Land restoration & agricultural supply chains

Building the business case

IUCN and the Global Agribusiness Alliance are co-hosting a shared learning journey to foster peer knowledge exchange and joint problem solving around landscape restoration in agricultural supply chains.

**Purpose:** This brief provides an overview of the role of forest landscape restoration (FLR) in strengthening the resilience and productivity of agricultural supply chains.

### Addressing land degradation in agricultural landscapes

Agriculture-driven land degradation is a global challenge, impacting at least 30% of arable land and over three billion people.¹ Land degradation is defined as the reduction or loss of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of land. This phenomenon has reduced global productivity potential by up to 23%. By 2050, land degradation and climate change together will further reduce global crop yields by 10%, rising to half in certain regions.²

### Beyond the environmental implications, the financial losses to farmers and agribusinesses are evident. It is estimated that between US$ 6.3-10.26 trillion is lost globally per year due to issues related to land degradation.²

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Global Agribusiness Alliance (GAA) are co-hosting a series of shared learning journeys with agribusinesses. These agribusinesses will champion and pilot solutions to restore degraded landscapes through FLR.

### FLR is a nature-based solution appropriate for agricultural supply chains. It is the ongoing process of protecting and restoring natural capital to improve or regain the services provided by nature. FLR addresses societal challenges and localised impacts, including climate change, biodiversity loss and food security. As companies shift to sustainable operations, there is growing interest from businesses and governments to adopt and apply solutions like FLR.³

### Restoration helps companies improve long-term land productivity while meeting corporate sustainability commitments in multiple ways. These include:

1. Managing socio-environmental risks to strengthen supply chain resiliency,
2. Improving an agribusiness’s reputation and social license to operate, and
3. Reaching carbon sequestration and net zero deforestation goals.

Investment in FLR can generate up to a 50-fold return when conditions are right.⁴

Neglecting the potential of FLR to strengthen resilience and productivity increases the risks associated with unproductive lands such as stranded assets, loss of competitive advantage and low Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance.
FLR is underpinned by six core principles

1. Landscape level: FLR focuses on re-establishing the diverse mosaic of land uses within a given landscape, including forests, agriculture and water resources.

2. Multiple benefits: It helps recapture soil fertility, boost productivity, sequester carbon and regulate watersheds – all essential for productive landscapes and healthy crops.

3. Local context specific: FLR considers social, economic and environmental interactions including the agricultural needs within a supply chain. This holistic approach ensures the relevance of subsequent actions and buy-in from local actors. Interventions may include planting or managing trees around fields, pastures and watercourses; adopting new crops or production systems; or improving soil and water management.

4. Maintain and enhance natural ecosystem services: It is always designed to avoid further reduction of natural forest cover.

5. Multi-stakeholder: The FLR process brings together farmers, producer organisations, processing companies, local and national organisations, and governments to agree on the best way to restore a landscape.

6. Long-term resilience: Restoration approaches may be adjusted over time to reflect improved knowledge or changing social and environmental conditions.

Planning FLR with the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology

The Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) is a trusted and widely-used tool to identify and model restoration opportunities in a landscape. ROAM applications help understand restoration needs based on the drivers of degradation – which areas are suitable for restoration; which interventions best meet multiple needs; costs and benefits; and the public and private financing required. The process is done in collaboration with both agribusinesses and other stakeholders (government, forest and farm producer organisations, and civil society) to ensure the opportunities identified confront the risks to supply and agricultural production.

Moving towards more resilient supply chains

IUCN supports collaborative action through the Restoration in supply chains from zero net deforestation to net positive action (RESUPPLY) project, funded by the German Ministry for the Environment International Climate Initiative (2019-2022).

The project is designed to technically support companies and other landscape actors in identifying landscape restoration opportunities, costs and benefits in supply chains. IUCN is applying ROAM assessments in three different landscapes with three agribusinesses and commodities – in Ghana with Olam International on cocoa; in Peru with ECOM on cocoa; and in Tanzania with Kilombero Sugarcane Company on sugar.

Join the learning journey

IUCN and GAA will co-deliver a series of shared learning journeys for the RESUPPLY project for peer agribusinesses. The journeys will promote the uptake and impact of FLR by providing a safe space for peer-learning, knowledge-sharing, and joint problem solving on both the process and technical implementation. They will address engagement at different steps of the supply chain, governance issues and intervention types.

International Union for Conservation of Nature

IUCN is a membership union composed of government and civil society organisations with 1,400 member organisations and 15,000 experts. This diversity and vast expertise make IUCN the global authority on the status of the natural world and measures to safeguard it.

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Global Agribusiness Alliance

The GAA is an international, CEO-led, private sector platform of supply-side companies, committed to harnessing their collective strengths to tackle shared environmental, social and sustainability challenges. GAA is part of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

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1 https://www.bonnchallenge.org/about-the-goal
3 https://www.credit-suisse.com/pwp/am/downloads/marketing/br_eeg_capabilities_ch_eng.pdf