

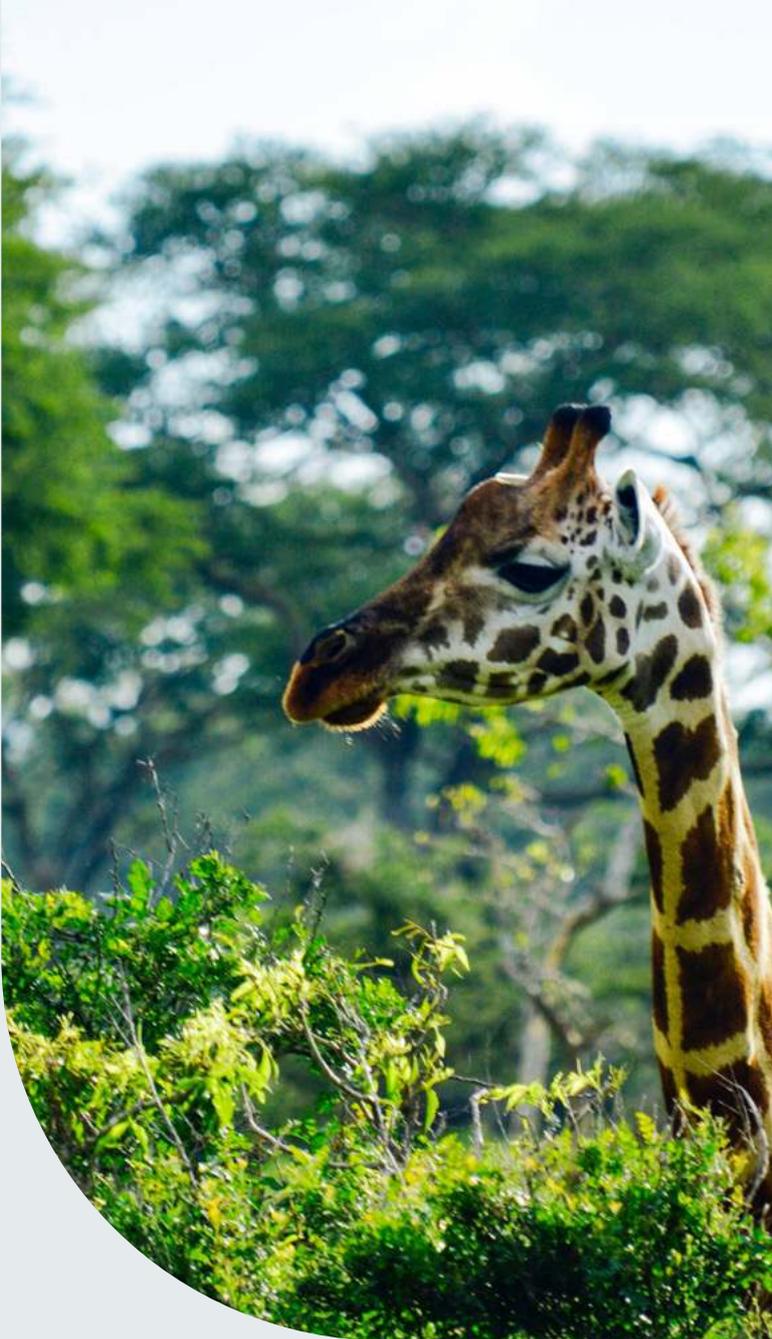


Case Study

Enabling private
sector investment
for forest landscape
restoration through
multi-partner
platforms in Africa

The case of AFR100

October 2022



Summary

The case study describes how the AFR100 Secretariat, a pan-African multi-stakeholder platform aimed at restoring forest landscapes, has been working to address key challenges for raising private sector investment for restoration activities. Through support by Partnerships for Forest (P4F), two regional coordinators were hired and have worked with the AFR100 Secretariat to counter barriers for investment and achievement of restoration goals, such as lack of coordination at national level, lack of funding to implement activities, absence of robust and coherent monitoring, and inadequate

communications & advocacy activities. In order to address these challenges, national Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) platforms involving several actors including the private sector have been set up in eight member countries. The Secretariat also formed independent working groups to improve monitoring, provide transparent information about progress and to mobilize more resources for restoration. Through these combined efforts, there has been increased funding to the restoration initiative including pledges by Bezos Earth Fund and the Global Evergreening Alliance.



