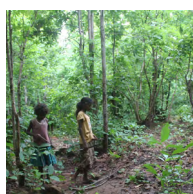




# World Rainforest Movement

Annual Report 2021



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# Who We Are

The World Rainforest Movement has existed since 1986, when it was founded by activists from around the world. Its main goal is to strengthen the global movement in defence of forests in order to fight deforestation and forest degradation.

WRM believes that this goal can only be achieved by fighting for social and ecological justice, and by respecting the collective rights of traditional communities and the right to self-determination of peoples who depend on forests for their livelihoods.

For this reason, WRM's actions are aligned to support the struggles of indigenous peoples and peasant communities in defence of their territories.

## Our Principles

- We work with grassroots organizations that have a deep knowledge of the complex realities in which they operate;
- We base our partnerships on mutual trust, shared perspectives and political analysis;
- We believe that community struggles are strengthened when there is an exchange of experiences between communities and community activists;
- We seek to understand the structural causes of forest destruction, from a local and community standpoint;
- We believe that exposing exploitation and abuse by forest-destroying actors is key to strengthening resistance, and to understanding and acting against the causes of forest destruction;
- We believe it is essential that the information, research and analysis produced by WRM be accessible to community activists and village leaders;
- We emphasise the special relationship that women have with forests and the importance of their roles in: collective processes of organisation, struggle and resistance to the threats to their territories; production and strengthening of knowledge and culture; family and community life; and transformation towards power structures that ensure meaningful involvement by all community members.

# Our Main Areas of Work

- The expansion of monoculture tree plantations to produce timber, pulp, palm oil, rubber or biomass. This expansion has posed a major threat to communities in tropical forest areas and beyond.
- The impacts of industries that extract timber, minerals, water and fossil fuels from forest territories, and the impacts caused by the infrastructure that supports this exploitation.
- The initiatives that are presented as “solutions,” but which in fact only exacerbate forest loss and climate change. These initiatives include certification of forest management concessions, monoculture tree plantations, carbon and biodiversity offsets, environmental offset programmes and conservation areas, among others.
- The new trends related to corporate tactics and national and international policies that facilitate the appropriation of community forests.
- The local struggles and resistance strategies of movements, organisations and communities in defence of their territories and forests.
- The differentiated impacts that women face when their lands are encroached upon and appropriated—including sexual violence, harassment, persecution, and loss of livelihood, among others.

# Foreword

The United Nations (UN) climate conference in Glasgow (COP 26) in November 2021 went down in history as another failure. There is no mention in its final document of legally-binding and drastic measures to address the climate chaos that the world is experiencing.

However, tropical forests did play a prominent role in this meeting. The fossil fuel industry and its corporate, financial and political allies—mostly from the global North—managed to include Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) and net-zero emissions in the final conference document.

At the core of NBS is forest carbon offsetting, a mechanism by which polluting industries can plant trees or conserve forests that store carbon—ostensibly as a way to offset their own emissions.

But offering carbon stored in forests to offset carbon emissions—in addition to not providing any long-term climate benefit—has provided an incentive for corporations to keep burning fossil fuels longer, thus keeping the capitalist global economy running. Even worse, it has reduced access to forests and changed the way numerous forest-dependent communities live within the forest.

Nature-Based Solutions are merely a facelift for a well-known idea: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)—the main international tropical forest conservation policy over the last 15 years.

The name change has been deliberate, probably in order to hide the evidence that REDD has left forests unprotected—failing as it does to address the direct and underlying causes of deforestation. As a result, 10 million hectares of forest are still lost worldwide every year, and global carbon emissions have only increased.

The ‘Nature’ in NBS means that forests—a source of life—are reduced to mere storage space for carbon, without communities. Creating and accounting for carbon markets has become a convenient and profitable business for consultants, certification schemes, companies, banks and big conservation NGOs.

The corporate sector, which is at the root of the climate and biodiversity crises, managed to reinvent itself as a ‘leader’ of what it claims to be the ‘solution’ to the crises: a transition to a ‘green’ or ‘low-carbon’ economy. But the symbol of the ‘green’ economy – the electric car – demands large-scale nickel- and other metal mining and infrastructure projects. As a result, destruction, deforestation and violent conflicts with communities will further expand.

