

Climate and Energy Response Facility (CERF)

2022 - 2025

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Foreword



Over the past 5 years, the *Climate and Energy Response Facility (CERF)* has become a trusted instrument for climate diplomacy in 40 countries. At the same time, it has been widely used for advancing the Dutch government's broader economic and policy objectives in these countries. Starting as a facility focused on climate change mitigation, CERF has steadily expanded to address more priorities, such as climate adaptation, circular economy, climate-smart agriculture and nature-based solutions. CERF has transformed into a versatile platform that connects policy goals with climate action on the ground.

This growth has been driven first and foremost by strong demand from embassies. They rely on CERF to help them bridge climate diplomacy, policy dialogue and project development. CERF particularly adds value in supporting policy ambitions, facilitating partnerships and strengthening local capacities. It acts as a catalyst, bringing together public institutions, the private sector, knowledge partners and financiers from both the Netherlands and partner countries. Within broader programmatic approaches, such as the combi-approach, CERF is also a trusted partner and contributes significantly to greening and sustainability efforts.

In partner countries, CERF has advanced discussions on offshore wind, green hydrogen, the circular economy, agroforestry, critical raw materials, deforestation and climate adaptation. It has supported governments in moving forward policy frameworks. CERF also helped businesses navigate emerging markets, and mobilised knowledge and expertise to support innovation and learning. Across these themes, the programme has consistently helped translate ambition into implementation.

Policy change takes time. CERF applies a sequenced, programmatic approach, which focuses on small, connected steps that catalyse long-term investments and change. This method has allowed CERF to stay committed to its long-term objectives while also

focusing on tangible and practical results. It also enabled CERF to remain realistic about what is needed to achieve a greener future.

Looking ahead, CERF is part of a broader trajectory. In 2026, the forthcoming end evaluation will offer a chance to take a critical look at what works well and where further strengthening is needed. These lessons will directly inform the next phase of our work under the Climate, Water and Food facility (CWF). While the thematic scope will widen, we will stay true to our core principles: demand-driven support to embassies, a long-term perspective, and alignment with both partner country priorities and Dutch international policy goals to create more opportunities for green investments.

We are proud of what we have accomplished together with our partners over the past years. While the challenges of the green transition remain complex and far from solved, we look ahead with confidence. Together with embassies and partners worldwide, we remain committed to advancing sustainable and inclusive climate goals; and to turning climate ambition into lasting action.

