



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2026-2030



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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2026-2030

HARNESSING THE POWER OF FARMER MANAGED NATURAL REGENERATION
(FMNR) AND THE WATER-ENERGY-FOOD-ECOSYSTEMS (WEFE) NEXUS
AGROFORESTRY APPROACH FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Document Control

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Review Schedule: This Strategic Framework shall be reviewed at mid-term (2028) and updated as needed based on implementation experience, changing context and emerging opportunities.

Contact Information

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FOREWORD

Dear Partners, Colleagues and Stakeholders,

It is with great pride and a profound sense of purpose that I present the Forum for Natural Regeneration's Strategic Framework for 2026-2030. This document represents the culmination of extensive reflection, consultation and learning from our years of work promoting Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration across northern Ghana. It articulates not only where we are going as an organisation but, more importantly, how we intend to contribute to the restoration of Ghana's degraded landscapes and the improved well-being of the communities who depend on them.

The period covered by this framework is critical. Ghana has made ambitious commitments to landscape restoration under the Bonn Challenge and AFR100. The government's Tree for Life Initiative signals a national priority on reforestation. The Environmental Protection Act, 2025 (Act 1124) has created a new architecture for climate finance and carbon markets. And the 2026-2029 District Medium-Term Development Plan cycle provides a concrete mechanism for localising restoration efforts. FONAR is positioned to help translate these policy commitments into tangible action on the ground.

Our strategic approach is anchored in two foundational concepts. The first is *Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)*, a low-cost, community-driven technique that has already restored more than 218,000 hectares in Ghana by harnessing the natural regenerative capacity of trees. The second is the *Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus*, an integrated framework that recognises the deep interconnections between the resources that sustain life and livelihoods. By bringing these two concepts together, we aim to demonstrate that restoring trees is not just about trees – it is about securing water for dry seasons, providing sustainable energy for cooking, increasing food production and rebuilding the ecosystems that underpin rural prosperity.

This framework sets out four strategic pillars that will guide our work: 1) scaling community-level FMNR adoption and WEFE outcomes; 2) shaping an enabling policy environment; 3) generating and sharing evidence; and 4) strengthening our own organisational capacity. It is ambitious but grounded in realism, reflecting both the scale of the challenge and our commitment to focused, effective action.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our Board of Directors and Global Advisor – Tony Rinaudo for their strategic guidance, our dedicated staff for their tireless efforts and to our partners; the Awaken Trees Foundation (our core funder), Heidehof Stiftung, the TRANS-SAHARA Project, World Vision Ghana, Regreening Africa and many others, for their collaboration and support. Most importantly, I thank the farmers and communities of northern Ghana, who are the true stewards of this restoration movement.

We invite you to join us in implementing this framework and working together toward a greener, more resilient future for all Ghanaians.

Yours in service,

Sumaila Seidu Saaka
FONAR Executive Director



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forum for Natural Regeneration (FONAR) gratefully acknowledges the diverse support, guidance and genuine collaborations that have made the development of this Strategic Framework (2026–2030) possible.

We extend our profound gratitude to Awaken Trees and its Founder, Josef Ertl, for their catalytic funding and visionary partnership. Josef's deep commitment to restoring degraded landscapes through community-led action has been instrumental in strengthening FONAR's institutional capacity and enabling us to articulate this ambitious yet grounded strategic vision. The belief that Awaken Trees has placed in our work in promoting the scaling up of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) empowers us to think beyond project cycles and to plan boldly for systemic, long-term change across northern Ghana.

The development of Strategic Framework has been profoundly inspired by our participation in the TRANS-SAHARA WEFE Nexus Agroforestry Project, funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme. The project's pioneering application of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus to agroforestry has fundamentally shaped FONAR's integrated approach. We are especially grateful to the project's coordinating institutions, the Technical University of Munich (TUM) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), and all international and national partners for generating the evidence and fostering the multi-stakeholder collaboration that underpin this framework. The Damol-Tindongo Living Lab in the Upper East Region stands as a living classroom and a centre of continuous learning.

We honour and thank the communities where we work – the farmers, women's groups, youth and local leaders; who are the heart of this strategy. Your daily stewardship of the land, your willingness to innovate with FMNR, and your resilience in the face of a changing climate are the reasons FONAR exists. This framework is our pledge to amplify your voices and support your efforts.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the FONAR Board of Directors for their strategic guidance, oversight and unwavering support throughout the development of this document. To the dedicated staff of FONAR, thank you for your tireless commitment, field expertise and passion for environmental restoration. This framework reflects our collective wisdom and aspirations.

We are also grateful to our collaborating partners; government agencies, fellow civil society organisations, especially World Vision Ghana, research institutions and private sector allies for your shared commitment to scaling FMNR and advancing the WEFE Nexus in Ghana.

Finally, we profoundly acknowledge the support of Mr. Tony Rinaudo, pioneer of FMNR and FONAR's Global Advisor, whose enduring vision of the "underground forest" continues to guide and inspire restoration practitioners across the Sahel and the world.

While this Strategic Framework has been shaped by many hands, FONAR accepts full responsibility for its content and the commitment to its faithful implementation.

Sumaila Seidu Saaka
Executive Director, Forum for Natural Regeneration (FONAR)



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Name
AFR100	African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DADU	District Agricultural Development Unit
DMTDP	District Medium-Term Development Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EU	European Union
FBO	Farmer-Based Organisation
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
FONAR	Forum for Natural Regeneration
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MEST	Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
T4L	Tree for Life Initiative
TRANS-SAHARA	EU Horizon-funded WEF E Agroforestry Project
UDS	University for Development Studies
VCM	Voluntary Carbon Market
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WEFE	Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Forum for Natural Regeneration (FONAR) is a Ghanaian non-profit organisation dedicated to restoring degraded landscapes and improving rural livelihoods through the promotion of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) and integrated agroforestry approaches. Operating primarily in the five northern regions of Ghana, FONAR works at the intersection of community action, policy advocacy and evidence generation to advance sustainable land management.

