FOLUR
Food Systems • Land Use • Restoration

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sowing the Seeds of Sustainability

Scaling-Up Integrated Land Management for a Better Future

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IN COOPERATION WITH

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Global Landscapes Forum

IFC International Finance Corporation WORLD BANK GROUP
Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities

The Food and Land Use Coalition

GOOD GROWTH PARTNERSHIP
Led by UNDP

The FOLUR Impact Program consists of

The Global Platform Project, led by the World Bank with

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations · The Food and Land Use Coalition · IFC International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group, Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities · Global Landscapes Forum · Good Growth Partnership, Led by UNDP

And 27 Country Projects shown on the map below, working with the following Implementing Agencies

Conservation International · Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations · IFAD, Investing in rural people · UNDP · UN environment programme · The World Bank, IBRD • IDA · WWF

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Agroforestry project site located at Dwerebease Community in the Kwahu East District of the Eastern Region.

Photo by Project Communication Team

Above: Farmer in Ghana with his livestock.

Photo by the Project Communication Team

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADM	Archer-Daniels-Midland
ASEF	Asia–Europe Foundation
BAAPA	Atlantic Forest of Alto Paraná
BII	British International Investment
CBD COP 16	Convention on Biological Diversity – 16th Conference of the Parties
CGF-FPC	Consumer Goods Forum – Forest Positive Coalition
CI	Conservation International
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center
CIRAD	Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement
CO_2	Carbon dioxide
CO_2e	Carbon dioxide equivalent
COFCO	China Oil and Foodstuffs Corporation
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture
ECOGAN	Sello Ganadero ECOGAN
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ESG	Environmental, social, and governance
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO GROUND	Global Open-Source Utilities for Natural Resource Data
FAO WHISP	Web-based Harmonized Information System Platform
FFC	Farmers First Cluster

FMO	Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank (Financierings-Maatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden)
FOLU Coalition	Food and Land Use Coalition
FY	Fiscal year
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGP-UNDP	Good Growth Partnership – UNDP
GLF	Global Landscapes Forum
GLP 2.0	Gender Learning Program 2.0
ICT	Information and communication technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILM	Integrated landscape management
ILPF	Crop–livestock–forest integration
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
ISRL	Inclusive Sustainable Rice Landscapes Project (Thailand)
KVKs	Krishi Vigyan Kendras
LAC	Latin American and the Caribbean
LDC	Louis Dreyfus Company
LGA	Local government area
LLRP II	Lowlands Livelihoods Resilience Project Phase II
MADES	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development
MARA	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (China)
MDBs	Multilateral development banks
MoA	Ministry of agriculture
NBS	Nature-based solutions
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRMS	National Rangeland Monitoring System
PILA	Platform for Integrated Landscape Assessment
PILA TAPE	Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation
POUT	Urban and Territorial Planning Plan
PRIR	Plan for Regenerative Rational Rotational Grazing
PROGREEN	Global Partnership for Sustainable and Resilient Landscapes
ROAM	Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology
SCF	Soft Commodities Forum
SCOLUR	Scaling up Cocoa-based Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration
SLM	Sustainable land management
SRLI	Sustainable Rice Landscapes Initiative
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-WCMC	UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WRI	World Resources Institute

FOLUR at a Glance

Above: The participants visited local restoration champions in Kaffa, Ethiopia, to discuss policy challenges and incentives for locally led land restoration and the way forward with local and national leaders.

Photo by Gilbert Muvunankiko

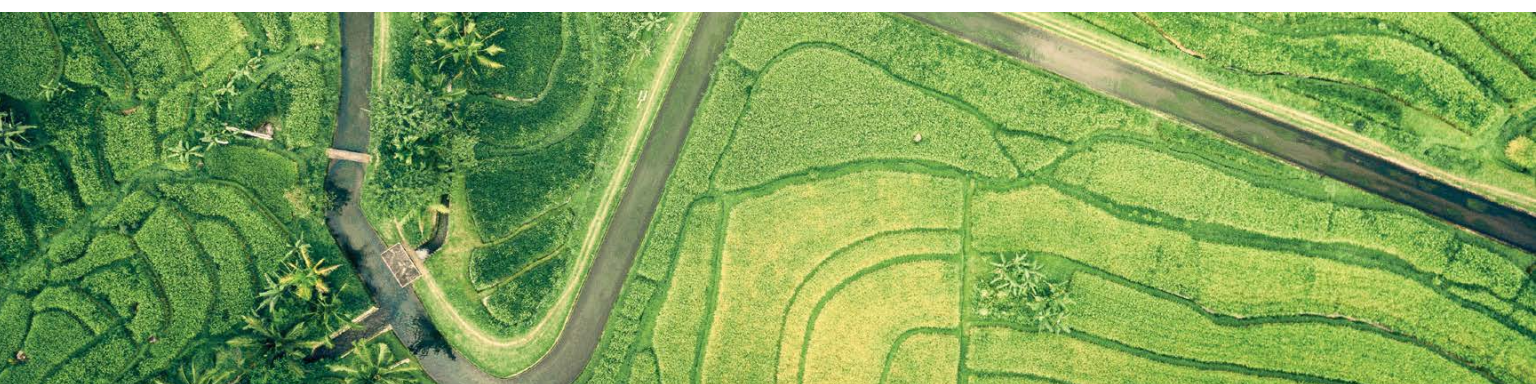
The Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program brings together 27[1] country projects and a Global Knowledge Platform that provides technical assistance and capacity-building support to these countries. Collectively, they focus on key commodities that contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, primarily through land use practices such as agricultural expansion into forests, biodiversity loss, and land degradation. The FOLUR Impact Program is designed to advance sustainable and integrated landscape management, promote efficient and deforestation-free food supply chains, and drive large-scale landscape restoration for both productive and ecosystem benefits, while minimizing negative externalities. The 27 country projects are designed to implement these objectives across critical landscapes under eight key commodity production systems.

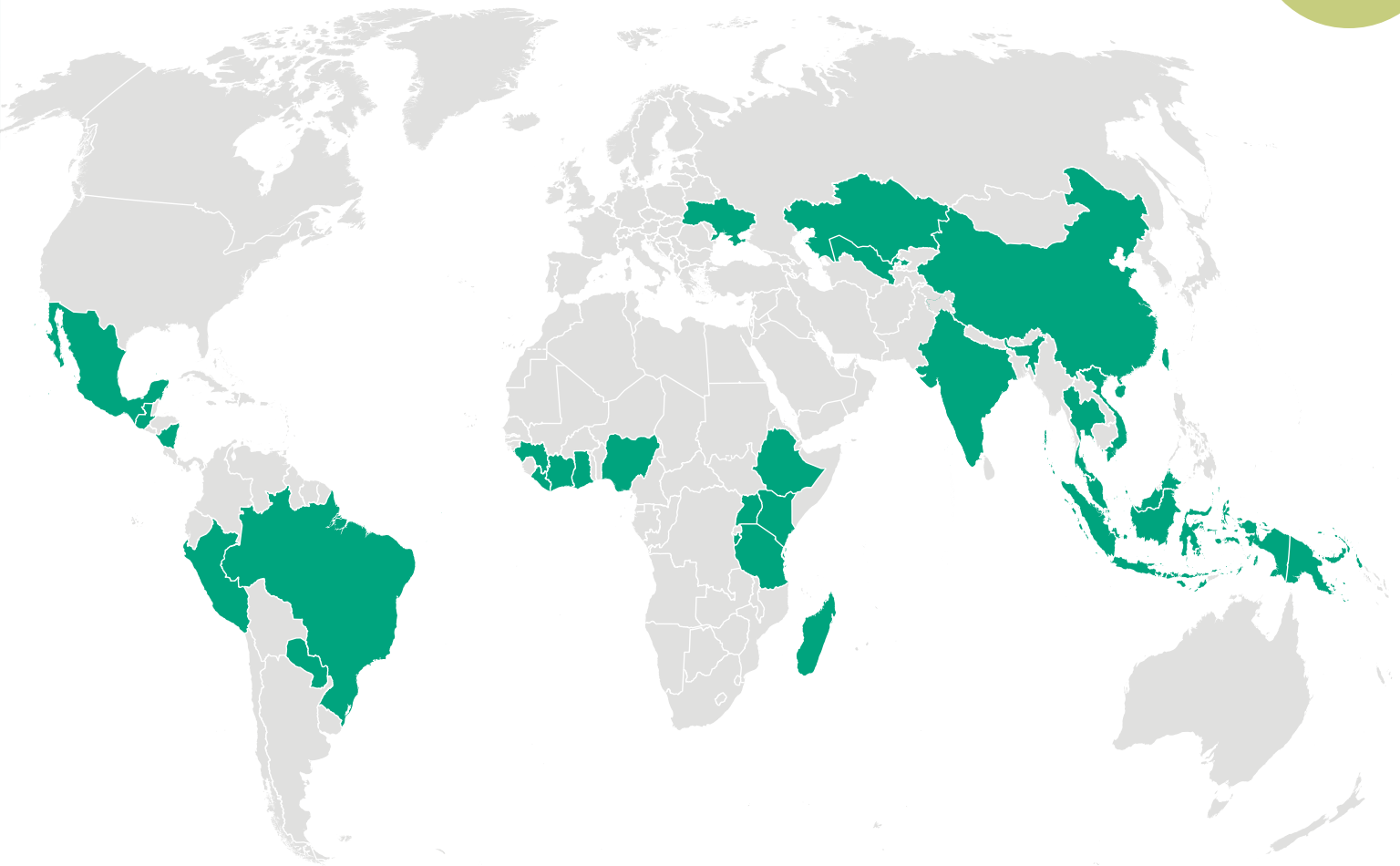
The FOLUR Global Knowledge Platform, led by the World Bank, serves as the integrative mechanism that brings projects, partners, policies, and practices together in a coherent program that is greater than the sum of its parts. Through strategic investments in capacity

[1] Out of the 27 FOLUR country projects, 26 were under implementation in the 2024–25 financial year. The Nicaragua project has not yet commenced implementation.

