

Programme Completion Review

Title: Cities4Forests Phase 2		
Final Programme Spend £ (full life): £4,400,000	Review Date:	09.2024
GB-GOV-7-PO020-C4F-Phase-2	Start Date: 21.11.2021	End Date: 30.06.2024

Summary of Programme Performance

Year	Year 1	PCR						
Programme Score	A	A+						
Residual Risk Exposure Rating								

DevTracker Link to Business Case (and any addendum):	DevTracker Programme GB-GOV-7-PO020-C4F-Phase-2 Documents (fcdo.gov.uk)
DevTracker Links to all logframes used during programme lifetime:	DevTracker Programme GB-GOV-7-PO020-C4F-Phase-2 Documents (fcdo.gov.uk)

[Scoring your programme:

The Programme Completion Review assesses and rates outputs using the following scale. The [programme scoring calculator](#) will calculate the overall output score, taking account of the weightings and individual output scores.

Description	Score
<i>Outputs substantially exceeded expectation</i>	A++
<i>Outputs moderately exceeded expectation</i>	A+
<i>Outputs met expectation</i>	A
<i>Outputs moderately did not meet expectation</i>	B
<i>Outputs substantially did not meet expectation</i>	C

A. Summary and Overview (1-2 pages)

Description of the programme and what it has achieved [1/2 page]

The Cities4Forests initiative links cities with forests and nature at three scales: inner forests (such as city trees, urban parks, and other green infrastructure), nearby forests (such as upstream watersheds) and faraway forests (especially tropical forests). Cities4Forests' intended impact is to accelerate the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of nature, to benefit cities, forests, and local communities. There are three pillars of the programme: on-the-ground technical assistance programs, support for new policies and practices, and efforts to unlock investments to catalyse progress on nature. Thematically, this includes a novel and diverse mix of approaches and situations and therefore elements of assistance, giving the ability to share experiences and develop links between a range of cities and countries (both ODA eligible and developed economies, but Defra's funding supports ODA-eligible countries) and to connect where wealth generally sits, in cities, with the different scales of forests.

The Business Case noted that in line with ICF objectives, the programme will support urban climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation efforts whilst contributing to poverty reduction and protecting biodiversity. Cities4Forests was founded by World Resource Institute (WRI), REVOLVE and Pilot Projects. WRI is Defra's delivery partner for Cities4Forests for the £4.4m voluntary contribution, which followed a £560k grant in early 2021. This Programme Completion Review (PCR) covers the implementation period from 22 November 2021 to 31 March 2024; our agreement completed with the submission of the final WRI report on 30 June 2024. In November 2023, WRI was

given a 3-month no cost-extension from the original implementation end date of December 31, 2023, with the project business case formally ending 30 June 2024.

Headline operational points:

- WRI has been a strong partner, **working effectively throughout the contribution period to deliver results against objectives set out in the business case, and working strategically in relevant areas to Defra.** The Cities4Forests team has been collaborative and flexible in working with the Defra programme team and in demonstrating programme achievements. We have developed an excellent working relationship. The Cities4Forests team has been consistent in meeting reporting deadlines and / or keeping Defra updated of any delays. Their reports were well organised and provided a rich range of examples to illustrate programme impacts and to show that spend matched satisfactorily to business case budget. Cities4Forests also regularly reflected on performance and implementing changes based on lessons learned. Cities4Forests has also drawn on wider capability within WRI to bolster their work, for example the Land and Carbon Lab (e.g. Global Forest Watch), the UrbanShift initiative and WRI's Gender and Equity Practice as well as the existing in-country teams.
- **Cities4Forests has met or exceeded all targets in the logframe, some markedly.** There are a broad range of achievements and activities, including specific technical assistance. However, this type of upstream, diverse developing initiative is not always easy to set targets for and indeed monitor the long-term impacts of. The logframe was completed in October 2022 then revised in March 2023 after the annual review. Even after this, some targets were significantly surpassed, particularly for output and outcome indicators (an extreme example is Output Indicator 1.2: Number of media hits promoting nature-based solutions; target for Defra funding 25, achieved attributed to Defra funding 231).
- ICF KPIs reported for the programme are:
 - ICF KPI 4: Number of people whose resilience has been improved as a result of ICF. Target: 250,000; achieved: 332,592
 - ICF KPI 6: Net Change in Greenhouse Gas Emissions (tCO₂e). Target: 16,000; achieved: 16,534
 - ICF KPI 17: Area Under Sustainable Management Practises (has) Target: 4000; achieved: 4,106
 - ICF KPI 15: Scored 4 (Partial evidence that suggest transformational change is likely)
 - TA KPI 3: Number of climate policies informed by ICF TA. Target: 14; achieved: 19
- Defra's flexible voluntary contribution has helped the Cities4Forests initiative move to a new level of implementation in ODA eligible countries. During the period of support, the total number of cities in the network has increased by around a third (to a total of 95 cities that have joined Cities4Forests). A notable achievement - although not a formal logframe target of Defra funding - has been to catalyse additional funding for the initiative from multiple sources, including DANIDA, Global Affairs Canada, FEMSA Foundation, and the Caterpillar Foundation. This has helped to grow economies of scale for projects and increase the impact of Defra's spend. **WRI estimate that Defra's initial contribution enabled Cities4Forests to unlock over US\$30 million in complementary funding to drive climate-resilient urban development across sub-Saharan Africa.** WRI estimate that complementary funding spent during Defra's implementation period (November 2021 to March 2024) was \$5.5m ODA and \$2.1m non-ODA. Defra's £4.4m voluntary contribution made up approximately 52% of ODA funding (44% of total funding) to Cities4Forests.
- The two-year investment in a longer-term existing programme passed quickly. A change in the Defra programme team part way and competing team priorities over the relatively short time-period also limited the Defra programme team's ability to deepen the partnerships with WRI and the beneficiaries of this programme, and to monitor delivery through country visits. In some countries, Defra's funding contributed to outputs, but impacts are yet to develop. The improvement of Defra's Operating Manual by the central Defra ODA Hub also occurred during this support, which meant that some new requirements were placed on the WRI team compared to the initial expectations.
- ICAI's review of HMG support to sustainable cities¹ (published in July 2024 with a green/amber assessment), highlighted the lack of linkage with nature-based solutions across HMG's funding to cities, which is a core focus of Cities4Forests. However, the review noted the limited visibility of Cities4Forests across HMG. There were a number of factors which made visibility difficult, including the fact that it was a relatively small investment from Defra, it was covered by a small Defra programme team (see point above),

¹ [UK aid for sustainable cities - ICAI \(independent.gov.uk\)](https://www.independent.gov.uk)

and the portfolio across HMG has been quite fragmented, making it difficult to dock into other, related programmes. Following annual review recommendations last year on increasing the visibility of the Cities4Forests, some beneficial cross-HMG links were made by the Defra team and WRI in the second year of the programme; for example, with Posts in India and East Africa. Wider visibility was sought for example, through cross-HMG teach-ins and dissemination of programme reporting and learning.

- VFM has been challenging to assess. We have focused on the 4 Es, building on information provided by WRI. In the absence of a cost benefit analysis in the business case addendum, we have offered a simple illustration of the monetary value linked to two of the ICF KPIs: GHG emissions reduced and restoration catalysed. WRI presented rationale of good value for money too in their final report, with evidence from a range of finance that was leveraged from Defra's initial investment.

Combining our assessment of logframe output, outcome and impact indicators, qualitative review of achievements as well as assessment of delivery partner performance, we score overall performance as an A+

Major lessons learned, evidence generated and recommendations [1/2 page]

- Development of guidance for monitoring upstream projects: WRI consider that UK ICF KPI methodologies are more focused on 'downstream' projects (e.g. tree planting, delivering training) whereas Cities4Forests has an emphasis on "upstream" interventions and enabling conditions (such as policy, finance, and markets) and work in a high number of cities and countries around the world. WRI suggested it would be valuable for Defra/UK ICF to invest in developing additional guidance for monitoring the wider-reaching impacts of upstream projects, to help the broader donor and environment and development community to understand how policy and broader efforts to foster positive enabling environments for nature-based solutions can translate into impacts such as hectares conserved and emissions reduced.
- Timeline to impacts: WRI note that many of the greatest impacts from Defra's investment may not be apparent until years later, considering the extended timeframe required to see the impacts of these kinds of interventions mature. Although Defra will maintain periodic catchups with WRI following programme closure to help understand these longer-term impacts, there is a lesson for Defra to consider in terms of the optimal length of investment in this kind of initiative. With a two-year duration, by the time the engagement with the programme is well developed, the end of implementation is on the radar. An extended involvement could potentially have allowed for more lessons to be learnt from upstream support and given the chance for more impacts to be generated. For future programming, Defra should consider longer term and better-resourced involvement in initiatives that are thematically well-integrated into Defra's ODA portfolio. This PCR also suggests that proportionate evaluation, perhaps as part of a wider thematic evaluation, could yield interesting information on understanding Cities4Forests' longer-term impacts as an upstream programme, and indeed its overall value for money.
- Logframe targets, importance of baseline information: more intensive work at the start of the programme to understand and develop targets particularly for outputs and outcomes would have been beneficial, including agreeing MEL processes, such as attribution, early. Cities4Forests noted that many of the learnings from Defra's requirements on MEL processes have been incorporated into their wider reporting processes.
- Visibility: following the recommendation in the programme's Annual Review, efforts were made by the Defra programme team to improve the programme's visibility across HMG and make links between Cities4Forests and teams at FCDO Posts. However, the size of the programme (operating in over 90 cities around the world) and the small Defra programme team, made this challenging, and this lack of visibility was highlighted by ICAI in their Sustainable Cities review. For future programmes of this kind, further emphasis by Defra should be placed on increasing visibility, sharing learning and results, and coordinating with central thematic teams (for example, in FCDO), who in turn were challenged by ICAI to bring more coherence to HMG's portfolio of work on cities.
- Safeguarding and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI): Cities4Forests actively engaged with Defra on GESI and safeguarding, developing more detailed guidance and processes throughout the course of the contribution period, and working towards more robust safeguards and realising and demonstrating better outcomes for marginalised groups.
- Defra programme management: there are several recommendations later in this PCR around programme management, for example, the need to earmark sufficient programme management time to allow deeper

involvement with programmes. For new Defra programming, many of these recommendations will be captured now that the revised Defra ODA Operating Manual is in force, compared to when the Cities4Forests investment started in 2021.

