

Minutes of the online meeting

# The Economics of Ecosystem Restoration:

## Launch of V3 of data collection template

Wednesday, 31 March 2021

16h00-17h30 Rome time



In September 2020, an online meeting was organized to share with partners the results of the piloting phase, in which six projects responded to the questionnaire. Given these results and the comments received in that meeting, the template has been modified. The resulting V3 version presents also detailed questions on ecosystem restoration benefits (both financial and social/environmental) and provides a new “user dashboard” functionality.

This online meeting aimed to:

- present the latest development of the TEER initiative;
- show the additions to the V3 template for data collection. Particularly, the meeting is organized to get feedback on the structure of the benefits module;
- show the user dashboard and its usefulness for project respondents;
- discuss the data collection strategy and the timeline of the TEER objectives;
- call from partners’ contributions to get as many projects as possible to start sharing the template and gathering data.

## Agenda

**16h00-16h10** Welcome and technical instructions, review of the Agenda and objectives of the online meeting (S. D’Andrea, FAO)

**16h10-16h20** Recap of TEER objectives and previous developments (B. Bodin, FAO/CBD)

**16h20-16h30** Presentation of the new module for data collection on benefits (H. Ding, WRI)

**16h30-16h40** Updated template structure and user dashboard (S. D’Andrea, FAO)

**16h40-17h00** Moderated Questions and Answers (moderator: S. D’Andrea)

**17h00-17h10** Data collection strategy and next steps (B. Bodin, FAO/CBD)

**17h10-17h25** Moderated Questions and Answers (moderator: S. D’Andrea)

**17h25-17h30** Conclusions and closure (C. Besacier, FAO)

## Participants

1	Gotor, Elisabetta	Bioversity International
2	Kettle, Christopher	Bioversity International
3	Thomas, Evert	Bioversity International
4	Pingault, Nathanael	Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)-CGIAR
5	Harrison, Rhett	CGIAR
6	Rodriguez, Lily	CIMA Peru
7	Moolenaar, Simon	Commonland

8	Wilson, Sarah	Conservation International
9	Vincent, Jeffrey	Duke University/World Bank
10	Besacier, Christophe	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
11	Chnais, Elias	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
12	D'Andrea, Sara	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
13	Ferro, Giacomo	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
14	Issifou , Wata	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
15	Kimba, Goubour	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
16	Madrid, Monica	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
17	Parfondry, Marc	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
18	Zoveda, Faustine	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
19	Bodin, Blaise	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
20	Crouzeilles, Renato	International Institute for Sustainability
21	Raes, Leander	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
22	Walder, Bethanie	Society for Ecological Restoration
23	Benini, Rubens	The Nature Conservancy
24	Ribeiro, Milena	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
25	Louman, Bas	Tropenbos International
26	Kumar, Pushpam	United Nations (UN)
27	Hatchondo, Xavier	Weforest
28	Buckingham, Kathleen	World Resources Institute (WRI)
29	Ding, Helen	World Resources Institute (WRI)
30	Pacheco, Pablo	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
31	Pinho, Alexandra	

## Summary of the discussion

Following a brief recap of the TEER objectives, partners engaged, funding, and work packages developed, a description of the state of the initiative was given, as well as a reminder of the concept of “intervention unit”. Results of the piloting phase were already discussed in previous meetings, thus the new objectives are: to collect data from as many projects as possible, to build a cost-benefit database with a user interface, and to educate restoration stakeholders on the value of this kind of data. A visual example of the final interface with estimates of costs per hectare was presented.

A conceptual presentation of the benefits module followed. The methodological framework already in place is structured in three phases: the characterization of the land in which the project is implemented, the description of the project, and the definition of the benefits. Two groups of benefits are identified: the financial and the social/environmental benefits. Financial benefits concern all goods and products at the intervention unit level that can be sold in the market. For these benefits, it is possible to quantify the baseline value and the expected change after the restoration intervention and to identify the beneficiaries. On the contrary, social/environmental benefits are only qualitatively assessed, and there could be financing mechanisms to monetize them. Beneficiaries are always identifiable.

A description of the template structure was given, followed by a live presentation of the Excel file, with a focus on the benefits module and the user dashboard. The strategy to capture baseline and non-baseline financial benefits in the cost-benefit analysis was described, as well as the importance of the user dashboard, which would act as an incentive for respondents to fill the questionnaire.

The presentation was followed by a first Q&A session, in which the following comments were addressed.