Below: Irrigation canal.

Photo by Ivan Bandura/ Unsplash





development, value chain engagement, policy and advocacy, and proactive knowledge management, the Global Platform strengthens integration and coherence across the program. The Global Platform is implemented in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU) which includes the World Resources Institute (WRI), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN); the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF); the Good Growth Partnership (GGP) led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which includes Conservation International (CI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance (ISEAL); and International Finance Corporation (IFC), each bringing distinct comparative advantages that collectively enhance the program's global impact.

Right: Cocoa Rehabilitation at Jejeti Nkwanta in the Kwahu West District of the Eastern Region. The picture shows a newly cut moribund farm and re-established farm planted with certified cocoa seedlings and shade trees such as plantain suckers, ofram and Emire.

Photo by the Project Communication Team

Forest seedling activity was organized in early July 2025 in Baan Pang Saa (or Pang Saa Village) in Mae Chan District, Chiang Rai province, Thailand, where the Inclusive Sustainable Rice Landscapes (ISRL) project is piloted in cooperation with partners Highland Research and Development Institute (Public Organization), Department of National Parks, and local administration bodies. The aim is to revive biodiversity in the watershed forest area and raise awareness among the local residents to preserve soil health and biodiversity.

Photo by ISRL Project/Agriculture and Food Cluster, GIZ Thailand

Overview of Achievements and Global Environmental Benefits

Above: Community Fire training for communities in the Kwahu West District, Ghana. This is done in collaboration with the Ghana National Fire Service.

Photo by the Project Communication Team

In fiscal year (FY) 2025, 26[2] Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) country projects made substantial progress toward achieving their Global Environmental Benefit (GEB) targets, with nearly 2.5 million hectares of land brought under improved management practices and 600,000 hectares restored. Building on the momentum of previous years, the country projects collectively reached close to 270,000 direct beneficiaries.

During this period, the FOLUR Global Platform advanced environmentally sustainable practices and policies across priority value chains. By promoting integrated landscape approaches, regenerative agriculture, and nature-based solutions, it provided countries with expert knowledge, policy guidance, and analytical tools to strengthen their efforts toward building sustainable agricultural systems.

Below: Rice fields.

Photo by Mikhail/ AdobeStock

Through cross-country learning, knowledge sharing, and peer-to-peer engagement facilitated by the World Bank via regional dialogues and workshops held in Ethiopia, Malaysia, Paraguay, Türkiye, and Viet Nam, as well as through training sessions and South–South exchanges organized by the Good Growth Partnership (GGP) as led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Food Systems program, FOLUR strengthened institutional capacities and built lasting momentum for sustainable value chains at both national

[2] Out of the 27 FOLUR country projects, the Nicaragua project has not yet commenced implementation.

and global levels. These workshops were attended by representatives from 14 FOLUR countries from Asia and Africa.

In parallel, FOLUR deepened public–private collaboration, mobilizing commitments to sustainable sourcing and investment, particularly through the IFC, WBCSD, and UNEP, and continued to scale investments aligned with established global environmental standards. Overall, private sector engagement advanced effectively, with FOLUR partners—particularly WBCSD and IFC—mobilizing commitments from over 40 companies engaged in livestock, rice, and soy toward sustainable sourcing and investment.

The Global Platform actively engaged with commodity platforms for coffee, cocoa, soy, and rice, while addressing gaps in wheat and livestock through events, dialogues, and targeted investments, including the FOLUR-financed IFC *Practices for Sustainable Investment in Private Sector Livestock Operations*. Since their launch in November 2022, these IFC practices have been widely endorsed by major multilateral development banks (MDBs) and presented at multiple international forums.

To date, IFC has made 12 investments, totaling approximately $720 million, including financing in five non-FOLUR countries. These investments span five countries in Asia, three in Africa, two in Central Asia, and two in Latin America. Individual commitments range from $3 million to $380 million, with an average investment size of about $55 million. The portfolio focuses on livestock practices—including beef and dairy—and supports companies such as Anyou, BaF Vietnam Agri, CnC Entobel, Guangxi Yangxiang Co., Ltd. (GXYX), Pearl Dairy IV, Alvoar Equity, Omarsa Farm, Adal Azyk, and Couvoir Amar.

The Farmer First Clusters (FFC) initiative, facilitated and managed by WBCSD's Soft Commodities Forum (SCF), leverages the strategic positions of five major agri-businesses in

Below: Harvesting coffee beans in Indonesia.

Photo by Yusuf Ahmad/ World Agroforestry

Above: 13,000 hectare sugar plantation in Piracicaba, Brazil. Contour planting is an important erosion management strategy and regenerative agriculture approach.

Photo by Julia Bolton/ FOLUR-IFC

soy supply chains to incentivize sustainable production in Cerrado landscapes that are at-risk of deforestation and conversion. To date, the FFC has deployed $4.3 million in investments from its five members, leveraging another $5.2 million in co-funding from member companies of the Consumer Goods Forum–Forest Positive Coalition (CGF-FPC), and an additional $2.4 million from the Land Innovation Fund. The FFC and CGF-FPC members are co-investing in common solutions and municipalities through shared implementing partners under the Sustainable Landscapes Partnership (SLP). In collaboration with producers, consumer goods companies, civil society, and governments, the SCF promoted sustainable soy supply chains and the preservation of high-priority ecosystems, beginning with the Cerrado biome.

Additionally, through UNEP, the FOLUR Global Platform built financial institutions' capacity to integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into land-use financing through training in Paraguay and globally. So far, UNEP has trained 800 representatives from 200 development finance institutions to promote sustainable finance.

During the 2025 FY, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued to pilot the Participatory Integrated Landscape Approach (PILA) in Nigeria and Kenya. PILA advanced country capacity on informed decision-making for sustainable land use as well as readiness for deforestation-free supply chains by equipping institutions and smallholders with digital tools that enhance traceability, transparency, and sustainable land use. Complementing this, the World Resource Institute (WRI) Policy Accelerator supported African Country Projects by fostering a collaborative, South–South network of government leaders in select African countries to advance policy solutions and accelerate on-the-ground restoration efforts.

In FY 2025 the Global Platform supported policy and gender integration efforts by providing technical tools and resources, with key contributions from UNDP and FAO. Notable knowledge products included an updated gender resource guide by UNDP, and the Assurance System Evaluation Framework (ASEF) by FAO. ASEF assesses the readiness of second- and third-party assurance and certification systems for agricultural commodities and timber to comply with emerging regulatory requirements such as the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) focusing on robustness, legality, traceability, and deforestation-free supply chains. The FOLUR Global Platform and the UNDP-GGP launched a new Gender Learning Program (GLP 2.0). The new program links gender focal persons from each FOLUR country project to share experiences and ideas with senior gender specialists. Success in addressing gender-related opportunities from country projects are shared widely in FOLUR's "Learning from Success" series, UNDP Food Systems Community[3] and FOLUR's Gender Equality Working Group.

[3] Formerly known as Food and Agricultural Commodities Systems (FACS)

FISCAL YEAR 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Forest seedling activity was organized in early July 2025 in Baan Pang Saa (or Pang Saa Village) in Mae Chan District, Chiang Rai province, Thailand, where the Inclusive Sustainable Rice Landscapes (ISRL) project is piloted in cooperation with partners Highland Research and Development Institute (Public Organization), Department of National Parks, and local administration bodies. The aim is to revive biodiversity in the watershed forest area and raise awareness among the local residents to preserve soil health and biodiversity.