This Strategic Framework for 2026-2030 articulates FONAR's vision, mission, strategic direction and implementation approach for the next five years. It is informed by extensive field experience, stakeholder consultations and alignment with national and international development priorities, including Ghana's Medium-Term Development Policy Framework, the Tree for Life Initiative, the Environmental Protection Act, 2025 (Act 1124), and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Challenge: Northern Ghana faces severe and interconnected challenges of land degradation, declining soil fertility, water scarcity, energy poverty, food insecurity and ecosystem decline. Conventional responses, including expensive tree-planting campaigns, have often failed to achieve lasting impact at scale. These challenges are exacerbated by policy barriers, particularly insecure tree tenure for smallholder farmers, and by weak integration of restoration priorities into district-level development planning and budgeting.

The FONAR Approach: FONAR's approach is built on two foundational pillars. First, *Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR)*, a low-cost, proven technique that harnesses the natural regenerative capacity of trees from existing rootstocks, stumps and seeds. FMNR has already restored more than 218,852 hectares of degraded lands and benefited more than 69,783 households in Ghana. Second, the *Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus*, an integrated framework that recognises and manages the interconnections between these critical resources. By applying the WEFE Nexus to FMNR, FONAR demonstrates that restoring trees generates simultaneous benefits across water security, sustainable energy, sustainable food production and ecosystem health.

Strategic Pillars (2026-2030):

Pillar	Goal	Key Objectives
Pillar 1: Community-Level FMNR Adoption and WEFE Outcomes	Farmers in target communities adopt and sustain FMNR, realising measurable improvements in water, energy, food and ecosystem outcomes.	1.1 Increase awareness and knowledge of FMNR and WEFE Nexus. 1.2 Build capacity of farmers and community structures for FMNR implementation. 1.3 Facilitate equitable access to FMNR benefits, particularly for women and marginalised groups. 1.4 Monitor and document WEFE outcomes at household and landscape levels.

Pillar	Goal	Key Objectives
Pillar 2: Policy Advocacy and Enabling Environment	Policy and institutional environment at district and national levels enables and incentivises FMNR adoption and WEFE agroforestry.	2.1 Integrate FMNR and WEFE indicators into District Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDPs) and budgets. 2.2 Advocate for tree tenure reforms that secure farmer rights to on-farm trees. 2.3 Promote access to climate finance and carbon markets for community FMNR initiatives. 2.4 Strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms for coordinated action on landscape restoration.
Pillar 3: Research, Evidence and Knowledge Management	Robust evidence base on FMNR and WEFE Nexus informs FONAR's programming, advocacy and broader sector learning.	3.1 Generate evidence on FMNR impacts across the WEFE Nexus. 3.2 Document and disseminate best practices and lessons learned. 3.3 Foster knowledge exchange and learning within Ghana and across the Sahel.
Pillar 4: Organisational Strengthening and Sustainability	FONAR is a resilient, effective and accountable organisation with the capacity to deliver its mission sustainably.	4.1 Strengthen governance, leadership and management systems. 4.2 Enhance financial management and resource mobilisation capacity. 4.3 Invest in staff development and foster a positive organisational culture. 4.4 Mainstream Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) across all operations.

Implementation Approach: FONAR will implement this framework through a combination of direct community engagement, strategic partnerships, policy advocacy, education and evidence generation. Geographic focus will be on the five northern regions of Ghana, with phased expansion based on learning and resource availability. Implementation modalities include community-based FMNR training and extension, establishment and support of community FMNR committees, establishment and support of school-based FMNR Eco-clubs, multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, policy analysis and engagement, and collaborative research with academic and technical partners.

Resource Mobilisation: FONAR will pursue a diversified funding strategy, including grants from international donors and foundations, domestic resource mobilisation from government budgets and local philanthropy, income from fee-for-service activities (training, technical assistance), and participation in carbon markets and climate finance mechanisms.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning: A robust MEL Framework, aligned with this strategy, will track progress against defined indicators, facilitate adaptive management and generate evidence for learning and accountability. Key performance indicators are established for each strategic pillar.



Conclusion: This Strategic Framework positions FONAR to make a significant contribution to Ghana's landscape restoration and climate resilience goals over the next five years. By scaling FMNR within a WEFE Nexus framework, advocating for enabling policies, and strengthening our own organisational capacity, we will help build a future where thriving trees support prosperous, resilient communities across northern Ghana.





PART I: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1: About FONAR

The Forum for Natural Regeneration (FONAR) is an environmentally focused non-governmental organisation duly registered in Ghana. Founded by Norbert Baba Akolbila and Sumaila Seidu Saaka in 2014, FONAR has established itself as a leading advocate and practitioner of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) in northern Ghana. The organisation works primarily in the Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Savannah and North East Regions, engaging directly with farming communities, traditional authorities, district assemblies and national policymakers.

FONAR's work is grounded in the conviction that restoring degraded landscapes is not only an environmental imperative but a fundamental requirement for poverty reduction, food security and climate resilience in the savannah regions of Northern Ghana. The organisation has been instrumental in calling on political parties and government institutions to incorporate and scale up FMNR as a cost-effective strategy for landscape restoration.

FONAR is an active implementing partner of the TRANS-SAHARA Project, an EU Horizon Europe-funded initiative that applies the WEF Nexus approach to agroforestry management in the Greater North African Region, including Ghana. Through the TRANS-SAHARA Living Lab in Damol-Tindongo, Upper East Region, FONAR collaborates with the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and international partners to generate evidence and demonstrate integrated approaches to restoration.

1.2: The Challenge: Land Degradation and its WEF Implications

Northern Ghana's savannah agro-ecological zone faces a confluence of environmental, social and economic challenges that threaten the well-being of millions of people:

Environmental Degradation:

- Extensive loss of tree cover due to unsustainable charcoal production, agricultural expansion, unregulated small-scale mining, overgrazing and annual bushfires.
- Severe soil erosion and declining soil fertility, reducing agricultural productivity.
- Loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, including pollination and pest control.

Water Insecurity:

- Erratic rainfall patterns and prolonged dry seasons, exacerbated by climate change.
- Declining groundwater levels and drying of streams and wells during the dry season.
- Reduced water infiltration and retention due to degraded soils and lack of tree cover.