WRI Cities4Forests programme-specific lessons:

- Increased focus: in the early stages of the initiative Cities4Forests expanded its cities network rapidly. The Cities4Forests team noted a lesson to focus more and only expand geographic or thematic scope when there was a clear business case and path to impact to do so.
- Network approach: the expanded network of cities allowed efficient sharing of information and encouraged knowledge exchange. There were interesting exchanges between developed and developing country cities for example around finance, however, some of the most productive exchanges were noted between cities in the global South.
- Finance for nature-based solutions takes time and patience, and pragmatism is crucial for blended finance: Cities4Forests found in sub-Saharan Africa that a large proportion of NBS projects relied on grants. Many sought private finance, but few were able to engage and convince investors on the viability of NBS and faced significant challenges.
- Approaches: WRI has highlighted the successful ‘accelerator’ approaches in India, Brazil and Sub-Saharan Africa that allowed Cities4Forests to maximise limited resources through targeted support and scaling. Accelerators have proved a strategic tool to mobilise resources, engage stakeholders and integrate NBS into urban planning and policy frameworks. Recommendation to prioritise the approach going forwards.

See Annex A for **Major lessons and recommendations for the year ahead from the 2022 Annual Review**

How this report was conducted [1 paragraph]

The scope of the PCR was agreed with the Cities4Forests team at the penultimate quarterly meeting so that their final report could provide relevant information. Defra carried out a PCR planning meeting prior to commencing the report with Defra’s Evidence and Analysis team agreeing sequencing and inputs. Cities4Forests provided a comprehensive final report with narrative examples of activities, a GESI analysis, evidence of value for money, the risk register, lessons learned and the logframe with results achieved across impact, outcome and output indicators. Defra reviewed this and previous WRI reports, the last annual review, business case addendum and the voluntary contribution agreement to consider the programme as a whole. The UK Posts where Cities4Forests carried out more activities and fellow donors were asked for feedback which has been incorporated. External sources of information and feedback were sought. The final financial report was reviewed by Defra’s ODA finance manager. The initial draft was reviewed by the team leader and then shared with WRI for a fact check and comments prior to submission to Defra’s Annual Review Board. Feedback from the Board was incorporated, and the PCR finalised with input from WRI.

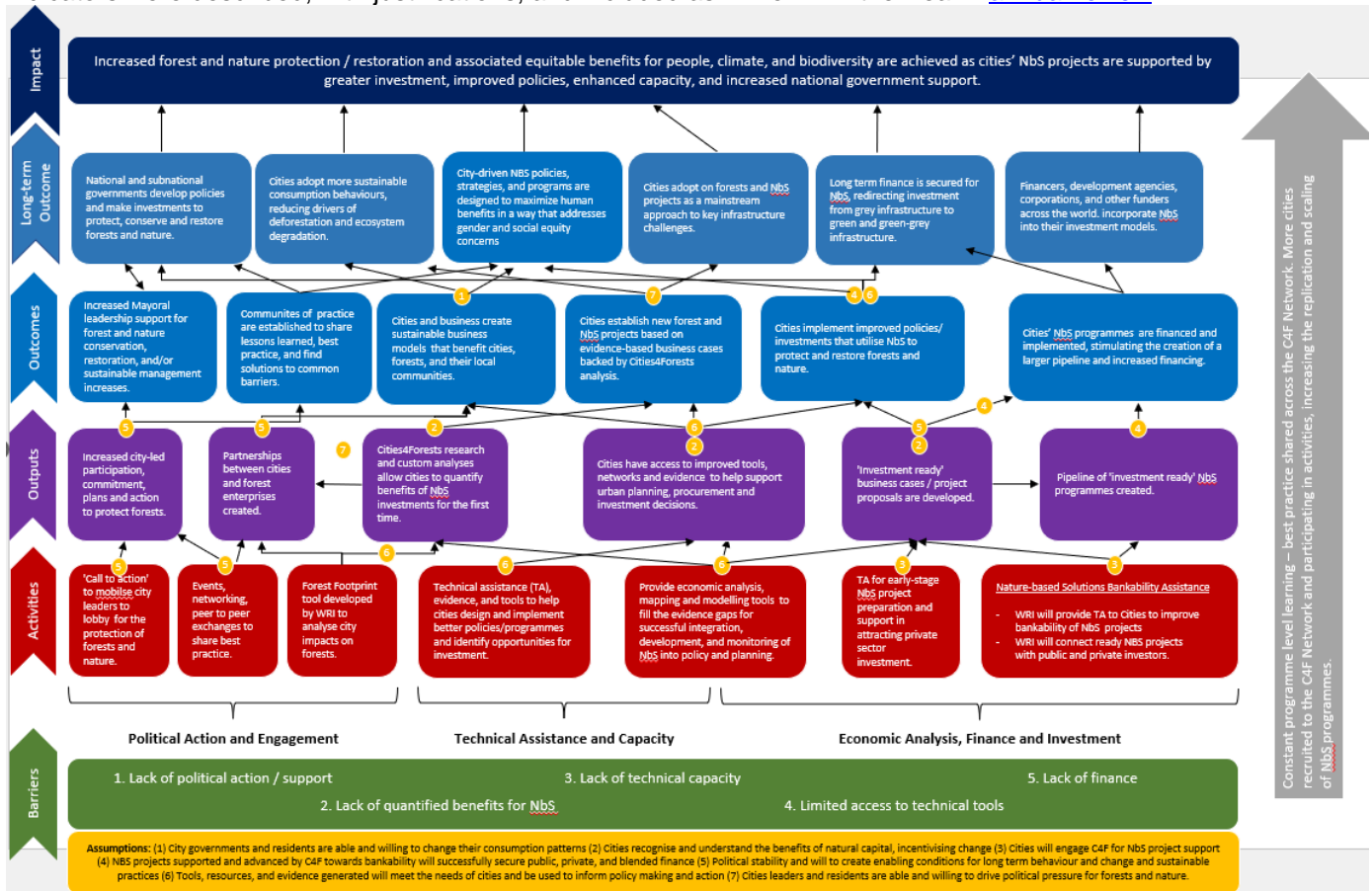
Actions following approval of this report [1-2 paragraphs]

As per the voluntary contribution agreement, Defra has received the final WRI narrative report as well as final financial report. Queries to both have been answered by WRI. The one outstanding product is the audit of the final financial report by Grant Thornton. This will be available by mid-October 2024. Following approval, this PCR will be uploaded to DevTracker.

B: Theory of Change and Outcome Assessment (1-2 pages)

Summarise the programme's theory of change (ToC) and results framework

The initiative's ToC is below. The logframe was completed in October 2022, the final version including results is also on DevTracker. After the first annual review, the logframe was revised in March 2023. The changes to impact indicators were described, with justifications, and included as Annex D in the Year 1 [annual review](#).



Cities4Forests' strategy to achieve impact is by working to change enabling conditions such as policy, finance, and capacity building to achieve systems change. The ToC was co-developed with Defra to identify a set of strategic activities in key geographies that would lead to outputs (e.g., research and analysis, convenings) that would then lead to outcomes (policy and finance changes), that then lead to Impacts (hectares conserved and restored on the ground). The assumptions shown above in the ToC have not been comprehensively reviewed, however there are indications of some assumptions being met through this PCR; for example #4: *NBS projects supported and advanced by Cities4Forests towards bankability will successfully secure public, private, and blended finance* and (see outcome indicator on finance narrative later this section) #6: *Tools, resources, and evidence generated will meet the needs of cities and be used to inform policy making and action* (see outcome indicator on technical assistance narrative). An evaluation would allow a more in-depth testing of the initial assumptions and consideration of how the evidence base has developed.

The example below illustrates how Cities4Forests' strategy works: activities leading to outputs, to outcomes, and eventually flowing through to impacts.

Cities4Forests and WRI Indonesia developed and launched 'EMISI', an innovative crowdfunding mechanism and mobile application, which has been adopted by multiple e-commerce and rideshare platforms to finance several forest restoration sites throughout Indonesia. EMISI raises money to finance tree planting, which contributes to carbon sequestration, restoration of degraded land and sustainable jobs for local communities.

- Barriers: EMISI sought to address key barriers identified in the ToC including 3 (lack of technical capacity), 4 (limited access to technical tools), and 5 (lack of finance).

- **Activities:** Cities4Forests provided Technical Assistance to develop the methodologies and tools needed for urban residents to calculate carbon footprints, convert to recommendations for restoration, collect and deliver finance, and training local groups in tree planting, care, and monitoring.
- **Outputs:** Listed in the ToC as “Cities have improved access to tools”, Cities4Forests published the methodology, developed an app, hosted trainings and workshops, and produced communications materials to reach Indonesian audiences.
- **Outcomes:** In line with the Outcome “Cities’ NBS programmes are financed and implemented”, EMISI raised US\$376,500 and delivered it to local organisations conducting restoration, providing livelihoods and digital literacy trainings for local people in rural areas.
- **Impacts:** The funds financed the planting of 166,531 trees, which are anticipated to sequester 11.77 million kgCO₂ over 20 years, the restoration of 203 hectares of degraded land, and creation of sustainable jobs for local communities (see ToC and logframe results).