Photo by ISRL Project/Agriculture and Food Cluster, GIZ Thailand

CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS

"Realizing the Vision of Low Emissions Rice Across Landscapes"

HANOI, VIET NAM | SEPT. 9–12, 2024

Highlight: Rice production systems are undergoing a transformation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while simultaneously improving agricultural productivity and diversification.

https://www.folur.org/news/folur-viet-nam-dialogue-focuses-shift-low-emissions-rice-landscapes

"Mastering Private Sector Engagement"

OCT. 14, 2024

Highlight: The private sector plays a crucial role in driving income-generating opportunities, creating jobs and fostering growth particularly in agriculture, forestry, and natural resource management.

https://www.folur.org/news/folur-leads-new-thinking-about-private-sector-ethiopia

Publication of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) White Paper | *Supporting Food Systems Transformation Toward Sustainability and Resilience*

OCT. 25, 2024

https://www.folur.org/knowledge/undp-white-paper-supporting-food-systems-transformation-towards-sustainability-and

"Boosting Biodiversity Outcomes in Green Commodity Value Chains" | 7th Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Investment Case Symposium

OCT. 25, 2024 | LIVE BROADCAST FROM CALI, COLOMBIA

https://www.globallandscapesforum.org/video/biodiversity-outcomes-green-commodity-value-chains/

"Sustainable Maize and Wheat: Scaling Innovations for Resilience"

ISTANBUL, TÜRKIYE | JAN. 20–24, 2025

Highlight: Innovative, efficient irrigation systems; wheat rust disease resistance breeding; digital agriculture technologies; climate-smart techniques; water and nutrient management; sustainable soils; and gender-intentional seed selection are vital for healthy farm systems.

https://www.folur.org/news/experts-meet-istanbul-discuss-innovations-maize-and-wheat-value-chains

Technical Workshop: "Scaling Nature-Based Solutions in Africa"

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA | FEB. 25–27, 2025

Highlight: Ethiopia sees positive results from massive scale land restoration efforts, so far generating more than 760,000 jobs.

https://www.folur.org/news/nature-based-coffee-land-restoration-ethiopia-spurs-jobs-growth

"Promoting Integrated Landscape Management and Sustainable Food Systems in the Niger Delta"

CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA | MARCH 17–20, 2025

Highlight: The successful application of Participatory Integrated Landscape Approach (PILA) is now yielding tangible results in Nigeria's cocoa and palm oil production landscapes.

Regional Latin America Workshop

CIUDAD DEL ESTE, PARAGUAY | APRIL 7–12, 2025

Highlight: Evidence indicates that it is critically important to align incentives across value chains with private companies, farmers, and financial institutions.

https://www.folur.org/news/reshaping-food-systems-folur-latin-america-countries

Global Land Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. | MAY 9, 2025

Highlight: Launch of journal article "Effective Integrated Landscape Management for Sustainable Food Systems through Multi-Stakeholder Transformative Governance and Tenure."

https://www.folur.org/news/healthy-planet-and-people-starts-sustainable-landscapes-tenure-and-transformative-governance

Technical Workshop: "Accelerating Restoration across Palm Oil and Rice Value Chains in Asia"

KOTA KINABALU, MALAYSIA | JUNE 10–18, 2025

WORLD BANK-LED REGIONAL DIALOGUES DRIVE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND COLLABORATION

The two-day Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Global Rice Dialogue in Hanoi, Viet Nam in September 2024 convened governments, researchers, and private-sector partners to advance sustainable, low-emissions rice systems. Discussions highlighted Viet Nam's vision for 1 million hectares of low-emissions rice, policy shifts to repurpose agricultural support, and innovations in emissions measurement, finance, and traceability. Sessions also addressed gender inclusion, private-sector solutions, and nature-based approaches, underscoring collaborative efforts to scale climate-smart and resilient rice landscapes across FOLUR countries.

In November 2024, FOLUR participated in Agropastoralism in Africa: Current Dynamics and Perspectives, a symposium held in preparation for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists Conference, organized by French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), which focused on discussions regarding sustainable agropastoral systems in the Sahel. FOLUR co-led a technical session with CIRAD, "Restoration of Landscapes and Resilience of Agropastoral Systems," featuring the World Bank, FOLUR, and World Bank-led, GEF-funded Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Invest project. Key themes included information and communications technology (ICT) use, policy frameworks, animal health, and inclusion of women and youth. A field visit showcased sustainable livestock–crop integration using Faidherbia albida, a nitrogen-fixing thorn tree, highlighting nature-based solutions that enhance soil fertility, productivity, and climate resilience.

An increasing focus on integrated landscape management (ILM) emerged at the Sustainable Maize and Wheat: Scaling Innovations for Resilience Regional Dialogue in February 2025 in Istanbul. Participants from FOLUR country projects in China, India, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan shared experiences on advancing climate-smart agriculture through soil health initiatives and collaboration among land managers, governments, researchers, the private sector, and financial institutions. Supported by experts from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), the dialogue fostered a shared understanding of drivers, challenges, and solutions for sustainable maize and wheat intensification, linking cereal production with environmental landscapes and agroforestry.

Regional workshops on nature-based solutions (NBS) were organized in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2025 to support effective country-level implementation by translating global and regional expertise into practical guidance. Representatives from 14 FOLUR countries participated, exchanging experiences on how NBS approaches can deliver landscape-level outcomes, such as improved ecosystem services, climate resilience, and sustainable production. The workshops helped countries align proposed landscape interventions with NBS principles, identify context-appropriate actions, and explore available financing options to support implementation, drawing on examples from Africa and Asia.

At the World Bank Global Land Conference in May 2025, FOLUR organized a side event, "Sustainable Landscapes in Action: Governance, Tenure and Land Rights within Integrated Landscape Management for Climate Action." Co-sponsored by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), World Bank's PROGREEN (the Global Partnership for Sustainable and Resilient Landscapes), FAO, and the World Bank, the session highlighted how secure land tenure and

inclusive governance underpin sustainable landscapes and deforestation-free food systems. Discussions featured new FOLUR-supported research on transformative governance and tenure, including the study *Customised Methodology to Assess and Measure Effectiveness of Integrated Landscape Management Relevant Multi-Stakeholder Transformative Governance, Incorporating Rights-Based Planning and Tenure Aspects, Applied in Kenya, Nigeria, and Viet Nam*, alongside FAO's PILA tool, and the World Bank's report on strengthening forest land rights. Country examples from FOLUR Nigeria, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, FOLUR Liberia, and Viet Nam showcased practical approaches for tenure recognition, community empowerment, and carbon benefit-sharing.

In May 2025, the FOLUR Global Platform organized a Regional Dialogue in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, bringing together five FOLUR countries from Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), Mexico, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, and Guatemala, to exchange experiences and identify strategies to accelerate project implementation. The dialogue focused on knowledge exchange around sustainable agriculture, landscape restoration, and financing mechanisms to scale restoration and sustainability efforts.

In June 2025, the FOLUR Global Platform convened local, regional, and global oil palm experts through a regional dialogue about advancing sustainability in oil palm landscapes, followed by a technical workshop on regenerative agriculture in oil palm and rice systems in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. The sessions were attended by FOLUR country teams across Asia and provided a platform for in-depth exchange on sustainable production practices and policy innovations.

Through these regional and commodity-focused dialogues, the Global Platform also brought together country projects, private sector stakeholders, and government counterparts to strengthen collaboration and advance private sector engagement in key commodity value chains.

Below: Dessalegn Ketema discussing the challenges and opportunities for integrating gender and social inclusion in land restoration-related policy incentives.

Photo by Margarita Gonzalez

Fiscal Year 2025 Global Platform Achievements

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RESTORATION THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Roll-Out of Flagship Tools

During FY 2025, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) focused on piloting its Participatory Integrated Landscape Approaches (PILA) tool in Nigeria and India. PILA is an innovative, inclusive, cross-sectoral approach that supports informed decision making by providing tailored information at the national, landscape, and field levels. Many key workshops have been organized in Nigeria where participants proactively addressed key policy challenges, with a strong focus on advancing compliance with the EUDR. The PILA workshops are designed to drive awareness and equip stakeholders with hands-on strategies for integrated landscape management (ILM) and agroecology. The first workshop was designed to catalyze action, and the second to fine-tune transition pathways that align with national policies and sustainability targets. Through PILA in Nigeria, FAO is now covering, through both the assessments and the multistakeholder process, all 36 local government areas (LGAs), well beyond the initial project target of only four LGAs. The total area supported by PILA—including state-level ILM plans development and light support for the eventual step-down to Institute of Land Use Planning (ILUP) development at the LGA level—is 3,563,299 hectares.

During the FOLUR Palm Oil Dialogue in June 2025, FAO soft-launched the Assurance Systems Evaluation Framework (ASEF) for production and trade of deforestation-free

Above: Participants from the Asociación Agropecuaria de Agua Dulce discuss the Pilot Plan for Regenerative Rational Rotational Grazing in the Chaco region of Paraguay.

Photo by FOLUR Paraguay Project, 2025

agricultural commodities. The framework aims to evaluate the alignment of second- and third-party assurance or certification systems covering agricultural commodities and wood with the new EUDR regulation for robustness, legality, traceability, and deforestation-free requirements. The session included the presentation of ASEF pilot case study findings conducted in Nigeria (cocoa), Kenya (coffee), Indonesia (oil palm), and Argentina (soy). It also included specific emphasis on implications for small-scale producers in terms of current and future market access. The ASEF was presented by FAO and Preferred by Nature, and included invitations to FOLUR oil palm countries Guinea, Indonesia, Liberia, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Papua New Guinea to contribute to an ongoing public stakeholder consultation.

World Resources Institute: Initiatives for Scalable Landscape Impact

FOLUR has enhanced its global visibility and strengthened national policy impact through the peer-to-peer Restoration and Policy Accelerator developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI). To date, the accelerator has partnered with governments in five FOLUR countries—Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, and Guatemala—to provide policy expertise and data-driven insights for effective restoration strategies. The initiative has fostered peer learning among leaders, turning challenges into opportunities for landscape restoration, and has been widely appreciated by FOLUR country teams.