Deforestation and the African Landscape

Around 60% of Africa's population is dependent on forests for some of their foods, goods and services. Standing forests and mangroves also address the impact of climate change by absorbing greenhouse gases, regulating water flows and protecting coastal communities from extreme events and sea level rises. But rising urbanisation, conflict, expanded refugee settlements and poor soil management practice mean that Africa lost 4.4 million hectares (ha) of forest each year between 2015 and 2020.

To address this, Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) initiatives—including the PAN African Ecosystem Restoration Action, the Great Green Wall, and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) —were created across Africa. These are long-term, multi-partner initiatives to restore the ecosystem and improve human well-being across deforested or degraded landscapes.

Forest Landscape Restoration Platforms

Large-scale impact on land restoration, such as the AFR100 pledge, requires the coordinated involvement of multiple actors.

FLR platforms are fora involving all key stakeholders, such as representatives from the national government, international NGOs and finance institutions, the private sector and civil society, in discussions on how their country will reach its AFR100 commitment. The process of designing and implementing the platforms brings these stakeholders together as equal partners to identify mutual goals and interests and develop working partnerships. The platforms aim to create a shared understanding of FLR and the enabling conditions for implementing activities related to country pledges made at the local, national and regional levels. They also enable access to innovation and funding. In order to bring private investors on board to mobilise more funding for restoration activities, FLR platforms allow the space for investors to develop relationships with multiple actors, such as civil societies and the private sector.

1. **Mansourian, S., & Berrahmouni, N.**, *Review of forest and landscape restoration in Africa*. FAO and AUDA-NEPAD, 2021 (<https://doi.org/10.4060/cb6111en>)
2. **World Bank**, *Forests Combat Climate Change*, World Bank, May 16, 2016, (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/forests/brief/forests-combat-climate-change>)





About AFR100

The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) was launched in 2015 at the 21st session of the Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris. The AFR100 is a country-led initiative that aims to restore 100 million hectares (ha) of land across Africa by 2030. It contributes to delivering the commitments of the Bonn Challenge, the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative, the African Union Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals and other targets. The initiative is led by the AFR100 Secretariat, housed at the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). The Secretariat is supported by a Management Team with representatives from Partnerships for Forests (P4F), Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ), the International Union for the Conservation of

Nature (IUCN), the World Bank, the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The AFR100 brings together partners including the public (participating African nations), civil society and private sectors, to work towards achieving their shared restoration goals and securing the associated benefits around food security, climate change resilience and poverty alleviation. At the multi-national level, the AFR100 supports political engagement and knowledge sharing. For signatory countries, it strengthens restoration efforts by providing a platform for communication, exchange, coordination and access to technical and financial support. Over 32 African countries have pledged to meet the AFR100 restoration commitments.

FIGURE 1 | AFR100 partners



In 2018, the AFR100 Secretariat asked P4F to provide technical and funding assistance to help address the challenges in tracking and ensuring cohesion among signatory countries in delivering impact on the ground faced by the AFR100 team. As a result, two regional coordinators were employed to support the Secretariat and set up national FLR platforms, with a monitoring and tracking framework to support coordination. The first phase of the support to the Secretariat (2019–2020) focused on creating an enabling environment for implementing the initiative. The regional coordinators were tasked with:

