

REGREEN THE GLOBE (RTG)

Ethiopia | Progress Brief
(2019-2024)

THIS MEANS THE WORLD



About this report

This brief summarises the main findings of a mid-term review of the ReGreen the Globe pilot project, implemented by World Vision Ethiopia. The review was conducted by independent consultants Excel Consulting Services PLC in 2023, while this brief was prepared by Alice Muller from World Vision Australia (WVA). For more information, please contact Silvio Dorati, WVA Country Impact Manager (silvio.dorati@worldvision.com.au), Alice Muller, WVA Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, FMNR Scale Up (alice.muller@worldvision.com.au) or Sarah Downes, WVA Programme Strategy and Operations Lead (sarah.downes@worldvision.com.au).

ReGreen the Globe is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

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Front cover photo: Addis from World Vision Ethiopia has seen first hand the remarkable impacts of FMNR on the landscape and communities. "By restoring the greenery and implementing sustainable practices, we have not only mitigated the effects of drought, but also improved soil fertility and water retention," says Addis.





This once bare mountain region in Ethiopia is now covered with beautiful forest because of FMNR practices through previous projects similar to RtG. FMNR is an astonishingly simple, low cost and effective tool for land regeneration, and it works in the world’s toughest climates.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goal	Contribute to the Ethiopian government’s Bonn Challenge pledge to restore 22 million hectares of degraded land by 2030
Timeframe	2019-2024
Budget	US\$2,698,101

ReGreen the Globe (RtG) is a five-year project contributing to the Ethiopian government’s Bonn Challenge pledge to restore 22 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.

Deforestation and unsustainable land-use practices have led to massive environmental damage in Ethiopia. Implemented by World Vision Ethiopia, the RtG project aims to help reverse this degradation by scaling up the practice of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) in Ethiopia.

The project is piloting an innovative movement-building approach to scaling, combining a multi-stakeholder partnership with on-the-ground FMNR demonstrations and capacity-building opportunities to increase community adoption of FMNR across Ethiopia. Integral to the project’s implementation is its support of two scaling platforms working to catalyse a national greening movement in Ethiopia. These platforms are known as the National Alliance and the Centre of Expertise.

An independent mid-term project review was conducted in 2023. According to this review, the scale-up platforms have generated positive collaboration and working relationships as members jointly pursue the scaling of FMNR practice throughout Ethiopia. Additionally, these platforms are helping to increase participants’ awareness of FMNR and their interest in adopting and promoting this greening tool. The review also highlighted several key areas to improve during the project’s remaining years. These focus areas include addressing known barriers to FMNR participation, improving monitoring and reporting processes to ensure any progress is validated, and strategically expanding membership of the scale-up platforms to include more decision makers and relevant advocacy groups.

CONTEXT

Deforestation and unsustainable land-use practices have led to unprecedented degradation of landscapes in Ethiopia. In 2018, it was estimated that over one quarter of Ethiopia's land area was degraded, affecting close to a third of the population.¹ As tree and plant cover has declined, so too has soil fertility and protection against erosion. Consequently, vital ecosystem services have been disrupted and communities' livelihoods and food security

undermined – particularly in the country's north and northwestern regions. Land degradation contributes to global warming, leading to more frequent droughts and floods. The people who are most affected by these environmental changes are among those least equipped to cope. The RtG project is working to help reverse this degradation and protect livelihoods and well-being by pioneering a novel approach to promoting community-based FMNR at scale.

WHAT IS FMNR?

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is a highly effective, simple and low-cost technique that helps reverse land degradation. It involves regenerating trees from stumps that are still alive and actively managing new trees starting to grow from wild seedlings. Through FMNR, communities can:

- Restore and increase tree cover
- Produce more and better animal fodder
- Increase the availability of firewood
- Improve soil fertility
- Produce higher crop yields to sell and eat
- Generate more income
- Improve their quality of life

FMNR increases the capture and storage of carbon in trees, plants and soil. This has a direct impact on climate change by removing this greenhouse gas from the atmosphere. In addition to selective pruning of tree stumps, shoots and seedlings, FMNR projects promote other landscape regeneration practices. These include water management, livestock and weed control, and fire management.

