

Cambodia

Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology

ROAM COUNTRY BRIEF

Forest landscape restoration (FLR) in the northern provinces of Cambodia could contribute significantly to meeting the country's INDC, while promoting the well-being of local communities and protecting biodiversity.

Why FLR

Cambodia is a highly biodiverse country with extensive forest cover and high rates of deforestation. The northern Cambodian provinces of Kampong Thom, Siem Reap and Preah Vihear can contribute significantly to meeting Cambodia's goal of maintaining 60% forest cover by 2030, while also providing income to local communities, securing ecosystem services and protecting biodiversity.

A subnational, multi-stakeholder restoration assessment of the three provinces was coordinated by IUCN, in collaboration with Cambodia's Forestry Administration, Ministry of Environment, and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The following FLR objectives were identified:

- forest cover increase;
- reduce soil erosion;
- increase the availability of non-timber forest products (NTFPs);
- improve local livelihoods through sustainable natural resource management;
- mitigate climate change;
- improve water quality and availability during the dry season;
- expand high-value timber production; and
- increase biodiversity.

For further information, please see: [Application of ROAM in Asia](#)

How to restore the landscape

Opportunity areas for restoration include conservation corridors, riparian buffers, and

QUICK FACTS

- **There are 209,000 ha of opportunity areas for restoration in the provinces of Kampong Thom, Siem Reap and Preah Vihear.**
- **US\$ 5 billion net return over a 40-year period generated by FLR.**
- **FLR provides economic and ecosystem services benefits amounting to US\$ 300 million net returns annually.**
- **FLR is an effective approach to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in the northern provinces.**

registered community-managed forests, fisheries and protected areas.

Restoration options are organised into four groups:

- 1. Forest restoration:** interventions depend on the level of the site's degradation and vary between tree planting and assisted natural regeneration, or only protection. Where resource exploitation is permitted, emphasis is placed on the use of high-value native trees. Other valuable NTFPs, such as resin or honey, should be considered.
- 2. Flooded forest restoration:** high ecological value for fisheries. Management includes tree planting, invasive plants management and fire prevention.
- 3. Riparian vegetation restoration:** maximises native vegetation restoration in 50 to 100-meter buffer zones along streams/rivers to prevent riverbank erosion,

stabilise nutrients in the soils and mitigate agricultural runoff into the water supply. Includes the planting of framework native tree species and the use of bamboo clusters as an alternative income.

- 4. Agricultural land improvement:** apply general principles of conservation agriculture, including use of crop residues, such as mulch for agricultural fields, no-till or reduced-till farming, and crop rotation. Intercropping cassava with peanuts or planting bamboo in unproductive/ barren agricultural lands is a suggested alternative.

For further information, please see: [ROAM in Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear, and Siem Reap, Cambodia](#)

Benefits & opportunities

Cambodia is a country with significant natural resources that can be a source of wealth and prosperity for generations to come. However, critical steps must be taken immediately to ensure the long-term sustainability of these resources. FLR will play a crucial role in this endeavour.

The cost-benefit analysis shows that, except for flooded forest restoration, all restoration interventions are economically justified investments. In terms of net present value, the most profitable are:

- plantation in community forests;
- cassava intercropping with peanuts on agricultural lands;
- cashew plantation on agricultural lands;
- native tree planting without regenerants in community forests; and
- native tree planting using *Acacia* nurse trees in community forests.

FLR recommends land use changes to improve the local livelihoods of communities who manage community forestry areas, community protected areas and community fisheries, as well as improve the sustainability and profitability of lands already under cultivation.

Additionally, FLR can substantially support Cambodia in meeting its international commitments, particularly the Paris

Agreement, Bonn Challenge and Aichi Targets. To meet its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) by 2030, Cambodia will need to restore approximately 1.2 million ha. of forest – if only reforestation is considered. Should a more inclusive landscape approach is adopted, it can help the country to restore not only forests but also productive farmlands, key watersheds and other landscape components to deliver multiple benefits for the community and environment.

Next steps

The next steps should include an open dialogue between national and local governmental authorities, local stakeholders, donor organizations and civil society organisations to identify available investment capital and determine areas of greatest interest.

The national government of Cambodia is urged to support these FLR objectives by considering a national ROAM assessment and subsequently establishing a national restoration target.

Policy recommendations for FLR:

- prioritise the development and approval of management plans emphasising restoration;
- continue to increase the number and professionalisation of protected area rangers;
- implement systematic registration of land titles and expedite resolution of land tenure disputes;
- develop a national payment for ecosystem services scheme;
- outline financing plans for restoration; and
- improve dissemination of forest restoration and agricultural knowledge to farmers.



Resources:
InfoFLR.org
iucn.org/forests



 INFOFLR
by IUCN