Energy Poverty:

- Heavy reliance on wood biomass energy (firewood and charcoal) for cooking and heating, placing unsustainable pressure on remaining tree stocks.
- Significant time and labour burdens, particularly for women and girls, in collecting fuelwood.
- Limited access to affordable, clean alternative energy sources.

Food Insecurity and Malnutrition:

- Low and variable crop yields due to poor soil fertility and moisture stress.
- High levels of chronic malnutrition, particularly among children, linked to dietary diversity gaps.
- Vulnerability of rain-fed agriculture to climate shocks and variability.

Ecosystem Decline:

- Fragmentation and degradation of natural habitats.
- Reduced availability of non-timber forest products (shea nuts, dawadawa, medicinal plants) that provide critical income and nutrition.

Policy and Institutional Barriers:

- Insecure tree tenure, whereby farmers lack clear rights to trees on their land, disincentivising long-term investment in tree management.
- Fragmented governance across water, agriculture, energy and environment sectors.
- Limited integration of landscape restoration into district development planning and budgeting.
- Dependence on short-term, donor-funded projects rather than sustained institutional support.

These challenges are deeply interconnected, consistent with the WEFE Nexus framing. Addressing them requires integrated, multi-sectoral approaches that recognise these interdependencies and seek to maximise synergies.

1.3: The Opportunity: FMNR and the WEFE Nexus

Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR): FMNR is a low-cost, rapid and community-driven approach to restoring tree cover on agricultural lands, grazing areas and degraded forests. Rather than planting expensive seedlings with often low survival rates, FMNR involves the systematic protection and management of naturally regenerating trees and shrubs from existing rootstocks, stumps and the soil seed bank. Farmers select the most promising stems, prune competing growth and protect the regenerating trees from fire and livestock.

FMNR has a proven track record across the Sahel, most notably in Niger, where more than 5 million hectares have been restored through this approach. In Ghana, FMNR was introduced by World Vision Ghana in 2009 and has since been scaled modestly through other projects.



Key advantages of FMNR:

- **Low Cost:** Estimated at US\$10-20 per hectare, compared to US\$500-1,000+ for conventional tree planting.
- **High Survival Rates:** Naturally regenerated trees have established root systems and are better adapted to local conditions.
- **Rapid Results:** Farmers can see benefits within 1-2 growing seasons.
- **Community Ownership:** FMNR empowers farmers as active managers rather than passive recipients.
- **Biodiversity Benefits:** FMNR promotes diverse, locally adapted species rather than monocultures.

The Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus: The WEFE Nexus is an integrated framework for understanding and managing the complex interconnections between water, energy, food and ecosystems. It recognises that actions in one sector invariably affect the others and that sustainable development requires managing these trade-offs and synergies deliberately. The WEFE Nexus Agroforestry approach supports integrated and coordinated action across sectors, aiming to reconcile conflicting interests while capturing opportunities.

The FONAR Approach (FMNR within a WEFE Nexus Framework): FONAR's strategic innovation lies in explicitly framing FMNR as a WEFE Nexus solution. By managing naturally regenerating trees on farms and landscapes, FONAR and partner communities generate simultaneous benefits across all four WEFE dimensions:

WEFE Dimension	FMNR Contribution
Water	Tree roots enhance soil structure and infiltration, increasing groundwater recharge. Tree canopy reduces evaporation and moderates microclimate. Improved water retention supports dry-season water availability for domestic and agricultural use.
Energy	Pruned branches provide a sustainable, renewable source of fuelwood, reducing pressure on natural forests and decreasing the time and labour women spend collecting cooking fuelwood.
Food	Trees improve soil fertility through leaf litter, nitrogen fixation (for leguminous species), and nutrient cycling. Shade reduces heat stress on crops. Tree products (fruits, nuts, leaves) provide additional nutrition and income, enhancing food security and dietary diversity.
Ecosystems	FMNR restores tree cover, enhances biodiversity, provides habitat for wildlife, sequesters carbon, reduces soil erosion and improves overall landscape health and resilience.

This integrated framing strengthens the case for investment in FMNR by demonstrating its contribution to multiple development priorities simultaneously. It also provides a framework for monitoring and communicating impact in a way that resonates with diverse stakeholders across government sectors.



1.4: Rationale for the Strategic Framework

This Strategic Framework is developed for the following purposes:

1. *Provide Strategic Clarity and Direction:* Articulate a clear, coherent vision and mission for FONAR and define the strategic priorities that will guide decision-making and resource allocation over the next five years.
2. *Enhance Programme Coherence:* Ensure that FONAR's diverse activities, from community engagements to national policy advocacy, are aligned and mutually reinforcing, contributing to a unified organisational strategy.
3. *Strengthen Accountability:* Establish clear goals, objectives and indicators against which FONAR's performance and impact can be measured and communicated to stakeholders; including communities, donors, government partners and the Board.
4. *Guide Resource Mobilisation:* Provide a compelling narrative and a clear investment case for prospective donors and partners, demonstrating how their support will contribute to a coherent, impactful strategy.
5. *Position FONAR within the Broader Landscape:* Articulate FONAR's unique contribution and comparative advantage within Ghana's landscape restoration and climate resilience ecosystem.
6. *Facilitate Learning and Adaptation:* Establish a framework for ongoing monitoring, reflection and learning, enabling FONAR to adapt its strategies in response to changing circumstances and emerging evidence.

This framework covers the period **2026-2030**, aligning with the national Medium-Term Development Policy Framework cycle and the 2026-2029 DMTDP cycle, with a mid-term review planned for 2028.





PART II: STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

2.1: Vision

A restored, resilient and productive landscape across northern Ghana where thriving trees sustain prosperous communities and healthy ecosystems.

2.2: Mission

To empower farming communities, influence policy and generate evidence for scaling Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration and WEFE Nexus agroforestry as pathways to sustainable livelihoods and climate resilience.