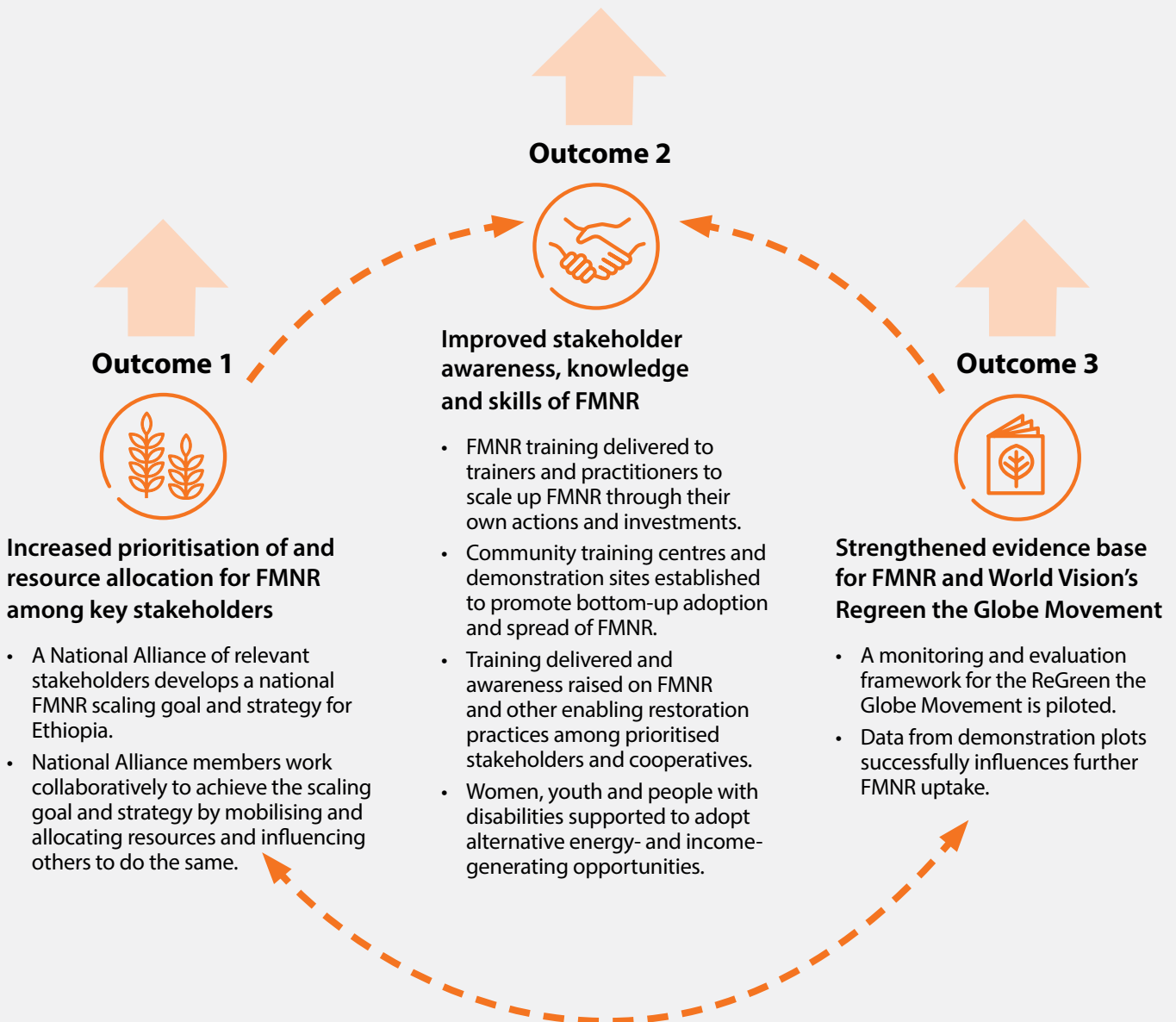
¹ Ephraim Nkonya, Alisher Mirzabaev and Joachim von Braun (2016), Economics of Land Degradation and Improvement – A Global Assessment for Sustainable Development.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

ReGreen the Globe is a five-year project implemented by World Vision Ethiopia and supported by the Australian Government through its Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). The project aims to help catalyse a greening movement and scale up FMNR in Ethiopia through three key outcomes, shown in Figure 1. The project is piloting an innovative approach to scaling FMNR that combines multi-sectoral partners with on-the-ground technical demonstrations and capacity-building opportunities. These efforts work together to create an enabling environment for increased community adoption of FMNR throughout Ethiopia.