In 2021, hundreds of movements and organizations, including WRM, [declared and announced](#) that they prefer to call NBS ‘nature-based dispossessions’, as these projects will seriously increase the threat of land grabbing for more monoculture tree plantations – which are conveniently called ‘planted forests’ - and more forest carbon projects. All this will cause more problems and increased violence against communities, in particular for women.

In this context, it continues to be a key priority for WRM to support grassroots communities, activists and organizations that face challenges on the ground, as a direct result of both the implementation of different policies and plans such as NBS, and large-scale extractive, infrastructure and other projects

Finally, the Covid 19 pandemic still significantly affected WRM’s work in 2021. Due to the pandemic, it was not possible to carry out most field activities—including community workshops and exchanges—and several of them had to take place through virtual workshops and meetings, in order to stay connected. Only in late 2021 did we manage to have face-to-face activities again, in Gabon and Mexico.





# Highlights from 2021

## Building Resistance & Solidarity

- In West and Central Africa, WRM continued its participation in the Informal Alliance Against Industrial Oil Palm Plantations, as a member of the Facilitation Team. During 2021, this network of grassroots communities and organisations from nine different countries organized two virtual workshops, one virtual women's meeting and its annual meeting, which was also virtual.

The first workshop, held in February, was an exchange between some Alliance members and communities from Liberia who face the expansion of Equatorial Palm Oil's plantations on their lands (a UK-based company). The second workshop enabled Alliance members to connect with communities in Uganda, as part of the agenda of an exchange between community members from Bugala and Buvuma islands, in Victoria Lake. The communities in Bugala face the expansion plans of Wilmar, a huge oil palm conglomerate; meanwhile villagers

in Buvuma have already experienced that expansion on their lands. They exchanged and learnt about the false promises that companies make when arriving in the community, the impacts plantations cause, and important steps to take to resist the expansion.

The women's virtual meeting was held in June. It was a space for participants from Cameroon, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Uganda and Sierra Leone to reflect on and evaluate the Alliance's activities to date, in order to contribute to the overall goal of strengthening women's struggles for land.



Part of the meeting of the Informal Alliance against Industrial Oil Palm Plantations



In October WRM also helped with the organization of the virtual annual Alliance meeting. This brought together organizations, activists and community members from DRC, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Cameroon, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast and Uganda. The first day was a women's meeting and the second day was a meeting for both women and men.

- In Brazil in May, along with CIMI, Friends of the Earth Brazil and activists from the state of Acre, WRM organized a hybrid meeting. The purpose of this meeting—which virtually brought together both individual participants as well as small groups of participants from a particular organization, region or community—was to exchange news and experiences, in order to break the isolation that groups and activists from different Amazonian regions may experience. Participants discussed the expansion of deforestation and the invasion of community territories, as well as the less visible, but nonetheless severe impacts of REDD-related policies on the livelihoods of Indigenous and non-Indigenous forest-dependent communities (REDD: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation). There were more than 100 people connected during the meeting, including activists, social movements,

NGOs and members of Indigenous Peoples and “extractivist” communities (forest-dependent communities that sustain themselves with non-timber forest products). A declaration from the meeting [was released](#).



“Amazon Besieged: Between Extreme Violence and Green Scams- People of the Forest in Defense of Mother Earth and Against the Invasions of Capital”

- In Brazil, WRM was also on the facilitation team of a network that brings together organizations, activists and community members opposed to the expansion of large-scale tree monocultures in different regions of the country. Two activities were organized in 2021. The first was a meeting in June, in which it was decided to relaunch the Alert Against the Green Desert Network. This name was used by a well-known national network that





was created at the end of the 1990s and remained active until 2010. The network helped to strengthen struggles to stop the expansion of industrial tree plantations, in a country with one of the largest total areas of tree monocultures in the global South. The second activity was an open webinar in the framework of September 21st, the International Day of Struggle against Monoculture Tree Plantations. The webinar can be [accessed here](#). At the end of the activity, the Network released an [open letter](#) against “green deserts”.

- In Mexico, along with the organization Otros Mundos, WRM helped organize a workshop to exchange experiences about the impacts of and resistance to industrial oil palm plantations in the Mesoamerican region. The exchange brought together indigenous and peasant community members from the region of Chiapas, in Mexico, as well as activists from Honduras, Guatemala and Ecuador. The meeting focused on analyzing the impacts of plantations, as well as enabling discussion and exchange among participants about their resistance struggles. As a result of the meeting, the Mesoamerican Network against Oil Palm plantations was formed and [a declaration was released](#).



Thailand



Mexico

- In Mozambique and Tanzania, WRM joined groups in the region to facilitate and organize activities to strengthen community struggles against industrial tree plantations. One of these activities was an exchange of experiences among community members and activists. Due to the pandemic, it was a hybrid meeting. The virtual exchange brought together approximately 60 members from rural communities who are facing industrial tree





monocultures on their land. Participants gathered in small groups in the capitals of the Manica, Sofala, Zambézia and Nampula provinces in Mozambique, and in the Iringa province in Tanzania. National and international supporters, including two Brazilian activists, also participated and exchanged their experiences. At the end of the activity, the participants released a [public letter](#). An [article](#) about the situation the communities face was also published in the WRM Bulletin.

## Exposing the Actors Responsible for Forest Destruction and Land Grabbing

- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a series of violent actions and murders was committed in January and February 2021 against communities struggling against the palm oil company, PHC/KKM/FERONIA. The communities are fighting to get back more than 100,000 hectares of land that was stolen from them during the colonial era. A coalition of organizations, of which WRM is a part, has been providing support to them. In response to the attacks, a [press release](#) was disseminated and letters were sent to the European development agencies who have channeled funds to the company.

- In February 2021, WRM released an international solidarity statement in support of the Karen Indigenous People from Bang Kloi, Thailand. The Karen people have been living in the Kaeng Krachan forests in Bang Kloi for generations. When the Kaeng Krachan National Park was created in 1981, they started to suffer violence and evictions. In January 2021, after years of dispossession and near-starvation, the Karen from Bang Kloi returned to their ancestral lands. Yet despite their right to their territory, they continue to face severe risks, intimidation and harassment.

- In Uganda, together with Witness Radio, WRM organized a series of field visits to, and meetings with communities that were evicted from their lands more than ten years ago, to make way for the expansion of the timber plantations of the New Forest Company. [An article](#) denouncing the situation was published in the WRM Bulletin.

- In Tanzania, together with the organization, SUHODE, WRM helped organize a series of visits to communities affected by the expansion of plantations of the timber companies, Green Resources and New Forest Company. The villages WRM visited included those contacted in a previous joint visit that WRM and SUHODE conducted in 2018, as well as villages



located in new areas where the company intends to expand its plantations. An article based on the visits [was published](#).

- In August, together with CNOP (Concertation Nationale des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles) and CDHD (Cercle des droits de l'Homme et de Développement), WRM organized a field visit to the region of Sangha, in the Republic of Congo for two members of the Informal Alliance against Industrial Oil Palm plantations. Communities in this area are facing multiple threats; most of their living spaces have been occupied by a large oil palm company, a logging company and a huge national park. An article describing the situation in the region and the actors behind the large-scale land concessions that threaten the communities [was published](#) in the WRM bulletin.

- Together with other 10 international and regional organizations, WRM drafted and released a statement against the so-called Nature Based Solutions (NBS). By the end of 2021, the statement had received the endorsement of more than 250 groups worldwide. It was initially released prior to the UN Climate COP, and it will be re-released in 2022 when the UN Biodiversity COP takes place. The statement denounces NBS as a corporate strategy to enable further expansion of fossil fuel extraction and burning, rather than its necessary

reduction. The basic concept underlying NBS is to expand the use of carbon offsets for carbon emissions from fossil fuels. The groups that have released the statement are the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), Alianza Biodiversidad, Asian Pacific Movement on Debt and Development, ETC group, Focus on the Global South, Global Grassroots Justice Alliance (GGJ), Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), Indigenous Climate Action (ICA), Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), the World March of Women (WMW) and WRM.