2.3: Core Values

FONAR's work is guided by the following core values:

Value	Description
<i>Community Ownership</i>	We believe that lasting change is driven by communities themselves. We work in partnership with farmers and communities, respecting local knowledge, priorities and institutions.
<i>Integrity and Accountability</i>	We are committed to transparency, honesty and ethical conduct in all our dealings. We hold ourselves accountable to the communities we serve, our partners and our donors.
<i>Equity and Inclusion</i>	We actively promote gender equity and social inclusion, ensuring that women, youth, pastoralists and other marginalised groups have voice, access and opportunity in all aspects of our work.
<i>Evidence-Based Action</i>	We ground our programmes and advocacy in robust evidence, combining scientific data with local knowledge. We are committed to continuous learning and adaptation.
<i>Collaboration and Partnership</i>	We recognise that the challenges we address are complex and require collective action. We work collaboratively with government, civil society, traditional authorities, the education system, research institutions and the private sector.
<i>Environmental Stewardship</i>	We are dedicated to restoring and protecting the natural environment for current and future generations, recognising the intrinsic value of healthy ecosystems.
<i>Innovation and Adaptability</i>	We embrace new ideas, technologies and approaches that can enhance our effectiveness. We remain flexible and adaptive in the face of changing conditions.

2.4: Guiding Principles

In implementing this strategy, FONAR will adhere to the following principles:

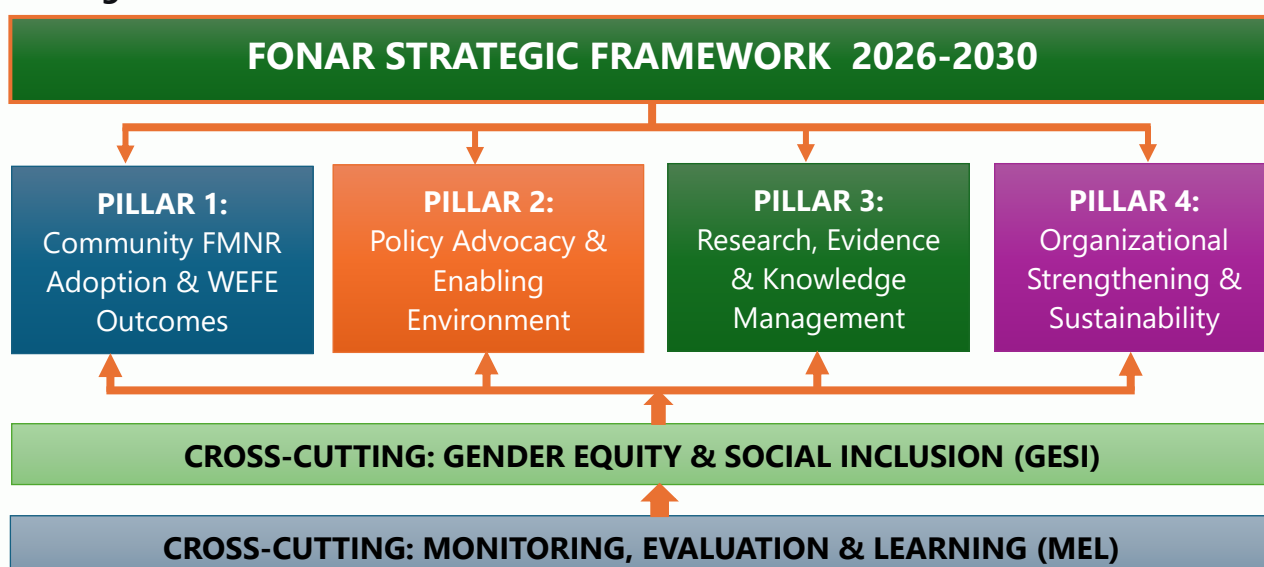
Principle	Description
<i>Do No Harm</i>	All interventions shall be designed and implemented to avoid unintended negative consequences for communities, particularly vulnerable groups.
<i>Subsidiarity</i>	Decisions shall be made at the most appropriate level, with authority and resources devolved to districts and communities where feasible.
<i>Integration</i>	We will consistently apply a WEFE Nexus lens to our work, considering interconnections across water, energy, food and ecosystems.
<i>Sustainability</i>	We will design interventions for long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability beyond project cycles.
<i>Adaptive Management</i>	We will use monitoring data and learning to regularly review and adjust our strategies and activities.
<i>Policy Coherence</i>	We will align our work with national and international policy frameworks and advocate for coherence across sectors.

PART III: STRATEGIC PILLARS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Overview of Strategic Pillars

FONAR's strategy for 2026-2030 is organised around four interconnected pillars, reflecting the organisation's comprehensive approach to scaling FMNR and WEFE agroforestry.

Strategic Pillars at a Glance:



3.2: Pillar 1: Community-Level FMNR Adoption and WEFE Outcomes

Goal: Farmers in target communities adopt and sustain FMNR practices, realising measurable improvements in water, energy, food and ecosystem outcomes.

Rationale: Direct engagement with farming communities is the foundation of FONAR's work. Sustained, widespread adoption of FMNR at the household and community level is essential for achieving landscape-scale restoration and delivering tangible WEFE benefits to rural populations. This pillar focuses on building awareness, providing training and technical support, strengthening local governance structures for FMNR, and ensuring that benefits are shared equitably.

Objectives and Key Strategies:

