

# 4 Returns

a holistic model to scale up the regeneration of degraded landscapes to heal people, landscapes and business

Approximately one-fourth of the world's  
landscapes are degraded due to human activity

Land Conversion

Urban Infrastructure &  
extractive industries

Overgrazing

Deforestation

Biodiversity Loss

Agricultural Monocultures

Climate Change

Disasters & Fires

Pollution

Source: WRI





Very degraded soil



Degraded soil



Stable soil



**COMMONLAND**  
4 RETURNS FROM LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

Source: WWF/UNEP 2016

# We can alter this trend through massive landscape restoration activities

Loess Plateau in China

1995



2009



Source: John D. Liu

# Potential for Landscape Restoration / Landscape Approach

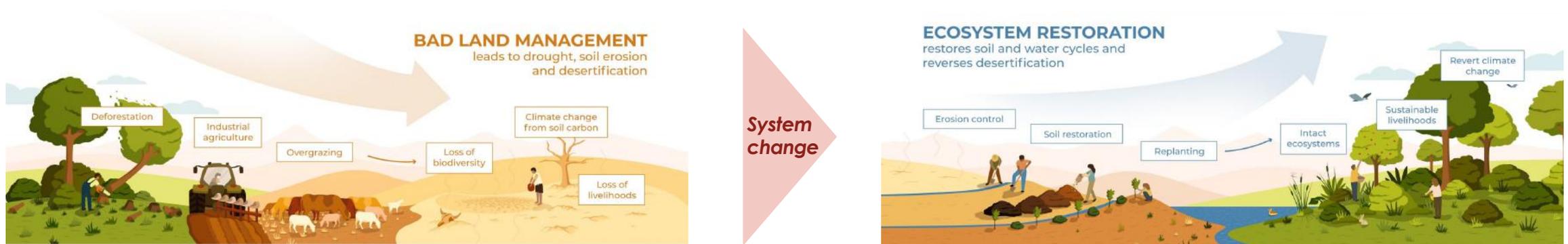
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billion ha

- 2 billion hectares of severely degraded land are suitable for restoration
- 1.5 billion hectares are suited for mosaic landscape restoration, in which forests and trees are combined with other land uses, including agroforestry
- huge opportunities for ecosystems & communities, businesses & societies



# How to capture system change at landscape level?



We first need one **framework**  
to restore global landscapes with business cases