- Deepening engagement with countries and other partners by facilitating and coordinating regional efforts to restore degraded and deforested land;
- Increasing technical support by enhancing the governance structure;
- Securing resources to meet the growing demand for:
 - Engagement and networking between AFR100 countries
 - Advisory services to financial and technical partners
 - Coordination and management of day-to-day AFR100 activities
 - Tracking progress of AFR100 implementation
 - Coordinating resource mobilisation efforts



Their work has focused on overseeing the creation of national FLR platforms in countries that P4F supports, building the capacity of ministries to contribute to the development and implementation of FLR funding strategies, building the capacity of the national AFR100 country representatives, and facilitating peer-to-peer learning between member countries. Multiple key stakeholders were engaged in the process, including communities, governments, private sector investors, foundations, development banks, and bilateral and multilateral donors. The collaboration resulted in an increased commitment by member countries to restore 128 million ha, raised from the initial 100 million ha.

The support provided by P4F played a crucial role in seeking innovative and effective ways to guide the AFR100 Secretariat and help countries to implement their existing pledges.

“AFR100 Coordinators Ousseynou Ndoeye and Valentine Buh Ebuia have worked tirelessly to improve the AFR100 organizational structure across West, Central, East and Southern regions.”

AUDA-NEPAD (taken from ‘The State of AFR100: The progress of forest landscape restoration by implementing partners’ report



AFR100 governance structure

To achieve the ambitious goal set by the AFR100, a strong governance structure, stakeholder engagement and streamlined regional platforms were set up. The AFR100 governance structure takes a lean and agile approach, with three decision-making bodies:

1. AFR100 Secretariat: receives the P4F funding for technical assistance and is responsible for mobilizing and sustaining political support, knowledge management, communications, and monitoring and reporting;
2. Management Team: serves as the decision-making body for AFR100 and supports the

Secretariat in executing selected managerial functions and high-level events;

3. Steering Committee of partner countries and donors: sets the agenda for AFR100, drives resource mobilization for the initiative, and anchors ownership of AFR100 with African countries.

In addition, task forces were formed on a rolling basis to address technical challenges, tackle barriers to implementation, and identify pathways and approaches to rapidly scale up restoration on the ground, e.g. in the areas of monitoring, finance, and communications.

FIGURE 2 AFR100's governance structure

Management Committee

- Composed of **7 partner organisations** and **4 country representatives** (annual rotation based on a vote from all AFR100 signatory countries) – including IUCN, World Bank, WRI

Regional Committee

- Approximately **6-8 people** composed of AFR100 focal points, technical partners including FCDO climate advisors
- The committee will also include private sector representatives

AFR100 Secretariat

Based in Johannesburg, South Africa

West Africa coordinator

Based in Dakar, Senegal

East Africa coordinator

Based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The regional coordinators are responsible for liaising the following partners for each signatory country in their region:

- **Country representatives** (e.g., Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Land/Agriculture)
- **Technical Partners** (e.g., GIZ, IUCN, WRI etc.)
- **Private sector partners** (e.g., EcoPlanet Bamboo)



The challenges in achieving AFR100's goal

Partnerships between public, private and non-profit groups are critical to the economic viability and longer-term impact of FLR. Currently, restoration initiatives in Africa are mostly financed by traditional sources, such as government budgets and philanthropic funds, while private sector funding remains low. Increasing the involvement of the private sector has the potential to minimize the initiatives' environmental and social risks, and

improve their resource efficiency, access to the market and access to finance.

In 2018, the AFR100 Secretariat and P4F East Africa team conducted an assessment to identify the key challenges in unlocking private investment for land restoration activities to achieve AFR100's goal. The regional coordinators were assigned to support these key areas.

Coordination at a national level

The assessment identified engagement of all relevant stakeholders at the national level as a key challenge for implementing restoration activities. FLR platforms are multi-disciplinary forums that involve a range of stakeholders from the government, international communities, the private sector, civil society and local communities. However, these groups have different values, interests and approaches. The efforts of the regional coordinators to bring together the actors were hindered by misalignment of vision and lack of a common language between and within ministries and countries.