Objective	Key Strategies
1.1: Increase awareness and knowledge of FMNR and the WEFE Nexus among target communities.	<p>1.1.1 Conduct community sensitisation and mobilisation campaigns using radio, drama, community meetings and peer-to-peer outreach.</p> <p>1.1.2 Develop and disseminate accessible communication materials (posters, flyers, videos) in local languages explaining FMNR and WEFE benefits.</p> <p>1.1.3 Facilitate exposure visits for farmers and community leaders to established FMNR sites.</p>
1.2: Build capacity of farmers and community structures for effective FMNR implementation.	<p>1.2.1 Deliver practical, hands-on FMNR training to farmers (women and men) on stem selection, pruning and protection techniques.</p> <p>1.2.2 Establish and maintain FMNR demonstration plots as learning sites in each target community.</p> <p>1.2.3 Train and support lead farmers (including women and youth) to serve as FMNR champions and peer educators.</p> <p>1.2.4 Strengthen the capacity of community FMNR committees in governance, planning and conflict resolution.</p> <p>1.2.5 Facilitate the development and enforcement of community byelaws supporting tree protection and FMNR.</p>
1.3: Facilitate equitable access to FMNR benefits, particularly for women and marginalised groups.	<p>1.3.1 Design training and activities to accommodate women's time constraints and literacy levels (e.g., women-only sessions, visual materials, flexible scheduling).</p> <p>1.3.2 Promote women's participation in community FMNR committees and decision-making structures (target: ≥40% women members).</p> <p>1.3.3 Support women's access to tree products (shea, moringa, fuelwood) and value addition opportunities.</p> <p>1.3.4 Facilitate linkages between FMNR groups and Green Savings and Loan Associations (GSLAs) to support income generation and investment.</p> <p>1.3.5 Address specific barriers faced by pastoralist communities, youth and persons with disabilities through targeted interventions.</p>
1.4: Monitor and document WEFE outcomes at household and landscape levels.	<p>1.4.1 Implement community-based monitoring systems using simple tracking tools (e.g., Farmer FMNR Tracking Cards).</p> <p>1.4.2 Collect and analyse data on key WEFE indicators (water availability, fuelwood access, crop yields, tree density, biodiversity).</p> <p>1.4.3 Use monitoring data to provide feedback to communities and adapt programme strategies.</p> <p>1.4.4 Document and share success stories and case studies demonstrating WEFE benefits.</p>

Five-Year Targets (2026-2030):

Indicator	Baseline (2026)	Target (2030)
Number of farmers trained in FMNR (cumulative)	To be established	10,000 (≥50% women)
Number of farmers actively practicing FMNR	To be established	5,000
Area under FMNR management in FONAR operational areas	To be established	+250,000 ha
Number of functional community FMNR committees	To be established	50 (≥40% women members)
Number of FMNR demonstration plots established	To be established	100
Percentage of FMNR adopters reporting improved crop yields	To be established	70%
Reduction in time spent collecting fuelwood (women)	To be established	30%

3.3: Pillar 2: Policy Advocacy and Enabling Environment

Goal: Policy and institutional environment at district and national levels enables and incentivises FMNR and WEFE agroforestry adoption.

Rationale: Even the most successful community-level FMNR initiatives will struggle to achieve scale and sustainability without a supportive policy environment. Key barriers include insecure tree tenure, limited access to climate finance, and weak integration of restoration strategies into district planning. This pillar focuses on evidence-based advocacy to address these systemic barriers, working with government, traditional authorities and civil society partners.

Objectives and Key Strategies:

Objective	Key Strategies
2.1: Advocate for tree tenure reforms that secure farmer rights to on-farm trees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1.1 Conduct and disseminate research on the impacts of current tree tenure arrangements on FMNR adoption and farmer livelihoods.2.1.2 Engage the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), Forestry Commission, and Parliament to advocate for legal and regulatory reforms.2.1.3 Build a multi-stakeholder coalition of CSOs, traditional authorities and farmer groups to advocate for tenure reform.2.1.4 Pilot and document simplified, community-based tree registration approaches.2.1.5 Advocate for specific provisions protecting women's tree rights.
2.2: Promote access to climate finance and carbon markets for community FMNR initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2.2.1 Monitor and engage with the development of carbon market regulations under the EPA Act, 2025 (Act 1124).2.2.2 Advocate for simplified MRV procedures and dedicated windows for small-scale, community-based FMNR carbon projects.2.2.3 Develop and register pilot FMNR carbon projects on the Ghana Carbon Registry.

Objective	Key Strategies
	<p>2.2.4 Build capacity of FONAR staff and community partners on carbon market fundamentals and benefit-sharing.</p> <p>2.2.5 Mobilise climate finance from international sources (GCF, GEF, Adaptation Fund) and domestic mechanisms (Mitigation Fund).</p>
2.3: Integrate FMNR and WEFE indicators into District Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDPs) and budgets.	<p>2.3.1 Engage with NDPC to ensure FMNR and WEFE considerations are reflected in DMTDP guidelines for the 2030-2033 cycle.</p> <p>2.3.2 Provide technical support and template language to District Planning Officers for integrating FMNR into DMTDPs and Annual Action Plans.</p> <p>2.3.3 Train district officials (Planning Officers, DADU staff) on FMNR and WEFE indicators.</p> <p>2.3.4 Advocate for dedicated budget allocations for FMNR activities in district budgets.</p> <p>2.3.5 Track and document district-level policy and budget commitments to FMNR.</p>
2.4: Strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms for coordinated action on landscape restoration.	<p>2.4.1 Participate actively in the Agroforestry Technical Working Group (ATWG) and other national coordination mechanisms.</p> <p>2.4.2 Establish and facilitate district-level FMNR coordination committees in target districts.</p> <p>2.4.3 Convene regular multi-stakeholder dialogues on tree tenure, climate finance and district planning.</p> <p>2.4.4 Build strategic partnerships with traditional authorities, recognising their role as custodians of customary land.</p>

Five-Year Targets (2026-2030):

Indicator	Baseline (2026)	Target (2030)
Number of districts with FMNR/WEFE activities included in DMTDPs	To be established	20
Number of districts with dedicated budget allocation for FMNR	0	15
Number of policy commitments secured on tree tenure reform	0	3
Number of FMNR projects registered or in pipeline for carbon finance	0	5
Value of climate finance mobilised for community FMNR	0	US\$5 million
Number of district FMNR coordination committees established	0	15

3.4: Pillar 3: Research, Evidence and Knowledge Management

Goal: Robust evidence base on FMNR and WEFE Nexus informs FONAR's programming, advocacy and broader sector learning.

Rationale: Credible evidence is essential for effective programming, persuasive advocacy and organisational learning. FONAR is committed to generating and sharing knowledge on FMNR and WEFE agroforestry, in partnership with research institutions and through our own MEL systems. This pillar focuses on research, documentation and knowledge exchange.

