

Regenerative Agriculture and Agroecology Action Lab - Overview and Call to Action

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Background:

The rationale for a shift from conventional to agroecological and regenerative production approaches is clear: one third of greenhouse gas emissions, 85% of biodiversity losses and three-quarters of freshwater use result from the food system and the way we produce, process, transport, handle and eat our food. Yet, before the Green Revolution triggered the mainstreaming of input-reliant, monocropping as the dominant form of production, Indigenous communities produced food through Indigenous foodways that sought to balance and connect land and life. With the lessons of the Green Revolution in hand and the wisdom of knowledge keepers, the necessity to produce sufficient nutritious food to feed a growing population while curbing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing resilience to climate change, conserving and restoring ecology by protecting and building back biodiversity and water quality, and restoring the dignity and wellbeing of farmers and Indigenous Peoples and local communities is obvious.

However, the transition to regenerative and agroecological approaches faces significant barriers:

1. **Risk of greenwashing:** Whereas 60% of the world's largest food and beverage companies have made a commitment to regenerative agriculture, fewer than 30% define it or even attempt to measure it.
2. **Lack of alignment on principles and outcomes:** In its [meta analysis](#) of those regenerative practices with the strongest evidence aligned to outcomes, the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU) named the lack of a harmonized outcomes measurement framework as one of the key impediments minimizing coordinated action and adoption across corporates, farmers, landscape stewards¹, fishers and aquatic food-producers, and investors.
3. **Need for food producer-centricity and landscape steward-centricity:** With the average age of farmers between 50-60 years, fewer parents seek to see their children bear the risks associated with farming. Unsustainable land use (including agriculture) undermines the ecological foundation and creates major risks for society and business. This can only be addressed with a long-term approach to integrated landscape management, balancing sustainable land use (including regen. agriculture), restoration, conservation and infrastructure. It is why landscape stewards have rarely been the protagonists of those agricultural policies that govern their lives. Without centering their voices and lowering the risks they face, they will not transition.
4. **Limited funding:** With \$650 billion a year in agricultural subsidies largely oriented to perpetuate the industrial model of production, the funding needs for producers, landscapes, and countries seeking to accelerate the transition are significant. Substantial private, public,

¹ Landscape stewards are all actors that help to restore, conserve and sustainably manage the landscape (ecosystems) in such a way that the ecological foundation of a landscape is restored and maintained to be able to support both production, biodiversity and natural ecosystems.

and philanthropic funding will be needed as will innovative financing instruments that reward the multiple co-benefits of regenerative production.

5. **Need for long-term investment:** The process of transitioning to regenerative and agroecological production within sustainably managed landscapes will require long-term, patient investments over decades to ensure a deep and sustained transition.
6. **Unfavorable enabling environments:** Few countries have reformed their agricultural policies, subsidies, and regulation to favor regenerative and agroecological approaches, nor do national agricultural research budgets adequately invest in the kinds of evidence generation required to develop enabling environments.
7. **Missing a shared north star:** We lack a galvanizing, singular call to action to accelerate the transition from conventional, fossil-fuel and energy-intensive production to regenerative and agroecological approaches inclusive of Indigenous foodways.

Action Lab Objectives:

This Action Lab seeks to (1) take stock of some of the major initiatives building the case for and removing the obstacles to transition toward regenerative and agroecological approaches at farm, landscape, and national levels, (2) ensure alignment between these initiatives and other efforts, and (3) workshop a common call to action that can unite these many efforts. COP28 offers an unparalleled opportunity to showcase food as a lever for climate action and regenerative agriculture, which has been elevated as a key theme within the food track of this COP, but cannot be seen as separate from the COP15 CBD Kunming-Montreal biodiversity agreement either.

We propose a unifying call to action:

*We call on food systems stakeholders globally to join us in aligning the necessary incentives (e.g., policy, financing, collaboration, governance), knowledge (scientific, including traditional and Indigenous), tools (data, innovation, accountability mechanisms, etc), and long term partnerships (between landscape stewards, business, science, finance, etc.) to transition from conventional agricultural systems to regenerative / agroecological approaches that yield positive biodiversity, food and nutrition security, conservation, climate, water and social equity outcomes, **and achieve 50% of food produced regeneratively by 2040 and 100% by 2050.***

Several initiatives aimed at COP28 and beyond respond to this call to action:

As the evidence in support of regenerative and agroecological food systems proliferates, so do the flagship initiatives aimed at accelerating these transitions. Beyond the four initiatives profiled within the Action Lab, a sea of producer-led, landscape-level, corporate-focused, and even national efforts are emerging. Connecting the four efforts profiled below to this broader galaxy of stakeholders and initiatives is crucial if we are to constitute a movement with the resources and momentum needed to achieve the call to action.

