

# **CAPACITY STATEMENT**



# FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION (FLR) HUB, EASTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

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#### Introduction

Located at the Rwanda's capital city, Kigali, the regional Hub for forest landscape restoration is a Center of Excellence (CoE) committed to providing forward-looking technical support on Forest landscape Restoration (FLR) and effective measurement mechanisms for restoration activities. By providing technical support to undertake assessments and feasibility studies, countries are able to generate timely and accurate information on restoration opportunities, priorities and trade-offs. With a highly skilled team of experts drawn from across the world, the hub's expertise and extensive knowledge-base provides a solid foundation for undertaking large and diverse conservation projects in the region and beyond. Priding on strong geospatial mapping and monitoring skills, a command in FLR extension and value chain expertise, a mastery on natural resource accounting and a solid regional experience on natural resource governance, the hub has been supporting governments in the region to not only commit to initiatives such as Bonn Challenge (BC) and AFR100 but also carry out restoration feasibility studies and assessments. The hub has also been supporting countries to implement high priority projects aimed at instituting best practices, establishing models and inginiting key restoration enablers. Some of the countries which have received technical support in undertaking restoration assessment include; Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Tanzania.

#### 1. Geo-spatial Mapping & Modelling

The hub carries a breadth of experience in the capture, visualization, validation, management and manipulation of geospatial data. With a a mastery of a spatial based Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) the team is able to determine restoration priorities and trade-offs where more than one social-ecological demands exists thus supporting governments in making critical decision on matters of conservation.

Geographic information/data such as water, soil quality, slope, irrigated areas, population, biodiversity, food security, etc) is collected, visualized and analyzed to come up with compelling scientific inferences. The data is analyzed through a Multi-Criteria Analysis approach where several parameters are stacked to determine the levels of degradation, opportunities and priorities .In essence, degradation maps are usually combined with land use and land cover maps to analyze the restoration options and to determine the priority areas for restoration.

Most importantly, the approach generates information needed to develop restoration strategies and technological FLR packages based on FLR interventions. Critical ecosystems services such as water yield, carbon and soil formation are modelled using tools such as InVEST and are carefully integrated into the MCA to map priority sites for restoration. The Restoration Opportunity Optimization Tool (ROOT) - a restoration optimization tool developed by IUCN and NatCap team - is also used to determine areas where restoration would yield the right benefits especially where two or more competing social-ecological needs.

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# 2. Forest Landscape Restoration Monitoring

With the understanding that monitoring is key in measuring restoration successes and impacts, the hub has continued to develop different tools and methods for data collection, processing and communication. Sampling approaches such as number of tree per square units have been used by the extension officers to determine tree seedlings survival rates while tree seedling transplantation has been been monitoring based on number of farmers and the unique parcel identification system. The Bonn Barometer tool developed by is another breath-taking approach in restoration monitoring where actual social-economic restoration are measured and monitored over time based on a number of biophysical changes. The hub has also been supporting countries in developing central monitoring systems that are capable of receiving restoration monitoring data remotely from the ground and transmitting the information thereof to various actors. Such example include the Rwanda's Forest Information Monitoring System.

# 3. Forest Landscape Restoration Extension

Extension work plays an important role in restoration where landowners/farmers are able to receive valuable technical support in their day to day activities. The hub has heavily built this capacity to ensure real landscape challenges are communicated and their solutions crafted through an infusion of local and scientific knowledge. In Rwanda for example, the hub has deployed a number of forest extension experts in the project areas to ensure restoration projects are implemented according to the recommended guidelines and best practices are documented for scaling up. The extension team is also tasked with responsibility of gathering monitoring data during the tree nursery establishment and seedling transplant occasions.

Building on the already existing models such as Farmer, Field School (FFS) the hub is able to intensify restoration project awareness and develop project ownership at the household level thus ensuring projects sustainability.