Objectives and Key Strategies:

Objective	Key Strategies
3.1: Generate evidence on FMNR impacts across the WEFE Nexus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1.1 Implement robust baseline, monitoring and evaluation studies in collaboration with research partners (KNUST, UDS, CSIR).3.1.2 Conduct thematic research on priority topics, including FMNR cost-benefit analysis, carbon sequestration potential, GESI impacts, and water resource outcomes.3.1.3 Leverage the TRANS-SAHARA Project Living Lab in Damol-Tindongo as a site for applied research and innovation.3.1.4 Utilise remote sensing and GIS technologies to monitor tree cover change at landscape scale.
3.2: Document and disseminate best practices and lessons learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.2.1 Produce and disseminate a range of knowledge products, including case studies, learning briefs, policy briefs and technical manuals.3.2.2 Maintain an accessible repository of FONAR knowledge products on the organisational website.3.2.3 Contribute to the FMNR Hub and other regional knowledge platforms.3.2.4 Present FONAR's work at national and international conferences and webinars.
3.3: Foster knowledge exchange and learning within Ghana and across the Sahel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.3.1 Facilitate peer-to-peer learning exchanges between FMNR communities within Ghana.3.3.2 Participate in regional FMNR and WEFE communities of practice, including those facilitated by Regreening Africa and World Vision.3.3.3 Learn from and adapt successful FMNR policy and programming models from Niger, Senegal, and other Sahelian countries.3.3.4 Share Ghana's FMNR experience with regional and international audiences.

Five-Year Targets (2026-2030):

Indicator	Baseline (2026)	Target (2030)
Number of research studies/assessments conducted	To be established	10
Number of knowledge products produced (case studies, briefs, manuals)	To be established	20
Number of knowledge-sharing events facilitated	To be established	15
Number of citations of FONAR research in policy or academic literature	To be established	10

3.5: Pillar 4: Organisational Strengthening and Sustainability

Goal: FONAR is a resilient, effective and accountable organisation with the capacity to deliver its mission sustainably.

Rationale: Achieving ambitious programme and policy goals requires a strong organisational foundation. This pillar focuses on strengthening FONAR's internal systems, governance, human resources, financial management and GESI mainstreaming to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

Objectives and Key Strategies:

Objective	Key Strategies
4.1: Strengthen governance, leadership and management systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4.1.1 Ensure an active, skilled and diverse Board of Directors providing effective strategic oversight.4.1.2 Review and update organisational policies (HR, Finance, Procurement, GESI, Safeguarding) on a regular cycle.4.1.3 Implement robust planning, budgeting and performance management systems.4.1.4 Ensure full compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements (ORC, NPO Secretariat, GRA).
4.2: Enhance financial management and resource mobilisation capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4.2.1 Maintain transparent and accountable financial management systems, including regular internal and external audits.4.2.2 Implement a diversified resource mobilisation strategy (see Part V).4.2.3 Strengthen grant management and reporting capacity.4.2.4 Build financial reserves to enhance organisational resilience.
4.3: Invest in staff development and foster a positive organisational culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4.3.1 Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for staff aligned with organisational needs.4.3.2 Conduct regular performance reviews and provide constructive feedback.4.3.3 Foster a collaborative, respectful and inclusive workplace culture.4.3.4 Implement competitive and equitable compensation and benefits.

Objective	Key Strategies
4.4: Mainstream Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) across all operations.	4.4.1 Implement FONAR's GESI Policy across all programmes and operations. 4.4.2 Provide regular GESI training for all staff and Board members. 4.4.3 Ensure GESI considerations are integrated into programme design, implementation, MEL and advocacy. 4.4.4 Monitor and report on GESI outcomes and organisational culture.

Five-Year Targets (2026-2030):

Indicator	Baseline (2026)	Target (2030)
Organisational capacity assessment score improvement	To be established	30% improvement
Percentage of annual budget from diversified sources	To be established	≤50% from any single source
Staff satisfaction rate	To be established	≥80%
Compliance with legal/regulatory requirements	To be established	100%
GESI Policy implementation score	To be established	≥80%

PART IV: IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

4.1: Geographic Focus

FONAR's primary geographic focus will remain the *five northern regions of Ghana*: Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Savannah and North East Regions. Within these regions, FONAR will prioritise districts where:

- Degradation levels are severe and FMNR has high potential for impact.
- FONAR has established relationships with communities and district authorities.
- Strategic opportunities exist (e.g., TRANS-SAHARA Living Lab in Damol-Tindongo, Nabdam District).
- Demand from communities and district assemblies is demonstrated.

FONAR will adopt a phased approach to geographic expansion, concentrating resources in a manageable number of districts to achieve depth of impact before scaling to new areas. Learning from initial districts will inform expansion strategies.

Initial Priority Districts (Illustrative):

- Nabdam District (Upper East) – TRANS-SAHARA Living Lab site.
- Talensi District (Upper East).
- Bongo District (Upper East).
- Bolga East District (Upper East)

4.2: Target Beneficiaries

FONAR's primary beneficiaries are *smallholder farming households* in northern Ghana, with a deliberate focus on reaching and empowering:

- **Women farmers:** Who are primary users of tree products and often face the greatest barriers to participation and benefit-sharing.
- **Children and young people (CYP):** Who represent the future of farming and can be engaged through school FMNR Eco-clubs, enterprise development and climate-smart agriculture.
- **Pastoralist communities:** Particularly Fulani herders, who are often marginalised and whose inclusion is essential for peaceful coexistence and sustainable resource management.
- **Female-headed households and other vulnerable groups.**

Secondary beneficiaries include *District Assemblies and government agencies*, who benefit from FONAR's technical support and evidence generation, and the *broader Ghanaian public*, who benefit from improved environmental outcomes and climate resilience.

4.3: Implementation Modalities

FONAR will implement this strategy through a combination of modalities:

Modality	Description
Direct Implementation	FONAR staff and community facilitators will directly deliver training, provide technical support and facilitate community-level activities in target communities.
Partnership with District Assemblies and DADUs	FONAR will work closely with District Agricultural Development Units (DADUs) to co-deliver training, integrate FMNR into extension services and support district planning processes.
Collaboration with Traditional Authorities	FONAR will engage Chiefs, Tindana's, and Queen Mothers as critical allies in community mobilisation, land access and enforcement of community byelaws.
Strategic Partnerships with NGOs and CSOs	FONAR will collaborate with organisations such as World Vision Ghana, Regreening Africa partners, and local CBOs to leverage complementary expertise, avoid duplication and achieve greater scale.
Research Partnerships	FONAR will collaborate with KNUST, UDS, CSIR, and international research institutions to generate evidence, pilot innovations and strengthen MEL.
Policy Engagement and Advocacy	FONAR will engage directly with NDPC, MLNR, EPA, MMDAs, and Parliament to advocate for policy and budget changes.
Private Sector Engagement	FONAR will explore partnerships with shea and moringa processors, carbon project developers, and financial institutions to create market incentives for FMNR.