Source: Commonland

**“Restoring our soil is restoring our soul”**

- Farmer from Tamil Nadu, India

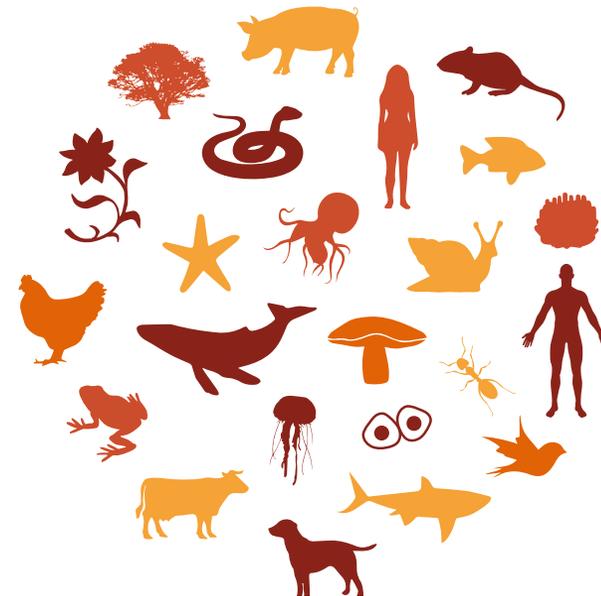


It should be practical, inclusive, holistic and long term

EGO



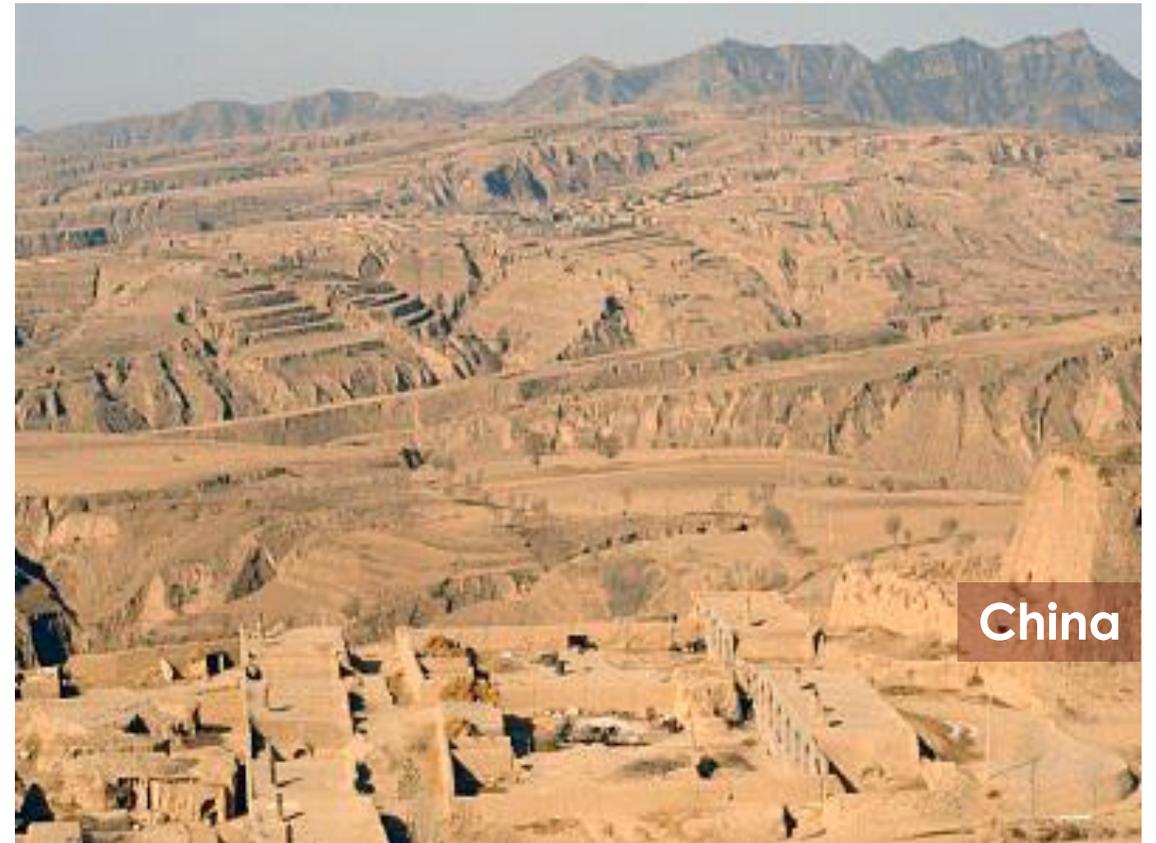
ECO



# Shifting away from: Maximising Returns on Investment per Hectare



Borneo

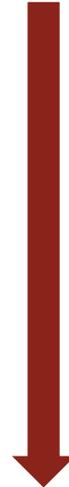


China

# In 2012 we designed a framework that turns 4 Losses into 4 Returns

## Land degradation leads to 4 Losses:

- Loss of purpose or hope
- Loss of employment and security
- Loss in biodiversity, soil & water
- Loss of economic activity



## Land restoration leads to 4 Returns:



Inspiration



Social capital



Natural capital



Financial capital



# These 4 Returns should be delivered by 3 Landscape Zones

**4** returns

**3** zones



**Economic Zone**  
Urban Areas,  
Infrastructure  
Delivering high and  
sustainable economic  
productivity

**Combined Zone**  
Restoring biodiversity, soil  
through regenerative  
agriculture – agroforestry  
delivering sustainable  
landscape productivity,  
carbon

**Natural zone**  
Restoring the ecological foundation  
and biodiversity, wildlife, native  
species, carbon

**3** zones



Time...

We are realists, not idealists

20 years



# A practical Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for Ecosystem Management

**4** returns



**RETURN OF  
INSPIRATION**

Giving people hope and  
a sense of purpose



**RETURN OF  
SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Bringing back jobs, business  
activity, education and security



**RETURN OF  
NATURAL CAPITAL**

Restoring biodiversity,  
soil and water quality



**RETURN OF  
FINANCIAL CAPITAL**

Realizing long-term  
sustainable profit

**3** zones



**20** years

A long-term approach is important as it takes approximately 20 years – or one generation – to restore a landscape

