



**RESTORING AFRICA'S DRYLANDS**  
ACCELERATING ACTION ON THE GROUND



# THE DRYLAND SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES IMPACT PROGRAM

Local action for impact at scale

#GLFAfrica

White paper prepared by



GLF Africa 2021 session co-hosts



**WHITE PAPER**

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Catalyzing accelerated action  
in drylands through stakeholder  
engagement, partnerships, adaptive  
programmatic approaches, local-  
to-global knowledge exchange and  
systemic capacity enhancement.

**Authors:**

Barbara Fang, Fidaa F. Haddad, Fritjof  
Boerstler, MariaTeresa DiBenedetto,  
Patrick Kalas, and Pragyam Pokhrel,  
Food and Agriculture Organization of  
the United Nations

## SHARED CHALLENGES IN AFRICA'S DRYLANDS

Globally, an estimated 2.1 billion people live in drylands, and about 525 million of those live in Africa's drylands. Dryland communities have been living in arid landscapes for centuries and have employed traditional and autonomous methods that sustainably use natural resources. But today, they are facing increasing and combined threats of climate change, population growth, global demands for livestock, and new difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Common challenges across dryland communities include lack of access to knowledge, limited monitoring and adaptive learning, and a lack of capacity and incentives to connect with global and regional stakeholders. Top-down approaches that are fragmented across different localities and countries, as well as a lack of structured incentives to connect local knowledge with global networks, have not fostered the conditions to turn the tide on transboundary land degradation in Africa's drylands.

## THE DRYLANDS SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES IMPACT PROGRAM: ACCELERATING CHANGE AT SCALE

This GLF session will launch the Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Program (DSL-IP), which takes a catalytic, country-driven approach to accelerating transformational and durable changes at scale. This will be applied across dryland communities in 11 countries in three geographical

clusters to avoid, reduce, and reverse further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands. The programmatic approach of the DSL IP will take account of the similar and transboundary nature of many of the challenges facing drylands.

The program will reach close to 1 million direct beneficiaries and bring 12 million hectares of drylands under sustainable land management, including 1.1 million hectares primarily benefitting biodiversity and preventing deforestation of 10,000 hectares of high conservation value forests. In addition, the program will improve the management effectiveness in 1.6 million hectares of protected areas and restore 0.9 million hectares of degraded land in the drylands. All these activities will result in total greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions of 34.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

To achieve transformational change, the impact program framework will rely on a three-pronged approach:

1. Develop effective planning, management and governance systems across national and sub-national levels, including improved collaboration across sectors for policy coherence and stronger land/resource tenure.
2. Mobilize national and international stakeholders, strengthen dryland value chains and leverage investments from the private sector by catalyzing funds to upscale Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) strategies.
3. Implement comprehensive monitoring, assessment and knowledge management based on innovative spatial assessment tools to support shared learning and co-production of knowledge.

### DSL-IP Regions and Countries

#### Miombo and Mopane ecosystems of Southern Africa:

Angola, Botswana,  
Malawi, Mozambique,  
Namibia, Tanzania,  
Zambia, Zimbabwe

#### Savannas of East and West Africa:

Burkina Faso, Kenya

#### Temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands of Central Asia:

Kazakhstan,  
Mongolia



# PARTNERSHIPS FOR COHERENT AND LASTING IMPACT

Led by FAO, supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and in partnership with the World Bank, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the DSL-IP will further harness partnerships in a consortium with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The partnership will crowd-in new collaborations with the private sector across multiple scales and civil society, especially organizations for rural Indigenous youth and women, for enduring results and coherent action through whole-of-society engagement. These cross-sector, multi-level collaborations will promote the sustainable management of drylands landscapes globally while fostering resilience of production systems, promoting restoration and rehabilitation, and improving livelihoods through a comprehensive landscape approach.



The DSL-IP will further leverage the convening power of FAO to deploy the policy-setting mechanisms of its Committee on Forestry, Committee on Agriculture, and Regional Forestry Commissions and Agriculture Committees to facilitate the program implementation, ensure overall coherence, and drive consistent program-wide outcomes on the ground. In particular, the FAO Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems, an inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder body established under the Committee on Forestry, will play an essential role in coordinating this effort.