4.4: Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement

Effective implementation of this strategy requires strong, collaborative relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders. FONAR's approach to partnership is guided by principles of mutual respect, transparency, complementarity and shared value.

A detailed *Multi-Stakeholder Mapping Document* has been developed to guide FONAR's engagement with specific stakeholder groups, including government agencies, traditional authorities, civil society, private sector, research institutions and international partners. Key partnerships are summarised below:

Stakeholder Category	Key Partners	Nature of Collaboration
Government – National	MLNR, Forestry Commission, MoFA, EPA, NDPC	Policy advocacy, technical collaboration, alignment with national programmes (T4L).
Government – District	MMDAs, DADUs, District Planning Officers	DMTDP integration, co-delivery of training, budget advocacy.
Traditional Authorities	Paramount Chiefs, Divisional Chiefs, Tindanas, Queen Mothers	Community entry, land access, byelaw enforcement, conflict resolution.
Research Institutions	KNUST (TRANS-SAHARA), UDS, CSIR-SARI, CSIR-FORIG	Evidence generation, MEL support, technical innovation.
NGOs and CSOs	World Vision Ghana, Regreening Africa partners, A Rocha Ghana, PFAG	Joint programming, advocacy coalitions, knowledge sharing.
Private Sector	Shea processors, moringa exporters, carbon developers, financial institutions	Value chain development, carbon finance, market linkages.
International Partners	Awaken Trees, Heidehof Stiftung, EU, FAO, UNDP, World Bank, GIZ, USAID	Funding, technical assistance, policy alignment.

PART V: RESOURCE MOBILISATION STRATEGY

5.1: Funding Diversification

To ensure financial sustainability and reduce dependence on any single funding source, FONAR will pursue a diversified resource mobilisation strategy encompassing:



Funding Stream	Strategy	Target Contribution (2030)
International Donors and Foundations	Develop and submit competitive proposals to bilateral and multilateral donors (EU, GIZ, USAID), international foundations, and climate funds (GCF, GEF).	40-50%
Government of Ghana	Advocate for inclusion of FMNR in national and district budgets; pursue service contracts with government agencies for training and technical assistance.	10-15%
Carbon Markets and Climate Finance	Develop and register FMNR carbon projects; sell verified carbon credits on voluntary and compliance markets; access Mitigation Fund resources.	15-20%
Private Sector Partnerships	Develop value chain partnerships (shea, moringa); secure corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding; offer fee-for-service training and advisory services.	10-15%
Local Philanthropy and Fundraising	Cultivate relationships with Ghanaian philanthropists and corporate donors; organise local fundraising events; explore crowdfunding opportunities.	5-10%
Income from Fee-for-Service	Offer paid training, consultancy, and technical assistance services to other organisations, government agencies, and private sector entities.	5%

5.2: Resource Mobilisation Targets

FONAR aims to grow its annual budget progressively over the strategic period, with an increasing proportion from diversified sources.

Year	Target Annual Budget (GHS)	% from Diversified Sources
2026 (Baseline)	To be established	To be established
2027	+15%	≥30%
2028	+25%	≥40%
2029	+35%	≥50%
2030	+50%	≥60%





PART VI: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

6.1: MEL Framework Overview

FONAR has developed a comprehensive *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework* that operationalises the measurement of progress against this strategic framework. The MEL Framework includes:

- A detailed *Theory of Change* articulating how FONAR's activities lead to desired outcomes and impacts.
- A *Results Framework* with indicators at output, outcome and impact levels for each strategic pillar.
- Standardised *data collection methods and tools*, including household surveys, farmer tracking cards, key informant interviews and participatory approaches.
- *Data quality assurance* and management procedures.
- An *evaluation plan* including baseline, mid-term, and endline evaluations.
- A *learning agenda* and mechanisms for reflection and adaptive management.

The MEL Framework is designed to be practical, participatory and aligned with FONAR's capacity and resources. It emphasises the use of data for decision-making and continuous improvement.

6.2: Key Performance Indicators (Summary)

Progress against this Strategic Framework will be tracked using the key performance indicators specified under each strategic pillar in Part III. A summary of high-level outcome indicators is provided below:

Strategic Pillar	Key Outcome Indicator	2030 Target
Pillar 1: Community FMNR Adoption	Area under FMNR management in FONAR operational areas	+250,000 ha
Pillar 1: Community FMNR Adoption	Number of farmers actively practicing FMNR	5,000
Pillar 2: Policy Advocacy	Number of districts with dedicated budget allocation for FMNR	15
Pillar 2: Policy Advocacy	Value of climate finance mobilised for community FMNR	US\$5 million
Pillar 3: Evidence & Knowledge	Number of knowledge products produced	20
Pillar 4: Organisational Strengthening	Organisational capacity assessment score improvement	30%

6.3: Learning and Adaptive Management

FONAR is committed to using MEL findings for continuous learning and improvement. The following mechanisms will ensure that learning informs adaptive management:

- *Quarterly Programme Review Meetings*: Staff review progress data, discuss challenges, and adjust implementation plans.
- *Annual Staff Retreat*: Reflect on annual achievements, review learning agenda, and set priorities.
- *Community Feedback Sessions*: Share findings with communities and solicit their interpretation and feedback.
- *After-Action Reviews*: Conduct brief reflections following major activities to capture immediate lessons.
- *Mid-Term Review (2028)*: Comprehensive assessment of progress against the Strategic Framework, leading to any necessary adjustments to strategies or targets.