Changes to outcome and impact indicators. [1/2 – 1 page]

Business case expected results

Defra’s business case addendum included the following expected results from the investment in Cities4Forests:

- 32,860 hectares of land benefit from avoided deforestation, restoration and improved management;
- 314,290 tCO₂ avoided or sequestered over 20 years;
- 170,660 people benefit from improved source water protection, improved air quality, reduced extreme heat and increased employment; and
- 70% of Cities4Forests project areas in or near member cities will be in zones essential to biodiversity preservation. In developing countries, 90% of Cities4Forests project areas in or near member cities will be in zones essential to biodiversity preservation.

The first three expected results were included in the logframe as impact indicators and are discussed throughout this PCR. The fourth result (related to biodiversity) was not included in the logframe, however, WRI has re-run the original high-level analysis to evaluate actual project distribution relative to areas important for biodiversity: in Latin America, 17 of 18 (96%) project sites were in zones essential to biodiversity preservation, in Africa it was 10 of 11 (91%) and in Asia it was 12 out of 14 (86%) sites.

In the March 2023 logframe review, two targets for impact indicators were reduced: Impact indicator 1 on ‘hectares of land benefiting from sustainable land management practices’ was reduced from 32,860 hectares to 4000 hectares. Impact indicator 2 on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions avoided, the target was reduced from 31,420 tCO₂ to 16,000 tCO₂ for the duration of this investment, although benefits are expected to continue accruing into the future (as noted in the logframe). The target for impact indicator 3, on ‘number of people whose climate resilience has been improved’ was increased from 170,660 to 250,000 people.

As shown in below table, all outcome indicators were also increased. Cities4Forests was conservative in their initial estimates, but through an iterative back-and-forth process with their in-country teams and Defra, they clarified which activities could feed into which outputs, outcomes and impacts. They also discovered new outcomes that could feed into metrics, and found that overall, they were under-counting their successes.

	Starting point	Final result
Budget	£4,400,000	£4,400,000
Timeframe	21 November, 2021 – 31 st December, 2023	21 November, 2021 – 30 th June, 2024 (activities completed 31 st March, 2024)

Impacts			
Impact Indicator (Units)	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target (last revision March 2023)	Final Result Achieved
Hectares of land benefiting from sustainable land management practices (hectares)	32,860 ha	4,000	4,106

Greenhouse gas emissions reduced or avoided (tCO ₂)	31,420	16,000	16,534
Number of people whose climate resilience has been improved through Cities4Forests (people)	170,660	250,000	332,592
Number of people with enhanced livelihoods through Cities4Forests	*This indicator was added after initial logframe was created	100	2,549
Outcomes			
Outcome Indicator (Units)	<i>Starting Target</i>	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
POLITICAL ACTION: Number of cities publicly issuing political statements supporting forests or nature as a result of Cities4Forests (number of cities)	10	75	98
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Number of policies, regulations, guidance, strategies, or commitments passed, enhanced, or informed by Cities4Forests (number of policies etc)	5	14	23
FINANCE: Number of NBS projects with improved financial access as a result of adopting Cities4Forests instruments or recommendations (number of projects)	5	5	21

Overall assessment of programme outcomes, impacts, sustainability and VfM [1/2 – 1 page]

Cities4Forests achieved all impact and outcome indicator targets in the logframe within budget (including a 3 month no-cost extension), however, the above table illustrates the challenges of setting targets for an upstream programme like Cities4Forests. Impact and outcome indicator targets were revised significantly during the short life of Defra's investment. Even with this adjustment, some revised targets were still significantly exceeded. Therefore as mentioned in the lessons learned section, Cities4Forests will be investing in MEL processes and accuracy in target setting.

After such a short duration investment, it is difficult to conclude comprehensively on sustainability, however, as the logframe shows, the impacts of Defra's investment are projected to continue. Cities4Forests is a long-term initiative and arguably one of the bigger impacts of Defra's flexible voluntary contribution has been to provide the platform for WRI to take funding to a new level for the programme (e.g. Canada's investment), and help countries scale investment in the thematic area (e.g. Green Climate Fund proposal in Colombia) – this has not been captured in the results framework, but is explicitly recognised by the Cities4Forests team. During the completion of the PCR, we have made a consideration of transformational change following the ICF KPI 15 methodology.

While the business case did not contemplate evaluation, this PCR suggests, subject to available funding and WRI agreement, that proportionate evaluation, perhaps as part of a wider thematic evaluation, could yield interesting information on better understanding an upstream multi-donor programme's longer-term impacts, target setting as well as triangulation of results and deeper consideration of value for money. As Defra funding has ended it is difficult to secure funding for a specific programme evaluation, however, the Defra programme team will work with

our ODA Hub colleagues to investigate the potential to include Cities4Forests learning in any future thematic evaluations we undertake. If WRI were to secure funding for this Defra would be happy to suggest areas of interest, such as better understanding the impacts of upstream interventions, tracking and measuring eventual results, testing continued relevance of the programme's ToC, how GESI considerations could be more integrated through the whole results framework and how best to measure value for money.

Over and above the logframe indicators, the novel linkage of cities to the three spatial sets of forests/nature is a benefit of the programme – in simple terms, linking where the money is with where nature is, and using nature-based solutions to benefit people.

1. Review the outcome level results against the logframe targets, and compare these with the overall output score.

The three outcome indicators are aligned with the pillars that form the basis of the Cities4Forests programme, helping cities to support nature and increase climate resilience through a) political action and engagement, b) technical assistance and capacity-building and c) economics, finance, and investment. In other words, their aim is to help cities make the necessary commitments, access the tools and resources they need to follow through, and gather the money needed to make it possible.

- a. Political Action: Number of cities publicly issuing political statements supporting forests or nature as a result of Cities4Forests. Laying the groundwork for this outcome, at Climate Week NYC in 2021, just before Defra's voluntary contribution commenced, Cities4Forests issued the "[Call to Action on Forests & Climate](#)". This was a declaration by 58 cities, including more than 50 mayors, representing 170 million residents. The declaration served as a [catalyst for additional commitments and pledges](#) on forest action from governments, Multilateral Development Banks, and companies at the Glasgow-based COP26 later that year. During our funding, notable examples include:
 - i. 26 additional cities joining Cities4Forests expanding the total to 96, for example, the Mayor of Niterói, Brazil signed the Declaration at the Cities Summit of Americas in April 2023, Bengaluru, India joined in June 2024.
 - ii. Kenyan President William Ruto, Governor of Nairobi City County Sakaja Johnson, with the support of Cities4Forests, and WRI Managing Director for Africa and Global Partnerships Wanjira Mathai [launched the Nairobi Rivers Commission](#) in February 2023 to rehabilitate wetlands and riparian zones in Nairobi City County to improve the quality of life and resilience of its residents. Through Cities4Forests, WRI is providing technical assistance on planning, design, and financing. Cities4Forests is providing support to the city of Nairobi and the [Nairobi Rivers Commission](#) in the wake of the [devastating floods of April and May 2024](#) to increase adoption and investment in community-led solutions for urban river regeneration.
- b. Technical Assistance: Number of policies, regulations, guidance, strategies, or commitments passed, enhanced, or informed by Cities4Forests. This target was exceeded, and there are strong results which illustrate the breadth and depth of Cities4Forests support. Achievements contributing to this formed the basis of reporting to ICF TA KPI 3: Number of climate policies informed by ICF TA. Some examples in 2023 include assistance/support to: the Brazzaville Urban Forest Policy, enhance the PES programme in Itabirito, Brazil based on a Cities4Forests study of natural infrastructure for water, incorporation of urban trees in Denpasar's regulations on GHG emissions, an NBS module in Indonesia's detailed Spatial Planning Regulation and the regulation establishing Nairobi Rivers Commission. Cities4Forests supported Jakarta's government to develop [regulations on management and protection of trees](#) and the provision and utilization of parks. Jakarta has subsequently established 54 new parks since 2022, many of which are in areas previously lacking green space, and planted more than 65,000 urban trees.
- c. Finance: number of NBS projects with improved financial access as a result of adopting Cities4Forests instruments or recommendations. Cities4Forests exceeded this target, which aligns with the overall output score of [A+]. A cornerstone of this indicator is Cities4Forests' strong results achieved through their NBS Accelerator model. Rather than supporting one project at a time, this has enabled rapid implementation of NBS through technical assistance to cohort groups of 5-10 projects and delivered capacity-building efforts in group settings. This enhances efficiency by enabling faster learning, adoption, and scaling through WRI's support in data analysis, community engagement, and cross-sectoral partnerships, resulting in projects that are quickly implemented, commercially viable, managed by long-term institutional partners, and aligned with future infrastructure investments. This collaborative approach not only reduces unit costs, but also enables faster and more efficient project implementation across different regions. In one example, a project in Maranguape, Brazil that was supported by the NBS Accelerator programme aimed to improve resident disaster resilience with rain gardens, biofiltering gardens, evapotranspiration basins, and biodigester pits paired with plans for new housing and revitalisation of the adjacent urban spaces.

Cities4Forests' team showcased the project to potential investors and eventually helped the project secure a US\$7 million grant from the Brazilian Ministry of Cities to scale the project. In another example, Cities4Forests' carried out an analysis on Incorporating Natural Infrastructure in Bogotá's Water System and how this can generate significant economic savings for Bogotá's water utility through reduced operational costs due to improved sediment and nitrogen control. These savings not only benefit the water utility but would diversify Bogotá's portfolio of water sources and reduce the need for reservoir expansion, improving water security for the city. This analysis has inspired a forthcoming proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) designed to unlock an investment of at least US\$70 million to develop and implement a large-scale green-grey infrastructure project for Bogotá's water supply system.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Cities4Forests has put significant commitment into gender, equality and social inclusion (GESI) since the inception of the programme. The original Defra business case and business case addendum had some limited references to GESI, and Cities4Forests and Defra have taken strides to develop the overarching strategic vision and to embed these aims further as the programme evolved throughout policies, activities, targets and impacts.

