vietnam, as described in the text box below, reflects a **clear effort made by WWF to build capacity and provide support to duty bearers**. In various cases commitments have been noted wherein after the provision of support and consultations with IPs and LCs, duty bearer institutions have reached agreements or made commitments on certain issues. For example, WWF Madagascar provided support to two ministries (the Ministries of Fisheries and Environment) to help them come to an agreement on how to ensure consistency between conflicting laws on resource management (3.11) specifically by sharing real cases from WWF's experience on the ground reflecting the impact of the conflicting laws. This agreement may or may not lead to the strengthening of the legal framework but reflects the role and importance of dialogue with duty bearers and progress in terms of reaching an agreement.

However, on two occasions where commitments had been made, **these signs of change were not substantiated by the duty bearers interviewed for the learning review** (3.7 and 3.8). This reflects the need to follow-up with duty bearers on commitments they made rather than moving onto different areas of work. This will support the programme in creating real and sustainable change.

Testing the hypothesis

As discussed in previous sections, the evidence under this area of work reflects necessary progress however it is not sufficient due to the structural barriers remaining in place in the form of the **willingness of duty bearers**. For example, in the signs of change related to Madagascar (3.1, 3.2, 3.3) WWF has made significant contributions to building the capacity of duty bearers, strengthening connections between CSOs, communities and duty bearer institutions in addition to advocating in partnerships with those organisations. The team and those interviewed reflect on the positivity and willingness by the duty bearers to engage with them - this is often a prerequisite for the success of WWF's strategy as a convenor of both duty bearers and CSOs.

Further, the evidence shows that success has often been determined by the **trusted relationship that WWF has with duty bearers**. There is no doubt that this relationship does facilitate progress in terms of building the capacity of duty bearers, as reflected in the example of Kenya (3.9) where WWF has contributed to the work of the Ministry of Environment & Forestry integrating inclusive conservation and NbS principles into its national position to the UNFCCC through technical support to this submission during a three-day workshop. However, stakeholders also reflect that this relationship can be somewhat troubling for CSOs that are purposely more distant from duty bearers whom they lobby and often have distrust towards. This may result in a wariness on the side of CSOs to partner with WWF as WWF is seen as too close to the authorities.

Promising practices & lessons learned

- The evidence reflects how funding support to CSOs is a positive practice. This has supported their work in both advocacy and providing technical support to duty bearers, showing a significant added value to the work of CSOs and the **importance of such partnerships, and the quality and equality of the collaboration, to achieving these changes**. Examples of this type of support can be seen in the

case of Myanmar (3.10) through support for a local CSO, in Madagascar in partnership with Tafo Mihaavo and in Kenya with the Kenyan Wildlife Conservancy Association (3.5).

- A promising practice, as previously articulated, was WWF's ability to use **strategic windows of opportunity** for example during elections, following changes in political authorities and using international normative frameworks (CBD, CITES etc.) to discuss issues of national importance.
- **Building coalitions** is also a promising practice to bring about change under this pathway. Duty bearers at the national levels need to advance their own legitimacy at the community and national level. Demands from large groups/movements have shown to elicit stronger responses from duty bearers.



Strategic course correction

The evidence shows considerable progress made in the initial period of the programme's implementation, while barriers to progress remain. As the team understands it, the ToC is purposely ambitious. There is a need to balance ambition and a realistic understanding and specification of what is needed to bring about the change that is described across the domains. While the evidence shows convincing progress, it is also clear that external structural barriers and internal barriers are preventing the achievement of the intermediate goals.

Based on this assessment, and in addition to the lessons identified in each section of the report, the learning review makes the following strategic recommendations on the direction of the programme:

Fine Tuning The flexibility of the programme and work plans is positive. It is essential to explore what the gaps are in order to fully understand what is needed. Using this learning review, we recommend that the team reviews the ToC working backwards from the long term goals, reviewing the intermediate goals, assumptions, conditions and activities, with an understanding of the progress made so far, in order to finetune and focus the programme theory of change moving forward.

- ➔ Broadly, explore and, where possible, create the conditions needed to achieve the Theory of Change as a whole, and re-explore to what extent the goals are achievable (this is a normal part of learning).
- ➔ Internally: Explore the barriers to internal culture change and focus internal activities on how to overcome those specific barriers. This could be done through having focused dialogues in order to understand the hesitancy and risks in moving forward with HRBA.
- ➔ Instead of moving forward to different activities, both the Global Functions and the Country Offices should seek to build on activities conducted in order to create sustained change. As stated in the evidence, some signs of change show initial progress, opportunities to build on these are clear. Further, the programme should seek to build on commitments of duty bearers and the initial increased visibility of IPs and LCs.