PART VII: RISK MANAGEMENT

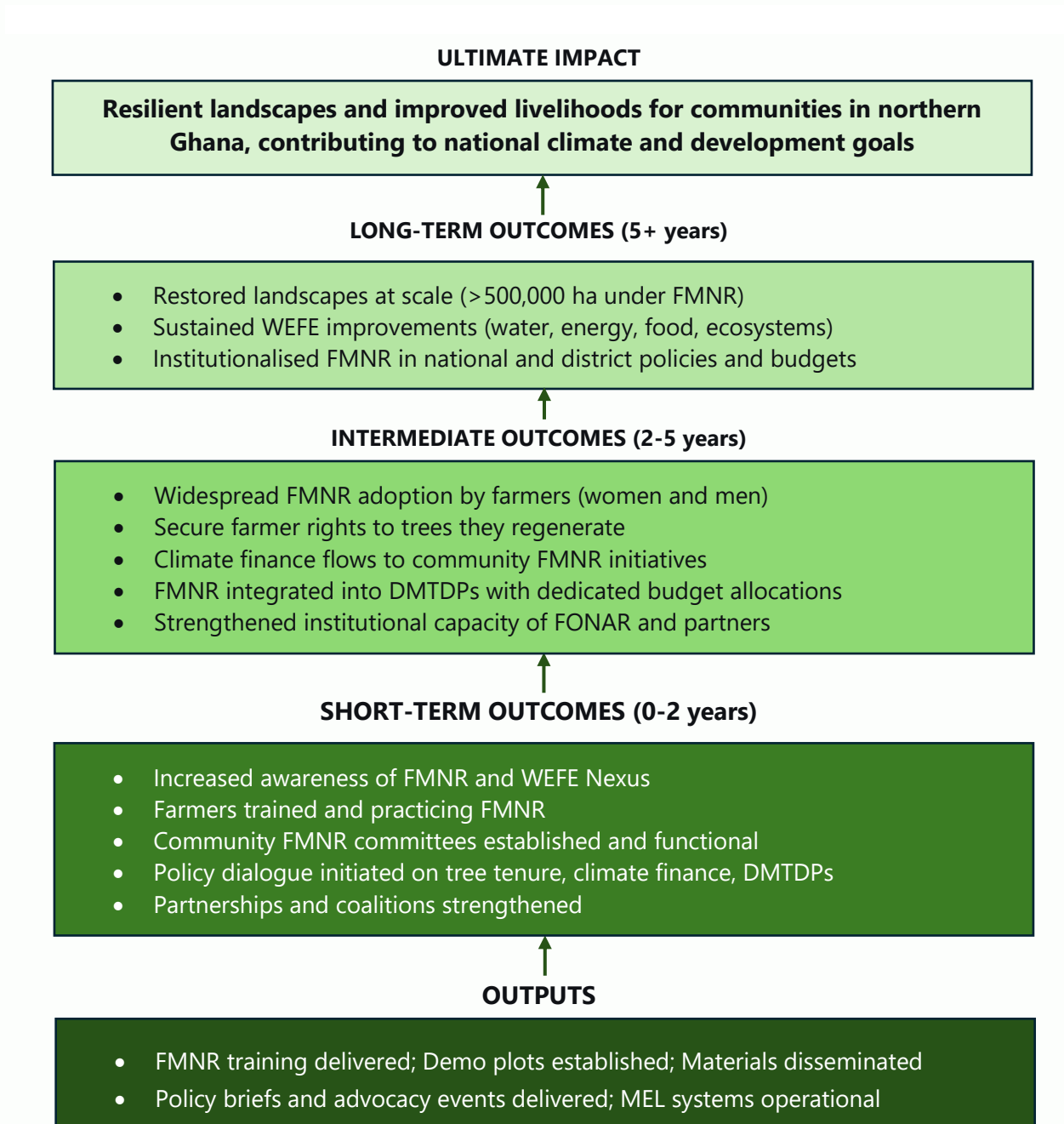
FONAR recognises that implementation of this Strategic Framework is subject to various risks. The following table identifies key risks and outlines mitigation strategies.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Climate Shocks (Drought, Floods)	High	High	Promote drought-resistant species; integrate water harvesting; diversify livelihood options; use FMNR to build landscape resilience.
Insufficient Funding	Medium	High	Diversify funding sources; build financial reserves; align programmes with government budgets; pursue carbon finance.
Political Instability or Policy Shifts	Medium	Medium	Build cross-party support; focus on technical evidence; institutionalise FMNR within government systems.
Tree Tenure Reform Stalled	Medium	High	Build broad stakeholder coalition; document economic benefits; engage traditional authorities; pursue incremental reforms.
Low Farmer Adoption	Medium	Medium	Strengthen extension; provide incentives; demonstrate visible benefits; address tenure concerns; target early adopters.
Gender and Social Exclusion	Medium	Medium	Mainstream GESI across all activities; monitor equity indicators; engage women and marginalised groups proactively.
Organisational Capacity Gaps	Medium	Medium	Invest in staff development; strengthen systems; build strategic partnerships; prioritise capacity strengthening in annual plans.
Insecurity or Conflict	Low	High	Monitor context; maintain neutrality; work with traditional authorities; adapt programming as needed.

PART VIII: ANNEXES

Annex A: Theory of Change Diagram

[Refer to the detailed Theory of Change in FONAR's MEL Framework document. A simplified version is presented below.]





Annex B: Results Framework Summary

[See detailed Results Framework in Part III of this document and the full MEL Framework.]

Annex C: Alignment with National and International Frameworks

This Strategic Framework aligns with and contributes to the following key frameworks:

Framework	Alignment
Ghana National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework (2026-2029)	Contributes to the Environment, Infrastructure and Spatial Planning dimension, with co-benefits across economic and social dimensions.
Tree for Life Initiative (T4L)	Complements national tree planting efforts with cost-effective natural regeneration and sustainable management of regenerated trees.
Environmental Protection Act, 2025 (Act 1124)	Aligns with climate governance, carbon market, and mitigation fund provisions.
Ghana's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)	Contributes to both mitigation (carbon sequestration) and adaptation (climate-resilient agriculture) commitments.
Bonn Challenge / AFR100	Supports Ghana's commitment to restore 2 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Contributes directly to SDGs 2, 6, 7, 13, and 15.
UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)	FMNR is recognised as a proven restoration methodology.