Cities4Forests published a number of learning guides and policy documents that set out principles, objectives and methods for promoting GESI. With resources from Defra's initial pilot investment from January to March of 2020, Cities4Forests created a '[Cities4Forests Gender and Social Equity Learning Guide](#)'. It directs cities toward positive, equitable, and inclusive forest related programmes by increasing awareness and supporting implementation of social equity considerations. Cities4Forests, and WRI more broadly, have also implemented new systems to make social analyses and GESI considerations a consistent and more standard part of the project design and planning process. This includes a requirement that both high-level projects and individual country offices (including Defra-funded work at WRI Brasil and WRI India) implement a "rapid social analysis" that includes an evaluation of laws, policies, regulations, and institutional context; access to and control of resources; participation, inclusion & power; current practice versus best practice; and project recommendations. This analysis has the potential to address the participation (or lack thereof) of marginalised groups in projects and to ensure that benefits are distributed more equally.

About midway through implementation, the programme included a new logframe output indicator on equity, which counted the number of NBS projects and policies informed by Cities4Forests with integrated gender and social equity considerations. This helped Cities4Forests to identify projects that were promoting GESI, and to use these as models for other projects to also embed GESI objectives. There is also a logframe target on the number of people whose climate resilience was improved through the programme, and Cities4Forests added a logframe target during implementation which counts the number of people with enhanced livelihoods through Cities4Forests. Cities4Forests has begun starting to disaggregate data for these indicators and for overarching ICF KPI reporting using more widely available data such as census data to provide estimates for population disaggregation (sex, geography, ability, and age). They have reflected that because data from government partners may be too limited in terms of its granularity and privacy restrictions, their plan is to move towards more robust disaggregation by advocating to donors to provide dedicated financial resources to support the increased use of surveys, focus groups, and technological tools that can provide access to GESI-relevant data. These steps would serve to understand in greater detail the programme's results in terms of GESI at the outcome level, and to ensure that projects are indeed supporting the most marginalised groups to which the interventions are targeted.

An internal review of GESI performance looked at Cities4Forests and made some constructive recommendations. The key one was for Cities4Forests to carry out a GESI analysis. While many Cities4Forests projects have carried out their own local version of a GESI analysis, including analysis of political, economic and social factors, Cities4Forests aimed to provide an overarching analysis of the programme as a whole. They looked at questions like "who will be left behind" by the programme, and included WRI guidance for typically 'hard to reach' groups. They discussed drivers of inequality and learning about power dynamics in some contexts that may exclude the perspectives of women, youth, Indigenous People, and/or the economically disadvantaged. They reviewed the harms that this inequality can cause, as well as unintended harms from interventions, such as displacement, gentrification, and added marginalization to already vulnerable groups. They then set out their principles for how to mitigate these harms, including transparency, inclusivity and evidence-based programming, and a project design process that leads with a needs assessment and action analysis. Cities4Forests included helpful examples from a range of projects that demonstrated how they're already implementing these features of GESI across the programme. They also referred to their processes for preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH); GESI-aligned procurement policies; internal, institutional policies for GESI and SEAH that apply to WRI; and WRI team capacity and expertise on GESI. Their reflections on lessons learnt and next steps for GESI in Cities4Forests demonstrated their commitment and ambition, with a particular focus on embedding their 'rapid social analysis' further across projects, improving data disaggregation, and continuing to invest in GESI-transformative projects where GESI is a primary objective.

C: Detailed Output Assessment [aim for max. 1 page per output. Repeat for each output]

Explanation on output scoring: as previously noted, output indicator targets have all been exceeded, some quite significantly. We have tempered our scoring with qualitative consideration of achievements too which we include in the narrative.

Output Number and Title	1. POLITICAL ACTION: Cities4Forests mobilizes city leaders to become vocal advocates for forests on the global stage		
Output Score	A+		
Impact weighting (%)	20%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
1.1 Number of Cities4Forests-supported events showcasing city leaders as advocates for forests	8	55	98

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
1.2 Number of media hits promoting nature-based solutions	15	25	231

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
1.3 Number of knowledge and communications products produced as a result of Cities4Forests activity	8	35	89

Briefly describe the output's activities and achievements during its lifetime, and provide supporting narrative for the score. [1/2 page]

Cities4Forests exceeded targets for all three indicators for the political action output in the current review period. Some highlights include a successful launch event in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, laying out a policy path for preserving and restoring the city's trees and forests. Attendees included Mayor Dieudonné Bantsimba, cabinet members, and over 100 attendees from local NGOs and civil society. The strategy outlines concrete actions and potential funding sources to guide effective urban forest conservation and NBS interventions, including potential impacts for tree planting around roads and social service buildings such as schools and hospitals.

The programme also exceeded targets for NBS media hits and communications products. In this case the target was clearly too low, being exceeded by an order of magnitude. This included a new website with key information on projects, resources and research, a newsletter with roughly 1,200 subscribers, a LinkedIn audience growing by 42% to over 2,000 followers, and multiple articles published on NBS, including one viewed over 850 times and another over 2,700 times. In addition to the logframe indicators, the Cities4Forests monthly email update is a useful source of information.

Lessons learned through this output, and recommendations for future programming [1-2 paragraphs]

While Cities4Forests surpassed the targets for this output indicator, in the future the programme team could assess further methods for setting appropriate baselines and ensuring ambition is high enough. Cities4Forests has identified this as one of the major lessons learned and expressed their commitment to the critical importance of mapping and scientific assessments to gain a clear understanding of ecosystems and communities from the outset to establish accurate baselines. This sets a foundation for setting ambition, measuring progress and making informed decisions in line with the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework.

Cities4Forests implemented recommendations from the last Annual Review for this indicator about improving communications and engagement through their communications strategy refresh in 2023 and tailoring communications to target audiences. This response to reflecting on areas for improvement from the last Annual Review helped to feed into these results. In one example, Cities4Forests invested in creating search-optimised editorial content, and one of their articles on the impacts of wildfires in cities has reached almost 13,000 people since its publication in June 2023 and is a top result for multiple Google search inquiries.

Output Number and Title	2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Cities4Forests empowers cities to operate with improved capacity to implement NBS, including improving policy/regulatory environments, utilizing new tools and methodologies, and improving ability to address social issues		
Output Score	A+		
Impact weighting (%)	40%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
2.1 Number of cities designing / implementing new or improved NBS programs as a result of Cities4Forests support	15	58	75

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
2.2 Number of new technical tools developed, curated, or applied by Cities4Forests that strengthen city capacity to implement NBS	4	4	9

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
2.3 Number of new technical analyses produced by Cities4Forests that strengthen city capacity to implement NBS	*This indicator was added after initial logframe was created	18	35

Briefly describe the output’s activities and achievements during its lifetime, and provide supporting narrative for the score. [1/2 page]

Cities4Forests exceeded all targets for the technical assistance output in the current review period. There were a range of activities that fed into this output. Cities4Forests provided analysis, engagement and technical expertise to cities across India to implement more than 30 nature-based projects over the past three years, to tackle challenges like urban flooding, extreme heat, and water shortages. At Jaipur Central Jail, WRI and local partners worked with inmates to create an urban farm on prison grounds. The fresh, organic produce is served to over 1,000 inmates and prison officials, while the farm itself helps cool the property. In Mumbai, a school-based urban gardening project offers students hands-on curriculum on plant care and the importance of local green spaces. The project is now being scaled across 250 public schools around the city and will improve food security for an estimated 72,000 students. These outcomes led to India's first national-level forum on urban nature-based solutions. Entrepreneurs, private investors, research organizations, civil society, academia, technical experts, government agencies, and policy makers regularly convene to share best practices and experiences implementing nature-based solutions in their cities to help scale NBS nationally and globally.

The Cities4Forests Forest Footprint Tool was developed during Defra's investment to support multiple cities' forest impact monitoring and baseline assessments. The first-of-its-kind tool takes literature on forest risk consumption and impacts, filters them through a framework with city specific data, and populates a live online Forest Footprint Dashboard² that shows cities their total annual deforestation footprint, as well as a breakdown with user-controllable inputs on future consumption and impact targets.

In Indonesia, Cities4Forests collaborated with Indigenous communities to accelerate the analysis, recognition and protection of their territories and traditional knowledge in spatial plans for Jayapura and Manokwari, where traditional community lands are under threat of development and loss of community tenure. This work also contributed to a broader effort by WRI Indonesia to work with the Gugus Tugas Masyarakat Adat (GTMA), or the Indigenous Peoples Task Force, which conducted participatory mapping in 92 Indigenous territories across over 300,000 hectares of land. This resulted in the issuance of six customary forest certificates in Jayapura regency which were a formal government recognition of Indigenous land rights.

In Bogotá, Colombia, Cities4Forests worked with Conservation International and Bogota's water utility to launch and disseminate the Bogotá Green-Gray Assessment report. Its findings include estimating the expected economic costs and benefits of natural infrastructure investments, encompassing implementation costs such as upfront investments, maintenance, and opportunity costs, as well as benefit estimations like expected cost reductions in chemical products for water treatment and energy costs. This makes a compelling business case for NBS investments in Bogotá's watershed, setting the stage for transformative water management that has the potential to benefit over 8 million residents and to serve as a model for global cities.

Lessons learned through this output, and recommendations for future programming [1-2 paragraphs]

In the March 2023 logframe review, the Cities4Forests team added Output Indicator 2.3: Number of new technical analyses produced by Cities4Forests that strengthen city capacity to implement NBS. The Cities4Forests team recommended this addition after realizing that existing Output indicators such as 2.2 and 1.3 did not adequately capture the amount of capacity the initiative was building through technical analyses produced in partnership with local governments or community organizations. One example is Cities4Forests collaboration with the city government of Addis Ababa to implement a participatory mapping approach to create a [first of its kind tree cover map](#) and baseline for the city that now serves as an official reference for the city as they implement NBS projects.