Figure 1. How the RtG project achieves change

Project Goal: Contribute to the Ethiopian government’s Bonn Challenge pledge to restore 22 million hectares of degraded land by 2030



The RtG project brings together relevant government and non-government partners who are igniting and powering the country's regreening movement. These partners have formed two key national FMNR scaling platforms:

1. **National Alliance:** Facilitates FMNR scale-up by bringing together diverse stakeholders with a common goal and amplifying their voices and actions. These efforts help to create greater FMNR awareness and resource mobilisation. In 2021-2022, the National Alliance set a goal to restore 752,910 hectares of degraded land in Ethiopia by 2024. Member organisations committed to this goal in the National Alliance Common Results Framework and the National Action Plan for FMNR Scaling (2022-2024).
2. **Centre of Expertise:** Supports the National Alliance members through the provision of FMNR technical advisory and training services. Dedicated training and resource centres provide demonstrations of FMNR best practice and evidence of its positive impacts on the landscape, communities and livelihoods.

Together, the National Alliance and Centre of Expertise consist of representatives from 19 organisations including government, international NGOs and civil society organisations. Equally important for RtG's implementation success are three regional-level FMNR scaling working groups that support the national scale-up platforms. The working groups represent the regions of Amhara, Oromia and South Nations Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) and help to link national scaling efforts with on-the-ground FMNR programming. Each group has developed its own plan and goals in alignment with the national regreening movement.

Engaging youth is a core strategy for the RtG project's long-term sustainability, given the synergy between the environment, livelihoods and stability. Additionally, to ensure that the demonstration and learning sites showcase best practice and inclusive FMNR, complementary natural resource management and livelihood development activities are being implemented with a strong focus on empowering women and people with a disability.



ReGreen the Globe aims to regenerate landscapes in Ethiopia while improving communities' food, water and livelihoods. Belaynesh is building up her poultry enterprise alongside other farming cooperative members. "Now I get 10 eggs a day," she says. "I feed my children a good breakfast."

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The mid-term review of RtG assessed the progress and effectiveness of the national scaling platforms and made recommendations for the remaining implementation period. The review was also intended to identify evidence of emerging outcomes in terms of FMNR spread and the specific contributions of the national scaling platforms to these outcomes. These results will be used as part of a final evaluation at the project's end.

METHODOLOGY

The mid-term review used a combination of outcome mapping and theory-based evaluation techniques to

frame the collection and analysis of a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. Outcome mapping identified causal links between project interventions and outcomes, while the contribution analysis examined the extent of the interventions' contribution to desired changes. As part of the review process, key informant interviews were conducted with 30 individuals from various organisations. Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopian Forest Development, international NGOs, local CSOs, research organisations and universities were included in these interviews. Institutional secondary data collection was also carried out to give the researchers a more comprehensive understanding of the project.



Stakeholder consultation workshops in Ambassel District are supporting the formation of a regional FMNR scaling working group. This group helps to link national scaling efforts with on-the-ground FMNR programming.

FINDINGS

Overall, the mid-term review found that the two national FMNR scaling platforms, National Alliance and Centre of Expertise, have contributed to positive changes in the perception, awareness and knowledge of FMNR practices among participants. The platforms have enhanced coverage and improved support for the adoption of FMNR practices in Ethiopia. These changes, demonstrated even in the early years of the project, signify an important milestone in the greater movement towards the country's land regeneration goals. The review findings also identify lessons including the disconnect in communication and actions between the national and regional platforms. This and other learnings can be addressed in the final implementation years.

The key review findings are detailed below.