IUCN FLR extension oficers interacting with farmers in Rwanda

# 4. Forest Landscape Restoration Financing

Funding restoration projects is with no doubt a big challenge for many countries in the region. Conventionally, restoration projects have only been funded by donors. With increased demand for such funding across the globe, donor's have been forced to place stringent and competitive technical requirements locking out many countries out of the much needed FLR financing. With rich experience in FLR financing mechanisms the hub, in support from other global offices, has been supporting a number ESARO countries to develop proposals for funding thus increasing their chances of getting the awards. Moreover, to further close the gap in restoration financing the hub has been spearheading the development of of country-specific innovative financing mechanisms/models that are embedded on FLR based value chains and bushiness cases. Such mechanisms include the famous Community Environmental Conservation Fund (CECF) that was launched in Uganda allowing farmers to borrow funds with a condition that they would restore their degraded lands. From its initial application in Uganda, the model has since then been adopted in Malawi and Kenya. Similar mechanisms in the region includes the Mali Verde and the Community Smart-Lending Platform (CSLP).

# 5. The Economic of Forest Landscape Restoration

More often than not, African countries grapple to understand the benefits that comes with injecting funds into restoration. This has clearly been reflected in the country's annual budgets where restoration or conservation budgets are negligible compared to other budgetary allocations. The hub through its expertise in natural resource accounting has been supporting relevant government institutions in undertaking FLR and Ecosystem Services (ES) valuation to demonstrate to the decision makers that restoration indeed has benefits and contribution to the countries GDP. In all cases, the analysis has indicated value for money and countries are beginning to improve their funding in conservation sector. Mainstreaming ecosystem valuation into the country's development agenda is undoubtedly the only way actors can influence more funding in restoration. Linking restoration multiple benefits to viable business models can incredibly increase funding in restoration. The hubs capacity in developing investment models based on FLR based value chains and local/community-based financing options has seen countries across the region develop their own restoration investments models that has consequently increased funding.

# 6. Influencing Policy and Governance

Policy and institutional framework plays a great role in shaping the country's restoration agenda. Cross-cutting issues around FLR requires multi-sectoral approach which is difficult to realize without FLR-friendly policies. During the decade ending 2020, more countries have realized the need to increase their efforts in restoring their degraded ecosystems. Equally, the hub has been intensifying its efforts in supporting countries to commits to different restoration vehicles and providing compelling data/information ( for example through policy briefs/review) that have been instrumental in repealing policies and improving institutional coordination.



ROAM training in Malawi

# 7. Capacity building

Site level analysis is key in ensuring informed restoration. Countries rely heavily on local capacities in actual project implementation. The hub m has therefore been partnering with national governments in developing local capacities through workshop training and field simulations particularly in ROAM and other assessment tools such as Integrated Wetland Assessment Toolkit (IWAT) and the Red-list Ecosystems (RLE) toolkit. Similar trainings have been carried out on FLR monitoring using tools such as barometer and Forest Community Finger Print (FCF).

#### Bottom-line

In summary, the FLR hub has been of enormous help to the region in establishing or strengthening the necessary restoration enablers key among them the technical capacity in ROAM and the ability ability for the countries to incubate and share best practices. By providing support in policy reviews, in establishing FLR fmarket places and partnerships and developing community based innovative financing mechanisms, the hub has indeed tranformed restoration perceptive in the region. In preparation for another decade of accelerated efforts restoration, the hubs aims at deepening and broadening its capacity which key in ensuring onground action and transformation of landscapes and livelihoods .





FLR Hub



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# Rwanda



# **Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology**

ROAM COUNTRY BRIFF

The greatest potential for forest landscape restoration (FLR) is through the use of land-use transitions which provide important livelihood benefits. Agroforestry is a central pillar of Rwanda's FLR initiative.

# ₩ Why FLR

The degradation, deforestation, soil erosion and loss of biodiversity pose alarming threats to the livelihoods of rural population. The primary challenge is managing existing resources sustainably to meet the needs of the population who depends on natural resources for their livelihoods.

Rwanda's Vision 2020 is a plan to address its environmental, social and economic challenges, and become a middle-income country by 2020.

In 2011, Rwanda made a pledge to the Bonn Challenge to restore 2 million ha of forest and agricultural land and achieve the goals outlined in Vision 2020, such as:

- Restore degraded land to increase forest cover to 30% and provide 100% access to clean water by reducing erosion and improving water filtration through forests;
- Improve the management of existing woodlots and restore forests to reduce pressure on natural forests for fuelwood and improve energy security; and
- Use agroforestry on existing agricultural land to improve crop production, reduce erosion, increase access to clean water and reduce pressure on natural forests.

# **QUICK FACTS**

- Rwanda has committed 2 million ha to the Bonn Challenge.
- Approximately 100 MtCO2e emissions can be reduced through restoration transitions.