Cities4Forests reflected on its rapid expansion earlier in the programme, adding new cities to the network and engaging in a wide range of opportunities across target geographies. While there were benefits of having the opportunity to work with a larger number of cities and identify the highest-impact opportunities, Cities4Forests found that they could deliver more impacts when they focused the geographic and thematic scope to their areas of expertise, political action, technical assistance and finance. They slowed expansion and inclusion of new cities to those where they could articulate a clearer path to impact, including future funding and financing. In the long term, this allowed the programme to focus on and scale successful projects.

Output Number and Title	3. FINANCE: Cities4Forests supports cities to unlock finance for NBS, through public, private, or blended sources
Output Score	A+

² <https://forestfootprint.org/>

Impact weighting (%)	40%	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No
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Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
3.1 Number of Cities4Forests finance-focused technical advisory engagements that advance access to finance for NBS projects	8	30	35

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
3.2 Number of institutions with revised or updated financial strategies / commitments for supporting NBS as a result of Cities4Forests	3	10	13

Briefly describe the output's activities and achievements during its lifetime, and provide supporting narrative for the score. [1/2 page]

Cities4Forests exceeded all targets for the finance output in the current review period. There were a range of activities that contributed to this output. In Maranguape Brazil, Cities4Forests helped unlock ~US\$9 million of funding for a local NBS project. The NBS accelerator provided technical support on investment-readiness for the city's "Projecto Parque Pirapora" which supported residents near the Pirapora River who had long been vulnerable to severe flooding, exacerbating existing problems with under-performing built infrastructure and a housing shortage. Support was aimed at improving resident flood disaster resilience with rain gardens, biofiltering gardens, evapotranspiration basins, and biodigester pits paired with plans for new housing and revitalization of the adjacent urban spaces. The Cities4Forests' team showcased the project to potential investors to help secure the further funding, which will allow for larger-scale implementation and can serve as a model for other Brazilian cities.

In another example, Cities4Forests supported the Brazilian state government of Espirito Santo to adopt a law that prioritises the restoration of water-critical forested areas upstream of the Vitoria Metropolitan Area. They conducted a study showing they may gain more from their investments in reservoirs if they are accompanied by natural or "green" infrastructure like native forests that help maintain healthy watersheds. Cities4Forests conducted a spatial and financial analysis which found that the water company, Cesan, stands to benefit from becoming a restoration partner and investing in natural infrastructure, reducing sediment pollution and saving the company US\$26 million over 20 years, a 14% return on their investment. In 2022 and 2023, the state has channelled more than R\$4.2 million (roughly US\$800k) through a payment for ecosystem services scheme that pays local landowners to implement agroforestry and other sustainable land management practices across more than 900 hectares of land, based on locations recommended by Cities4Forests.

Lessons learned through this output, and recommendations for future programming [1-2 paragraphs]

Cities4Forests reflected on the pressure to mobilise private and blended finance for NBS and climate-positive action globally, and how these activities do not happen over short timeframes. Cities4Forests carried out research on the status of NBS project development in sub-Saharan Africa, and found that of nearly 250 NBS projects, 88% percent relied primarily on grants for their financing. Though many projects sought to engage private finance, few had the necessary tools or experience to engage investors, faced significant challenges related to local governance and market conditions, and faced an investor landscape that is still questioning the financial benefits from NBS. Cities4Forests reflected that this is a significant gap, particularly when across the Global South, philanthropic and grant funding to support projects in securing private finance is likely to be necessary for the foreseeable future, and this will have disproportionately difficult consequences for the most vulnerable populations living amongst informal

settlements. More research like this would be beneficial to indicate how and when, along the arc of project maturity, private capital is a realistic near-term pathway, and how trust over a sustained period is required.

Output Number and Title	4. EQUITY – Cities4Forests promotes gender equality and social inclusion throughout its programmes.		
Output Score	A		
Impact weighting (%)	Cross cutting	Impact weighting revised since last AR?	No

Output Indicator	Starting Target	Final Logframe Target	Final Result Achieved
4 Number of NBS projects and policies informed by Cities4Forests with integrated gender and social equity considerations	*This indicator was added after initial logframe was created	12	23

Briefly describe the output's activities and achievements during its lifetime, and provide supporting narrative for the score. [1/2 page]

Both WRI and Defra have sought to raise the profile and strengthen integration of gender equity and social inclusion in programmes. Defra has strengthened the integration of GESI across its ODA portfolio through the establishment of a Social Development Unit that has supported increased capacity and capability in Defra programmes through assessments, guidance and trainings. WRI developed the '[Cities4Forests Gender and Social Equity Learning Guide](#)' and WRI's GESI specialist travelled to Africa to lead trainings. Cities4Forests added a new cross cutting indicator tracking the number of NBS projects and policies informed by Cities4Forests with integrated gender and social equity considerations. While commitments to GESI were apparent throughout both organisations' policies, this was an opportunity to include a metric in the logframe to more accurately reflect outcomes in Cities4Forests projects around GESI. While Cities4Forests exceeded targets for this output indicator, we recognise that this is a journey towards being GESI transformative in programmes which continues; for this reason, we have scored an A.

One example contributing to this indicator is Cities4Forests' Green Open Space Accessibility Mapping project. It aimed to identify and address barriers faced by women and marginalised groups in accessing green spaces by using surveys and workshops with local communities in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Kumasi, Ghana; and Musanze, Rwanda. Some city parks in these cities charge entry fees, making them effectively inaccessible to all but the wealthiest residents. Some public spaces did not meet standards for perceived personal safety, which includes fear of crime and violence, which made them inaccessible to many women, youth, and the elderly. With Cities4Forests' guidance, each city now aims to improve social equity and accessibility in at least one green space in a previously underutilised area and will seek to integrate GESI considerations into planning and implementation processes.

In another project in the Ruzizi Basin, DRC, WRI hired a GESI consultant to conduct a rapid social analysis to assess the distribution of benefits from tree nurseries within communities. Women and youth will then be engaged in roles managing the tree nurseries and participating as sapling providers, contributing to targets of more equitable distribution of benefits.

Lessons learned through this output, and recommendations for future programming [1-2 paragraphs]

Cities4Forests reflected on its work towards embedding GESI throughout its programmes and stated a number of lessons and actions. Firstly, they wanted to work towards a more systematic and consistent approach to social analysis for all projects. This is already a requirement at WRI for many projects of a certain size or scope, and Cities4Forests has the opportunity to implement social analysis in more projects in the coming year. They also wanted to direct funding towards acquiring more robust disaggregated data in projects to measure GESI indicators. They recognized that their current approach relying on data from government partners may be too limited in terms of granularity and privacy restrictions. They plan to advocate to donors to provide dedicated financial resources to support the increased use of surveys, focus groups, and technological tools that can provide access to GESI-relevant data. Finally, they are committed to investing in more GESI-transformative projects. For example, a core

feature of a newly funded project by Canada is engaging women and other underrepresented groups in NBS planning, project preparation, implementation, and local decision-making. In delivering these solutions, the project works to shift social norms and power relationships to facilitate the active participation and influence of women in climate action. By investing in projects like this with a strong GESI component, they can collect learning and scale the lessons to all Cities4Forests projects.

D: Value for Money [$\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 page]

VfM performance compared to the original VfM proposition in the business case

The original Cities4Forests Business Case Addendum for the voluntary contribution contained only high-level information on VfM. This did not include any cost-benefit analysis, which might have been used to demonstrate and subsequently monitor VfM compared to what was originally anticipated. The Cities4Forests Annual Review, completed in December 2022, presented a more detailed assessment made against the FCDO 4E Framework. For the PCR, we will follow the same 4 Es approach, however, have also provided two potential quantified examples based on the programme's final reported results to illustrate the programmes' potential cost-effectiveness.

Overall, the programme is judged to have achieved good VfM as the Cities4Forests programme has delivered well against all the desired outputs at the original £4.4m cost. Most notably, and as shown below, Defra's relatively small voluntary contribution has enabled WRI to leverage a significant amount of funding from other sources, and to support countries to scale investment in different thematic areas. While this has not been captured in the results framework, it contributes to demonstrating the overall value for money of Defra's investment.

Economy – considers whether the inputs required for a project are being procured at the right price.

As anticipated in the Business Case, material costs have been relatively low over the course of Defra's voluntary contribution. The focus on providing technical assistance and capacity building support means the largest expenditure is on staff. This is due to Cities4Forests' approach of working "upstream" on enabling conditions (for example, focused on shifting policy, building partner capacity through provision of technical assistance, mobilising finance etc.) rather than directly spending funds on material costs (such as tree seedlings, equipment for conservation patrols). Cities4Forests noted that they have taken steps to control these staff costs, for example, by minimising hiring in WRI's Washington D.C. office (where salaries and office costs are relatively high) and growing the team primarily in WRI's country offices, where staff costs are lower. Of the 60+ staff that spend significant time working on Cities4Forests, fewer than a dozen are based in the US. This also has the added benefit of building local teams that know the local context, politics and language.

Spend was monitored during the annual reporting process; total spend did not exceed the £4.4m budget. Table 2 below compares the actual spend with the business case budget. The larger budget lines (>£100k) are within 10% variance of budgets. Several budget lines, notably Travel, Conferences and Communications did go up proportionately more as the programme adapted to the impacts of COVID (including the need to reinforce relationships with partners after periods of pandemic separation) and increased travel costs due to inflation. Defra accepted the rationale for these deviations. WRI has accounting and financial management safeguards in place, including layers of review by project-level accounting teams, central accounting teams, managers, and external auditors, and they follow US Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles (GAAP). An external audit of Defra funding is also being prepared.