- Simon Moolenaar asked if, in the next phase, social and environmental benefits will be quantified or will just be addressed qualitatively.
  - It is acknowledged that project managers may not have the technical background to quantify them, but the template allows for the possibility to have a follow-up if they declare that there are plans for a financing mechanism. The aim of the TEER until now is to collect qualitative information and, if possible, quantify them using a standard methodology. This is just a first step, the TEER could complement other data collection projects, and a call for an alignment is shared.
- Pablo Pacheco noted that some social/environmental benefits can be quantifiable in the sense that may have a market/incidence on land value. Related to the expected change, he asked how to take account of the uncertainty surrounding the percentage change in expected value. A question on the estimate accuracy is needed.
  - A way to solve this would be to ask to quantify the expected change in the first year of implementation and then come back to the same respondent after some years to check if their expectation was realized effectively. For employment benefits, cost data can be used since the template asks to quantify the paid and unpaid labor in the total amount of money and person-days.
  - Ideally, the TEER template could be sent in a before and after phase, but there is a risk that respondents couldn't be honest in the after answer since they wouldn't admit failing in some achievements planned at the beginning. TEER should aim to collect data as accurately as possible but also as quickly as possible, thus a kind of trade-off is faced. **Call for contribution to detect this issue from partners.**
- Simon Moolenaar suggested getting aligned to the 1000L initiative (Seth Shames at EcoAg) with a finance working group presenting a questionnaire on the landscape. To determine the true benefits of investing in landscape restoration, he also suggested that he developed a Framework to analyze, quantify and, where possible, monetize the effects of all externalities (positive and negative) of land use and management change in a systematic way (De Groot et al., 2019, see also: <https://www.es-partnership.org/esp-guidelines/>). It is the first attempt to arrive at an integrated CBA combining Direct and Indirect Market Values. So, the TEER could link these initiatives to get more data to complement that obtained from the field through the template.
- Rhett Harrison pointed out that that it is possible to verify answers against global data sets.
  - As this could be a bit adversarial, instead, the idea could be to work the other way around and eventually get data from models on restoration benefits (on the land declared in the IU tab) and ask respondents to react to this kind of data (if data from the field are higher or lower) to compare it to remote sensing or modelled data.

The second part of the meeting focused on the data collection strategy. A practical issue is the timing of projects: the questionnaire could be sent to projects before the implementation phase to get expected data or at the end, thus including real data.

The data collection process would take years to get completed, as long as projects progress. Thus, three types of data could be collected: data collected throughout the project (that would take years), data projected

from projects starting (that need to be verified over time), and retrofitted data from project ending (but couldn't be as accurate as needed).

The timeline for the next steps should proceed as follows. By the end of April 2021, projects will be scoped out to check what data they can provide. From May to September 2021, tailored versions of the template will be sent, and project respondents will be helped in filling the template. By December 2021, data should be cleaned and published using a simple user interface. Educating on the value of this kind of data and its usefulness is an objective left for the future, from 2022 onward.

The material available on the TEER webpage was shown, as well as the communication strategy. This includes a subchapter in the SOFO 2021 focused on ecosystem restoration cost-benefits data, the participation in side-events at the WFC in May 2022, and a launch report for the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. Finally, the TEER logo was presented.

A second Q&A session followed. The main points highlighted are briefly listed below.

- Jeffrey Vincent encouraged to use the World Bank data (a working paper in which he is personally engaged) and to use the data from his project in the TEER. Data collected from several projects can be included in the TEER final database. He also suggested linking with the Inner American Development Bank, developing forestry projects (these data could be included, too).
- Rhett Harrison asked if there are some hypotheses to test in a representative sample, e.g., if some characteristics may affect costs. This is one of the final objectives of the data collection process. Data from the onboarding phase would be checked in this sense, contextualized in space and time. Hypotheses on what are the main drivers of costs and benefits would be verified once an appropriate amount of data is available.
- Jeffrey Vincent noted that this has been possible with World Bank data, based on his experience. He suggested developing similar models and using TEER data to predict costs in a given country/area. Contextualized projections are one of the main usefulness of the database.
- Christophe Besacier asked how to incentivize respondents to fill as quickly as possible the template. There are two incentives for that: the first incentive is at the organization level, making this database available to organizations that contribute with their data. The second is at the individual level since project respondents get an overview of the data submitted and economic indicators of their project through the dashboard, which provides the building blocks of a CBA.