In the last fiscal year, the WRI Regional Landscape Policy Accelerator in Ethiopia brought together 70 participants from FOLUR and non-FOLUR countries—including Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Rwanda—facilitating rich exchanges with mentors from Africa, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the United States. Participants engaged in modules on restoration policy design, mobilizing public–private finance, integrating equity and inclusion, and strengthening monitoring systems. A spotlight on Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) highlighted their potential to channel restoration funds to communities, drawing on successful models from Guatemala and Costa Rica. Country teams identified key policy gaps, such as the absence of PES frameworks in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi; limited monitoring systems in Ethiopia; and weak regulatory and financial instruments in the Lake Kivu and Rusizi River Basin. To sustain progress, WRI is leveraging additional funds to provide targeted technical assistance that helps countries address these gaps and scale up forest and landscape restoration.

Below: Cocoa beans on a tree in Nigeria.

Photo by Tope. A Asokere/ Unsplash

Select Country Spotlights: China, Nigeria, and Paraguay

The FOLUR Global Platform's policy and governance initiatives are complemented by country-level leadership translating these approaches into action. In China and Nigeria, governments and institutions are embedding FOLUR's principles of sustainability, participation, and innovation into local systems—demonstrating how global frameworks and national ownership combined can drive lasting change across landscapes.

A rice paddy in Hubei Province, China.
Photo by RAWFILE REDUX 2/iStockPhoto

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: FOLUR CHINA

Government and Institutional Leadership in Advancing Ecological and Smart Agriculture

The FOLUR project, a key initiative under the World Bank–Global Environment Facility (GEF) green finance framework, is advancing Nanzhang County's ecological and sustainable agricultural transformation. Guided by the "3S" approach—Safety, Sustainability, and Smart Agriculture—it has addressed challenges of limited green finance and technical constraints through a participatory stakeholder mechanism. The project has established a comprehensive production safety and traceability system, developed a sustainable, climate-smart, low-carbon rice production model, and strengthened the intelligent industry chain for high-quality rice, enhancing both ecological and economic value. This has helped build a "3S" ecological agri-food value chain that delivers co-benefits across the environment, food systems, and community development under the banner "Ecological Nanzhang, Organic Kitchen."

A robust safety and traceability system ensures the quality and safety of rice production through the Ten Unifications and Five Substitutions model, guiding farmers to follow standardized green production procedures. Every stage—from seed selection to pest control and harvesting—meets national green certification standards, supported by biological pest management and reduced fertilizer and pesticide use. Processing takes place in dust-free workshops, following national hygiene and labeling standards, while a digital traceability system ensures transparency and quality assurance "from field to table."

To promote climate-smart, low -carbon agriculture, the project applies emission reduction and carbon sequestration technologies, such as alternate wetting and drying (AWD) irrigation, organic fertilizer substitution, straw returning, and winter fallow green manure. Adaptive measures include low-methane aromatic rice varieties, water-saving irrigation, and climate monitoring stations to optimize harvest timing. Farmland resilience is strengthened through hedgerows, ecological ditches, vetiver grass pest control, and agroforestry-based carbon sequestration, integrating the landscape management principle of "mountains, waters, forests, fields, and villages."

Green financial support from the World Bank and GEF has been pivotal in overcoming economic and equipment barriers, mobilizing social capital, and steering local financial institutions toward green finance. This has fostered broad acceptance of ecological principles among government, enterprises, and farmers, accelerating Nanzhang's agricultural transformation. The project's participatory approach—linking government agencies, financial institutions, enterprises, research organizations, and rural communities—has cultivated a shared culture of ecological transition grounded in green finance, institutional support, technological innovation, and farmer participation. Altogether, this approach demonstrates how international green finance, innovation, and community engagement can jointly drive sustainable, low-carbon rural transformation in Nanzhang County.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: FOLUR NIGERIA

Fostering Ownership for Lasting Change Through PILA Trainings

The Nigeria FOLUR project has made significant progress in strengthening national capacity for integrated landscape management (ILM) through the roll-out of Participatory Informed Landscape Approaches (PILA). Beginning in August 2024, a series of training-of-trainers sessions were organized for state geographic information systems (GIS) teams, which were comprised of 12 core participants, on the PILA Geospatial Platform and related FAO Open Foris tools—Earth Map Se.Plan (SEPAL), Collect Earth, **Web-based Harmonized Information System Platform** (WHISP), and Global Open-Source Utilities for Natural Resource Data (GROUND)—aimed at enhancing national capacity to independently conduct integrated landscape assessments and restoration suitability analyses, and to monitor ILM plan activities toward shared objectives. These participants were technical officers and GIS specialists from state Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) units and the Federal Ministries of Environment and Agriculture.

Following these trainings, they conducted step-down sessions reaching over 200 participants, including state-level and local government area (LGA)-level planners, data officers, and project implementation teams, thereby expanding—as well as institutionalizing—the national technical capacity for landscape mapping and monitoring. An in-person extended training in March 2025 brought together 60 experts from federal and state agencies, academia, and civil society to learn about the PILA Geospatial Platform and Open Foris WHISP, while 25 private sector representatives participated in an online training in August 2025 on Open Foris GROUND for mapping farm boundaries and improving supply chain traceability with direct relevance to comply with deforestation-free international regulations. Complementary capacity development under PILA-TAPE (Participatory Informed Landscape Approach–Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation) supported 35 project staff in agroecology and farm–household surveys and data analysis, while the PILA – Participatory Visioning conducted visioning sessions and behavioral change assessments with 60 staff from July 2024–mid 2025. Together, these initiatives are creating and institutionalizing a community of national champions for ILM, embedding new skills, mindsets, and institutional practices within Nigeria's landscape management system. The trainings have gone beyond skill transfer—they have triggered a cultural shift from top-down planning to participatory, evidence-based decision-making, empowering local institutions to take ownership of ILM processes. Moreover, each training applied a knowledge–attitude–practice methodology to track the effectiveness of the training, including the extent to which participants were able to transfer the new knowledge and skills acquired into practice. This approach to enable and empower country stakeholders marks a transformative turning point, where national capacities are no longer dependent on external expertise but are driving sustainable landscape restoration from within. This increase in country ownership promises to deliver more durable and lasting results at scale.

Cocoa during separation process.

Photo by Oke Oluwasegun/iStockPhoto

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: FOLUR PARAGUAY

Institutional Leadership in Promoting Regenerative Livestock Practices in the Paraguayan Chaco

In the Paraguayan Chaco, the Agua Dulce Livestock Association (APAD), in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES) through the FOLUR Paraguay Project, is implementing a Pilot Plan for Regenerative Rational Rotational Grazing (PRIR). The initiative covers three ranches across 5,000 hectares in the area of Agua Dulce and represents a joint effort to align sustainable cattle production with the conservation of Chaco ecosystems.

The PRIR management system promotes improvements in biodiversity and soil quality through active producer participation. Within the four modules established, the results are already striking—average weight gains of 350–450 kilograms per hectare per year, compared to just 150–180 kilograms per hectare per year in conventional systems. Likewise, the stocking rate averages 1.06 animal units per hectare, a significant improvement over the 0.2 animal units per hectare typical of conventional grazing systems in the area. These figures illustrate the greater productivity and carrying capacity achieved through regenerative practices.

Preliminary results show that PRIR contributes to improved forage quality and higher forage production, optimizing cattle feeding and overall productivity. The system also reduces soil erosion and compaction, extending the longevity of pastures and improving water-use efficiency. Additional benefits include better control of internal parasites in cattle and enhanced biodiversity—factors that reinforce the sustainability of production systems and the resilience of the broader Chaco ecosystem.

The pilot has attracted significant interest from both producers and public entities, quickly becoming a reference for national strategies on sustainable production and climate change adaptation. It is also emerging as a model for producer associations aiming to transition toward more resilient and sustainable livestock practices. Currently, APAD's 85 members are direct beneficiaries of this initiative.

The experience highlights several key success factors. Chief among them is the generation of data and evidence demonstrating both environmental and productive benefits, which has helped build confidence among producers and decision-makers. This evidence-based approach confirms that optimizing land use and reducing grazing area expansion can deliver tangible gains. Furthermore, the initiative underscores the importance of field-based technical assistance, which ensures the correct application of the PRIR model and supports its replication in other regions. These lessons contribute directly to integrating PRIR into broader sustainable production and climate adaptation policies in Paraguay.

FOLUR team in Paraguay.

Photo by FOLUR

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RESTORATION THROUGH PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

International Finance Corporation: Private Sector Pathways for Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable Livestock

Under FOLUR, in fiscal year (FY) 2025, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) developed a strategic approach to regenerative agriculture (Regen Ag) that integrates resilient farming systems across crops, livestock, and aquaculture, enabling policies and value chains that reward sustainable production and healthy food systems. IFC advanced knowledge generation and private sector engagement through this approach. The IFC Approach and Framework for Regenerative Agriculture, the first among public and private financiers, was presented at multiple events and refined through consultations with clients and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It was validated through real-time testing with a pipeline client in Brazil, and its applicability was assessed against current client engagements in Brazil and Côte d'Ivoire.

