



Policy Brief: A Strategy for Transforming Food Systems through Regenerative Landscapes

Galvanizing a Global Regenerative Agriculture Transition in the Context of a Polycrisis

The world's food systems are fundamentally unsustainable. They face the impacts of, and significantly contribute to, the global “polycrisis”—the interconnected challenges of persistent food and water insecurity, accelerating climate change, biodiversity loss, widespread land and ecosystem degradation, and growing income inequality. There is an acute need to transition to regenerative solutions that address these systemic challenges. This means pursuing solutions that go beyond farm fences and food value chains to also protect the bounty and services of our natural world as well as the irreplaceable cultural and natural heritage of farming and Indigenous communities who are intimately entwined with a place.

For this, we must support and sustain community-led landscape partnerships (LPs). These can serve as voluntary platforms for diverse groups to strategize and collaborate to develop regenerative landscapes over the long term. They can grapple with such challenges as managing the tension between local and global food demands; aligning agricultural production with ecosystem management, built and green infrastructure; and securing funding and policies that foster coordinated landscape-wide change. While local governments are critical partners, LPs offer a neutral space to bring together public, private and community sectors to address thorny governance challenges as they emerge. They can forge connections with actors to connect with actors responsible for people, food, and nature outside the landscape and at higher scales. LPs take diverse forms, from informal to highly structured.

Urgent dialogue and action around regenerative landscapes are needed among global, national, and sub-national movers and shakers of the regenerative agriculture and food system transition. This includes leaders in farming, policy, finance, business, civil society, and science. We argue that community-led landscape partnerships are a key solution, and provide insights and recommendations on how food system leaders can become their strong allies in achieving landscape success (see Figure 1). The analysis is based on lessons learned from the partners of 1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People (1000L)—and other partners in Regen10—who cumulatively bring many decades of expertise to this challenge. The work is illustrated by numerous cases showing the rich diversity, impacts, and transformative potential of landscape partnerships as well as the innovative tools, programs, policies, and financial models that contribute to their success.