THE SCALE-UP PLATFORMS HAVE LED TO BETTER COLLABORATION AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

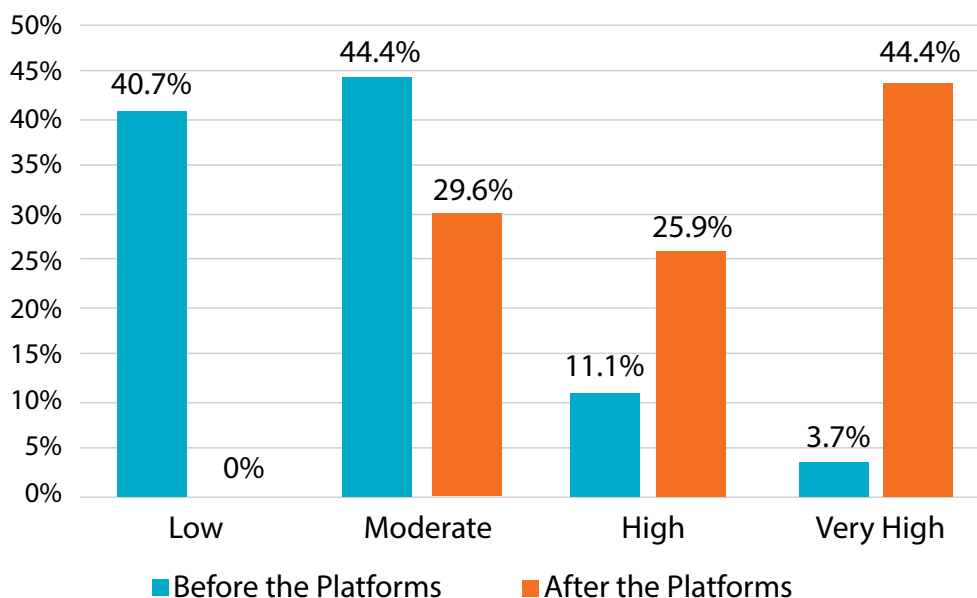
The platforms have created a national-level system for joint planning and collaboration, enabling different actors to work together more harmoniously towards FMNR scale-up in Ethiopia. Many interview respondents reported that the platforms are important mechanisms for fostering positive working relationships among members, helping to increase levels of trust and reciprocity (see Figure 2). Members have benefited from exchanging learnings and information on innovative models.

“The platform has established good partnership arrangements. I can now easily contact and get any information from any members of the platform.”
 — Interview respondent from the National Alliance working group

“Individuals gained valuable information about the activities and initiatives undertaken by other organisations and promoted knowledge sharing and collaboration.”
 — National Alliance representative

“Another significant purpose served by the platform is the building of synergy and harmony among participating institutions. This fosters a culture of working together and lays the foundation for effective collaboration and cooperation in the pursuit of common goals.”
 — National Alliance representative

Figure 2: Before and after perceptions on the platforms’ overall contribution to enhancing relationships between platform members

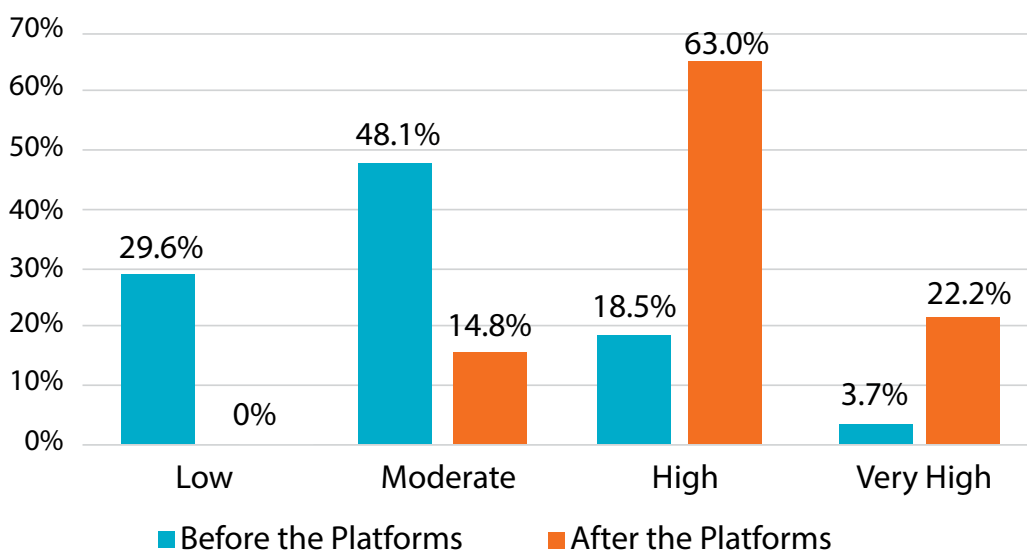


PARTICIPANTS’ AWARENESS OF FMNR AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRACTICE HAS INCREASED

Positive change in participants’ engagement with FMNR was observed in mid-term results. The formation of the scale-up structures was found to be securing increased buy-in and acceptance of FMNR practices, leading to a greater understanding of and commitment to implementing the practice. As an example, the proportion of participants rating the importance of FMNR to their organisation at high or above increased

from 50 percent to 80 percent after participating in the scale-up platforms. Project activities such as technical training, learning workshops and demonstration tours have helped to improve participants’ knowledge and build their capacity to adopt this practice. Demonstration sites have also provided members with tangible and real-time information on best practice FMNR. As a result, the percentage of participants who rated their engagement in FMNR as high or very high after being part of the platforms jumped from 22.2 percent to 85.2 percent (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Participants’ engagement in FMNR before and after the platforms