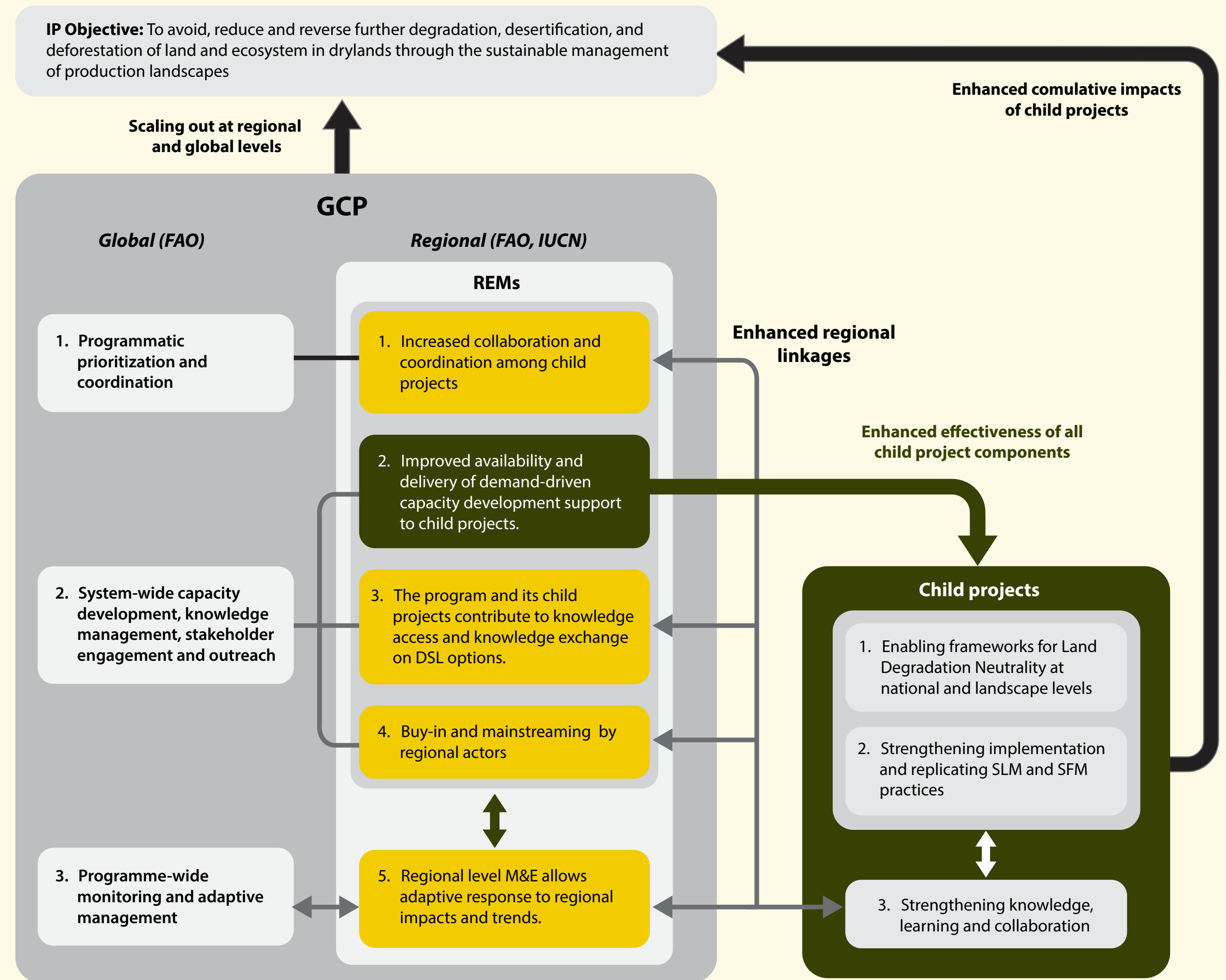


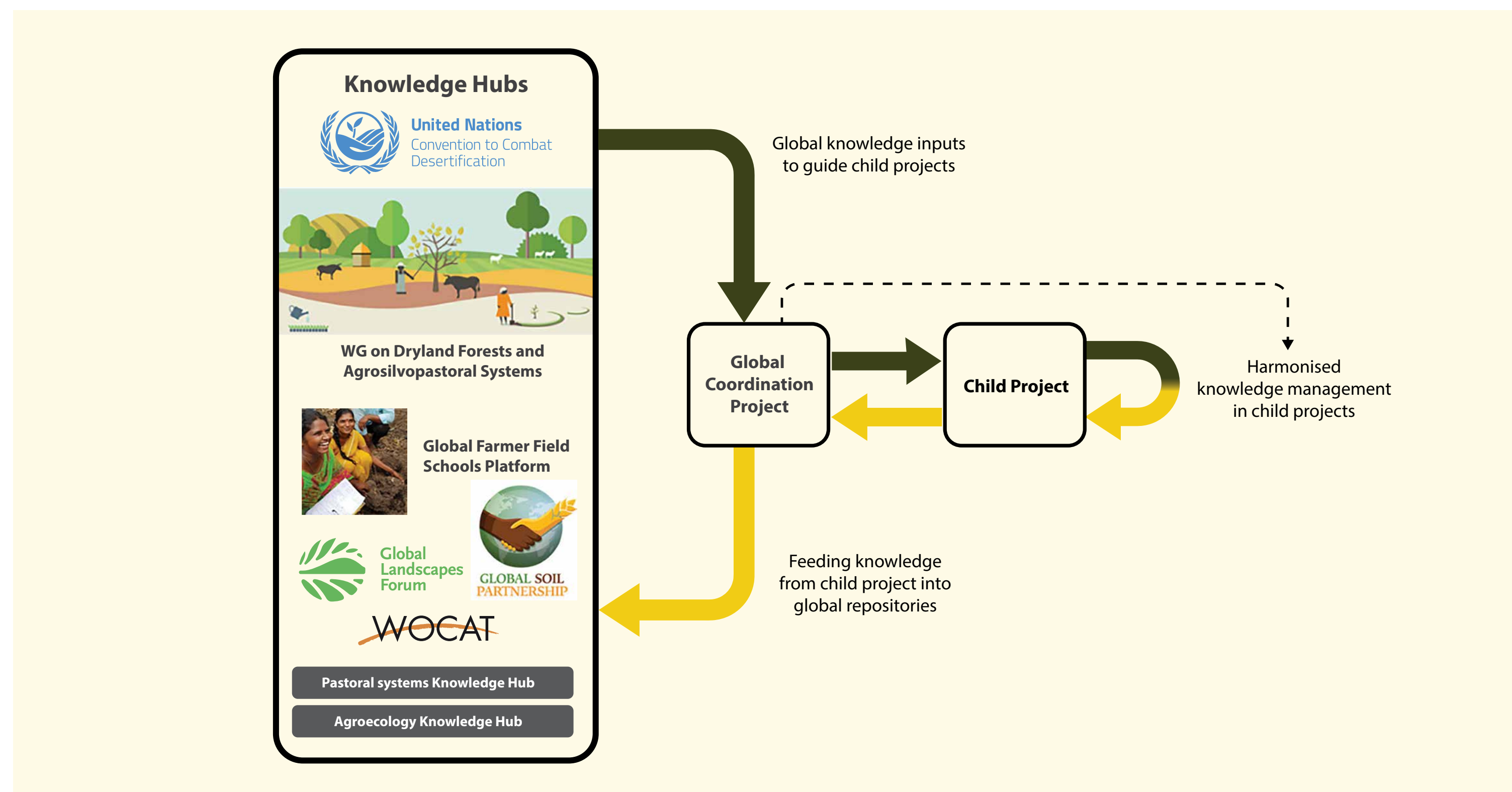
Figure 1. Relations between the Global Coordination project (GCP), the Regional Exchange Mechanisms (REMs) and the child projects.

## 1+1=3: GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

By introducing a global, regional and transboundary dimension, the DSL-IP will help to ensure that threat reduction resulting from the program is sustained in the 11 target countries and in neighbouring countries with similar conditions and challenges. Through knowledge exchange and linkages to regional and global platforms and community of practices, and through Regional Exchange Mechanisms (REMs) and the Global Child Project (GCP), the overall scale of the impacts of the DSL-IP will increase while implementing durable solutions and maximizing synergies across all the DSL-IP components. Thus, the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts. It will also be of concrete benefit to each of the participating countries, allowing them to increase the effectiveness and the durability of the impacts of their country project investments.

Knowledge platforms and networks in these GEF integrated approaches have been effective for sharing best practices and facilitating interaction among country projects<sup>1</sup>. The DSL-IP will build on successes by using a highly participatory method to put dryland communities and countries in the driver's seat for knowledge-sharing in their countries and regions while systematically documenting knowledge generated and enhancing the two-way flow of local and regional/global knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/documents/ops7-evaluation-highlights.pdf>