Alongside this strategic work, IFC's advisory portfolio is generating tangible results across countries. In Uganda, IFC and Nestlé Nespresso are revitalizing coffee supply chains in the Rwenzori region, improving the livelihoods of over 3,200 smallholder farmers, 40 percent of whom are women. By December 2025, 700 hectares are expected to be under improved practice. The project has restored coffee production, built strong farmer training networks, established savings and loan groups, and achieved full EUDR compliance with traceable sourcing. In India, IFC and Olam are developing a climate-smart rice and wheat value chain to enhance productivity and income. Nearly 16,500 farmers, over 20 percent of whom are women, have been trained on sustainable practices—such as integrated soil, water, and pest management—leading to adoption across 11,000 farm plots, 15–20 percent water savings, and improved yields. In Brazil, IFC is supporting private sector partners in soy and cocoa to adopt biodiversity-friendly and regenerative practices. By June 2027, 25,000 hectares are expected to be under improved management, with an additional 50,000 hectares restored through the implementation and biodiversity monitoring of a Cerrado corridor in Mato Grosso do Sul.

IFC continued to advance its flagship *Practices for Sustainable Investment in Livestock Operations*, another FOLUR-facilitated initiative. In FY 2025, IFC supported Adal Azyk in the Kyrgyz Republic and Couvoir Amar in Senegal in adopting these practices as part of IFC investments to improve operational efficiency and support business expansion. Since their launch at the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock's annual meeting in October 2022, these practices have been presented at 23 international events, reaching more than 4,800 participants, including 896 at FAO's Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation in Rome in September 2025. The practices have been endorsed by major multilateral development banks (MDBs) with significant animal protein portfolios, including Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Invest, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank (FMO), and British International Investment (BII). Since then, IFC has made 12 livestock investments totaling approximately $720 million, including financing in five non-FOLUR countries—Pakistan, Ecuador, Mauritania, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Senegal—thereby extending the reach and impact of the FOLUR program.

Above: 13,000 hectare sugar plantation in Piracicaba-Brazil.

Photo by Julia Bolton/ FOLUR-IFC

World Business Council for Sustainable Development: Partnerships for Deforestation-Free, Climate-Smart Soy and Rice

In Brazil, FOLUR supported the WBCSD in mobilizing the Farmer First Clusters Initiative (FFC) through the Soft Commodities Forum, engaging private sector partners, such as Archer-Daniels-Midland (ADM), Bunge, Cargill, the China Oil and Foodstuffs Corporation (COFCO), and the Louis Dreyfus Company (LDC) to promote deforestation- and conversion-free soy production in Brazil's Cerrado Biome.. It has mobilized $4.3M from members, plus $7.6M in co-funding, and jointly invests with The Consumer Goods Forum–The Forest Positive Coalition (CGF-FPC) companies in shared, landscape-level solutions through the Sustainable Landscapes Partnership. In Brazil, over 1,244 people benefited from capacity-building activities led by partners, such as Parque Vida Cerrado, Rede Crop-Livestock-Forest Integration (ILPF), and Solidaridad, covering producers, rural extensionists, students, and seed collectors. The Soft Commodities Forum further contributed through the FFC, restoring 220 hectares of native vegetation, improving practices across over 1 million hectares of farmland, and mitigating 2.8 million metric tons of CO_2-equivalent (CO_2e) in total emissions.

In Asia, WBCSD supported the Sustainable Rice Landscapes Initiative (SRLI). This initiative, currently under implementation across China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam, placed 3 million hectares of rice farmland under improved management, reducing 87.8 million metric tons of CO_2e and benefiting more than 600,000 farmers, half of whom are women. Together, these initiatives exemplify how FOLUR's global partnerships drive large-scale adoption of sustainable practices and measurable environmental impact.

The United Nations Environment Programme: Sustainable Land-Use Finance, and Conservation International's Private Sector Initiatives

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under the Good Growth Partnership (GGP), another key core partner leading private sector engagement, has, since July 2024, been strengthening the capacity of financial institutions and regulators to make environmental,

social, and governance (ESG)-informed investment decisions and align their portfolios with sustainable land-use financing through nature-based solutions. It has developed and delivered training to financial actors in Paraguay and at the global level, together with the The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). It has published an environmental and social factsheet for impact investors in Indonesia. To date, over 800 representatives from 200 financial institutions have been trained on issues relating to sustainable land use finance, including investing in nature-based solutions.

Lastly, with support from UNDP-GGP, Conservation International (CI), through the Sustainable Coffee Challenge, led the Coffee Public–Private Task Force's Resilient Coffee Landscapes workstream, advancing landscape and jurisdictional approaches to tackle deforestation, promote living incomes, and address broader sustainability challenges across coffee value chains. Together, initiatives led by the FOLUR Global Platform demonstrate how FOLUR's global partnerships are catalyzing transformative private sector action across commodities and geographies. This momentum is also reflected at the country level, where FOLUR projects are deepening collaboration with agribusinesses and investors to drive tangible sustainability results.

Select Country Spotlight: China and Thailand

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: FOLUR CHINA

Advancing Private Sector Engagement Climate-Smart and Inclusive Agriculture Through the FAO–MARA Initiative in China

The FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) of China led the FOLUR project in Xinyu, Jiangxi Province, which is transforming traditional farming into a sustainable, low-carbon, and market-driven system that empowers farmers and promotes ecological growth. Through certification, unified branding, and order-based production, FOLUR supported cooperatives to market products such as Baizhangfeng Organic Rice, which has become a strong regional brand. Jiangxi Baizhangfeng Rice Industry Co., Ltd. primarily contributed to building a market-oriented agricultural product value chain. Working closely with the FOLUR China project team, it developed the regional public brand, Baizhangfeng, for organic rice, which has supported surrounding agricultural brands and promoted the development of premium products. Through the "company + cooperative + farmer" order-based production model, the company has engaged over 280 local farmers in organic rice cultivation and created 410 jobs.

Leveraging organic certification, order-based production, and an integrated system of unified processing, branding, and sales, the company has strengthened regional brand influence, stabilized agricultural product pricing, and enhanced farmers' incomes.

Meanwhile, another FOLUR supported cooperative, Jiangxi Zhenghe Ecological Agriculture Co., Ltd., has built a circular system that converts farm waste into biogas and organic fertilizers, replacing chemical inputs and supplying renewable energy. Together, these innovations have enhanced soil health, expanded rural employment, and positioned Xinyu as a leading model of inclusive and climate-smart agricultural transformation.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: THAILAND

Strengthening Sustainable Rice Value Chains Through Private Sector Engagement

The Inclusive Sustainable Rice Landscapes Project in Thailand (ISRL) is driving a transformative shift in how rice and agricultural landscapes are managed by balancing social, economic, and environmental priorities. Through integrated land use planning at both national and local levels, the project is paving the way for the widespread adoption of sustainable rice farming practices among smallholder farmers while simultaneously conserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity.

Focusing on the two target provinces of Chiang Rai and Ubon Ratchathani, the project has already made impressive progress—reaching over 15,000 smallholder farmers, 57 percent of whom are women. These efforts have resulted in 61,317 hectares of land under improved landscape management practices, driven by the adoption of biodiversity-friendly measures, such as reduced chemical use, improved water management, and the elimination of rice residue burning. Additionally, 6,785 hectares of land have been restored through afforestation and the introduction of diversified cropping systems in areas less suited for rice cultivation.

The project's impact extends beyond farms to markets, where six companies are now sourcing rice directly from project target areas, signaling a growing demand for sustainably produced rice. Building on this success, ISRL recently facilitated inclusive and participatory consultations with national and provincial stakeholders to develop a National Roadmap draft for achieving sustainable rice landscapes in Thailand, outlining five-, ten-, and twenty-year milestones. The next phase will focus on engaging local stakeholders to translate this roadmap into provincial action plans, deepening on-the-ground implementation, generating new learnings, and refining best practices to advance the country's journey toward truly sustainable rice landscapes.

SCALING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RESTORATION IMPACT THROUGH FOLURIZATION[4]

The World Bank's Lowlands Livelihoods Resilience Project Phase II (LLRP II) is a five-year initiative to improve the livelihoods and climate resilience of three million pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Ethiopia's lowlands. Building on phase I, which rehabilitated 400,000 hectares of rangelands, LLRP II aims to expand sustainable and climate-resilient management to an additional 600,000 hectares across four components: disaster risk management, rangeland management, climate-resilient livelihoods, and policy support. To address limited technical capacity and the absence of a national rangeland monitoring system, the LLRP II Project, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Agricultural Transformation Institute (ATI), Alliance Bioversity International–International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), is developing a National Rangelands Data Platform and Monitoring System (NRMS) to track the health and trends of Ethiopia's rangelands. The system will synthesize remote sensing data, integrate community-

[4] A project is FOLURized if it is informed by a FOLUR financed activity, i.e. upstream efforts influencing the development of national, sub-national and regional projects that are supported by additional donor financing.

based ground-truthing (including women's insights), and disseminate rangeland information through accessible digital platforms and delivery channels. It will also estimate baseline greenhouse gas emissions to enable future participation in carbon markets and promote climate-smart rangeland management. The NRMS will be linked to the MoA's data-sharing system, with FOLUR-facilitated ILRI collaboration to support its development.

FOLUR, through the World Bank, is also supporting the integration of sustainable and climate-smart practices into its Agricultural Recovery Inclusive Support Emergency (ARISE) Project in Ukraine, including an online platform currently under development that will provide Ukrainian farmers with access to European Union–endorsed climate-smart practices.

These engagements reflect the FOLURization approach, whereby FOLUR-financed upstream activities inform and influence related operations supported through additional donor financing. Both LLRP II and ARISE demonstrate how FOLUR's upstream work extends beyond the 27 country projects to shape broader sustainable land-use investments.