EVIDENCE OF FMNR MAINSTREAMING IS MIXED

Based on the RtG project’s latest performance report, the scale-up platforms indicated that FMNR was being practiced on 90 percent of the mid-term target of 158,800 hectares of land. However, this mid-term review was not able to validate this report. This was largely due to the absence of a strong verification system to determine whether the figures reported were indeed happening on the ground. Key informant interviews also highlighted the need to engage more decision makers in the scale-up platforms to more successfully influence change at a higher level.

“There was a very poor coordination mechanism, as far as I know. No scheduled regular meetings. I do not even know exactly who is in charge of coordinating the working group at a regional level.”

—Regional working group participant

“In the remaining project period, the Centre of Expertise should prioritise developing national FMNR standards. Without national standards, it is difficult to estimate the required resources and design an appropriate monitoring and evaluation plan for FMNR scaling.”

— National Alliance representative

SUSTAINABILITY

The mid-term review identified positive signs of the sustainability of the national scale-up platforms, particularly due to the improved commitment and collaboration among members that has been achieved so far. The multi-sectoral and capacity-building approach has laid a strong foundation for the ongoing alignment of national action and commitments towards FMNR and land regeneration.

However, sustainability prospects at a regional level were found to be less positive. This is primarily because of insufficient support and communication to build momentum for the regional working groups. As detailed in the recommendations, the remaining project years can be used to strengthen the regional working group activities and refine a clearer strategy to better integrate regional and national FMNR scaling efforts. Increasing awareness and knowledge of FMNR among key decision makers and advocates will also help ensure the platforms' sustainability in the future.



A group of government extension staff in Ambassel District are attending FMNR training through the ReGreen the Globe project.



With support and training through a nearby FMNR demonstration site, Desta is now practicing a mixed-farming system on his own land. He has successfully cultivated cabbage, coffee, sugarcane, Ethiopian kale and much more on his two hectares of land.

ENVIRONMENT

The RtG project is contributing to positive and sustainable changes to the environment by working with a range of stakeholders to scale up FMNR to restore degraded land. Scaling of FMNR across large areas of land will support climate change adaptation and mitigation for communities and landscapes. FMNR demonstrates its value by enhancing ecosystem resilience, facilitating carbon sequestration and promoting sustainable land management. This makes it a critical tool in the battle against climate change while simultaneously benefiting local communities and ecosystems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The mid-term review identified a number of opportunities to enhance the scaling platforms' effectiveness in the remaining project years.

EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY SCALE-UP PLATFORMS' MEMBERSHIP

Additional members should be encouraged to join the platforms to challenge the dominance of experts and increase representation from key regional and national decision makers. These new members could include high-ranking government officials or members of parliament, private sector and media entities, youth and women groups or environmental advocacy groups. The addition of new and diverse members could help cascade FMNR scaling activities from a national to grassroots level, helping to widen awareness and adoption of the tool.

MOBILISE FURTHER RESOURCES THROUGH ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER SIMILAR PLATFORMS

Securing additional funding and resources was considered crucial for further FMNR scaling. Various resource mobilisation opportunities exist or have been suggested. These include establishing an FMNR fund accessible by platform members to support their land regeneration efforts or joint proposal development and prepositioning with donors. Harnessing the strengthened advocacy and communication capacity of the recommended membership changes outlined above could bolster more resources. Alignment with other established platforms and programs with similar functions is also recommended to avoid unnecessarily competing for resources and leverage one another's strengths and influence.

IMPROVE STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Limited coordination and collaboration between national and regional platform structures is hindering their effectiveness. This could be helped by assigning regional focal persons to better facilitate coordination with the national scaling platforms. Improving communication and the sharing of good practices through channels like websites and data repositories will also improve shared learnings. The review also strongly recommended improving the project's monitoring and evaluation systems through a comprehensive and standardised monitoring system.



Stakeholder consultation workshops in Boset District are supporting the formation of a regional FMNR scaling working group. This group helps to link national scaling efforts with on-the-ground FMNR programming.



Desta (centre) is a member of a forest development cooperative formed through the ReGreen the Globe pilot project. He is using his FMNR and agroforestry training to farm maize, banana, avocado and more, generating income to pay his children's school fees and expand his farming ventures.

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