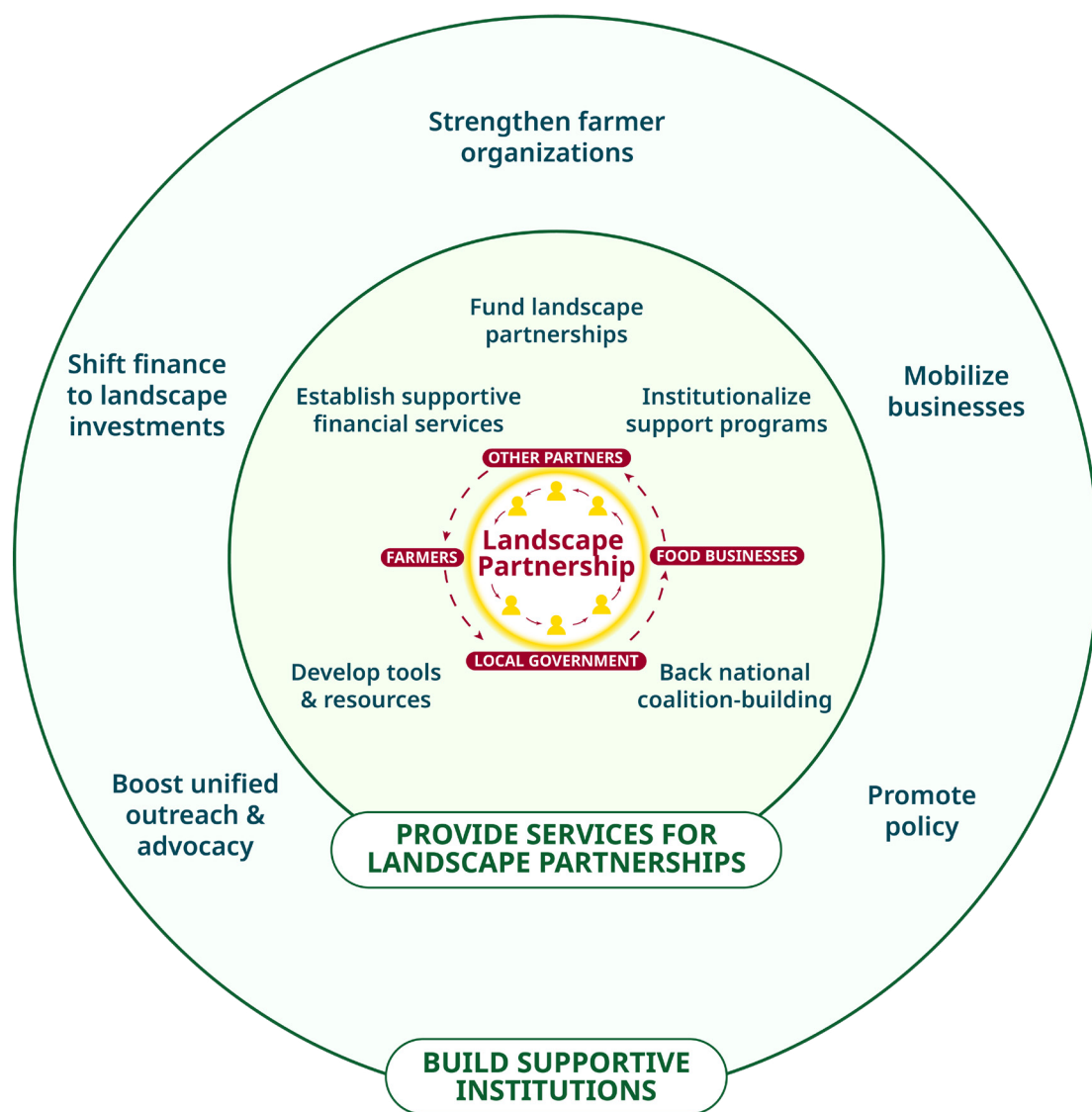


Figure 1.
A strategy for agriculture and food system transformation through regenerative landscapes

Landscape Partnerships: The Foundation of Regenerative Landscapes

Imagine an idealized regenerative landscape: Sustainable, diverse farming systems thrive, producing a mix of crops, livestock, and forest products that regenerate soil, conserve water, and enhance biodiversity. Farmers and communities—supported by green infrastructure such as pollinator pathways, living windbreaks, and restored waterways—collaborate to create a mosaic of productive lands and interconnected ecosystems. Equitable relationships across value chains connect local producers with consumers who value sustainability. There is a shared sense of community, purpose, and love of place.

Their investments in landscape-regenerating projects generate four kinds of returns: inspiration (increased connection to the landscape, motivating stewardship), human well-being (strengthened communities, health, nutrition, food and water security, social resilience), healthy nature (including biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and resilience), and regenerative economies (long-term economic resilience and prosperity of communities and businesses).

LPs have emerged as a way to advance such regenerative landscapes and are now widespread, facilitated by trusted NGOs, local governments, or other interested agents. By bringing together diverse stakeholders from across the landscape, LPs enable coordinated planning and action. They provide spaces for inclusive decision making, open dialogue, negotiation, and the co-creation of solutions that balance environmental and public health with social, cultural, and economic goals. The next section provides an overview of their diverse organizational forms, the functions they provide, and the roles and responsibilities of LP partners.

Overview of the Collaborative Landscape Process

Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) provides a practical, proven framework for guiding LPs toward achieving returns of inspiration, human well-being, healthy nature, and regenerative economics. The five elements are: build a strong landscape partnership; foster a shared understanding of the landscape; forge a long-term holistic vision, transformation strategy with a clear agenda for investment, and short-term action plans; mobilize and secure financing for the action plan; and promote systematic learning and impact assessment for continuous adaptation. The approach, tools, and methods of ILM have been refined over several decades—with a particular focus on addressing agriculture–environment–livelihood interactions. They are adaptable to both diverse contexts and the rhythm of local processes and are responsive to both new learnings and evolving conditions.

Providing Services that Build and Strengthen Regenerative Landscape Partnerships

Most LPs struggle to get the support they need. For them to thrive, food system leaders can play strategic roles through five actions, illustrated in the paper by examples and synthesized learnings.

