

Malawi's national priorities for forest landscape restoration (FLR) are centred on enhancing food security, increasing resilience to climate change and conserving biodiversity.

Why FLR

In Malawi, land degradation creates alarming economic, social and environmental challenges. As 98% of the cultivated land is rainfed, farmers are extremely vulnerable to climate change and shifting weather patterns.

In 2016, Malawi made an ambitious pledge to restore 4.5 million ha under the Bonn Challenge and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR 100). In order to advance its restoration goals, the Government of Malawi launched the National Forest Landscape Restoration Assessment (NFLRA), which resulted in the National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy (NFLRS). The NFLRA and associated strategy highlight the total FLR opportunities to restore degraded and deforested landscapes and address underlying challenges of food insecurity, water shortage, vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters such as drought, floods etc.

For further information:

[National FLR Opportunities Assessment in Malawi](#)

[National FLR Strategy in Malawi](#)

How to restore landscapes

After completing a pilot restoration opportunities assessment study in Malawi's Liwonde Forest Reserve landscape, a multi-sector national task force was organised to guide and support the NFLRA led by Malawi's Department of Forestry. Technical and financial support was provided by the USAID Malawi

QUICK FACTS

- **Malawi has pledged 4.5 million ha to the Bonn Challenge and AFR100.**
- **1.2 million ha are suitable for two or more restoration interventions.**
- **If proposed action will be fully implemented, Malawi will achieve at least 10% tree cover on 50% of cropland by 2020 and 80% of cropland by 2030.**

PERFORM Project, with technical assistance from World Resources Institute (WRI), with financial support by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); and IUCN with the support of [KNOWFOR](#) programme funded by UK aid from the UK Government.

The national task force was supported by three technical working groups to oversee stocktaking and mapping activities, policy and institutional analysis, and economic and financial analysis. The working group on stocktaking and mapping led the process to identify the extent and location of degradation, and develop a list of restoration interventions suited to local circumstances in Malawi. Field visits, stocktaking and community consultations were a central part of the assessment.

The biophysical and socio-economic challenges identified through stakeholder consultations include: declining soil fertility, deforestation, poor water quality/availability, food insecurity, poverty and limited income, among others.

Five key restoration interventions were proposed to address these challenges:

- Agricultural technologies (conservation agriculture, farmer-managed natural regeneration (FMNR), agroforestry);
- Community forests and woodlots;
- Forest management;
- Soil and water conservation; and
- River- and stream-bank restoration.

A multi-criteria analysis was applied to identify areas of functional landscape degradation where FLR interventions could be targeted to support the identified FLR priorities for increased food security, enhanced resilience to climate change and biodiversity conservation.

Benefits and opportunities

Nearly 7.7 million ha have been identified as opportunities for restoration. Of this area, 6.4 million ha (67%) are suitable for one restoration intervention and more than 1.2 million ha (13%) are suitable for two or more restoration interventions.

Recognising women's roles in agriculture and forest management practices through gender-responsive FLR programming can help ensure that both women and men in forest-dependent communities sustainably use and manage the land and that benefits from proposed interventions are shared equitably.

Over a 20-year timeframe, the economic analysis shows that implementing agricultural technologies will generate between MWK 1.5 million and 2.1 million additional benefits per ha compared to conventional maize agriculture. Community forests and woodlots are expected to generate additional benefits of MWK 5.7 million. Activities that safeguard ecosystem services will generate several benefits which compensate for the costs of implementation.

FLR is relevant to achieve a number of cross-sector environmental and development goals included in national strategies and policies. However, consistency across policies and legal frameworks is needed to enable widespread adoption of restoration interventions.

Some of the policy opportunities include:

- Incorporating FLR as a national priority consistently across newly drafted or revised policies and laws.
- Formalising the responsibilities of traditional authorities in district development planning for FLR.

- Supporting multi-agency and cross-sectoral programme design and implementation of landscape restoration approaches (including district development plans and strategies).
- Potential sources of revenue to bring restoration to scale in Malawi and capitalise a national restoration fund include: realigning domestic public funding to focus on restoration activities; national and international private investments and public-private partnerships which provide a return on investment linked to restoration interventions; international funds and sources for restoration financing, such as the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund.

Next steps

Malawi has developed a national strategy to implement options for FLR, setting targets and roles and responsibilities for each of the stakeholders involved.

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Establish a monitoring system to assess progress on FLR implementation.
- Create an enabling environment which fosters widespread adoption of the five gender responsive FLR interventions.
- Integrate gender responsive restoration into district-level development and resource allocation decisions.
- Increase technical support and training, and expand communication and outreach through extension services.
- Ensure that knowledge-sharing programmes are designed for both women and men to reduce barriers to knowledge and promote wide adoption of FLR practices.

Malawi's national strategy has been instrumental to access international climate funding as well as domestic funding for implementation. For example, the Malawi Youth Forest Restoration Programme is a new, ambitious programme entirely funded through Malawi's domestic budget, making the country one of the first to use its tax money to fund FLR.

For more information:

[Her Farm Radio: a platform for women to engage in FLR in Malawi](#)

Resources:

InfoFLR.org

iucn.org/forests



 INFOFLR
by IUCN