GENDER EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FOLUR LEARNING AND DIALOGUES

World Bank and Good Growth Partnership led by United Nations Development Programme: Next Phase of Gender Learning

The World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme–Good Growth Partnership (UNDP-GGP) launched a new Gender Learning Program (GLP 2.0). This program builds on the success of GLP 1.0, which was attended by 178 participants from 58 countries and was inspired in part by a follow-up assessment of country project team needs. GLP 2.0 launched an online seminar series aimed at country projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), entitled "Advancing Equality: Gender-Inclusive Solutions for Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration." The GLP 2.0 Gender Introductory course reached over 150 participants across three regional sessions. The series has built a shared foundation of knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment in food systems, helping FOLUR country projects and other practitioners sharpen their tools, strengthen inclusion, and lead more sustainable, equitable change. A second series will gather FOLUR gender specialists and focal points on tailored regional clinics.

Additionally, the World Bank and the Mexican country team jointly produced a FOLUR Global Platform Brief *Learning from Success: A Forest Landscape Initiative Demonstrating Environmental Benefits and Empowering Women*.

Commodity and region-focused gender sessions were also integral to FOLUR regional dialogues held in Malaysia, Paraguay, Türkiye, and Viet Nam. In total, over 200 people participated in-person in these sessions, which discussed gender challenges that country project teams face in their commodity value chains and potential solutions and activities aimed at addressing them to enhance overall project outcomes and impacts. Expert presentations and session videos are available here.

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT: FOLUR MEXICO

Empowering Producers Through Gender-Responsive and Climate-Smart Practices

The FOLUR Mexico (CONECTA) project integrates land-use planning and natural resource management with livestock and agroforestry value chains to promote sustainable practices through a landscape approach. Three Integrated Watershed Management Action Plans (IWAPs) have been developed; one has been published and two are currently in progress, covering nine priority watersheds across 747,430 hectares. By 2025, two additional IWAPs will add 1.07 million hectares.

Additionally, FOLUR established four public-private coordination mechanisms which are helping scale-up climate-smart practices:

- Regional Ecological Land-Use Plan of the Sierra Occidental in Jalisco
- Trust Fund for the Sustainable Forest Development Program of Jalisco
- Mountain–Bay Alliance in Jalisco
- ECOGAN Livestock Label in Chiapas.

The project has improved management practices on 12,533 hectares and conserved 10 percent of natural vegetation, reaching 6,114 beneficiaries, including 2606 women and 30 producer groups.

In addition, specific initiatives have highlighted women's leadership in sustainable livestock production. For example, Fundación Cuenca Sana, Agua Limpia A.C. supported women producers through the FOLUR-supported project, Production of Organic Biofertilizer and Biogas Using Biodigesters in Livestock Areas of the Ameca–Mascota, Pitillal, Cuale, Las Juntas, and El Tuito Watersheds. According to Mutungwazi et al. (2018), a biogas digester is an airtight enclosed container designed to enhance the anaerobic digestion of biodegradable waste and facilitate the collection of produced biogas. Two biodigesters were installed, and three demonstration gardens established, accompanied by training on garden management and the use of biomass as fertilizer, while biogas serves as domestic fuel. These efforts have strengthened household sustainability and made women's roles in livestock production—such as milking—more visible and valued.

Tending cattle in Mexico.

Photo by Jessica García/CONECTA

STRENGTHENING PROGRAM DELIVERY THROUGH GLOBAL ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATIONS, AND COORDINATION

In fiscal 2025, the World Bank, with the support of core partners, focused on communicating narratives that highlighted key events and activities. Efforts to enhance coordination, learning, and program delivery were advanced through eight major events uniting the FOLUR community, 19 UNDP Food Systems Community-hosted webinars, and the publication of 11 knowledge products and 11 news stories highlighting notable successes.

World Bank: Advancing Delivery Through Global Engagement and Strategic Communications

Country Project Clinics

In collaboration with the GEF Secretariat, the World Bank held targeted country clinics with select FOLUR countries to identify implementation bottlenecks and better understand systemic challenges affecting project delivery. These one-on-one consultations with executing agencies and implementing partners provided valuable policy, institutional, and operational constraints insights. The lessons drawn from these discussions help both the World Bank and the GEF refine their approaches and inform the design of future programs under GEF-9, the ninth replenishment of the GEF trust fund, thereby ensuring more responsive and context-specific support mechanisms. As of June 2025, 26 out of 27 countries were in the implementation phase.

Global Advocacy and Communications

FOLUR was represented at the Africa Food Systems Summit and the IFC Agribusiness Summit. FOLUR communications efforts supported core partners' studies and papers, including an IFC study, Sustainable Rice Market Insights: A Preliminary Survey–Introduction to the Market and Financing Opportunities; a UNDP paper on food systems and power dynamics; and an FAO paper on PILA, and worked with core partners to develop and disseminate blogs and other communications products to complement these products.

The World Bank coordinated the FOLUR Regional Dialogue and Technical Workshop series on rice, cereals, and palm oil (described in section 3.2), and managed related communications, such as blogs and country stories. Working closely with core partners and the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF), FOLUR delivered communications materials around key conferences and events led by FOLUR and other organizations, including a wrap-up article on the GLF ThinkLandscape News website, a blog and social media, and four social media short-form interviews for each of the FOLUR Regional Dialogues (section 3.2). One example was the session: "A Healthy Planet and People Starts with Sustainable Landscapes, Tenure, and Transformative Governance" during the World Bank Land Conference in May 2025, with approximately 50 in-person participants and 50 online, featuring FOLUR projects and analytics. World Bank communications also developed new Practical Notes

Below: A woman holding a baby goat in her arms.

Photo by joan m/Unsplash

Above: Rice paddy in Nai Mueang, Thailand.

Photo by Tom De Decker/ Unsplash

and Learning from Success series briefs on key thematic areas. FOLUR achievements were summarized in the annual report and spring update. Additionally, FOLUR.org has seen substantial growth in web visitors, from 12,000 in FY 2024 to 15,000 in FY 2025.

Global Landscapes Forum: Amplifying Global Visibility and Engagement for FOLUR

The GLF, FOLUR's key communications partner, engaged in multiple events to promote FOLUR through various news stories, videos, and social media supported by the World Bank. The hybrid Seventh GLF Investment Case Symposium, Rewarding Nature: A Roadmap to Finance the Biodiversity Plan, on the sidelines of the 16th Conference of the Parties under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 16) in Cali, Colombia, featured a FOLUR session titled "Boosting Biodiversity Outcomes in Green Commodity Value Chains." More than 2,000 participants joined this conference.

Following the maize and wheat regional dialogue in Istanbul, the GLF produced a ThinkLandscape news article; a wrap-up vlog; the video, "Small-scale farmers: The backbone of the wheat value chain;" and a series of social media interviews with FOLUR World Bank managers, country leaders, and participants from the Center for International Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT), the Ukrainian Institute for Plant Variety Examination, and IFC. The FOLUR podcast series, Around the World in Eight Commodities, was also launched with episodes on cocoa, coffee, rice, and wheat.

Lastly, Peter Umunay (Thematic Lead - Food Systems and Land Use, GEF), hosted the GLF Live broadcast, "What's been achieved in sustainable value chains in 2024?" featuring FOLUR.

The hashtags #FOLURImpact and #ThinkLandscape continue to gain global traction, generating over 80,000 engagements on social media. Over the past four years, the FOLUR Impact Program has reached almost 50 million people through the #ThinkLandscape and #FOLURImpact hashtags.

United Nations Development Program: Strengthening Knowledge Exchange Through Digital Platforms

UNDP–under GGP continued to support FOLUR through the FOLUR Community, a dedicated digital collaborative space (DCS) hosted within the broader UNDP Food Systems Community, which now includes over 880 members globally. The FOLUR Community is the Impact Program's central digital knowledge hub, connecting country projects, Global Platform partners, and stakeholders worldwide. To boost visibility and engagement, FOLUR stories and updates began to be regularly featured on the UNDP Food Systems LinkedIn account, which reaches an audience of over 17,000 followers. FOLUR-related posts, particularly short videos and country stories, receive impressions of up to 1,300 per post, helping position FOLUR country projects and knowledge products more prominently with global audiences.

As part of its knowledge-sharing mandate, UNDP-GGP completed the first volume of the FOLUR Case Study Catalogue, highlighting practical experiences from country projects and global partners on farmer extension services, gender equality, and multistakeholder collaboration. The cases illustrate effective, replicable strategies for advancing sustainable and inclusive commodity systems. Key lessons include the value of participatory approaches, gender-responsive design, and locally led collaboration.

Since July 2024, UNDP-GGP, through its community of practice, has organized 19 learning events, including Capacity Needs Assessment Workshops[5] for three regions; Farmer Support Systems, Financing Ecosystem Restoration; Understanding and Working with Power in Food Systems; and three discovery sessions Asia, Africa, and Latin America in economic analysis (targeted scenario analysis) to advance policy reform.

[5] A capacity needs assessment (CNA) is a bottom-up, participatory analysis conducted in collaboration with the FAO to identify the capacity development needs and thematic interests of FOLUR country project teams.

Below: Cattle herd in Paraguay.