- ➔ For the review team, it is difficult to see how the programme will overcome the structural barriers preventing IPs and LCs from claiming their rights - for example only having observer status in global policy processes and not being involved in policy discussions directly in certain fora - without directly and explicitly advocating for this. It is clear that WWF is making progress in terms of centralising and visibilising IPs and LCs in events, documents, etc. However, without directly advocating for a greater role and say in policy, it may not be possible to realise the required change. The programme team should explore this opportunity.
- ➔ The evidence above will help WWF to understand what partnerships are needed in order to create change. It is clear that WWF will not achieve any of the goals without the support of other organisations. The programme should explicitly explore this and seek to understand the best way to create meaningful partnerships that benefit both the partners and WWF.
- ➔ Finally, continue to explore the complementarity between this programme and other similar WWF programmes to understand whether there are further opportunities for collaboration to create critical mass for support on the rights-based agenda.

Become an even better listener and learner The evidence shows that when IPs, LCs and CSOs are involved in design, results are considerably better. Furthermore, in order to become a thought-leader on HRBA, it is essential that WWF becomes a better listener.

- ➔ This could include a roundtable with organisations on how to integrate HRBA and gender into WWF's work. The internal culture change could be facilitated by opening up to constructive feedback and being an actor that is willing to learn from others with more expertise on these elements than WWF has held historically. Further, WWF should create a structured format to gather feedback from organisations with which they have collaborated, in an After Action Review format for example, where WWF seeks to understand what went well, what could be improved and more specifically whether the organisation is practising what it preaches in terms of the true participation of IPs, LCs and CSOs in the work.
- ➔ As part of being a better listener, the review recommends inviting and prioritising 'critical voices' in future learning moments for the VfD programme from the broader WWF Network and externally. Specifically, 'critical voices' means those that don't necessarily agree with using a HRBA in conservation or in further building the rights-based work of the Network (internally) and organisations that have negative perceptions of WWF. This would help to add further context to the internal barriers but also reflect a real willingness to learn from outside of the organisation.
 - ◆ A key added value of the programme in relation to learning during implementation is the annual learning event, where key internal stakeholders collectively reflect on the relevance and validity of the programme ToC and adapt the strategy based on the collected evidence and signs of change. WWF could include IPs, LCs and other collaborators in order to create more inclusive learning environments.

Equitable partnership and support As we understand it, and as mentioned in the text, WWF reflects positively on the increased recent collaboration with WWF before and during COP15, in collective actions such as the Human Rights & Biodiversity working group and at the CBD. WWF should sustain/maintain partnerships with IPs networks and human rights groups following this. As WWF is moving forward with advocacy for the implementation of GBF targets, it is important to strengthen existing collective advocacy platforms at national level to build on initiatives and collective actions such as the Human Rights & Biodiversity working group at global level. This is also an opportunity to reinforce principles of equitable partnerships with civil society organisations and other groups and constituencies.

Increase the programme relevance to the wider WWF Network The VfD ToC seeks to have an impact on the entire Network, in line with commitments already made. This takes time, significant capacity across the Network needs to be developed. Due to the short time of implementation and the scope of this review, is it of course not possible to research how and if the programme contributed to a shift in an entrenched mindset within the Network. The review recommends that the programme team strategizes on how to build on this initial progress to ensure how the expertise is not just built within the programme stakeholders but also beyond. This must go beyond activities such as the Spotlight Series and move to a more consolidated strategy with an annual agenda of activities that seek to share expertise, lessons and external feedback on the progress.

Knowledge management In order to achieve the above recommendation, knowledge management is key to enable the programme to achieve its greatest potential. The VfD team should consider whether the currently available information is collected, stored and disseminated in a consistent way, and whether all WWF offices have access to the information and tools. What is learned should be actively distributed throughout the Network. WWF International should actively promote a learning culture, among others by liberating staff time to store, disseminate and give follow up to evaluations, reviews and lessons learned in projects and programmes.

Baseline research of internal capacity building to help assess progress The review team is aware that an assessment of interest was done in advance of the Spotlight Series. To build on this, at this critical time in the implementation of the programme, the programme could consider doing a baseline assessment of the current capacity in relation to HRBA and advocacy/policy capacity in collaboration with the teams leading on these areas of work. Further, baselines can support the understanding of the programme's impact on the capacity of IPs, LCs and CSOs - which should also be considered as a potential point for a baseline study before activities begin.

Champions of Change Currently, to a large extent, the expertise on rights-based approaches remains in the global functions and practices and less so at the country level despite efforts made to share expertise and build capacity - this is normal at the early stages of the programme. Of course, the programme should continue to facilitate expertise sharing. However, in order to truly spread the ownership of the programme and these areas of expertise to the country level - the programme should consider the capacities of those offices and their ability to take time to become experts. Further, consider the idea of creating a group of 'champions' who have a

specific interest in an area of rights-based thinking, who would like to become experts and carve out the time for them to do so. This can help to both create sustained change (beyond ad-hoc training) and move the impact of the programme beyond those currently considered 'experts'. Endorsement by the leadership of country offices and WWF International can help to create the critical mass which is necessary to make this programme a success throughout the Network.

