Rwanda

Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology

The greatest potential for forest landscape restoration (FLR) is through the use of land-use transitions which provide important livelihood benefits. Agroforestry is a central pillar of Rwanda's FLR initiative.

Why FLR

The degradation, deforestation, soil erosion and loss of biodiversity pose alarming threats to the livelihoods of rural population. The primary challenge is managing existing resources sustainably to meet the needs of the population who depends on natural resources for their livelihoods.

Rwanda's Vision 2020 is a plan to address environmental, social and economic challenges, and its intention to become a middle-income country by 2020.

In 2011, Rwanda made a pledge to the Bonn Challenge to restore 2 million ha of forest and agricultural land and achieve the goals outlined in Vision 2020, such as:

- Restore degraded land to increase forest cover to 30% and provide 100% access to clean water by reducing erosion and improving water filtration through forests;

- Improve the management of existing woodlots and restore forests to reduce pressure on natural forests for fuelwood and improve energy security; and

- Apply agroforestry approaches on existing agricultural land to improve crop production, reduce erosion, increase access to clean water and reduce pressure on natural forests.

QUICK FACTS

- **Rwanda has committed 2 million ha to the Bonn Challenge.**
- **Approximately 100 MtCO$_2$e emissions can be reduced through restoration transitions.**

How to restore landscapes

The Department of Forestry and Nature Conservation in the Rwandan Natural Resource Authority worked in partnership with IUCN, World Resources Institute (WRI) and alongside relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to apply ROAM between 2012 and 2014.

Based on land uses and proposed restoration interventions, the following transitions were identified:

Traditional agriculture
- Agroforestry on steep, flat or gently sloping land

Poorly managed eucalyptus woodlots and plantations
- Improve silviculture and rehabilitation of existing, sub-optimally managed woodlots with spacing and erosion and fire-prevention best practices

Deforested land
- Protect and restore existing natural forests
- Establish or improve protective forests in important and sensitive sites

Benefits and opportunities

Approximately 2.25 million ha of land and freshwater resources in Rwanda could directly benefit from FLR in terms of improved productivity and ecosystem functionality.

Rwanda's Vision 2020 seeks to increase forest cover from 17% to 30% by 2020, which has the potential to reduce approximately 100 $MtCO_2e$ emissions through restoration transitions. FLR offers a climate mitigation opportunity to restore degraded and deforested landscapes with the additional benefit of reducing emissions.

Some opportunities in terms of policies and sources of finance are:

- Agroforestry value-chains attract investors, such as fruits, essential oils, coffee and tea;

- The Clean Development Mechanism and Voluntary markets that offer income opportunities;

- Investment potential in key areas of the rural energy value chain, such as investors in watershed services; and

- Ecotourism and REDD+ as opportunities for the protection and regeneration of national parks and reserves.

In 2016, Rwanda also piloted a FLR project aimed at developing restoration technological models for scaling up agroforestry. Woodlots and protective forest technical packages were developed and their cost-benefit analysis were carried out.

Next steps

The following recommendations are proposed:

- **Improve coordination among government agencies.** Ensure that ministries work together and identify ways to collaborate with the private sector and civil society, including district level engagement.

- **Improve the delivery of technical know-how, advice and high-quality planting stock.** Enhance the capacity of existing seed and nursery assets, clarify the mandate of the Tree Seed Centre, and create positive incentives for long-term capital investment, particularly from the private sector.

- **Encourage the demand for trees as well as products from FLR.** Stimulate the use of native tree species in agricultural landscapes by helping farmers improve their return from restoration activities and increasing awareness of potential benefits.

- **Prioritise and support early application of FLR in selected landscapes.** Identify existing or planned initiatives to test key FLR interventions that simultaneously have the support of and direct benefits for local communities.

- **Identify finance/resourcing options.** Map the full range of opportunities, options, and models for unlocking finance while making the business case for FLR.

- **Enhance community engagement** in restoration through village land-use planning process.

For further information see:
Forest landscape restoration opportunity assessment for Rwanda

A Thousand Hills Turn Green: How Rwanda became a leader in forest landscape

Rwandan forest landscape restoration opportunity assessment: tracing the influence

Rwanda's Green Wall

Resources:
InfoFLR.org
iucn.org/forests

IUCN

INFOFLR
by IUCN