In addition, the Secretariat has more than 19 technical partners (including from country agencies, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), FAO, UNDP, UNEP) who are raising awareness of FLR to support countries to meet

their restoration commitments. Several of these initiatives are raising awareness of the importance of FLR by contributing to the AFR100. The limited coordination among these entities meant that the regional coordinators faced duplication of effort in, for example, setting up national stakeholder platforms and monitoring systems.

Lastly, there was a lack of infrastructure for private sector involvement in restoration. There is no doubt that the private sector can play a role in improving inclusivity in FLR practices, but careful planning is necessary to ensure this result. The regional coordinators found a lack of incentives, such as access to funds, that would help to ensure outcomes that align the private sector with the national pledge and government objectives, such as improving gender equality in access to FLR services.





Funding to implement activities

Unlocking finance has been challenging to FLR initiatives such as the AFR100. Funders, including private sector actors, can be put off by the long-term nature and lack of business proposition in these initiatives. Similarly, the AFR100 Secretariat identified

three main funding gaps: lack of funding for restoration actors on the ground; lack of funding for stakeholder engagement; and lack of funding to support the private sector, particularly female and young entrepreneurs, due to lack of innovative FLR business models.

Monitoring and transparency

The Secretariat recognised the need to improve the systems that track and report on the progress of AFR100 restoration efforts in member countries. Their assessment found a fragmented and duplicative reporting system due to the lack of a continent-wide AFR100 monitoring framework and difficulty in comprehensively assessing progress as restoration data were often scattered across institutions and ministries. The monitoring of progress in each country also varied, showing

the need for capacity building and increased collaboration between stakeholders. The Secretariat's assessment indicated that providing transparent and verifiable information on change of land cover through a robust AFR100 monitoring platform would attract investment into FLR. Tracking restoration helps ministries and countries show the progress made on their commitments and scale up successful projects, and could inspire donors to continue investing.

Communications and Advocacy

A lack of communication and advocacy has hindered replicability and knowledge sharing between member countries and so reduced the effectiveness to meet AFR100 pledges on time. It also creates an information gap between stakeholders such as the

AFR100 management, member countries, technical partners and financial partners, including private sector actors. Thus, the Secretariat realized the need to organize regular forums and workshops to discuss progress and challenges.

“The impact of FLR at local and national level is immense and includes an increase in forest cover and carbon sequestration to combat climate change, increase in biological diversity, increasing rural income and employment, which will improve food security and nutrition. The private sector needs to be involved in accelerating FLR on the ground.”

Dr Ousseynou Ndoye, AFR100 Coordinator for West and Central Africa





Enhancing private sector engagement and investment in FLR

Two working groups have been created - the Private Sector and Finance Working Group and the Monitoring Working Group. These two working groups are all interdependent and central to the success of AFR100.

Engaging the private sector by creating commercially viable restoration approaches is starting to offer a more sustainable, long-term solution than traditional public and philanthropic funding models. In response to the challenges around unlocking private finance, the regional coordinators have worked with the AFR100 Secretariat to provide financial support to encourage private sector actors to become involved, to launch national FLR platforms for improved coordination, and to develop a robust AFR100 monitoring system.

For example, the coordinators played a significant role in implementing the Land Accelerator Programme, which supports female and young entrepreneurs to get involved in forest restoration through the AFR100. The programme was launched in 2018 by AUDA-NEPAD and WRI, with the support of Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. It provides mentorship and networking opportunities, technical training, and workshops to build storytelling and pitching skills. The regional coordinators held consultative meetings geared towards mobilising additional resources. The programme has attracted nearly 1,400 applicants in Africa, and its 104 alumni report that they have created 11,200 jobs, worked with 56,000 farmers and restored 127,000 ha across 34 countries.