Learning methodology The external learning review team notes that the OH methodology, in addition to the use of learning questions, is useful for monitoring, continuous learning and adaptive management. However, the team notes that for the external learning reviews, another methodology might provide more insight into HOW and WHY the programme is achieving or not achieving in specific contexts and for specific offices/CSO partners. For this reason, the review team recommends that the monitoring and internal learning method remain the same for the VfD programme and for the next external learning review a realist approach to the assessment should be used. The assessment should be guided by the questions: what works - for whom - under what conditions? This will help to situate the insights.

Annexes

Annex I - Full outcome harvest excel

(See attached)

Annex II - Learning framework

<i>Areas of enquiry</i>	<i>Research questions</i>
Relevance & ownership To what extent did the VfD programme respond to the policy priorities of rights-holders and CSOs partners part of the programme?	How did the programme adapt to the contexts (including political, COVID related, space for civil society, etc) of implementation?
	Are the priorities of the VfD programme in line with the national, regional and global policy priorities of rights holders and CSO partners in each country?
	Is the VfD programme relevant to the policy priorities of WWF Network? How is the programme owned and led by WWF Network?
	Does the VfD programme add value to the policy work of rights holders and CSO partners? If so, how?
	How were the policy priorities identified? To what extent are they relevant to CSOs and rights-holders to facilitate ownership over the programme?
	Were there areas/priorities that were not explored by the programme but were deemed highly relevant by rights holders and CSO partners?
Effectiveness To what extent has the VfD programme contributed to internal and external changes across the 5 domains of the ToC? What evidence exists to support these changes?	[Domain 1] How has the programme contributed to the work of IPs, LCs and CSOs acting to influence decision making processes?
	[Domain 1] How has the programme contributed to IPs, LCs and CSOs being more strategic in their policy and advocacy efforts?
	[Domain 2] Have WWF internalised learnings from their engagement with CSOs in relation to their policy and advocacy work? If so, how? If not, how can this be improved moving forward?
	[Domain 2] How and to what extent has the VfD programme contributed to collective policy advocacy for human rights and gender inclusive conservation from national to global levels? How do the cases explored reflect on the effectiveness of working together to drive change across multiple countries and at regional or global level as a way to achieve advocacy objectives?
	[Domain 2] How has WWF formed or joined coalitions with other civil society organisations that have helped to advance their advocacy, for rights-based and inclusive conservation advocacy agenda? Have lessons from these coalitions been gathered, discussed, shared and internalised within WWF?
	[Domain 2] How has the capacity of WWF to apply a gender-transformative approach to their work been strengthened? How has this been achieved? What impact has this had on the outcome of global and country level advocacy activities?
	[Domain 2] How has the VfD programme contributed to shifting WWF Network's approaches, practices and policies towards HRBA and inclusive conservation?
	[Domain 2] To what extent and how WWF has integrated gender, civic space, EHRDS, IPs, LCs rights into its policy advocacy positions towards global and regional policy processes? What lessons can be drawn ?

	[Domain 3] To what extent and how have relevant duty-bearer institutions been influenced by WWF and CSOs to change policies, policy processes and legal frameworks at national level? Areas of concern: Development: Development of new law or policy. Adoption: Passing of a new law or policy Consultation: Inclusion of IPs & LCs in policy processes Improvement: Passing of a proposal for an improvement of an existing law or policy Blocking: Successful opposition to a policy or law; potentially stops negative changes Implementation: Concrete changes in practices of targeted governments actors towards implementing certain law/policy
	[Domain 4] Has the programme contributed to increasing space for IP, LCs and CSOs to participate in national, regional and global policies and decision making processes?
	[Domain 4] To what extent and how space has been created for WWF in the south to have a stronger voice within WWF Network policy discussions?
	[Domain 4] To what extent has the participation of IPs, LCs and CSOs led to local reforms in a particular sector? What processes lead to these reforms influencing changes at the national and global level of that sector?
	[Domain 5] To which significant advocacy outcomes has the VfD programme made a measurable contribution?
	[Domain 5] How and to what extent has WWF influenced the delegates to regional and global policy processes?
	[Cross cutting] What were the enablers and barriers in achieving success across the domains of change?
Reflections on the accuracy and relevance of the ToC What analysis and reflections can be drawn on the relevance and accuracy of the Theory of Change based on the evidence of the effectiveness of the programme?	[Collaboration --> Advocacy] Has collaboration between South-North WWF counterparts led to increased space and strengthened advocacy at the regional and global level?
	[Power balance] Has the empowerment of IPs, LCs and their CSOs led to shifts in power balances in national, regional and global policy and decision making processes?
	[Awareness --> confidence] Has an increased awareness of rights led to IPs, LCs and their CSOs claiming their rights and holding duty-bearers accountable?
	[Representation --> ownership] Has an increased representation of the interests of excluded groups led to increases in ownership and legitimacy in processes and policies?
	[Accountability] Have duty bearers acted on their commitments when held to account?
	[Collective impact] Have collective advocacy efforts between WWF, IP and CSOs led to success in advocacy at the national, regional and global level?
	[Increase space] To what extent and how has the increased space enabled contribution to changes in policies and practices? Have increased spaces for dialogue led to achievements in pushing for IC, RBA and gender responsive practices in conservation agendas such as NbS and IWT?
Lessons Learned & moving forward	What conclusions can be drawn on the validity of the Theory of Change based on the analysis?
	In terms of internal learning, to what extent is work under the VfD programme influencing other internal capacity building initiatives related to the practices within WWF? More broadly, what learnings can be drawn from the VfD programme on internal capacity building for future programming?
	What lessons can be drawn to inform the future of the programme and its success?