- 1 Fund strong, long-term, community-led partnerships for agricultural and landscape regeneration capable of realizing their transformative vision.** LPs provide a key social infrastructure for regenerative landscapes, to implement processes such as governance, facilitation, assessments, coordination, and monitoring. Hence the highest priority for support, expressed by both partnerships and financiers, is sustained localized funding of LPs, directly or through multi-landscape funds. We call on philanthropies, governments, and corporate social responsibility programs to mobilize the resources needed.
- 2 Strengthen programs to support regenerative landscape partnerships and facilitate connections with landscape-friendly businesses and other external actors.** Another key element of the social infrastructure is landscape programs organized by national and subnational governments, NGOs, farmer organizations, and businesses to provide technical, market, and other services for landscape partnerships. These can contribute specialized expertise such as in agroecology and market research.
- 3 Promote learning networks to develop and disseminate the tools, learning resources, and software that local leaders seek for landscape food system transformation.** LPs require digital platforms, data systems, and software, as well as learning resources and tools, targeted to their needs. A participatory landscape service and learning network can accelerate access and enrichment. University and other research programs need to mobilize new knowledge that can be adapted to the socio-ecological realities of a specific territory to meet the priority needs of LPs.
- 4 Establish financial services for landscape partnerships to foster and align investment-ready projects and implement coordinated finance strategies.** Develop services that help landscape partnerships create investment-ready projects and align funding streams for long-term success. These include private and nonprofit consultancy services; financial management, farmer and NGO intermediation services; landscape finance accelerator services; fit-for purpose mechanism development; and incubation services for regenerative enterprises and projects.
- 5 Support national coalitions of landscape partnerships to accelerate knowledge-sharing and advocate for policy, financial, and institutional support.** Coordinated efforts among dozens of landscape partnerships can influence national policy and amplify local impact. Regenerative agriculture and food system leaders can support them through seed funding for building coalitions, government endorsement and engagement, and fostering cross-learning among national coalitions.

Mobilizing Key Levers for Landscape Partnerships to Succeed

We encourage leaders in the regenerative agriculture and food system to catalyze five other key actions to leverage a stronger enabling environment for landscape partnerships:

- 6 Strengthen farmer organizations as landscape leaders.** It is essential to empower farmer organizations to co-lead and co-design landscape initiatives. Secondary and tertiary farmer/producer organizations can play leading roles with support from government agriculture, development, and environment departments, NGOs, and philanthropies.
- 7 Mobilize businesses to source agricultural products from, and invest for the long term in, regenerative landscapes.** The agribusiness and food industries must better understand their risk exposure in each landscape and shift their own sourcing and sustainability strategies, learn to collaborate with LPs, develop new business models, and mobilize support from business schools and consultants to invest effectively. Corporate social responsibility programs should spatially identify key sourcing shed and support landscape partnerships there to co-manage systemic risks.
- 8 Shift financial flows to regenerative landscape investment.** The finance system needs to shift towards place-based landscape investment, coordinating sectoral financial flows to invest in locally endorsed landscape project portfolios. Innovations are needed to analyze systemic risks, develop finance infrastructure that links projects with prospective investors, create blended finance mechanisms that catalyze coordinated regenerative agricultural and landscape investment, and add supportive finance regulation.
- 9 Promote public policy and planning that enable LPs to be effective.** Governments can play critical roles by establishing policy frameworks and decentralizing public finance. They must strengthen Indigenous, farmer, and community rights; establish services for LPs and regenerative agriculture; and align land-use planning and design across sector investments. International agreements setting goals and rules around land use should explicitly promote regenerative agriculture and landscapes.
- 10 Promote outreach and advocacy to raise awareness and spark action.** Coordinated outreach campaigns can inspire action both by highlighting the economic, environmental, and social risks and returns of regenerative landscapes and by empowering LPs to tell their own stories. Allies can collaborate for policy advocacy around regenerative agriculture and regenerative landscapes, elevating the voices of smallholder farmers and Indigenous communities in designing landscape programs, funding mechanisms and policies.

A Call to Action

We urge leaders to seize this moment to lead, inspire, and transform. By embracing regenerative landscape strategies, you can accelerate the transformation to regenerative agriculture and agroecology, shaping a future that nourishes people and the planet. Whether you are a leader in policy, business, finance, philanthropy, science or civil society, you can be a strong ally and collaborator with landscape and subnational leaders and become part of this global movement to create sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems that respond to the needs in every landscape.

To read the full Strategy white paper, see: