CHAPTER 04:
GMT as an Ecosystem Catalyst

GMT's Role in International Climate Policy Initiatives

Over the past six years, GMT has sought to increase its contribution to international and national climate policy, leveraging grassroots expertise to influence global discussions. Achieving UNFCCC observer status in 2023 was a key milestone in this work, granting GMT access to "blue zone" discussions at high-profile events. At COP28 in Dubai, Dr. Merrill and Dr. Abdelwareth engaged directly with Indonesian government officials to advocate for clearer and more robust mangrove conservation policies that could anchor the broader array of blue carbon initiatives in the region. Continued advocacy for more harmonized policies across ASEAN has continued to inspire GMT's service to a wider community of practice, while highlighting its ability to bring field-tested solutions into global policy discussions.
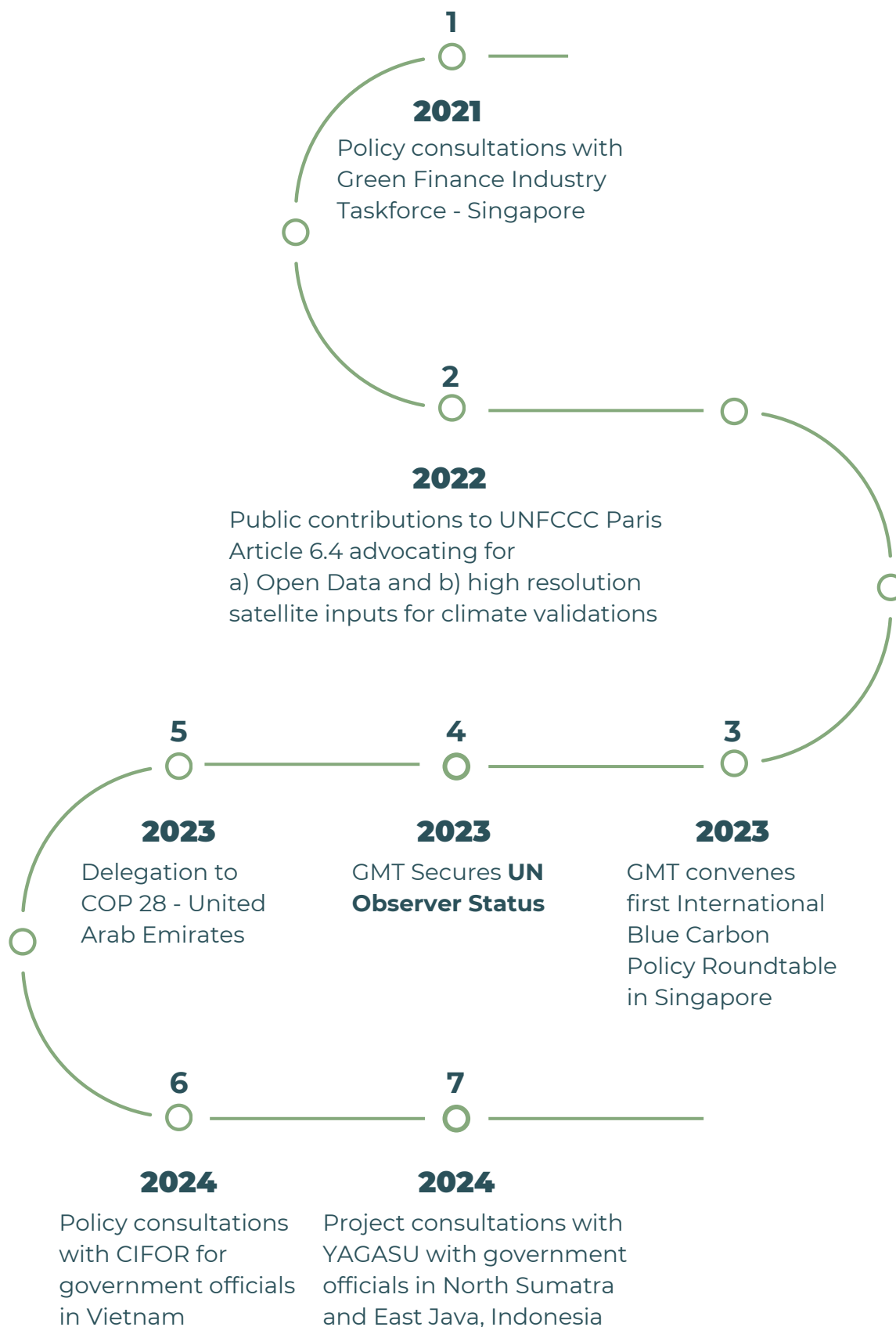
Like many other hard-working mangrove teams, GMT has emphasized the dual benefits of mangrove conservation: ecological restoration and community empowerment in policy discussions. These lessons have influenced broader debates on carbon credit standardization and the importance of embedding social equity in environmental frameworks.

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"Navigating the complexities of voluntary carbon markets and ensuring that developing nations can benefit from Article 6-related foreign investment, requires innovation, persistence, and an unswerving commitment to equity."