Annex III - List of interviewees

<i>Interviewee name</i>	<i>Position/organisation</i>
Representative	EA Wildlife, Kenya
Representative	CSO Myanmar
Representative	CSO Myanmar
Representative	Forest Forum, Mozambique
Representative	CAK, Kenya
Representative	CSO network Myanmar
Representative	No Deep Seabed Mining Initiative, WWF
Representative	External Gender Consultant
Representative of Forest administration	Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable, Madagascar
Representative	Department at the Ministry of Environment and sustainable development, Madagascar
Representative	CNREC Vietnam
Representative	KWCA, Kenya
Representative	Forest Action Network, Kenya
Representative	Swedbio
Representative	Department of Forest Norms and Control National Directorate of Forests, Mozambique
Representative	VP Office (CBD focal point) Tanzania
Representative	CSO Myanmar
Representative	TRAFFIC Southeast Asia
Representative	NTFP EP
Representative	Women 4 Biodiversity
Representative	TAFO MIHAAVO National, Madagascar
Representative	Youth Biodiversity Network, Tanzania
Representative	Legal Unit, CITES Secretariat
Representative	Gender advisory, Ministry of Environment, Panama
Representative	Global Governance Policy, WWF International
Representative	Governance Practice
Representative	WWF Colombia
Representative	Policy and Advocacy - WWF International
Representative	Illegal Wildlife Trade - WWF International

Representative	Wildlife Crime Initiative, WWF International
Representative	Global Governance Policy, WWF Kenya
Representative	WWF Madagascar
Representative	WWF Mozambique
Representative	WWF Tanzania
Representative	WWF Kenya
Representative	WWF Kenya
Representative	WWF Vietnam
Representative	WWF Myanmar
Representative	WWF Myanmar
Representative	WWF Myanmar

Annex IV - List of documents

General Programme Documents
VfD Annual Report 2021
Result Framework
VfD Revised ToC
Annual Work Plan 2021
VfD learning brief #1
Learning report - Learning Brief - May 2021
Knowledge Products
Annual Work Plan 2022
Domain Hypothesis Pathways
Harvesting Signs of Change
Programme Document VfD last version
Responses to Sida Questions on VfD
Theory of Action_VfD
Evidence for External Learning review
210928 Communication Verbale TGRN Version française
Annex 1 - CITES livelihoods - revised 07 May 2022 - short version - final
Annex 4 - WWF Ranger Brief - Final.docx
Workshop Report_CBD_SBSTTA Preparatory Meeting Final
HRDD guidance Support to LEA - FINAL draft
LOWRES - Cites and Gender Brief ENG - FINAL
WWF – WCC Report
WWF MAD letter signed by two ministries
WWF Review of draft COP15 decision (CBD.WG2020.4.L2) August 2022

(ENG) MultiStakeholderProcesses_WWFDiscussionPaper
Civic Space and EHRD WWF Network Support Tool - Draft Single Pages
Civic Space and EHRD WWF Network Support Tool - Draft Spreads
Draft IC guiding principles
EWMI_Letter_Final
HRDD guidance Support to LEA - FINAL draft
humanrights_4_longbrief ENG final
IIED-Gender and GBF brief
Mekon Ecology - Research on NBS V2
strategic_framework_peaci_
W4B-Advancing_Women-ENGLISH_Report
WWF brief - NbS in the CBD
WWF briefing The Rights Based Approach and the post-2020 GBF - April 2021
WWF Recommendations for gender-responsive GBF