Photo by FOLUR Paraguay Project, 2025

APPENDIX:
Select Country Project Highlights

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Focus: Cocoa

Access to Technology Boosts Effectiveness in the Field

Project managers and extension agents engage with producers to raise awareness and provide capacity building and support for agroforestry plot design, the benefits of trees, and seedlings supply.

Site identification, site enrichment with native species, and conservation activities cover almost 2,000 hectares.

Capacity building at technical committee meetings emphasizes the importance of Inclusive Landscape Management Plans. Participants learn about village land delimitation activities and documentation required to acquire village land titles.

Above: Women working with FOLUR in Paraguay.
Photo by FOLUR

Capacity-building in office automation and computer equipment for the Permanent Secretariats of the four project management areas was initiated. Nearly €12 million ($14 million) in equipment has been donated to cooperatives and work groups. More

than €35 million ($41 million) were donated to 22 entities active in the SCOLUR (Scaling up Cocoa-based Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration) project areas to boost effectiveness in the field.

GHANA

Focus: Cocoa

Planning Crucial to Watershed Restoration

The project uses the Participatory Community Watershed Planning process to engage all community members in natural resource management, including vulnerable people. It supports negotiating challenges to better manage natural resources within the watershed area. A total of 182 community watershed plans are now under implementation.

The project has so far supported 7,075 farmers, comprising 4,245 men and 2,830 women, with farm inputs to implement sustainable management practices on 2,229.1 hectares.

The spatial development framework for six project districts, which includes Sene West, Kwahu Afram Plains South, Kwahu South, Kwahu West, Kwahu East, and Bosome Freho, within the cocoa landscape was established to guide planning, pending the approval of each district.

More than 500 community fire volunteers were trained and provided with fire suppression equipment to assist in controlling bush fires, a major challenge in some of the project areas.

Some 715.7 hectares of riparian sites were revegetated, and the project has supported over 500 farmers to cut and re-establish 1,000 hectares of moribund cocoa.

Additional livelihood activities are underway in 15 communities across the project districts, benefiting 242 beneficiaries. Of these, 128 are small ruminants-rearing, 18 are engaged in poultry keeping, 21 are engaged in soap-making, and 70 are involved in aquaculture. Overall, 79 percent of beneficiaries are women.

Below: Cocoa bean husks.

Photo by Kristiana Pinne/ Unsplash

Above: Terraced rice fields.

Photo by Denis Shchigolev/ Unsplash

INDIA

Focus: Wheat, rice

Advancing Climate-Resilient and Low-Emission Agriculture

Between July 2024 and June 2025, the project advanced sustainable rice-wheat systems across Punjab, Haryana, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh. 5,424 hectares were brought under improved practices, benefiting 7,400 farmers, including 1,785 women and 2,369 Indigenous farmers.

Key interventions, such as direct seeded rice (DSR), zero tillage, mulching, crop diversification, nanofertilizers, and integrated pest management, enhanced soil health, reduced emissions, and conserved water.

Land restoration work is in preparation. In Chhattisgarh, 1,000 pond sites were identified for water harvesting under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA); excavation of 23 ponds has begun, but is paused for the monsoon period. Degraded land mapping and alignment with government programs are underway to guide restoration.

A decision support system (DSS) is being developed to support landscape-level planning. As of June 2025, mitigation totaled 14,553 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_e), mainly from low-emission practices.

Key achievements include broad farmer adoption of sustainable practices, strengthened institutional capacity through digital tools, and collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) state agricultural universities, and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutes to scale digital extension. Despite challenges, such as limited machinery, certification costs, and data gaps, the project demonstrates a strong model for climate-resilient agriculture and scalable landscape transformation.

INDONESIA

Focus: Palm oil, coffee, cocoa, rice

Laying the Groundwork for Targeted Restoration

Advances in mapping, planning, and stakeholder engagement are underway, although physical restoration activities have not yet begun.

A total of 796,098.31 hectares of landscapes were identified as potential areas for improved management practices through comprehensive high conservation value assessments and commodity landscape mapping, supported by targeted scenario analysis.

Figures will be further validated through on-ground stakeholder consultations, field verification, and integration with good agricultural practices, social forestry schemes, and integrated landscape management (ILM) plans.

The project identified approximately 262,000 hectares of degraded land for restoration. Community engagement and participatory planning are ongoing across the five targeted landscapes. Restoration implementation was scheduled to begin in the fourth quarter of FY 2024.

The project has supported the mapping and recognition of 133,408 hectares under 90 social forestry permits, which encompass both conservation and sustainable use zones. These areas are undergoing gradual integration into broader ILM frameworks and are expected to benefit from improved participatory governance and management structures as implementation progresses.

To date, the project has identified a potential mitigation of 11,177,050 metric tons of CO_2e from activities in Central Aceh, Mandailing Natal, and Luwu Districts.

Key achievements include strong stakeholder engagement at national and subnational levels, the development of gender-responsive action plans, and the successful mobilization of over $93 million in co-financing.

Below: Woman picking peppers.

Photo by EqualStock/ Unsplash

KAZAKHSTAN

Focus: Wheat

Conducting Baseline Assessments to Prepare for Launch

North Kazakhstan oblast, covering an area of 9.804 million hectares, was selected as the pilot region. In collaboration with local authorities and national partners, the project is currently conducting a baseline assessment and has initiated systematic data collection.

The project is addressing two interrelated challenges: the dominance of wheat monoculture and the critical shortage of quality forage for a growing livestock sector. Low crop diversity remains a key barrier to sustainable land use and climate resilience, while limited forage availability undermines feed security and contributes to land degradation.

By targeting small and medium-sized farmers, the project promotes the adoption of diversified cropping systems grounded in scientific crop rotation principles. This includes incentivizing the integration of nitrogen-fixing pulses to enhance soil health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and increase climate adaptability.

The project also supports the expansion of climate-resilient perennial forage crops and improved pasture management to restore degraded pasture- and hay lands and build sustainable livestock systems.

The project design includes ecosystem restoration via the creation of the Koshetau Uplands eco-corridor and Tukty Protected Area in the North-Kazakhstan and Akmola regions, totaling approximately 600,000 hectares. These designated areas aim to protect relic pine forests, diverse steppes, meadows, bogs, and fallow lands.

Below: Wheat in the field.

Photo by Raphael Rychetsky/ Unsplash

LIBERIA

Focus: Palm oil, cocoa

Palm Oil Company Plantations Are Sites of Most Restoration

A course on national gender-sensitive land use planning, designed to help meet project objectives, offered information on the landscape relative to different land uses, in addition to forest cover, soil suitability for agriculture, and degraded areas suitable for conservation.

Nine clan-specific land use plans were developed and validated by stakeholders at the community, clan, county, and national levels in Grand Cape Mount County, Gbarpolu County, and Lofa County.

An active multistakeholder platform meets quarterly to review project progress.

The Smallholder Agriculture Transformation and Agribusiness Revitalization Project (STAR-P) secured $6.95 million from the Ministry of Agriculture to increase agricultural productivity and promote commercialization of smallholder farmers by linking farmers and agribusiness firms in selected value chains, including cocoa and palm oil. Community resource centers situated at select academic and research institutions serve as knowledge hubs.

The areas brought under sustainable land management (SLM) practices are primarily within areas owned by MANO Palm Oil, a co-financier. Eight conservation agreements have been signed with local communities and smallholder farmers, supporting the transition to sustainable production.

While the restoration of 15,000 hectares has not yet begun, Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) and a restoration plan using integrated forest and land management approaches were established.

Palm fruit in Malaysia.

Photo by Nafise Motlaq/ World Bank

MALAYSIA

Focus: Palm oil

Seeking Support from Stakeholders and Building Collaboration

The project aims to strengthen land use planning and governance, promote certified sustainable palm oil, support smallholders with training and tools, and restore degraded areas. It targets 54,000 direct beneficiaries, including 27,000

women, and aims to restore 200,000 hectares, improve practices across 2,380,763 hectares, and reduce 10,740,674 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent of lifetime direct greenhouse gas emissions.

An inception workshop was convened in March 2025 in the state capital Kota Kinabalu to introduce the project and its objectives to the key stakeholders. The workshop resulted in two key outcomes, the inclusion of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development and People's Wellbeing and minor revisions to the project result framework. The inception phase affirmed that the project design remains relevant and well-aligned with both national and state priorities.

Key roles, including National Project Director, Project Manager, and Chief Technical Advisor, are filled or to be filled imminently, with a projected completion date of October 2025.

The Sabah Forestry Department, a key implementing partner, co-hosted the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Restoration Technical Workshop with the World Bank in June and coordinated an accompanying site visit to Kampung Gana in Kota Marudu.

The project envisages overcoming implementation challenges through buy-in from stakeholders and aligning their natural resources management system to become more collaborative and adaptive regarding nature and knowledge gaps.

NIGERIA

Focus: Palm oil, cocoa

Multistakeholder platforms and integrated landscape management technical working groups are established at project sites in Cross River and Ondo states. At the national level, consultations are fostering consensus on customary land titling, sustainable production, and compliance with the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

The project supports the development of a seven-year strategic plan for the cocoa, oil palm, and coffee sectors.