# How to restore landscapes

As The Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation in the Rwandan Natural Resource Authority worked in partnership with IUCN, WRI and alongside relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to apply ROAM between 2012 and 2014.

Based on land uses and proposed restoration interventions, the following transitions were identified:

#### **Traditional agriculture**

Agroforestry on steep, flat or gently sloping land

# Poorly managed eucalyptus woodlots and plantations

 Improve silviculture and rehabilitation of existing, sub-optimally managed woodlots with spacing and erosion and fireprevention best practices

#### **Deforested land**

- Protect and restore existing natural forests
- Establish or improve protective forests in important and sensitive sites



Approximately 2.25 million ha of land and freshwater resources in Rwanda could directly benefit from FLR in terms of improved productivity and ecosystem functionality.

Rwanda's Vision 2020 seeks to increase forest cover from 17% to 30% by 2020, which has the potential to reduce approximately 100 MtCO2e emissions through restoration transitions. FLR offers a climate mitigation opportunity to restore degraded and deforested landscapes with the additional benefit of reducing emissions.

Some opportunities in terms of policies and sources of finance are:

- Agroforestry value-chains attract investors, such as fruits, essential oils, coffee and tea;
- The Clean Development Mechanism and Voluntary markets that offer income opportunities;
- Investment potential in key areas of the rural energy value chain, such as investors in watershed services; and
- Ecotourism and REDD+ as opportunities for the protection and regeneration of national parks and reserves.

In 2016, Rwanda also piloted a FLR project aimed at developing restoration technological models for scaling up the agroforestry – woodlots and protective forest technical packages were developed and their costbenefit analysis were carried out.

Next steps

The following recommendations are proposed:

 Improve coordination among government agencies. Ensure that ministries work together and identify ways to collaborate with the private sector and civil society, including district level engagement.

- Improve the delivery of technical knowhow, advice and high-quality planting stock. Enhance the capacity of existing seed and nursery assets, clarify the mandate of the Tree Seed Centre, and create positive incentives for long-term capital investment, particularly from the private sector.
- Encourage the demand for trees as well as products from FLR. Stimulate the use of native tree species in agricultural landscapes by helping farmers improve their return from restoration activities and increasing awareness of potential benefits.
- Prioritise and support early application of FLR in selected landscapes. Identify existing or planned initiatives to test key FLR interventions that simultaneously have the support of and direct benefits for local communities.
- Identify finance/resourcing options. Map the full range of opportunities, options, and models for unlocking finance while making the business case for FLR.
- Enhance community engagement in restoration through village land-use planning process.

#### For further information see:

Forest landscape restoration opportunity assessment for Rwanda

Rwandan forest landscape restoration opportunity assessment: tracing the influence

Rwanda's Green Wall

Resources: InfoFLR.org iucn.org/forests







# **FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION (FLR) IN RWANDA**

# An attractive investment opportunity on the rise

# It takes more than commitments to achieve desired restoration:

- 1. Huge investments are needed to achieve the ambitious restoration goals to which Rwanda committed in the context of the Bonn Challenge.
- 2. The main barrier to meeting the national FLR commitment and related investment targets is not the lack of investors willing to engage but rather the lack of knowledge and access to the variety of financing opportunities.
- 3. FLR involves both process and implementation . The government of Rwanda has established a highly enabling environment for FLR investment by putting in place a conducive policy, institutional and legal framework. All stakeholders should take this opportunity to leverage the restoration initiatives in Rwanda.
- 4. The main potential investment incentives in Rwanda include international financial instruments such as REDD+ and GCF as well as national private incentives which include impact investment funds and public funds such as FONERWA and other incentives. The Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and fiscal and regulatory incentives are yet to be introduced and/or operationalised.
- 5. A number of interventions are called for to stimulate more investment in FLR in Rwanda and develop new financing options for this sector. These include, among others, the development of a national PES strategy, the operationalization of the national Forest Investment Fund, and the introduction of new fiscal incentives (subsidies and/or tax credits for the sector).

# I. Rwanda revives its momentum to restore 2 million Ha of degraded land and forests

In 2011, Rwanda joined "The Bonn Challenge", a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020. As part of this initiative, Rwanda pledged to achieve a countrywide reversal of natural resources degradation with 2 million hectares restored (around 76% of the national territory) by year 2020.