Table 2: Expected Programme Costs for Cities4Forests Extension (Nominal Prices)

Categories	Total Predicted Cost (from BC, 2019)	Total Actual Cost (from final financial report, 2024)	Difference (Predicted – Actual)
	GBP	GBP	GBP
Salaries	1,216,567	1,187,510	+29,057
Benefits	563,660	511,898	+51,762
Occupancy	73,218	63,565	+9,653
Project-Related Office Services & Supplies	47,446	47,747	-301
Research Expenses	146,474	149,662	-3,188
Conference Expenses	70,239	89,332	-19,093

Publications	16,549	11,550	+4,999
Communications	67,591	96,937	-29,346
Travel	72,197	98,058	-25,861
Project-Related Electronic Network	106,831	106,275	+556
Research Materials & Quality Assurance	49,943	50,260	-317
Subgrants	1,601,593	1,609,288	-7,695
Other Direct Costs	8,097	12,910	-4,813
General & Administrative Expenses	359,595	365,007	-5,412
TOTAL BUDGET	4,400,000	4,399,999	+1

Note: Salaries and benefits line items include staff from Global WRI offices: US, Colombia, UK, Ethiopia, Kenya, DRC, RC and Madagascar. Other Global WRI offices are included in subgrants line item.

Efficiency – seeks to maximise the intended output from a given amount of funding through reducing amount spent on such areas as fees and operational costs.

The Business Case set out that by investing in Cities4Forests as an existing initiative, Defra could achieve good VfM compared to setting up a new programme, as funding could be used directly to support activities rather than programme start-up costs. It also noted that as Cities4Forests is part of the wider WRI organisation, this could be beneficial due to economies of scale and benefitting from existing quality-control processes.

This does appear to have been the case in several instances, thereby helping to improve the efficiency of Defra spend. For example, Cities4Forests noted that being able to make use of pre-existing infrastructure within WRI country offices allowed Cities4Forests to keep start-up costs for new projects relatively low. In a more specific example, when the Cities4Forests Kenya team needed support with geospatial analysis, Cities4Forests were able to broker a connection with data specialists at WRI India, helping to deliver a core service at lower price, while also building a South-South collaboration. Cities4Forests has also benefitted from using WRI's systems and safeguards, including the 'Managing for Results' system (which provides support on planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning), and 'Research, Data and Innovations' system (which sets standards and provides support on research).

Effectiveness – refers to the ability of funding to deliver the intended outcome.

Effectiveness considers whether the programme has achieved the intended outcomes at the expected costs. As this was a voluntary contribution from Defra, the total cost was capped at £4.4m. As set out above, Cities4Forests has delivered well against the expected outcomes, meeting or exceeding all targets. Projects consistently delivered against the intended outcome, for example, the range of political events and publications that mobilised city leaders to become vocal advocates for forests internationally; the technical tools and analyses developed that improved cities' capacity to implement NBS; and the guidance for projects particularly through NBS accelerator programmes, that unlocked public and private finance, providing support and the opportunity to scale for successful pilot projects.

Cities4Forests has sought to measure the effectiveness of outcomes through its monitoring and evaluation systems. For example, evaluation aims to ensure that projects not only meet immediate objectives, but also contribute to sustainable long-term change, using scientific methods where possible to measure project durability and scale. They note an example in Indonesia where a digital dashboard was included to track individual tree conditions at restoration sites.

Equity

The Cities4Forests team aimed to develop GESI principles and methods into their project design as the programme evolved to ensure that the benefits of NBS reach marginalised and vulnerable communities. See Section B under "Gender Equality and Social Inclusion" for a full assessment of this GESI approach and WRI's commitment to continuous improvement on GESI. One area for improvement is gathering more robust and disaggregated data on GESI impacts, and WRI remains committed to dedicating resources to build this capacity. On this basis, we assess that Cities4Forests has met Defra's commitment to supporting ODA eligible projects with clear management actions to address biodiversity and alleviate poverty.

WRI's Procurement Policy also requires positive efforts to be made for inclusive procurement. They utilise small businesses and those owned by groups facing social, political, and economic exclusion, including LGBTQIA+ people, women, Indigenous people, migrants, people with disabilities and communities who experience racism. Positive efforts may include, but are not limited to, incorporating supplier diversity questions in requests for proposals, increasing outreach and the opportunity to compete for contracts, and establishing non-financial indicators to include in bid analyses.

Cost-effectiveness

We consider potential £/benefit ratios to help illustrate the potential cost-effectiveness of this investment. With Defra's voluntary contribution of £4.4m, the Cities4Forests results show that the programme was able to pass or enhance more than 30 policies, plans and strategies, while improving financial access for more than 20 NBS projects. These levers in turn allowed Cities4Forests to bring 4,100 hectares under sustainable land management. A simple £/benefit ratio (using the total value – i.e. £4.4m - of this investment) indicates that this roughly equates to a cost of £1,073 (US\$1,365) per hectare, which is competitive compared to estimated global average forest restoration costs of ~£1,830 (US\$2,328/ha)³. Whilst this analysis is tentative, we estimate it is potentially conservative given that the focus of Cities4Forests' work is not just on trees planted/hectares restored, but on people, and these projects were strategically selected to maximise benefits for local communities. Further, it doesn't include any of the non-quantifiable outputs or impacts shown in Section B. In addition, Defra's investment was used to unlock additional funds that will scale impact across thousands more hectares.

Similarly, we can consider the monetised carbon savings. The Cities4Forests results indicate around 16,000t (8,392t in 2022 and 8,142t in 2023) of GHG emissions reduced or avoided as a result of Defra funding. Using [DESNZ Carbon Values](#), analysis estimates total discounted carbon savings of £8.6m - £25.8m (2024 prices, 2021 present value). This assumes carbon saving impacts are sustained for 4 years. This range reflects low and high Green Book carbon values. It is important to note this excludes any additional benefits in the form of reduced carbon emissions for future years, implying the benefits in the form of reduced GHG emissions could be even higher and whilst a full BCR hasn't been conducted, this metric alone shows benefits outweigh Defra's initial investment.

Defra's funding was essential in leveraging finance for the Cities4Forests programme. Defra funded foundational work in Ethiopia, Kenya, DRC and elsewhere was essential to a successful pitch to DANIDA to support a new program, the African Climate Resilient Cities project, and for Canada to fund the SUNCASA project to address flooding and water-related risks in Dire Dawa, Kigali, and Johannesburg through gender responsive NBS interventions. Informed by foundational GSE successes made possible by Defra funding, these projects aim to engage women and other underrepresented groups in planning and decision making, enhancing social equity and economic empowerment, showing Defra's investment was crucial to the success of incumbent and future projects. During the duration of Defra funding, US\$7.6m (\$5.5m ODA, \$2.1m non-ODA) of funding was combined through a range of public and private complementary funders (including DANIDA, GIZ, US Forest Service, Global Affairs Canada, FEMSA Foundation, and the Caterpillar Foundation), spent across 20 countries across a variety of cost categories to synergise with Defra's funding and helped to grow economies of scale for projects and increase the impact of Defra's spend.

WRI estimate that Defra's initial contribution enabled Cities4Forests to unlock over US\$30 million (Disaggregated in Table 3) in complementary funding to drive climate-resilient urban development. This leveraged funding has created a multiplier effect, transforming the initial investment into a much larger pool of resources, thereby amplifying the project's ultimate impact into the future.

Table 3: Funds Raised by Cities4Forests since 2021. Note: This funding will continue to be spent post Defra funding, and the majority was leveraged by Defra's investment.

Leveraged Funds Raised by Cities4Forests since NOV 2021		
Public/Private	ODA or Non-ODA	Amount (USD)
Public	ODA	\$ 18.2 Mil
Public	Non-ODA	\$ 6.4 Mil
Private	ODA	\$ 7.1 Mil
Private	Non-ODA	\$ 2.6 Mil
TOTAL		\$ 34.3 Mil

³ https://trilliontrees.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Trillion-Trees_Defining-the-real-cost-of-restoring-forests.pdf; original source: <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2664.13263>

E: Risk [½ - 2 pages]

Overview of programme risk during the past year and over the life of the programme, drawing on Defra's Risk Management Policy and wider risk guidance.

Programme risk during the past year and throughout the life of the programme has remained broadly within ODA portfolio risk appetites. Risk appetite did not change over the course of the programme. Although the programme team at the time of programme initiation did not define a risk appetite for separate categories of risk, there was a cautious risk appetite for safeguarding and fiduciary issues (default portfolio appetite). Risk management developed over the course of the programme, for example by splitting risk into categories and better defining ownership, and by carrying out delivery chain mapping. Cities4Forests maintained an up-to-date risk register and shared it with Defra through the programme management cycle, including through quarterly programme management and reporting meetings, and annual reports and reviews. The Cities4Forests risk register complemented Defra's risk register.

Where risks did escalate, Cities4Forests and Defra communicated promptly about how to respond, how to handle issues and mitigate further/escalating risk. WRI has their own policies and procedures for managing safeguarding risks but committed to Defra's procedures and reporting any safeguarding risks, particularly involving SEAH, immediately to Defra's ODA Hub and programme team.

The main trends in programme risk exposure have been driven by wider contextual factors and created fluctuating risk likelihood and impact ratings. There were a range of factors, including delays to implementing programme activities caused by COVID-19, high inflation and global financial conditions creating instability and uncertainty for Cities4Forests core operations (due to increased prices for key services), and budget constraints for individual cities affecting Cities4Forests' ability to influence audiences. More recently, turnover in government administrations in key Cities4Forests geographies pose a risk in disrupting the continuity of programs. For example, elections in 2024 in key Cities4Forests geographies (U.S., India, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa etc.) could lead to reduced and/or slowed access to funding as key potential donors and government partners are affected by political changes, changing priorities or bureaucratic processes. Mitigations have included building longer lasting relationships with city technical staff who may be less likely to turnover with administration changes, emphasising Cities4Forests' non-partisan approach, maintaining robust financial management, prioritising the most effective interventions and showcasing publicly findings that demonstrate how and where NBS can lower the cost of providing key services.