The regional coordinators supported the launch of national FLR platforms in Senegal, Niger, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Malawi. These national FLR platforms are important vehicles for ensuring the private sector is involved in forest and land degradation solutions.

To enhance private sector engagement, the AFR100 Secretariat formed interdependent working groups – the Private Sector and Financing Group, and the Monitoring Working Group – to improve monitoring, provide transparent information about progress and to mobilise more resources for restoration. The Secretariat also helped to align monitoring activities and discuss achievements and challenges by organising two monitoring workshops in Senegal and Malawi. The participants included AFR100 member country representatives, government officials, technical partners, international institutions, farmer organisations, regional and national development organisations, technical experts, and civil society organisations. The Secretariat also created the AFR100 Monitoring Platform, a centralized source that tracks changes in land use and measures metrics such as governance, economy and impacts on people and communities. The regional coordinator's membership and active participation in the Monitoring Working Group – giving presentations in workshops and providing technical support to establish the monitoring platforms – has been critical.

These coordinated efforts have led to increased private sector investment in the restoration initiative. Some notable examples are:



@Dr. Ousseynou Ndiaye

3. WRI, "The Land Accelerator", n.d., <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/land-accelerator/africa>



- On 21 November 2021, the Bezos Earth Fund pledged US\$2 billion to help restore nature and transform food systems with Africa-owned partners, including US\$20 million to the AFR100. According to a press release by Bezos Earth Fund, US\$1 billion will support landscape restoration, including planting trees on degraded landscapes, revitalising grasslands and integrating trees into farmland. The AFR100 stated that “the first US\$2 billion investment in local African organisations, businesses and government-led projects could later initiate an investment of US\$15 billion, which could spark the restoration of 20 million ha of land by 2026. This, in turn, could generate US\$135 billion in benefits to around 40 million people.”
- In May 2022, the Global Ever Greening Alliance launched the Restore Africa programme, a US\$150 million nature-based carbon programme aiming to restore 1.9 million ha and 1.5 million smallholder farming across Kenya, Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. According to the company’s website, the programme is the world’s biggest privately funded farmer-led restoration programme and aims to tackle the challenges of food security and rural poverty by supporting communities to increase the productivity and profitability of the farming system.

“Through the recruitment of the two regional coordinators, P4F has increased the Secretariat’s capacity to work with the private sector; has allowed a closer relationship between the Secretariat and member countries and helped set up national stakeholder platforms in AFR100 member countries to strengthen coordination and develop a common language and vision.”

Mamadou Diakhite, AUDA-NEPAD/AFR100
Secretariat Manager





Establishment of national FLR platforms

The national FLR platforms provide a forum for exchange and are chaired by the Ministry of Environment or Ministry of Forestry of the respective countries. They engage a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives, directly and indirectly involved in FLR from other ministries and public institutions, financial partners (World Bank, Germany's Federal Ministry for Environment, KfW Development Bank, UKAID, and USAID) and international institutions (FAO, UNDP, UNEP, WRI, IUCN, Center for International Forestry Research, World Agroforestry Centre, WWF, GIZ, SNV Netherlands Development Organization, etc.), the private sector including smallholder farmers, cooperatives, women and young entrepreneurs, NGOs and groups and associations, traditional authorities, sub-regional organizations such as Southern African Development Community and Economic Community of West African States, as well as interested embassies.

The achievements of the national FLR platforms include⁴:

- Ensuring the implementation of the AFR100 commitment and building the capacity of actors involved;

- Pooling human and financial resources by monitoring and mapping implementation progress at the national level;
- Mobilizing financial and human resources to enable restoration activities;
- Facilitating better inclusion of FLR in development policies and strategies;
- Lobbying for the creation of a department in charge of reforestation and landscape restoration within a Ministry of the Environment of member countries;
- Providing recommendations based on successful restoration initiatives that can attract funding, be scaled up and widely disseminated;
- Knowledge and experience sharing;
- Strengthening South–South cooperation and learning by organizing exchange visits between countries involved in the AFR100 initiative.