Achieving the FLR restoration goal will generate an estimated US\$ 628 million per year in net benefits from watershed protection, improved crop yields and forest products, and will sequester up to 0.19 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually.

A study conducted in 2014 by MINIRENA in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Resources Institute (WRI) on Forest Landscape Restoration Opportunity Assessment in Rwanda concluded that at least 1.5 million ha are available for new restoration initiatives across the country through a number of activities ranging from agroforestry and silviculture to the establishment of protective forests on steep ridgetops and riparian/wetlands buffer zones as well as restoration of degraded areas within Protected Areas (PAs) and their buffer zones (Figure 1).

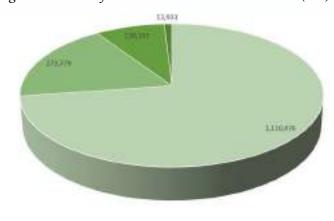
However, despite the good policy framework and efforts towards FLR, a recent review of policies, programs and investment incentives in FLR in Rwanda by IUCN and Rwanda Water and Forestry Authority (RWFA) in collaboration with the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS) shows that substantial FLR investment and incentives need to be enhanced in order to adequately integrate FLR in the national development agenda (IUCN 2017). Since its commitment to FLR, \$ 458,561,802,657 have been invested in FLR related activities in Rwanda. Based on a global estimate by FAO, suggesting that \$360 billions are needed to achieve the FLR global target of 150 million ha by 2020, Rwanda has achieved 11.3% of the expected national FLR target (\$ 4,680,000,000).

IUCN (2017) also found that unprecedented opportunities now exist for increased investments in forestry and agroforestry related business in Rwanda. In addition, different incentives have been put in place to stimulate this sector and attract new investors. However, FLR investment in Rwanda has been largely driven by (national and international) public funds so far except for some few ad-hoc investments from private players and development partners (MINIFOM, 2010).

The present brief provides a review of existing FLR investment opportunities in Rwanda and sheds light on the various incentives that have been put in place. Its aim is to attract increased investment in this promising sector which will help drive forward the country's green and climate-resilient economy.



Figure 1: Areas of FLR Interventions in Rwanda (Ha)



- Agroforestry
- Protective forests
- 🖿 Eucalyptus & Pine 🏻 🖿 PAs and their buffer zones

# II. Incentives and FLR investment insights in Rwanda

In order to address different problems that impede Forest Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Forest Management in Rwanda; there is a need for financial mechanisms and incentives to encourage farmers and investors to adopt practices and activities that will overcome obstacles for forest restoration and thus enhance better management of landscapes in general.

According to the World Bank's Programme on Forests (PROFOR, 2004), four forms of incentives are used to foster Sustainable Forest Management across the world. These are: Fiscal incentives, financial incentives, land owner incentives and concessional incentives. The existing incentives of this kind in Rwanda are outlined in the sections below.

#### 2.1. International Financial Incentives

#### FREDD++ and Voluntary Carbon Markets

The REDD+ programme is expected to provide positive incentives to reduce Green House Gases emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. When implemented, REDD++ will incentivize investment in sustainable forestry and land-use sectors as well in sustainable management of forests and forest carbon stock conservation.

Rwanda has developed its REDD+ Readiness Proposal in 2014. However, not all required structures have been put in place to kick-start this programme and funds are being sought as part of the new National Forest Investment Plan currently being developed.

## Rwanda Reaping the Fruits of climate change financing mechanisms

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change together with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) represent a huge opportunity for financing FLR in Rwanda.

On top of these multilateral climate change financing mechanisms, bilateral mechanisms such as the German's International Climate Initiative (IKI) have also been supporting FLR investments in Rwanda and they can be leveraged further to drive forward this sector in the country.

Finally, there exist numerous impact investment and venture philanthropy funds that can be leveraged by FLR investors to match funds to include restoration activities in their business models.

#### 2.2. National Financial Incentives

### FONERWA: A home Grown Environment and Climate Change Fund

FONERWA provides funding for the environmental and climate resilience projects in Rwanda and it represents a good incentive for FLR in the country.

Indeed, this government-backed fund has been driving investment in Rwanda's natural infrastructure (forest landscapes, wetlands and watershed protection) and it is expected to set an example for private sector investment by building a business case for private investors and matching those investments to support more landscape restoration activities.