There were also expected delivery and programme risks flagged, for example around the high demand for technical assistance from Cities4Forests' members exceeding the programme's ability to deliver support and a lack of support/political buy-in from city leaders, residents, and local forest communities for the programme due to lack of incentives and/or awareness of the benefits of the programme. None of these risks escalated beyond appetite during the programme and were mitigated in constructive ways.

Defra owned key risks for the programme. An example was the potential lack of effective management of the programme by the delivery partner, resulting in a failure or delay to meeting agreed milestones and indicators set out in the contribution letter and log frame. This risk was mitigated by effective programme management, MEL approaches and collaborative engagement between Cities4Forests and Defra. Defra highlighted other risks around WRI or delivery partners having breaches in best practice either institutionally or in projects on the ground around SEAH, particularly for vulnerable groups and children. None of these risks escalated above risk appetite and they were mitigated effectively.

On fraud risk, Defra due diligence pre-award included review of independent financial audits of Cities4Forests funders (including the previous Defra grant) and statutory audits of WRI accounts in the US. The main controls are the independent financial audit of WRIs financial report of Defra's voluntary contribution, the statutory WRI US audits and the internal WRI processes.

F: Programme Management: Commercial and Financial Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation [1 - 1 ½ pages]

Summarise the performance of partners and Defra, notably on commercial and financial issues, and including VfM measures of economy and efficiency. [1 page]

WRI performance

WRI has been a professional and responsive delivery partner. The working relationship with Defra has been excellent. WRI demonstrated effective programme management and has delivered the financial and narrative reports as per the voluntary contribution agreement. The agreement, as noted below, had limited requirements but the spend aligned satisfactorily with the budget lines included in the business case. The Cities4Forests team has worked collaboratively with Defra and consistently engaged through our scheduled programme management and reporting meetings, as well as being readily available on an ad-hoc basis whenever required. The quarterly meetings have been productive and engaging, combining standard agenda items like a review of risks with an illustrative update on Cities4Forests activities. Cities4Forests has also presented updates on their work and results to wider Defra on three occasions (the last of these was cross-HMG) throughout the course of the investment. Where requested, the central Cities4Forests team has facilitated links between FCDO teams and local WRI offices in various countries. They have been receptive to a range of ad hoc requests including to meet our revised Operating Manual even when not included in the agreement.

Cities4Forests has various donors but apart from Defra with our flexible contribution, other donors generally earmark their funding including to specific geographies. WRI has convened Donor Advisory Committee meetings that Defra joined with other donors; the last one was in mid-2023.

WRI brings strong capabilities including in-country and specialist expertise and systems like Global Forest Watch. Cities4Forests is supported by a range of central WRI resource facilities including those for strategy and theories of change; planning; monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL); research; and budget and finance teams. We note that WRI has developed its internal policies (e.g. SEAH) processes and was responsive to Defra recommendations.

As an organisation, WRI has set science-based targets for reducing emissions by 2030; these are aligned with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C⁴.

Defra performance

Due diligence and agreement: pre-award, due diligence by Defra was limited to reviewing financial audits of WRI projects rather than a dedicated delivery partner review (DPR); this provided limited diligence. In early 2023 there was further due diligence; this included a review of a BEIS DPR of WRI, as well as further review of WRI documentation, systems and processes. Defra and HMG expectations were also shared with WRI in line with Defra's ODA Operating Manual, which then fed into WRI developing policies. If this were a long-running programme Defra would have recommended that a DPR be conducted on WRI; however due to the limited time to programme close, this was not considered proportionate.

A high-level voluntary contribution agreement covered the £4.4m investment. This included requirements such as quarterly meetings, annual reports, a final financial report and the need to abide by the code of conduct for recipients of government general grants. Defra's approach to voluntary contribution agreements has now been strengthened in line with Defra's ODA Operating Manual.

Recommendation: If voluntary contribution agreements are used by ODA programmes, Defra should ensure that the requirements expected to meet Defra's Operating Manual in a grant agreement or contract are present in the voluntary contribution agreement.

Recommendation: Consider by default a delivery partner review unless the SRO is confident diligence requirements of Defra Operating Manual are met by other means e.g. a delivery partner review conducted by another government department of the same delivery partner, implementing a similar project.

Defra programme management, staffing: programme management time sometimes ended up being constrained due to other immediate team priorities. The impact of this was that much of the Defra programme team's time was focused on ensuring compliance and core programme management. This limited opportunities for the programme team to better familiarise themselves with Cities4Forests implementation and the impacts it was having, including, for example, undertaking monitoring visits. Continuity of programme management was affected by the change of Defra staff managing the programme during the voluntary contribution.

Investment duration: The short duration of the investment in a complicated and diverse initiative made programme management more challenging. By the time the logframe was developed, the end of implementation was less than 18 months away. WRI also noted the need for a longer timeframe than this voluntary contribution for impacts to be

⁴ [Sustainability at WRI | World Resources Institute](#)

realised. Though the programme has completed Defra will maintain periodic catchups to understand these and this PCR has suggested that proportionate evaluation could yield interesting information.

Continuity of the programme: This was a short-term investment for Defra which created challenges in managing the programme and offering continuity to WRI. In 2021 after the 3-month initial grant, Defra's International Forests and Landscapes team started a larger business case with the hope to secure longer term involvement. However, during funding reviews this was not taken forward. Mid-way through FY21/22, a further opportunity to fund Cities4Forests arose, and this voluntary contribution was made at the end of that FY. There had been strong motivation in the programme team to continue involvement with Cities4Forests beyond this voluntary contribution, however, the rather unique focus of Cities4Forests has meant it has not found a clear 'home' in HMG. In 2023 when the programme team put forward Cities4Forests for additional funding, Defra's Secretary of State at the time made the decision not to take this forward. This decision was communicated to WRI. Defra granted a no-cost extension which helped WRI bridge the gap with new sources of funding secured by Cities4Forests e.g. from Canada and DANIDA.

There is a very good working relationship with the WRI team, and the Cities4Forests programme created a link for Defra with a strong global actor working in relevant areas of interest. Following the closure of this investment Defra will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with WRI as a strategic partner.

Recommendation: For future programming, look for longer term, sufficiently resourced involvement which is thematically part of an integrated Defra approach to programming and builds collaboration with strategic partners.

Visibility and engagement XHMG: the annual review noted in its recommendations/lessons learnt an aim to increase engagement, dissemination of learning and collaboration with UK Posts in countries where Cities4Forests works and across Whitehall. The 2024 ICAI review noted that visibility of the programme could be improved particularly with FCDO Sustainable Cities teams, although the report recognised more had been done by the Defra team over the last year. The programme team facilitated engagement between WRI and FCDO in some of Cities4Forests key geographies. While we recognise more could have been done, examples include presenting the programme in UK PACT XHMG meeting with Indonesia and subsequent link-up between FCDO and WRI; meetings and subsequent link up with High Commissions in India and South Africa as well as sharing Cities4Forests annual report more widely. Since the ICAI report, we have made a concerted effort to disseminate experience more widely, including with the FCDO's Sustainable Cities team as the policy lead in Government. We note that the engagement process with Posts has improved markedly with Defra's central priority country engagement work.

Recommendation: from the start of any centrally managed programme, work carefully with Defra engagement teams and prioritise linkages with Posts and relevant central teams in OGDs.

Feedback from Other Stakeholders

We also gathered feedback and recommendations from a range of stakeholders that have an interest in the programme.

FCDO Post in Bengaluru, India described their team's visits to Cities4Forests sites in late 2023 administered in Kochi by WRI looking at sustainability in urban communities. The sites were all well cared for and enhanced the urban environment by providing green spaces as well as climate benefits. FCDO met briefly with a range of stakeholders including staff and students at one of the beneficiary schools who spoke very positively about the benefits of the planting project. FCDO noted that WRI had developed many positive links with community user groups and that these relationships had added value. More generally, this Post has continued engagement with WRI as part of an FCDO initiative to support tech. One project is particularly relevant as it is focused on encouraging community engagement with the planting and care for trees in urban Bengaluru and using AI to help identify appropriate sites where those on the ground will be supportive and engaged.

Members of Defra's wider Ecosystem Protection and Restoration Team visited Brazzaville, Republic of Congo and met with local Cities4Forests colleagues in 2023. They noted that Cities4Forests clearly have good relations and support from the government in Congo, including with the mayor's office and the Forestry Ministry. With the mayor's office, Cities4Forests have supported them to produce their city action plan. With the Forestry Ministry, WRI have been supporting production of detailed maps (and databases underpinning them) on land use, national park delineation, logging concessions etc., which was funded by the UK's Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme. WRI's data driven approach was apparent.

Another colleague at Post in Africa noted that most WRI staff interacted with were based in the United States, so suggested that if other Posts noticed this as well, it might be worthwhile for WRI to get their local offices more involved in international networking – to share benefits of engagement in the areas where work is happening on the

ground. Another colleague from Post in Jakarta shared that Posts could also improve coordination on global and regional programme delivery in country to support join-up and prevent working in silos.

Programme-level approach to monitoring and evaluation [1/2 page]

The business case addendum proposed the MEL approach as:

- Internal M&E is integrated into all activities funded either in-part or in-full by Defra's investment for the duration of the programme.
- A light-touch **theory of change** and **logical framework** will be developed within the first six months of the programme. WRI will report against a number of Defra's key performance indicators and the outcomes and outputs above will be monitored.
- WRI will provide **quarterly progress updates** as well as an **annual report** in Summer 2022 and 2023 to align with their reporting processes.
- An **Annual Review** will be conducted after the first year and WRI will provide and finalise with Defra a **Project Completion Report** no more than three months after programme completion and leveraging WRI in-house M&E experts.