Senegal

The national platform was held in October 2021, with the support of the AFR100 Secretariat and the regional coordinators. The platform was chaired by the Government of Senegal through the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development and attended by the Senegalese Agricultural Research Institute, National Institute of Pedology, The Senegal National Council for Concentration and Rural Cooperation, sectoral administrations, public institutions, civil society technical and financial partners including the AFR100 Secretariat, IUCN, GIZ, World Vision, Japan International Cooperation Agency and IED Africa.

The participating stakeholders discussed the opportunities and challenges of sustainable land use in Senegal. The action points that emerged include finalizing a decree to organize the

platforms on a continued basis, strengthening the capacity of FLR actors, developing resource mobilization activities and organizing exchange trips to share best practices.



4. The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), The state of AFR100: The progress of forest landscape restoration by implementing partners, 2022



Replication of the national platform model in Nigeria

The Nigerian government approached the AFR100 Secretariat requesting technical support in setting up a national platform having learned of the success of similar initiatives in East, West and Central African countries (Malawi, Senegal, Cameroon, Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

The government took the initiative to source funding for the platform, rather than requesting funding from P4F. A representative from the Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria stated:

“I think it was mostly publishing Nigeria’s commitment to the various stakeholders in the country that necessitated setting up of the platform. I was also aware of Malawi’s and Niger’s stakeholder engagement platforms, but most importantly, we needed it to have the relevant ministries and other stakeholders to get into the momentum of achieving the national commitment.”

Representative from the Federal Ministry of Environment of Nigeria

The AFR100 West and Central Africa regional coordinator supported this initiative, and the platform took place in March 2022 in Abuja, Nigeria. According to a representative from the Federal Ministry of Environment “On the 3rd of March, Nigeria’s AFR100 representative, with the support of the AFR100 regional coordinator, Dr Ndoye, Ousseynou, formally launched the AFR100 national stakeholder platform with over 70 participants. It was a hybrid event that was

also attended by AFR100 representatives from other countries. The coordinator supported us in securing the funds needed for setting up the platform, they helped in the preparation and with administrative processes and attended the formal launch event.”

The Nigerian Government has finalized an administrative decree ensuring the continuation of the platform.



Niger

The national platform was held in November 2021 and was chaired by the country's Ministry of Environment and the Fight against Desertification. It was attended by a wide range of participants including government representatives (high-level officials of the Ministry of Environment and Fight against Desertification, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock), IUCN, FAO, Catholic Relief Services, GIZ, women and youth organizations, local NGOs, the private sector involved in production and export of forest products and the Great Green Wall Initiative.

Establishing the platform was critical to Niger starting to adequately document and report the progress it has made in meeting its restoration goals.

The Ministry of Environment and the Fight Against Desertification have signed a decree making the creation of the national stakeholder platform legal, with the goal of ensuring the continuity of the platform.



Cameroon

The national stakeholder platform was held in October 2021. It was presided over by the Minister

of Environment, Nature Protection, and Sustainable Development of Cameroon, his Excellency Hele Pierre.

“The preparation phase via the national representatives was led by the AFR100 Regional Coordinator (West and Central Africa), Dr Ousseynou Ndoye. Good discussions took place and finally the participants learnt a lot from the national stakeholder platform.”