Cecilia Costella
Team manager CERF

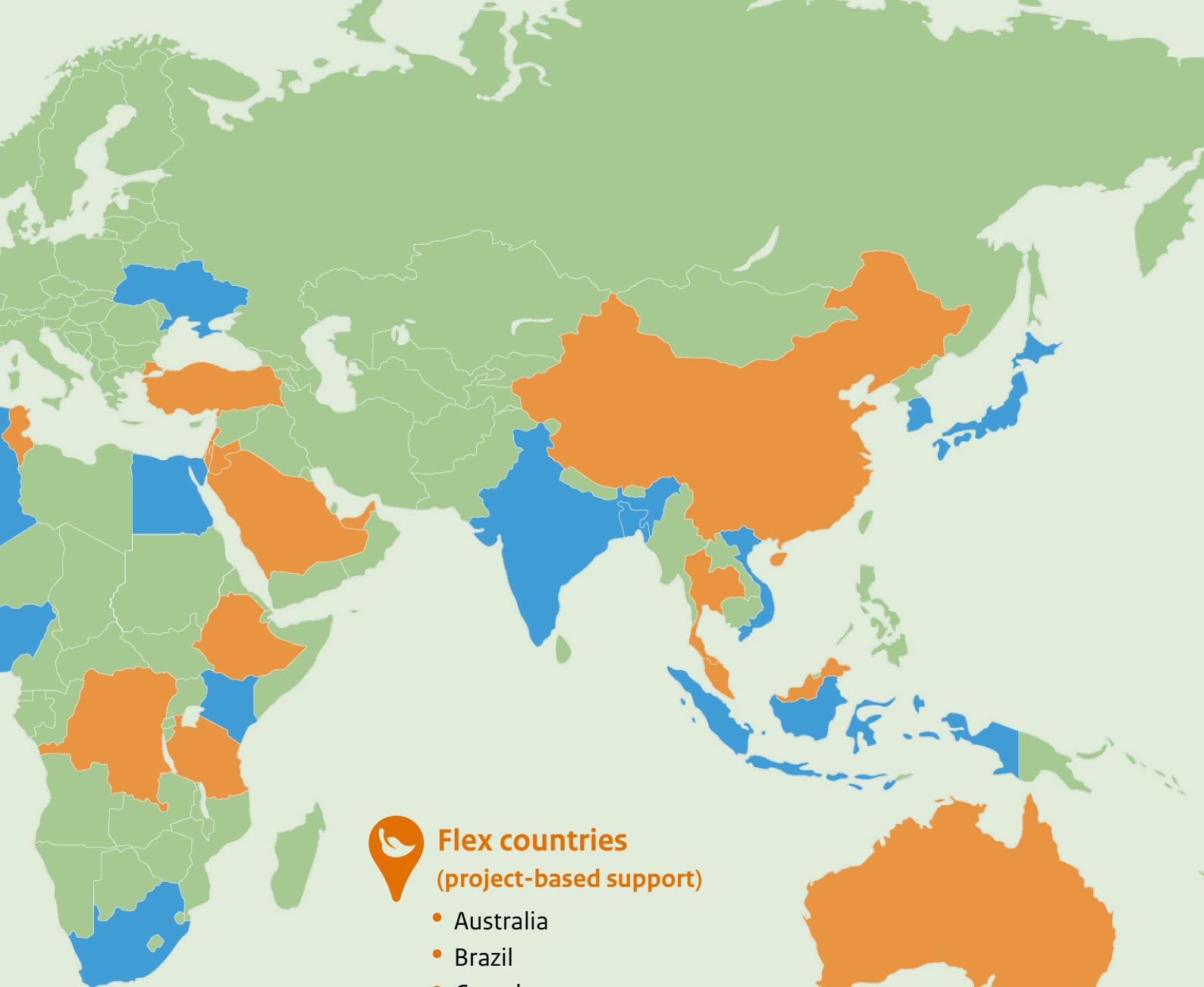
CERF world map



Focus countries (long-term collaboration)

- Algeria
- Bangladesh
- Colombia
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Egypt
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Kenya
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Ukraine
- Vietnam





Flex countries (project-based support)

- Australia
- Brazil
- Canada
- China
- DRC
- Ethiopia
- Israel
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Palestinian Territories
- Saudi Arabia
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Tunisia
- Turkiye
- United Arab Emirates
- United States of America





CERF organisation

The Climate and Energy Response Facility (CERF) is a government-to-government programme. The facility supports the green transition of partner countries by accelerating climate mitigation and adaptation.

With a strong emphasis on policy change and climate action, CERF promotes cross-sector collaboration.

The programme is divided into 3 workstreams:

1. **Long-term collaboration** – a strategic, ongoing cooperation focused on developing and implementing long-term climate and energy transition agendas/projects.
2. **Short-term collaboration** - demand-driven, project-based support addressing specific climate challenges and needs.
3. **Combi-tracks** – joint efforts with Private Sector Development (PSD) and Business Development (BD) coaches, where CERF provides advisory support on green transition themes.

The Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) manages CERF on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For its implementation, RVO collaborates closely with Dutch embassies in both Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA partner countries.

The means

To accelerate the green transition in partner countries, CERF mobilises experts, financiers and stakeholders.

A variety of tools is used, such as:

- **Facilitating** policy dialogue and practical solutions;
- **Connecting** – building partnerships between Dutch and local stakeholders;
- **Knowledge sharing** – providing expertise and best practices;
- **Capacity strengthening** – enhancing local skills and institutions;
- **Multi-stakeholder analysis** – mapping the problems and possible solutions;

- **Exchanges** – trade missions, study visits and expert exchanges;
- **Conferences** – facilitating knowledge exchange and networking.

The topics

To effectively support the green transition, CERF focuses on a set of priority themes. These topics guide collaboration with partner countries, while remaining flexible and responsive to emerging needs:

- Wind energy
- Solar energy
- Green hydrogen
- Circular economy and waste management
- Deforestation and biodiversity
- Agroforestry
- Critical raw materials (CRMs)
- Climate adaptation

CERF works across its focus topics with one overarching goal: to support and strengthen the enabling environment in partner countries. By fostering international economic cooperation, CERF supports local development, expands sustainable business opportunities and enables knowledge exchange across borders.

Through these efforts, CERF connects Dutch companies with local governments, NGOs and enterprises. This helps Dutch companies build productive partnerships and navigate new markets.

In doing so, the programme supports policy change, stimulates bilateral trade and investments, and contributes to long-term climate action and sustainable economic growth.