This was followed. Due to staff changes on both Defra and WRI sides, logframe completion took slightly longer than planned. It was developed in close collaboration with Defra and is based on Cities4Forests' Theory of Change. The logframe has become the basis for monitoring of the wider Cities4Forests initiative.

WRI engaged with city and country offices in the network regularly to assess progress towards targets on an ongoing basis. Methodologies for the ICF KPIs monitored have been quality assured as part of Defra's ICF results collection by our analysts. WRI have shared a narrative of progress and achievements with Defra at the quarterly regular intervals.

As is clear from the logframe, outcome and output indicator targets were achieved; although there has been a challenge setting targets for the upstream interventions typical of Cities4Forests. While it is positive that all targets have been surpassed, the challenges in setting upstream targets indicate that some targets could have been made more stretching.

Attribution of results to Defra funding was less straightforward than a simple multi-donor fund or indeed a bilateral project due to the earmarking of other donors and the fact that Cities4Forests supports both ODA eligible and non-eligible countries. A two-tier approach was taken by WRI. Firstly, for the three impact indicators in the logframe which are ICF KPIs (i.e., hectares of land benefiting from sustainable land management practices, greenhouse gas emissions reduced or avoided (tCO₂) and number of people whose climate resilience has been improved) with identifiable numbers in the supported ODA eligible countries, total numbers are reduced according to the estimated proportion of Defra funding. The approach taken in Year 1 was an across-the-board reduction of results (30%) estimated according to volume of complimentary funding, however in Year 2 the approach evolved and used a country-by-country adjustment to account for the variable level of other donor funding.

Secondly, for outcome and output indicators, which are under three pillars of Political Action, Technical Assistance and Finance, a contribution type approach was taken. There was no reduction for attribution, rather a yes/no approach: "Did we provide technical assistance to city X with Defra funds" and if yes, the city counted. As noted in Section A, during its duration, Defra's voluntary contribution made up approximately 52% of the ODA funding. There are non-ODA cities/political action across the Cities4Forests network included in the Cities4Forests Defra logframe output/outcome indicator results, but only where there is a justification of ODA country benefits/link to ODA policy dialogue.

No evaluation was proposed in the short duration. This PCR considers that dependent on funding availability, an evaluation would be useful to better understand the programme's long-term impact (i.e. do impacts continue to accrue as WRI suggest).

Recommendation: Development of guidance for monitoring upstream projects: WRI consider that UK ICF KPI methodologies are more focused on 'downstream' projects (e.g., tree planting, delivering trainings) whereas Cities4Forests has an emphasis on "upstream" interventions and enabling conditions (such as policy, finance, and markets) and work in a high number of cities and countries around the world. WRI suggested it would be valuable for Defra/UK ICF to invest in developing additional guidance for monitoring the wider-reaching impacts of upstream projects, to help the broader donor and environment and development community to understand how policy can translate into impacts such as hectares conserved, and emissions reduced. They note the extended timeframe required to see the impacts of such interventions mature.

Recommendation: more intensive work at the start of the programme to really understand and develop **logframe targets** particularly for outputs and outcomes and agree MEL processes such as attribution of results.

Recommendation (subject to WRI agreement and UK funds being available): Defra to include Cities4Forests in any thematic evaluation of programming carried out; WRI to consider a programme evaluation (subject to funding being secured) the scope of which Defra would be happy to contribute to.

Date of last narrative financial report	20 June 2024	Date of last audited annual statement	Tbc – we are waiting for final financial report to be audited by Grant Thornton
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ANNEX A: Major lessons and recommendations for Defra for the year ahead from 2022 Annual Review:

From 2022 Annual Review: Major lessons and recommendations for the year ahead	Was this achieved / any further comments on the lesson learnt
<p>Programme management responsibility within Defra switched to a new team in mid-2022, which led to some discontinuity and there were some resource constraints. <i>During Q4 of 2022/2023, Defra has completed the process of bringing programme management up to date with our standard practices.</i></p>	<p><u>Partially complete:</u> The new team has still experienced resourcing challenges both due to competing priorities and greater time needs to meet Operating Manual. A recommendation to consider staffing continuity for programmes, potentially in the form of longer time periods for handovers and that overall the right amount of resource is dedicated to each programme (Discussed more in Section F).</p>
<p>Early illustrative reporting shows that some Year 2 logframe targets have already been exceeded in Year 1. <i>By end of Q4, Cities4Forests and Defra have revised the logframe including making some Year 2 targets more stretching (Annex D includes revisions to logframe).</i></p>	<p><u>Complete:</u> Logframe was revised in March 2023. However, as Section C illustrates there remain various Outcome and Output indicator targets which were significantly surpassed. In our final programme management and reporting meeting, WRI expressed that they intend to dedicate more resources towards monitoring, evaluation and learning with future investments, which could include a focus on how to set targets within a closer range of what is achievable.</p>
<p>Defra has already had some interest from other related programmes across Whitehall and from country Posts where there is related ICF/ODA programming. <i>Cities4Forests and Defra have worked in Q4 of FY 2022/2023 to develop a plan for increasing engagement on Cities4Forests, disseminating best practice and learning and creating opportunities for collaboration with other programmes.</i></p>	<p><u>Partially complete:</u> ICAI review of HMG support to sustainable cities flagged a low visibility of Cities4Forests with FCDO sustainable cities teams but recognised that Defra had done more over the last year. Further discussion in Section F, but in summary, the Defra team has proactively made connections between FCDO and some Cities4Forests teams, and in June 2024 WRI presented the programme and its results in a cross UK Government session. WRI also carries out regular workshops, training sessions and community of practice sessions for its own staff, donors and experts and researchers in the wider development community. They cover a vast range of topics.</p>
<p>The Defra team should familiarise themselves more closely with Cities4Forests implementation, including through field visits, to improve their monitoring and understanding of the programme, and the potential synergies and learning for other UK ODA investments.</p>	<p><u>Partially complete:</u> Colleagues from Defra's Ecosystems, Protection and Restoration team, visited a Cities4Forests project in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo in 2023.</p>
<p>Defra/WRI to discuss any lessons learnt, evidence sharing, and any positive and negative feedback/complaints from stakeholders at quarterly PMRG meetings.</p>	<p><u>Complete:</u> This was done on a consistent basis, with ad-hoc communication between PMRG meetings as needed.</p>

ANNEX B: WRI thematic recommendations for the year ahead from Annual Review and the action taken (reported by WRI):

Recommendation	Action taken
<p>Cities4Forests should continue to ensure that the programme's outcomes and outputs are aligned with global landmark targets and goals for nature, climate, and human well-being such as the Paris Agreement, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework 30x30, Adaptation Finance, Sustainable Development Goals and that Cities4Forests work contributes to accelerate progress towards scaling climate and environmental action at the local, national, and global level.</p>	<p>Cities4Forests worked with WRI country offices and government partners to ensure the initiative was aligned with countries NDCs, NBSAPs, and development priorities, while also advancing the goals of international agendas including the SDGs, 30x30, and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Since many of the initiative's projects work at the sub-national level, Cities4Forests was a driver for WRI's involvement in the <u>Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) initiative</u>, which was launched by a coalition of partners at COP28. The CHAMP initiative was endorsed by 63 countries with a commitment to enhance cooperation between national, regional, and local governments on planning, financing, and implementing national climate goals. One example is Cities4Forests work to promote bioeconomy value chains in Belem, Brazil, which aligns with the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy, the Panamazon Belem Declaration, and subsequent OTCA Action Plan. Nationally, it advances Brazil's Ecological Transformation Plan, its national bioeconomy and restoration strategies, and its recently enhanced NDC and NBSAP.</p>
<p>The science and practice of monitoring / evaluating the effectiveness of NbS programs remains a crucial gap to secure additional investments and political buy-in for Cities4Forests and nature more broadly. Cities4Forests should continue to invest in improved evaluation and monitoring of NbS to strengthen the case for bolder policies and increased investment.</p>	<p>Cities4Forests has invested in two approaches for monitoring / evaluation of NBS effectiveness. First, the initiative developed a monitoring plan for work supported by Defra's voluntary contribution, including a logframe, set of KPIs, and set of methodologies aligned with ICF methods, that Cities4Forests has since adopted for their broader portfolio and became the foundation for monitoring approaches for new projects such as Cities4Forests' work in Africa funded by Canada and Danida. Second, Defra's contribution enabled the project team to secure a \$400k scoping grant from the FEMSA foundation to develop a high-level strategy for NBS monitoring with a focus on water security in Latin America, and a handshake agreement for a 5-year, seven-figure grant to develop a full project to advance the science and practice of NBS monitoring including an expert advisory group, publication, and pilot application of monitoring programs in two locations.</p>
<p>Cities4Forests has generated new data, analyses, and decision-making tools, but will need to continue to focus on adoption and implementation to achieve on-the-ground impact. Cities4Forests should ensure its engagement does not stop at the analysis stage and that they continue to seek to incorporate their findings into city policies, strategies, and investments.</p>	<p>While Cities4Forests focused in year 1 of Defra's Voluntary Contribution on new data, analyses, and decision-making tools, the initiative succeeded in year 2 in converting these outputs into outcomes and impacts. Cities4Forests exceeded impact and outcome targets under the initiative's logframe. Cities4Forests early foundational work has also catalyzed future impacts by enabling implementation-focused projects in Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Africa, and Colombia. This large-scale implementation work would not have been possible without the baselines, data, and economic analyses conducted in earlier stages of the project.</p>