Dr Abdon Awono, CIFOR-ICRAF Regional Office, Yaounde, Cameroon



Lessons Learned for implementing FLR and enabling investment for forest landscape restoration

1. Forest landscape restoration is a win-win approach that improves the environment (combating climate change, improving biological diversity) and human well-being (providing green jobs, enhancing food security and nutrition, increasing income opportunities).
2. There is a need to provide seed funding for the national FLR platforms to ensure smooth implementation of the roadmap for each country. Lack of ownership poses a challenge when some country representatives aren't responsive to communications from the Secretariat.
3. Channelling financial support to landscape actors (young entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs, rural communities, association, smallholder farmers) is critical in incentivizing landscape actors to undertake FLR activities and accelerating FLR in Africa.
4. Lack of funding is a major challenge to accelerating FLR and so efforts around private sector finance mobilisation need to be strengthened if restoration goals are to be met. This has become clear across the five plus years since the AFR100 was established and was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.
5. Creating and sharing knowledge on successes and challenges of FLR implementation and on the speed of reaching AFR100 commitments with FLR stakeholders at local, national, regional and international levels is very important.
6. National platforms create dynamic interactions between country representatives and government officials, and so improve coordination among stakeholders, avoid duplication of effort and enabled the sharing of good practice and learning.





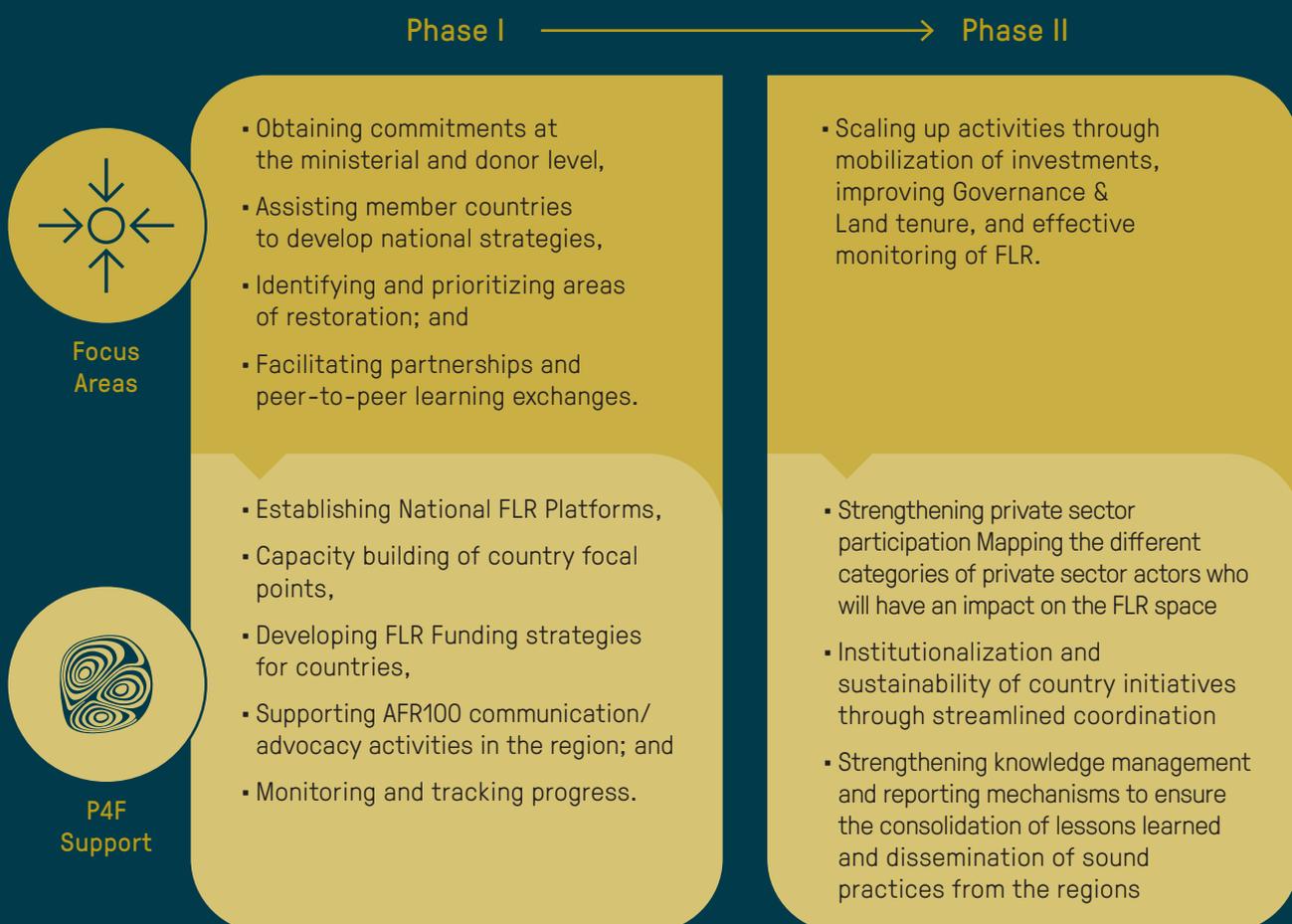
What is next for AFR100 and forest landscape restoration in Africa?