Programmatic approach

Over the past years, the programme has followed a sequenced, programmatic approach. It is a strategic method using a multi-year programming plan to:

- define the specific steps a CERF intervention can catalyse;
- determine how the intervention connects with other programmes, within RVO and with partners like Invest International or the World Bank.

The approach takes 2 (complementary) forms:

1. **Supporting** an enabling environment for policy and investment in partner countries. This involves working with multiple partners to, for example, strengthen regulatory frameworks, enhance market conditions and remove barriers.
2. **Project development** for (Dutch) companies. This includes identifying opportunities and connecting firms with relevant local partners, key stakeholders and financiers.



Sequenced, programmatic approach

CERF collaboration

Start of a collaboration between a Dutch embassy and CERF.



Inclusion of key stakeholders

Collaboration extends to the partner country's local governmental authorities.



Planning

Preparation for execution.



Execution of practical means

Examples are study visits, conferences, multi-stakeholder analyses and so on.



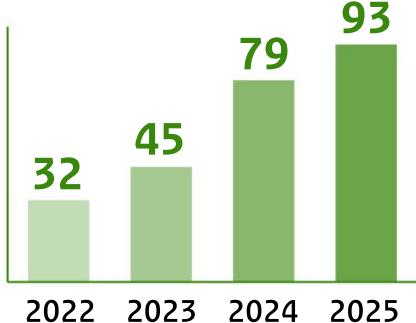
Catalyst for change

CERF interventions are designed to connect with larger programmes, enhancing their overall impact.



CERF highlights

Number of projects



17

long-term
collaborations



19

short-term
collaborations

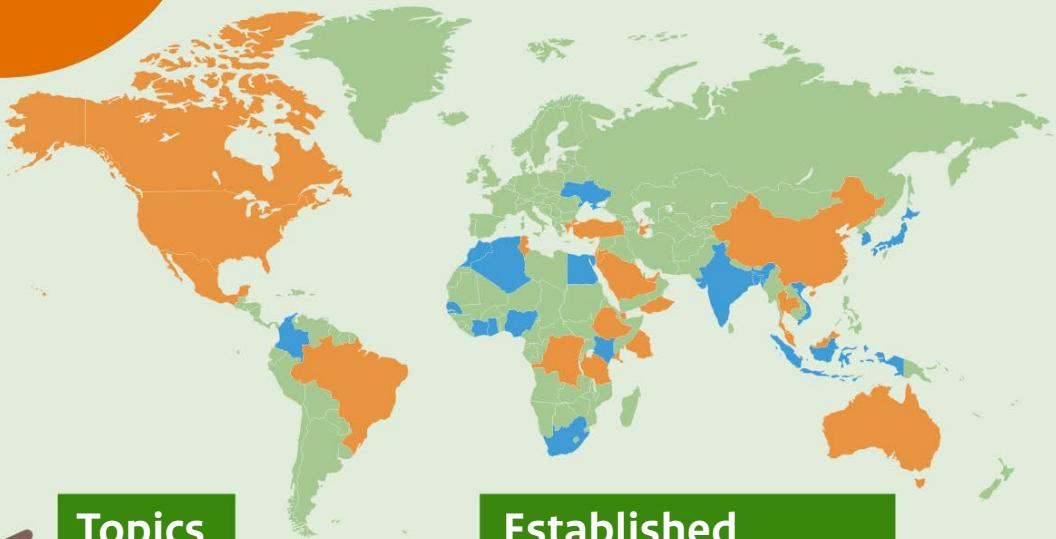


21

combi-tracks

Total
249
activities
and projects

CERF partner countries



Topics

- (Offshore) wind energy
- Solar energy
- Green hydrogen
- Circular economy and waste management
- Deforestation and biodiversity
- Agroforestry
- Critical raw materials
- Climate adaptation

**Established
partnerships
between different
stakeholders**

- Local governments
- Knowledge institutes
- NGOs
- Private sector
- Financial institutions



Reflections

This chapter reflects on lessons learnt, successes and valuable feedback from partners.

Lessons learnt

What lessons did we learn and what did we do to overcome obstacles?

1. Policy change

Long-term policy changes are difficult to measure. By using a programmatic approach, we can track incremental steps, making it easier to monitor progress towards structural, long-term transformation.

This programmatic approach aligns well with CERF's role as an enabling tool for identifying opportunities and connecting stakeholders and existing initiatives. With CERF's follow-up programme, the Climate, Water and Food facility (CWF), the aim is to focus more on partners in climate finance that are most synergistic with CERF. Examples of such partners active in climate action and project generation include Invest International, FMO, SNV, WWF and GIZ.