- Dr Simon JD Schillebeeckx,
GMT Director

Significant Milestones in GMT's Mission

1

2021
Policy consultations with
Green Finance Industry
Taskforce - Singapore

2

2022
Public contributions to UNFCCC Paris
Article 6.4 advocating for
a) Open Data and b) high resolution
satellite inputs for climate validations

5

2023
Delegation to
COP 28 - United
Arab Emirates

4

2023
GMT Secures **UN
Observer Status**

3

2023
GMT convenes
first International
Blue Carbon
Policy Roundtable
in Singapore

6

2024
Policy consultations
with CIFOR for
government officials
in Vietnam

7

2024
Project consultations with
YAGASU with government
officials in North Sumatra
and East Java, Indonesia

Catalyzing Policy and Market Shifts

GMT has sought to contribute to advancing the blue carbon market through innovative approaches like the OxCarbon Standard. While initially met with skepticism, GMT's persistent advocacy for embracing novel standards for impact verification has showcased the need for credible approaches to carbon credit certification that embrace cutting edge science and open data protocols. Today, GMT manages two large scale conservation projects under OxCarbon Standard, publishing annually one of the most comprehensive mangrove datasets on the planet. OxCarbon showcases the power of combining ultra high resolution satellite data with advanced machine learning to deliver best in class assessments of dynamic blue carbon pools. In Indonesia and across the global tropics, GMT is proud to encourage stakeholders across sectors to embrace alternative standards that prioritize transparency and scientific integrity over traditional validation chains.

Partnerships with organizations like the Climate Policy Initiative have been instrumental in GMT's ability to shape market dynamics. By introducing syndication models that share investment risks among diverse stakeholders, GMT has lowered barriers to entry for blue carbon projects. This financial innovation ensures equitable resource distribution, aligning global funding with grassroots conservation needs.

Working with *The Global Innovation Lab for Climate Finance - CPI*

GROVE: Forestry Smart Ledger (FSL) sought to revolutionize small-scale forestry finance by connecting projects to funders through a blockchain-powered platform.

Written in Zilliqa smart contracts, GROVE sought to ensure transparency in peer-to-peer impact investment while providing an architecture for lowering validation costs via remote sensing and machine learning. GROVE sought to crowdfund up to USD 38M within three years, sequestering 8.2M tCO_2e and doubling community incomes. The approach combined tokenized crowdfunding with a traditional segregated escrow model to unblock financial efficiencies for impactful and scalable climate action, and was recognized as the top climate idea for India in 2020.
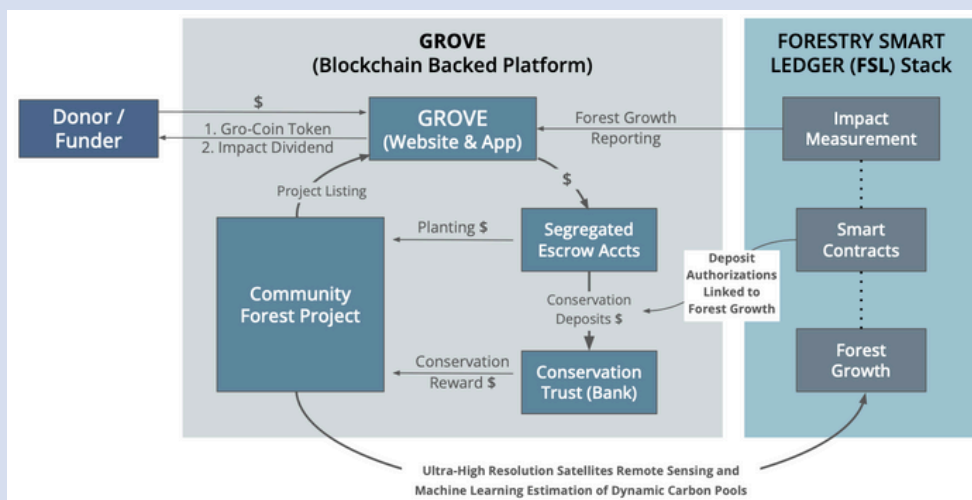
> **"Our partnerships with organizations like Worldview, YAGASU, and CIFOR have demonstrated how local expertise can drive global change."**
>
> - Dr. Simon JD Schillebeeckx,
> *GMT Director*

Bridging Local and Global Conservation Agendas

GMT's strength lies in its ability to connect local conservation efforts with international frameworks and communities of practice. Its partnership with YAGASU exemplifies this approach, as the two organizations co-created a replicable model for community-based mangrove restoration that prioritizes women-led initiatives and reliable community benefits. The success of this model in the scale up of the Blue Carbon Corridor inspires ongoing sharing to forums like COP and the Global Mangrove Alliance, wherein GMT's seeks to contribute replicable best practice to global practitioners.

To address tensions between local priorities and international goals, GMT relies on evidence-based advocacy. Data from our mangrove restoration and conservation projects in Indonesia, for example, have highlighted the co-benefits of mangrove conservation, demonstrating how ecological restoration can simultaneously address community livelihoods, biodiversity protection, and global climate targets.

Transformative Partnerships and Ripple Effects

Partnerships are central to GMT's role as an ecosystem catalyst. Collaborations with networks like the UBS Climate Collective have provided critical early-stage funding to Indonesian communities working with GMT to conduct feasibility studies, organize stakeholders to establish regenerative easements, and assess ecosystems for opportunities for active restoration. GMT aspires for these foundational efforts to create ripple effects, influencing how other organizations approach conservation funding and implementation across ASEAN.

Looking ahead, GMT aims to deepen its role in harmonizing regulatory frameworks in the region, while advancing open data standards globally. By fostering collaborations with groups like the Global Mangrove Alliance, GMT seeks to unify global efforts in mangrove conservation while ensuring local communities remain central to these initiatives.