The second phase of AFR100 was launched at the COP26. In this phase, the AFR100 Secretariat, with support from P4F, embarked on a more strategic path of collaboration with the private sector by supporting programmes and inclusive businesses that channel private sector capital into restoration to scale FLR activities among AFR100 member countries.

In this way, the partnership is implementing a three-pronged approach to engage with private sector actors. The first is focused on

strengthening private sector participation by mapping private sector actors, developing funding strategies, and organizing private sector dialogues. The second involves setting up national stakeholder platforms in additional countries and institutionalizing the platforms in the countries supported in the first phase. The third prong strengthens knowledge management and reporting mechanisms to ensure the consolidation of lessons learned and dissemination of sound practices from the regions.

FIGURE 3 | Phasing of AFR100 activities





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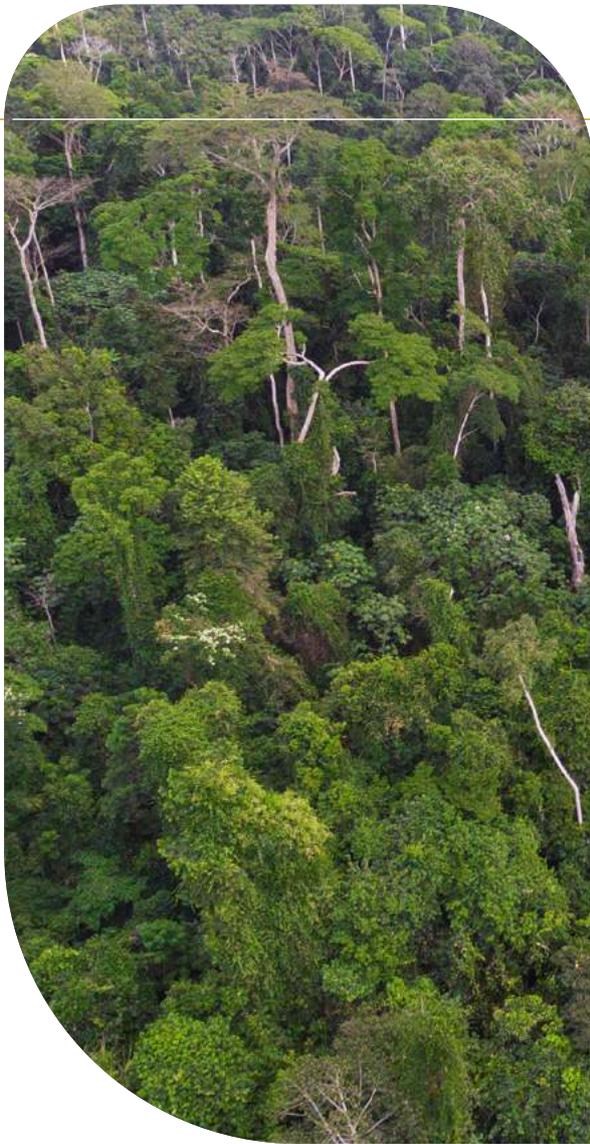
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