2. Long-term strategy

Sustained impact requires a coherent, long-term strategy for countries, thematic niches and investor engagement. With CWF, work will continue on integrated multi-year plans that strengthen coordination and focus.

3. Investor and donor engagement

To improve the programme's effectiveness in delivering climate action and mobilising Dutch investments, more engagement from financial institutions is needed. In CWF, this has been included as a programme goal.

4. Purpose and added value of CERF

CERF acts as a catalyst for enabling environments, policy support and climate-focused project development. It can serve as the essential 'connecting link' between existing instruments and stakeholders. This way, CERF complements other initiatives and achieves significant impact with relatively limited resources.

5. Continuous reflection and adaptation

During CERF's implementation, it became clear that there was a need to address adaptation and to include biodiversity and broader sustainability goals. By focusing on realistic mid-term outcomes and staying flexible, CERF and embassies can adjust country plans to fit the needs of partner countries within the framework of long-term strategy and policy change ambitions. This ongoing process of reflection and adaptation is even more integrated into CWF.

From our partners

Partners describe CERF as an effective instrument for advancing climate diplomacy. Below you can find an overview of what partners say about the programme.

How do partners describe CERF?

"An effective partner for advancing climate diplomacy"
"Flexible"
"Technical knowledge"
"Broad network"

Review of CERF's work

"Broadly coherent and effective at creating linkages"
"Effective in terms of short-term outcomes in raising awareness"
"Generation of Dutch private sector projects"



Case study

Offshore wind energy in Colombia

Colombia has set strong ambitions for the development of offshore wind energy. The country has significant potential, especially along the Caribbean coast, where wind speeds are among the world's highest. Colombia's coastal areas are suitable for installing both fixed and floating offshore wind turbines. Expanding offshore wind capacity would diversify Colombia's energy mix and make the system more resilient to the ups and downs in the country's climate. This is especially important as Colombia relies heavily on hydropower, which is more vulnerable during prolonged dry periods. By integrating offshore wind into its energy portfolio, Colombia can enhance energy security, support sustainable growth and generate economic benefits, including an estimated 26,000 local jobs.

Dutch knowledge on wind energy

The Netherlands is ranked among the world's top 5 countries for offshore wind. The sector has expanded rapidly over the past decade. As a result, the Netherlands has transformed from an emerging player into one of the world's leading offshore wind markets since 2013.

The Dutch offshore wind sector offers a comprehensive range of expertise across the entire value chain. This includes pre-development consultancy and site research, high-quality component supply, and specialised operations and maintenance services. The sector also offers dedicated support to SMEs and startups, enabling them to scale innovative solutions and enter international markets.

The power of wind

Colombia has a leading role in developing offshore wind in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its Offshore Wind Roadmap shows a generation potential of 50 GW. The government has launched the region's first offshore wind tender for the allocation of temporary occupancy permits in maritime areas, prequalifying 8 parties. It has received its first formal bid.

Offshore wind gives Colombia a secure, affordable clean energy and strong economic opportunities.

It also helps electrify heavy industries and enable large-scale green hydrogen production, supporting the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. At the same time, Colombia's coastal and marine waters are highly biodiverse and local communities depend on fishing areas. To address these social and environmental challenges, Colombia has developed a Just Energy Transition roadmap.



CERF activities

CERF collaboration in Colombia is based on a partnership with the Colombian Ministry of Mines and Energy, which leads offshore wind development. Activities included masterclasses and training on key technical and strategic topics for Colombian institutions. Partners joined international exchanges, visiting Dutch conferences to learn from local expertise. Studies on ports and the local supply chain were carried out to find opportunities for supporting the offshore wind and green hydrogen sectors. CERF advisors visited Colombia to strengthen cooperation, give guidance and support joint planning. The main success factor has been the close collaboration between Colombian and international partners throughout these activities.

Next steps

CERF will continue to focus on developing offshore wind ports and supply chains. Together with the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessments (NCEA), it will support work on environmental and social issues. CERF will share the supply chain study results locally at a roadshow. It will explore expanding local education programmes for offshore wind skills with RVO's private sector programme. CERF will also try to attract investment by hosting a finance workshop for local banks with the World Bank and international financial institutions. Where relevant, the Dutch private sector, knowledge, and financial institutions will be included.