- In the context of the International Day of Struggle Against Monoculture Tree Plantations, and as a member of the Ecuadorian network of alternatives to oil palm, WRM helped shine a light on and expose the dirty tactics used by La Fabril, a palm oil company in Ecuador. La Fabril filed a lawsuit against several community leaders—demanding USD 320,000 for alleged damages—due to community protests that allegedly led to the loss of the company's harvest.





## Producing Information and Analysis of Corporate Tactics and Threats to Forest-Dependent Communities

### ATTACKS ON FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES IN INDONESIA AND RESISTANCE STORIES



A Compilation of WRM Bulletin Articles  
March 2021

WORLD RAINFOREST MOVEMENT

### *Attacks on Forest-Dependent Communities in Indonesia and Stories of Resistance*

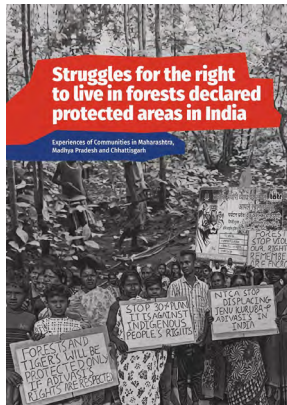
[This publication](#) compiles a series of WRM articles about threats and struggles in Indonesia. This is part of the work that WRM has been doing in close collaboration with activists supporting communities from different islands that are facing multiple threats. These threats increased after the approval of the Omnibus Law that relaxed environmental legislation to benefit the extractive industries and related actors. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government has increased its harassment and surveillance of activists and their organizations.



### *Nine Reasons to Say NO to Contract Farming with Palm Oil Companies*

[This booklet](#) contains the main promises the palm oil industry uses to seduce community members and peasants into contract farming. It also explains what the companies are hiding from them. This publication is based on experiences from Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. The booklet was initially produced in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, but upon the request of WRM partners, it was also translated into Indonesian and Luganda—the latter being the common language spoken in the regions of Uganda where industrial oil palm plantations are expanding.





### ***Struggles for the right to live in forests declared as Protected Areas in India. Experiences from Communities in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh***

[This book](#) is a tool to help communities amplify their protests against the aggressive “fortress conservation” model—pursued by forest officials and park managers, with the support of international conservation NGOs and corporations. This is part of the activities that WRM has been organizing in recent years along with the All India Forum of Forest Movements. The book was first published in English and is being translated into three local languages spoken in the regions covered by the publication.



### ***Indonesian version of the video: NO to violence against women and girls living in and around oil palm plantations***

[This video](#), launched first in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, highlights the many layers of violence that women suffer as a result of the expansion of industrial plantations. It is the result of an ongoing learning process in which WRM is engaged, together with the groups that comprise the Informal Alliance in Africa. The Indonesian version was produced upon the request of our partners in Indonesia.



### **Corporate strategies to fund plantation expansion**

To help understand the financial architecture that tree plantation companies create in order to expand their businesses, WRM researched and published two articles about two relevant corporate actors: [Arbaro Fund](#) and [Suzano](#). The first actor is a new investment fund that managed to secure funding from international institutions, like the Green Climate Fund, to expand industrial tree plantations in the global South. Meanwhile Suzano is a huge, well-established pulp and plantations company from Brazil that issued so called “green bonds” as a new way to finance its expansion projects. The articles describe how these companies operate, and the tactics they develop to expand their business and increase their wealth and power.



## WRM Bulletin

# Highlighting the Struggles Against Injustice and Violence Caused by Green Capitalism

WRM published six issues of its bulletin in 2021. All of them are available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese, and some are available in Indonesian. More than 30 organisations and activists from Africa, Asia and Latin America have contributed to the bulletins.

The bulletins were distributed to the WRM mailing lists by language, posted on the website, made available in pdf for download, and shared widely on WRM's social networks.