## THE SPRINT TO 2030

The DSL-IP will be implemented from 2021 to 2026, a crucial period for the world to achieve multiple urgent environmental commitments and development goals. As a multifocal and integrated initiative, the DSL-IP will result in numerous benefits in areas of land degradation, biodiversity and climate change. It will support countries in implementing their Land Degradation Neutrality Strategies (LDNS) under

the UNCCD, while also aligning and contributing to commitments to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and biodiversity targets to be set under the Global Biodiversity Framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This will lay the groundwork for more impactful action in the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) by scaling-up land degradation neutrality across three critical dryland landscapes. Underlying all of this, the program will also contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDGs 2 and 15.

## PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

GLF Africa Digital Conference 2021 would not be possible without the support and participation of the following hosts, partners and organizations. For a full list of everyone involved, please visit: [events.globallandscapesforum.org/africa-2021/partners](https://events.globallandscapesforum.org/africa-2021/partners)

## GLOBAL LANDSCAPES FORUM

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihoods, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UNEP and the World Bank and Charter Members.

**Charter Members:** CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, EcoAgriculture Partners, EFI, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, ILRI, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, RRI, SAN, TMG - Think Tank for Sustainability, UNEP, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen Research, WFO, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, WRI, WWF International, Youth in Landscapes Initiative



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