Case study

Agroforestry in Ghana

Ghana's cacao sector plays a significant role in the national economy. By integrating trees into cocoa farms, agroforestry creates a cooler microclimate and enriches soil fertility. This helps protect crops from extreme heat and irregular rainfall, enhances resilience to climate change and pests, and increases water-use efficiency. Agroforestry also provides additional income streams from timber, fruit and other non-cocoa products. This helps farmers diversify and strengthen their livelihoods. Environmentally, agroforestry promotes biodiversity and reduces the need to clear new forest land, supporting both sustainable production and ecosystem conservation.

Despite the recognised benefits of agroforestry, many cocoa farmers in Ghana still face barriers to adopting agroforestry practices.

Dutch knowledge on agroforestry

Dutch institutions have extensive knowledge of innovative farming practices. It ranges from crop management and soil health to water conservation and sustainable pest control. Their expertise includes practices such as precision agriculture, agroforestry integration and climate-smart farming. All methods are designed to increase productivity while minimising environmental impact.

At the same time, the Netherlands is committed to mutual learning and understanding. Knowledge exchange with other countries is essential, ensuring that the Dutch experience is complemented by local insights and global best practices.

The power of agroforestry

Agroforestry is a land-use practice that integrates trees with crops and livestock grazing areas. Trees help regulate the temperature in the microclimate, and crop diversification enhances soil fertility. As a result, agroforestry increases resilience to climate impacts such as droughts and floods. It also reduces soil erosion and provides additional income through diversification of products. Agroforestry promotes biodiversity by creating habitat corridors and more varied landscapes.

The Netherlands' role in the cacao industry



As one of the world's largest importers of cocoa, the Netherlands plays a significant role in shaping the global cacao market. This strong trade relationship highlights the need to protect and strengthen the sector. Supporting sustainable cacao production helps stakeholders address climate change, pests and deforestation, while benefiting producers, ecosystems and consumers worldwide.

CERF activities

The focus of this collaboration was on fully understanding the sector. The main goals were to identify and map key challenges, enhance stakeholder engagement, review policies and map the ecosystem. Systematically understanding the sector's landscape made it possible to pinpoint the most pressing issues and opportunities for intervention.

Agroforestry priorities were set through multi-stakeholder analyses. A dedicated CERF study looked at strategies to support agroforestry by giving practical advice for policy, investment and scaling up sustainable practices. The outcomes were presented at a workshop with many stakeholders. Then, the programme created an Agroforestry Technical Working Group to coordinate agroforestry work across Ghana. This group helps ensure the perspectives and needs of farmers, policymakers, researchers and other relevant actors are fully included. Smaller subgroups were formed

within this larger group to solve the main challenges, encouraging collaborative problem-solving and practical solutions.

Next steps

The working group continues to offer a vital platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange and policy dialogue among key stakeholders. By bringing together experts, policymakers and practitioners, the group facilitates the sharing of best practices, innovative solutions and lessons learnt in agriculture.

The working group supports informed decision-making, fosters policy development, and unites efforts to tackle agroforestry challenges. Next, CERF aims to help actualise the group's suggestions, enabling locally-led policy change, capacity building and pilot projects.





The way forward: Climate, Water and Food facility (CWF)

Since early 2026, CERF has continued as the Climate, Water and Food facility (CWF). Running from 2026 to 2029, CWF will continue to support partner countries in their climate and energy transitions. The new programme will achieve this through government-to-government collaboration and an integrated approach connecting public, private, financial and knowledge actors. With an expanded focus on water and food security, CWF will take a more holistic and integrated approach to climate mitigation and adaption. Greening, gender and biodiversity will receive stronger emphasis as cross-cutting themes. This ensures that interventions are sustainable, inclusive and in line with global climate and development goals.

Dutch embassies continue to lead in selecting sectors and providing strategic direction, with RVO offering advice and support. Core CWF tools include technical assistance, capacity building, knowledge exchange and the sequential use of Dutch and international instruments. These tools are in line with the programme's objectives in supporting climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and greening of specific sectors including water, food security, energy and critical raw materials.

CWF's activities are focused on:

- Policy advice and supporting dialogue;
- Facilitating knowledge exchange between Dutch and local stakeholders;
- Connecting Dutch companies with local governments and businesses;
- Enhancing the capacity of local stakeholders.

By using the programmatic approach and working closely with other programmes and financial (inter)national organisations, CWF aims to expand investment and scale-up opportunities across the climate, water and food sectors.

With CWF, RVO continues and deepens the work started under CERF. By using the same programmatic approach and lessons learnt during CERF, CWF can make a broader and long-lasting impact.



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