WRM 2021 bulletin issues at a glance:

- Bulletin 254 – [In the Face of Threats and Invasions in Forests, Communities Defend and Reclaim Their Life Spaces.](#) January/February 2021.
- Bulletin 255 – [Nature-based Solutions: Concealing Massive Land Theft \(Available in Indonesian\).](#) March/April 2021.
- Bulletin 256 – [Transition to what? Injustices of the "Low-Carbon" Economy and "Green Energy" \(Available in Indonesian\).](#) May/June 2021.
- Bulletin 257 – [Resistance in the Face of Multiple Tactics to Expand Monocultures.](#) July/August 2021.
- Bulletin 258 – [Communities Resist Land Grabbing and Tree Plantations.](#) September/October 2021.
- Bulletin 259 – [Faced with the Impositions of Capital, The Struggle Continues!](#) November/December 2021.





## Supporting Women's Resistance Against Patriarchal Oppression in Forests

- In the Informal Alliance Against Industrial Oil Palm Plantations, WRM continued to support the creation of spaces for women to participate and debate. The women's workshops organized throughout the year were in response to a request from the women themselves, in order to break the isolation imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic.

WRM also helped an activist from the Informal Alliance in Sierra Leone organize a series of field visits to talk and exchange with women in different regions affected by oil palm plantations. Women are facing the impacts, and resisting the onslaught, of oil palm plantations and other destructive projects. The women decided to come together and form a national women's grassroots network, called WONAPRI.

Also in Sierra Leone, WRM provided support to women facing harassment and criminalization due to their opposition to SOCFIN—a company owned by the Belgian Fabri family and the French Bolloré group, which holds vast power in several countries in West and Central

Africa where it has rubber and oil palm plantations.

- In the framework of the activities around September 21st, our partner Muyissi in Gabon organized a community workshop in the village of Ferra, with the participation of villagers from Ferra and the neighboring village, Nanga. These villages are surrounded by OLAM's industrial oil palm plantations. Women in particular are facing the challenge of a lack of land on which to cultivate food. WRM facilitated the participation of two women from the Informal Alliance who have experience working with women (one from the Republic of Congo and one from Cameroon), to help them reflect and build strategies to resist and recover land to grow crops and regain food sovereignty.

- WRM engaged with the Brazilian organization, SOF, in a series of capacity-building sessions. The goal of these sessions was to learn and better understand how to incorporate a feminist perspective in the work we do, taking into account the many realities in which WRM works—with different religions, beliefs, levels of oppression, cultures and regions, to name just a few.





## WRM Structure and Financial Overview

Stichting World Rainforest Movement (WRM) is a Dutch foundation registered in 1999 at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce under number 34118798.

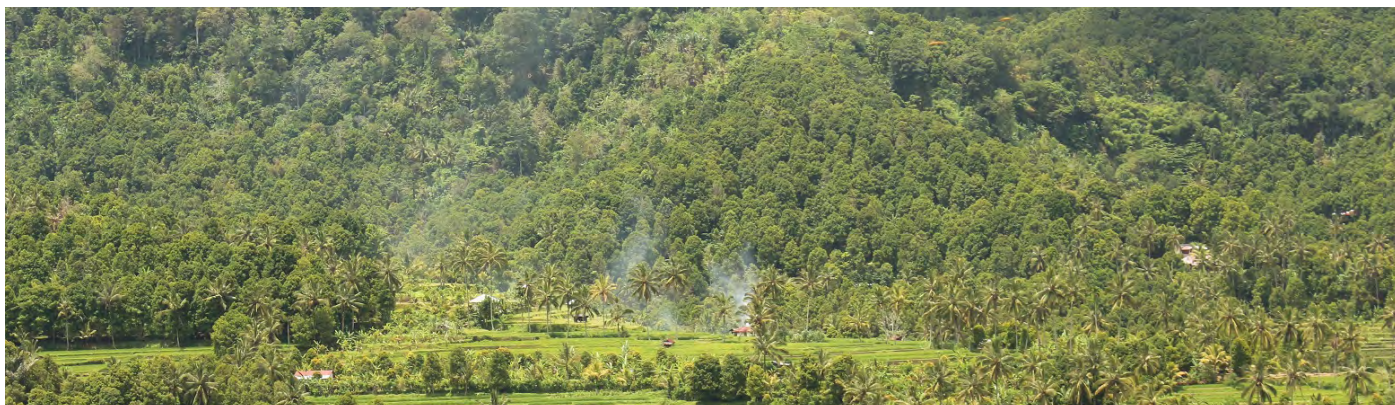
The Board members of the Stichting WRM, responsible for governing legal and financial-administrative issues, are: Larry Lohmann, Chairman; Ivonne Yáñez, Treasurer; Silvia Ribeiro, Secretary; Premrudee Daoroung, Member.