#### **■ Undertaking PES for Greater Ecosystem Protection**

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) by different users of the services (including provision, regulation, supporting and cultural services) is considered a good incentive for investment in forest landscape restoration.

Normally, it is understood that PES is mainly based on the opportunity costs; i.e. the costs incurred by the custodians to undertake sustainable practices towards the target resource which will thus preserve or restore a given environmental service, such as water services, carbon storage, and biodiversity conservation.

Thus, PES not only makes economic sense but also is ecologically beneficial. PES being largely driven by voluntary initiatives, the increasing awareness among businesses for corporate social responsibility represents a good opportunity for PES. Moreover, the policy and institutional landscape in Rwanda is conducive enough to support the development and implementation of PES schemes in the country.

PES is a potential avenue for achieving synergy between development and conservation objectives, particularly for landowners in the low-income tropics (Tschakert, 2007).

It has been developed in Latin America but limited experiences exist in Africa in general (Pagiola at al. 2005), and especially in Rwanda, despite potential for PES development (Andrew and Masozera, 2010).

# III. Shaping FLR through Conducive Policy environment in Rwanda

The opportunity for FLR investment in Rwanda is demonstrated by the existing heightened political will and commitment to support measures that constitute the national governance framework for forests, land and other aspects related to FLR.

This support is seen through the incorporation of FLR- related elements in various policies and government programs and the overall emphasis the government puts on the promotion of long- term investment in the country. The sections below outline examples of such provisions included in national FLR related policies.

# ► Securing Tenure for Prospering FLR

The government has established a land system that is secure and introduced land reforms that are necessary for good management and proper use of national land resources (MINIRENA, 2012). Under the land policy implementation, laws on land were adopted (Organic Law of 2005 revised 2013).

Furthermore, a National Land Use and Development Master Plan has been developed to guide land use planning across the country and land registration covering the whole country has been conducted resulting in the establishment of a georeferenced database for every parcel of land in the whole country.

The full implementation of the land policy constitutes a big encouragement for investment in FLR because it provides a framework within which forests can be created securely and in the right places and managed for higher productivity and optimum provision of ecosystem services.

# Rwanda's Dream For Sustainable Biomass Energy (BEST)

BEST was prepared with the purpose to make the supply of wood and charcoal sustainable (EUEI, 2008) by focusing on four pillars: energy conservation, rehabilitation of forest plantations, fuel substitution and capacity building.

The analysis on which BEST is based reveals that the national supply/demand balance of fuel wood shows an average annual deficit of 1.8 Mt.

BEST concludes with a statement that Rwanda still has many years ahead to go until its needs in biomass fuel are met. Indeed, quick estimates indicate that by year 2020, at least 7 million people will still depend on biomass fuel (against 9.4 million when EDPRS II was developed (NISR, 2008).

BEST thus offers a realistic picture of the prospects of wood energy and proposes pathways for sustainable consideration of the biomass energy embedded in its four pillars.

The implementation of BEST constitutes a good incentive for investment in FLR because it recognizes the increasing demand for fuel wood and encourages adoption of many technologies that will stimulate the wood market in Rwanda and catalyse the development of wood value-chain in the country.

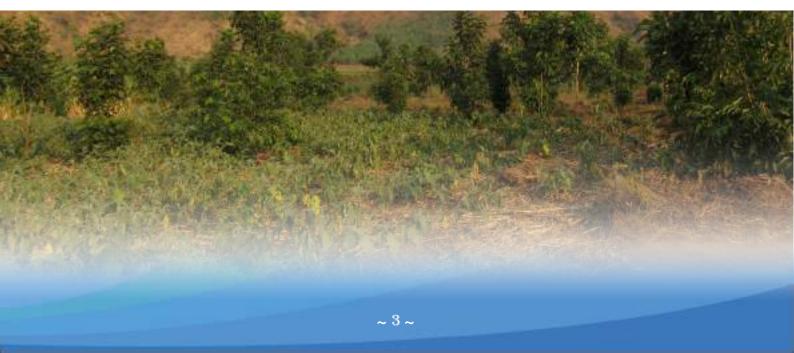
# ► Anchoring FLR on Public Private Partnership (PPP) Principles

Despite a number of relevant initiatives launched and allocated funding in forest restoration, there is still a big gap to be closed to reach full landscape restoration in the country. Rwanda considers private investments as an opportunity to bridge this gap.