Over 30,000 beneficiaries were profiled across 16 LGAs, including 25,647 farmers—40.3 percent of whom are women—organized into Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS) and 118 women's groups for training on climate-smart agriculture (CSA), sustainable forest management, and nature-based livelihoods. Already, 17,803 smallholder farmers, 37 percent of whom are women, have benefited directly from CSA training. Collectively, these farmers manage an estimated 92,010 hectares of farmland.

Restoration efforts are anchored in tree seedling production and enrichment planting. Three solar-powered nurseries can produce 3 million seedlings annually. Already, over 500,000 seedlings have been raised—150,000 native fruit trees for agroforestry and 350,000 indigenous

species for forest enrichment. Over 2,000 community members have been sensitized on sustainable forest management, with 48 individuals, 52 percent of whom are women, engaged in daily nursery operations.

Private sector engagement is progressing through consultations on traceability, verified sourcing areas for cocoa, and securing a jurisdictional Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil certification for oil palm, ensuring sustainability commitments extend across supply chains.

Successes include strong farmer mobilization, high-level policy endorsements, and the launch of large-scale nurseries.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Focus: Palm oil, cocoa, coffee

Tree Nurseries Key Component of Restoration Activities

Restoration activities are underway with two community-based organizations to assess degraded areas across four targeted local level governments.

Tree nurseries, including cocoa plantations, are being established to support the restoration of 9,898 hectares of degraded agricultural land. Some 28,424 hectares of degraded forest land are identified for restoration through native tree planting and artificial regeneration.

An Integrated Environmental Monitoring System is being developed to support ongoing conservation and restoration efforts.

Land-use planning for the entire island of New Britain—excluding protected areas—is underway, supported by the Department of Lands and Physical Planning. The launch of the National Sustainable Land Use Planning and Information Management System will enhance transparency and inter-agency collaboration, promoting improved land management practices.

Targeted scenario analysis is underway for oil palm and cocoa to determine the baseline scenario by assessing the respective impacts of a business-as-usual scenario and the adoption of Sustainable Ecosystem Management (SEM) scenarios.

The subsequent findings will help inform policy decisions and guide investments in the oil palm and cocoa sector, helping to address the dual goals of increasing productivity and mitigating adverse environmental impacts. Such information will significantly contribute to achieving greenhouse gas emissions targets.

The development of an Integrated Environmental Monitoring and Reporting System will further reinforce initiatives to avoid deforestation and strengthen reporting of environmental infringements.

PARAGUAY

Focus: Beef, soybean

Inclusive Agricultural and Livestock Reforms Benefit Producers

Key actions include updating the Urban and Territorial Planning Plan (POUT) for the municipality of Naranjal and strengthening implementation in the municipality of Filadelfia.

These efforts reflect a strategic approach to promoting sustainable land use in critical regions such as the Chaco and the Atlantic Forest of Alto Paraná (BAAPA).

The project implements sustainable agriculture and livestock practices with diverse producers, including Indigenous communities. Activities include rehabilitation of degraded agricultural soils and pilot projects for integrated soil and water management, such as the use of cover crops.

The project encountered challenges due to delays in implementation, limitations in inter-institutional coordination, and the socioeconomic context of the target territories.

The presentation of the governance model for the Sustainable Development Platform in the Chaco, Alto Paraná, and Itapúa was a key milestone. The launch included a first plenary session with inter-institutional participation, which allowed for the alignment of objectives, clarification of roles, and shared commitments.

A protocol is under development to ensure effective operation of national multistakeholder dialogue platforms and incorporation of gender considerations into sustainable beef and soy supply chains.

Approximately 40 percent of the direct beneficiaries will be women. Gender-responsive capacity-building programs on ILM, aimed at technically strengthening public stakeholders at the national and local levels to design, implement, and monitor integrated land-use plans are planned.

TANZANIA

Focus: Rice

Targeting Rice Value Chains for Improvement

The project focuses on the promotion of sustainable rice production in two key landscapes: the Kilombero landscape on mainland Tanzania; and the north A and B districts on Zanzibar. The project intends to deliver a total of 40,000 hectares of restored land and 1,202,690 hectares of land under improved practices, resulting in 6,480,330 metric tons of CO_2 emissions mitigated, with a total of 23,220 beneficiaries.

However, project implementation is behind schedule due to lengthy administrative procedures on the part of government counterparts. A part-time interim project team facilitated the start-up of priority project activities. These included a range of baseline studies regarding ecological conditions and threats in the project landscapes, studies into existing institutional arrangements, land tenure and water governance systems, background for the development of ILM frameworks for the two target landscapes, an assessment of the existing rice value chain, and an opportunity analysis for private sector investments in sustainable rice production, as well as the application of ROAM.

All studies are completed or are in advanced stages. Recruitment of key project positions is complete, and a full-time project coordinator, two landscape coordinators, a finance manager, and a monitoring and evaluation expert are now in place.

THAILAND

Focus: Rice

National and Local Level Planning Supports Sustainable Farming

The Inclusive Sustainable Rice Landscapes project seeks to transform rice and agricultural production landscapes by reconciling competing social, economic, and environmental interests.

Integrated land use planning at the national and local levels precedes the adoption of sustainable rice farming practices by smallholder farmers while maintaining, restoring, and improving landscapes, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Local level activities focus on the two target provinces of Chiang Rai and Ubon Ratchathani.

To date, the project has delivered targeted interventions that have improved practices for landscape management, including the adoption of priority practices with positive impacts on biodiversity by reducing chemical use, as well as improvements to water resources through water management, and human health by not burning rice residues, and sustainable rice farming standards. Land has been restored through afforestation and diversified cropping in areas not suited for rice farming.

There is an increased market demand for more sustainably farmed rice, with six companies actively sourcing rice from the project's target areas that meet these attributes.

The project engaged national and provincial stakeholders to develop a national roadmap for sustainable rice landscapes, with five-, 10-, and 20-year milestones for potential advancement and adoption through political processes.

The draft roadmap will be translated into provincial landscape management action plans to generate further on-the-ground experience and validation.

Above: Landscape in Rivne Nature Reserve, Ukraine.

Photo by Mykhailo Franchuk

UKRAINE

Focus: Livestock

Peatlands Undergo Feasibility Studies for Restoration

Integrated Land Use Plans were developed for eight pilot communities.

Of 83 territorial communities adjacent to peatlands, key biodiversity areas, and/or protected areas identified, 25 are poised to implement Integrated Land Use Plans.

Ekobereg, an engineering firm, will conduct feasibility studies for seven peatland restoration sites, including hydrological infrastructure assessments and the design of rewetting interventions. A land reclamation expert is overseeing the studies and supporting stakeholder consultations with local communities, forestry enterprises, and land users.

The project exceeded its original target of terrestrial protected areas under improved management for conservation, an increase attributed to the inclusion of Drevlianskyi Nature Reserve as a project partner, the territorial expansion of Nobel National Nature Park, and the active participation of the Chornobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve.

IT and field equipment, such as cameras, laptops, and printers, was distributed. Power banks were also provided to maintain operations during outages, in addition to the provision of 15 drones.

A national monitoring, reporting, and verification protocol for greenhouse gas fluxes in peatlands is being developed by Egis Ukraine under leadership of a United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change member. In cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory Center, a draft protocol was prepared and reviewed, followed by a workshop.

UZBEKISTAN

Focus: Wheat

Uzbekistan Greenhouse Initiative Supports Rural Women

In Uzbekistan's rural areas, agriculture is the backbone of community life, with both men and women playing essential roles. This project improves rural incomes and promotes sustainable agricultural practices through ecosystem restoration services.

Women are actively included and provided with equal access to the necessary tools and resources to participate fully. This inclusive approach, developed in collaboration with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Agriculture, has played a vital role in ensuring that women in rural areas benefit as much as their male counterparts from project outcomes.

At the core of this initiative lies the installation of small greenhouses on household plots across project provinces' rural areas. Procured by the project, they are much more than agricultural structures—they are instruments of empowerment. By providing rural women with the tools and knowledge to cultivate high-yield vegetable cash crops, they are securing a year-round income. They generate between 10–30 million Uzbekistan soms, or $800–2,400, annually, significantly boosting household incomes. Effectively managed, these greenhouses become a sustainable source of income, empowering women to contribute significantly to their household economies.

VIET NAM

Focus: Rice

Progress on Food Production and Gender-Sensitive Value Chains

The project is designed to enhance landscape management practices in the Mekong Delta. Despite government approval, the project faces challenges aligning national procedures with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) requirements.

Nevertheless, the sustainable food production and gender-sensitive value chains aspects of the project are progressing with completed assessments of agricultural extension plans and capacity, farmer organization needs, green financial resources, and sustainable rice farming practices.

Providing rice producers with technical and financial support, and market information to extension workers and farmers, facilitates adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and environmental stewardship. The project will also establish a value chain that incentivizes and standardizes sustainable rice landscape management.

Below: Rice terraces in Sapa, Viet Nam.

Photo by Damien Kopp/ Unsplash

By implementing enhanced water management practices and reducing agrochemical use, the project will contribute to conservation and environmental health. Improved water resource management, including partial restoration of natural flooding patterns, will benefit coastal mangroves, which serve as habitats for aquatic and bird species and as breeding grounds for commercial fish stocks. The project adheres to the biodiversity requirements outlined in the Sustainable Rice Platform Standard.

Initiatives also include agroforestry in farming systems to increase carbon stocks by introducing woody perennial biomass and ecosystem restoration.

FOLUR

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