The Uruguayan Education Ministry has granted the Stichting WRM registered in the Netherlands permission to function in Uruguay, where the office of the WRM International Secretariat is located. In Uruguay, the Foundation is registered under the name of “Fundación Movimiento Mundial por los Bosques Tropicales”, with the fiscal registration number (RUT) 00215767260016.

In 2016, WRM was granted ANBI in the Netherlands. The acronym stands for "Algemeen Nut Beogende Instellingen" and the status is granted to foundations registered with the Dutch Chamber of Commerce whose mission and activities are deemed by the Tax Service to overwhelmingly serve the common good.

The **WRM International Secretariat** is a team of seven people located in different countries. Its office is in Uruguay and its International Coordinator is Winfridus Overbeek. The International Secretariat team receives input and guidance for its activities from the WRM Advisory Committee; from biannual WRM strategy meetings with WRM allies from different continents; and from regular interaction between the team and hundreds of community organizations, social movements, NGOs and indigenous peoples' organisations in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The **WRM Advisory Committee in 2021** consists of the following members: Godwin Ojo, Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (Nigeria); Hendro Sangkoyo, School of Democratic Economics (Indonesia); Larry Lohmann, The Corner House (United Kingdom); Premrudee Daoroung, Project SEVANA South-East Asia (Thailand); Shalmali Guttal, Focus on the Global South (Thailand); Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Group (Mexico); Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network (USA); Ivonne Yáñez, Acción Ecológica (Ecuador).



## WRM's Remuneration Policy

The members of the Dutch WRM Foundation Board and WRM Advisory Committee, as well as any volunteers WRM might work with, do not receive any form of salary or honorarium for the activities they carry out for WRM. They can, however, request reimbursement for costs incurred for participation in WRM meetings, such as transport and accommodation expenses.

Only WRM International Secretariat staff and the international coordinator of the organisation receive a salary or honorarium. Individuals hired for short-term, specific activities, such as carrying out case studies, can receive an honorarium, based on a contract clearly describing the tasks to be carried out and the remuneration agreed upon.

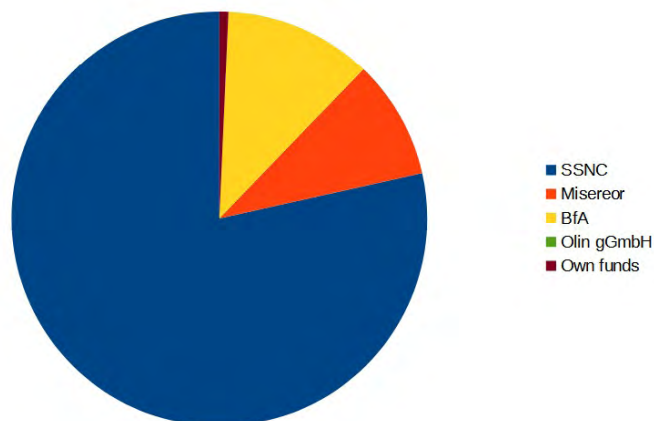
## Funding

In 2021, WRM core activities were funded by SSNC (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation) from Sweden, Misereor/KZE from Germany, Bread for All from Switzerland. For specific activities, WRM received support from Olin gmbH from Germany.

The total executed income for the year

2021 was USD 317,222 split among the different funding sources as follows:

Funding source	Amount in USD	Percentage
SSNC	249,182	78.5%
Misereor	29,560	9.3%
BfA	36,322	11.5%
Olin gmbH	47	0.0%
Own funds	2,111	0.7%



WRM 2021 Annual accounts have been audited by the firm, Auditores Asociados, in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing issued by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). A summary of the Annual audit is available [here](#). It includes a summarized version of the Notes to the financial statements.





## Contact Details

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