Indeed, Rwanda aims to have a private sector-led economy by 2020 and private sector involvement is poised to be the cornerstone in achieving stated objectives in all Rwandan policies.

The National Private Sector Development Strategy established in 2013 emphasizes on attracting funds from development partners as well as the private sector through PPPs.

This is a good opportunity and incentive for FLR as clear directives and structures have been put in place to guide the establishment and implementation of such ventures.



# Fromising Agents of Change: Small private actors and Community Enterprises

Nature-Based Community Enterprises (NBCEs) is an emerging concept in Rwanda where many community groups operating in cooperatives engage in various profit-making activities based on nature. Rwanda recognizes the importance of cooperatives in national economy and various incentive mechanisms have been put in place to boost investment in these important economic entities.

IUCN (2017) found that cooperatives operating in the forestry sector especially those involved in tree seedlings business lack the capacity to compete in tenders while they were in the best position to resolve the low tree survival rate problem observed in national afforestation and reforestation programmes.

Fortunately, the national cooperative promotion policy is expected to remedy this issue through its provisions to develop this sector including building capacity of cooperative members, linking them with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and establishing a deposit guarantee fund to protect cooperatives against financial illiquidity.

All of these interventions will make community-based entreprises the true engine of FLR investment in the country.

# Framework for integrating FLR in national development interventions

Rwanda has built its reputation for concocting innovative models for achieving its development aspirations in harmony with its socio-economic and historical context. The implementation of these unique programmes has allowed the country to make strides in domains ranging from justice, to public management, transparency, pro-poor development, and social cohesion. A number of such initiatives directly support FLR and are believed to offer a framework to accelerate the achievement of national FLR commitments. These are:

- Girinka (One cow per poor Family) programme has the objective to root out extreme symptoms of poverty through distribution of cows to the poorest segments of the society. Girinka greatly supports FLR because its full implementation will reduce farmers dependency on chemical fertilizers and the increased application of manual will restore soils fertility and reduce their fragility to degradation.
- Umuganda (Community Works) is a citizen engagement programme where communities regularly come together to perform various collective projects. It constitutes a big FLR opportunity given the fact that tree planting is a popular theme among projects under the scheme.
- Imihigo (Performance contracts) constitutes a tool for management of public affairs and self-commitment as an individual or an institution. Given their competitive aspect, Imihigo represent a big potential for accelerating FLR because they can stimulate the local translation and implementation of national FLR commitments at district, community, or even household levels.

# IV. Taking FLR in Rwanda to the next level

Rwanda is often recognized as a model for responsiveness, innovation, and efficiency in attracting investments. Its economy grew by more than 8% per year between 2001 and 2015; corruption is low; and it has one of the best "ease of doing business" rankings in Africa.

Regarding investment in FLR sector, the very conducive environment that exists in Rwanda and many emerging opportunities make this sector the best to invest in. The following are some of the key highlights of making the FLR sector even more attractive for investment in Rwanda:

- 1. Private companies in Rwanda should further allocate funds to FLR through Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- Citizen-based initiatives such as crowdfunding platforms should be promoted in Rwanda as an innovative approach for funding FLR projects as well as other land owners across the country who will be willing to invest in forest plantations activities
- 3. Ecological compensation should be emphasized on as an opportunity (or obligation when required by law) for companies to compensate their negative impacts on forest ecosystems and this compensation can be used to boost forest restoration in the landscape.
- Green bonds restoration should be initiated in Rwanda in order to provide incentives for small-scale landowners and farmers to restore land on a large scale
- 5. Coverage of risks linked to FLR investments is necessary to attract investors. Partial risk guarantee programmes can be designed for large-scale restoration projects, and insurance/reinsurance companies are called on to design adapted schemes for securing FLR investment patterns in the face of climate change and other risks.
- More efforts should be put into gathering and sharing information on successful business models from early adopters that can inspire action from other actors.
- There is need for increased capacity of community enterprises to effectively invest in forest-related businesses and they should be trained in various silviculture techniques and different wood processing methods.
- 8. Strong synergies and partnership should be built between Public and private sectors and public sector should support and provide an enabling environment for FLR investments by developing and enforcing adequate regulations and legal frameworks.
- PES Policy and Legal framework should be established to regulate and support effective investment opportunities in forest sector.

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