1) **National Leadership via the Agroecology Coalition.** Agroecological food systems can tackle the climate, biodiversity, land degradation and hunger crises together – because they're based on diversity, resilience and equity. As a systemic approach that addresses the various parts of our food system, agroecology greatly enhances agricultural biodiversity and its multiple benefits – from production to consumption, and at various scales from farm to landscape to food systems – while

promoting social justice, nurturing identity and culture, and strengthening the economic viability of rural areas. As such, the mission of the Agroecology Coalition is to accelerate the transformation of food systems through agroecology, guided by the 13 principles defined by the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) that are aligned with the 10 Elements of Agroecology as adopted by the 197 FAO Members in December 2019. Agroecology is central to implementing the COP28 Presidency's call on putting nature, people, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action given its holistic nature. The Coalition endeavors to contribute to this by encouraging and supporting implementation of country pathways for food systems transformation by facilitating co-creation and exchange of knowledge and experience on agroecology; by promoting increased investments in agroecology; and by seeking political engagement and increased commitment to agroecological transformation. **The call to action is for governments and non-state actors to make use of and be guided by the 13 principles in framing, developing and implementing initiatives in order to sustainably transform our food systems.**

2) Regen10: Regen10 is a multi-stakeholder collaborative platform to build the evidence base and shared understanding of what it would take over this decade for 50% of the world's food to be produced in a way that benefits people, nature, and climate. It focuses on achieving holistic and integrated outcomes, including but not limited to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved soil health, water quality, biodiversity, livelihoods, socio-cultural issues, and equity. Through a consultative process, Regen10 is developing an Outcomes Framework, with principles and core metrics to measure and understand the changes that occur over time on farms and in landscapes. It is connecting a growing network of regenerative leaders and practitioners working around the world in diverse landscapes to share learnings and co-create knowledge products and strategies. It aims to elevate issues to shape the policy and finance enabling environment, bring perspectives that have traditionally been left on the margins into decision making processes, and foster global momentum towards regenerative food systems transformation through an inclusive platform, strategic communications, and engagement. **The call to action is for all food systems stakeholders to provide feedback on a "Zero Draft" of the Regen10 Outcomes Framework (launched at COP28) for refinement by COP29, and to share information related to regenerative and agroecological landscape-level initiatives to create a digital map (launched at COP28).**

3) Philanthropic Theory of Transformation and Acceleration Platform(s): There is an urgent need to unlock and activate new funding and financial flows to support and scale agroecology, regenerative approaches and Indigenous foodways. While global awareness and interest in these approaches has grown, the pace of progress and financial flows fall significantly short of addressing the urgent need for transformative change. The philanthropic sector has a unique role to play, and the Global Alliance for the Future of Food is mobilizing a collaborative of 20+ philanthropic leaders to build a shared vision and plan for action to strengthen and accelerate the regenerative, agroecological transition, putting food producers, farmers and landscape stewards at the center. By COP28 this collaboration will deliver a shared Theory of Transformation to establish the required magnitude of financing required to transition, define barriers to change, identify regenerative pathways and systemic drivers, and build the confidence of funders to invest ambitiously and patiently in the regenerative transition. Following COP28 the philanthropic collaborative will segue into prototype design of an acceleration platform/facilities to catalyze the vision of the Theory of Transformation in key geographies. **The call to action today is to leverage philanthropic**

leadership to create enabling environments for agroecology, regenerative approaches and Indigenous foodways to flourish.

4) **COP28 Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes:** The COP28 UAE Presidency is seeking to accelerate the systemic transformation of food systems through the launch of a comprehensive package of commitments and initiatives of countries, businesses, financiers, tech innovators, consumers, and farmers. The Food Track Pillar 2 aims to mobilize private and public players to commit to specific targets and tangible actions in their own contexts. Beyond many existing initiatives focused on sustainable food systems, COP28's Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes aims to mobilize and connect non-state actors to transition a specific number of landscapes to regenerative agriculture outcomes. This initiative builds upon and accelerates existing efforts, such as Regen10, 1000 Landscapes for One Billion People, Commonland and others. As companies and other non-state actors engaged in the commitments will publicly disclose progress, the number of landscapes, value chains and hectares will be aggregated to demonstrate the total impact of these commitments. This will enable accelerated investment from climate finance, nature finance and other funding mechanisms and provide a funnel to scale innovation. In addition, countries that will join the leader-level declaration on climate action, food systems and sustainable agriculture that will be launched at COP28 can incorporate the commitments in their jurisdictions. **The call to action today is to raise corporates and other non-state actors' ambition on regenerative landscapes transformations.**

Alongside these four signature initiatives are other critical pieces of work including: Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI) Agribusiness Taskforce and One Planet Business for Biodiversity (OP2B) focus on regenerative agriculture; FAIRR's Analysis of Corporate Commitments to Regenerative; Terra Genesis and Smallholder Data Services focus on smallholder-led regenerative systems; Commonland; 1000 Landscapes for One Billion People; Terasso focusing on an integrated landscape management approach; The Nature Conservancy's Foodscapes program and many, many more.

Integration and alignment is critical:

The road from COP28 to COP30 offers an opportunity for more ambitious commitments and action and is a key timeframe to monitor progress and push for accountability. Action on regenerative agriculture and agroecology must reflect clear and integrated landscape approaches, adopt transparent and holistic outcome frameworks, and demonstrate ambition and coordination at the depth, pace and scale required. Opportunities for integrated thinking and action on agroecology and regenerative agriculture at farm, landscape, and national scales are pivotal for meeting myriad national and global goals including for climate, biodiversity, food and nutrition security, and equity.

Action Lab co-organizers: The Rockefeller Foundation, The Agroecology Coalition, The Global Alliance for the Future of Food, Regen10, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Commonland, Funders for Regenerative Agriculture, United Nations Foundation, Boston Consulting Group