# And build landscape restoration partnerships with a common landscape vision (using Theory U)

**Co-initiating**  
Creating common intent

**Co-sensing**  
Observing and learning

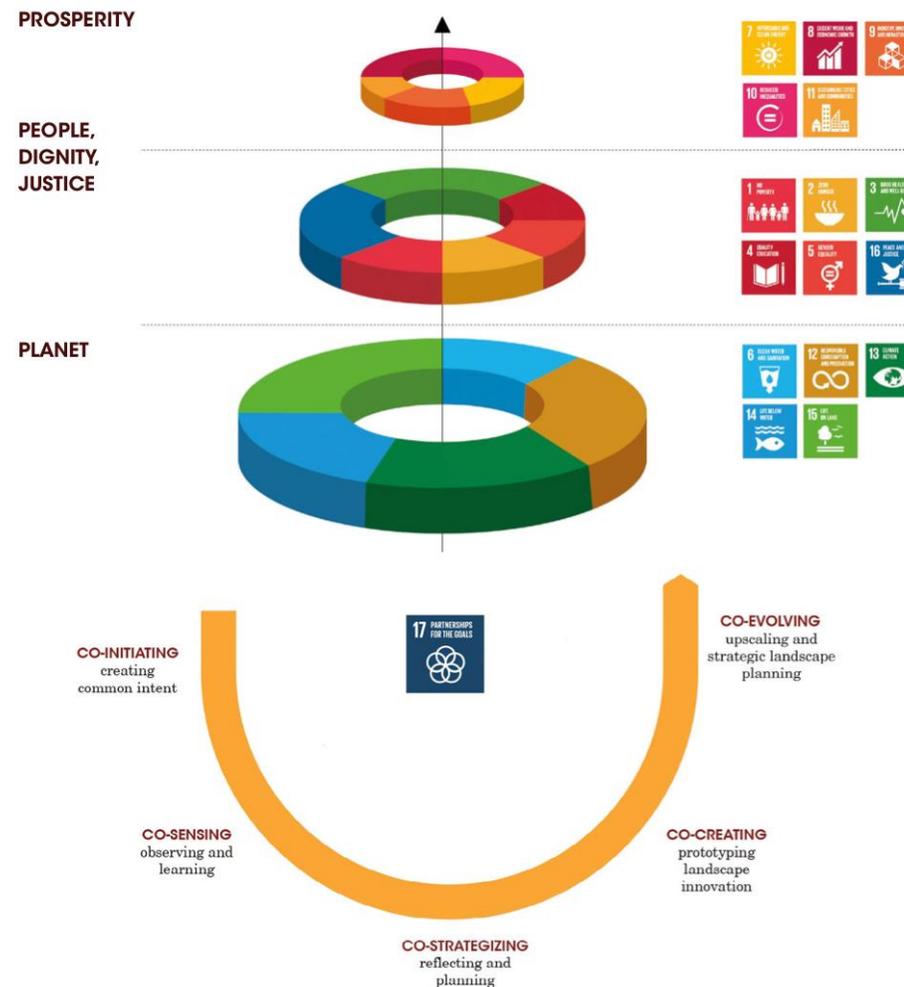


**Co-evolving**  
Upscaling and strategic  
landscape planning

**Co-creating**  
Prototyping landscape  
innovation

**Co-strategizing**  
Reflecting and planning

# Holistic ecosystem restoration addressing almost all Sustainable Development Goals



**Theory U has proven to be an inspiring and practical tool to forge lasting partnerships across multiple global challenges, thus addressing the United Nations Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) and delivering 4 returns.**

(Source: SGDs (UN), 4 returns, 3 zones, 20 years (Willem Ferwerda, RSM - Erasmus University, Commonland), Theory U (Otto Scharmer, Presencing Institute MIT), TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity), Planetary Boundaries (Johan Rockström, Stockholm Resilience Centre), Doughnut Economics (Kate Raworth, Oxford University)).

# In 2013 we started Commonland with the ambition to test 4 returns concept

Discover  
Scout & Select



Year 0

Criteria: eco potential, risks, local leadership, business cases, politics

Vision  
co-create Landscape  
Partnerships



Year 1

Co-creation process with all stakeholders using Theory U

Design  
co-create mapping



Year 2

Create overview effect: use 3 landscape zones and start activities

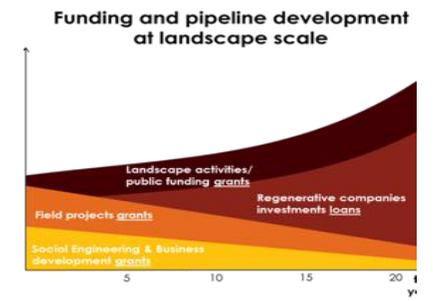
Business Development  
Regenerative Landuses



Year 3

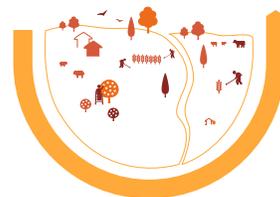
Develop regen ag businesses from pilots to scale

Finance  
- blended -

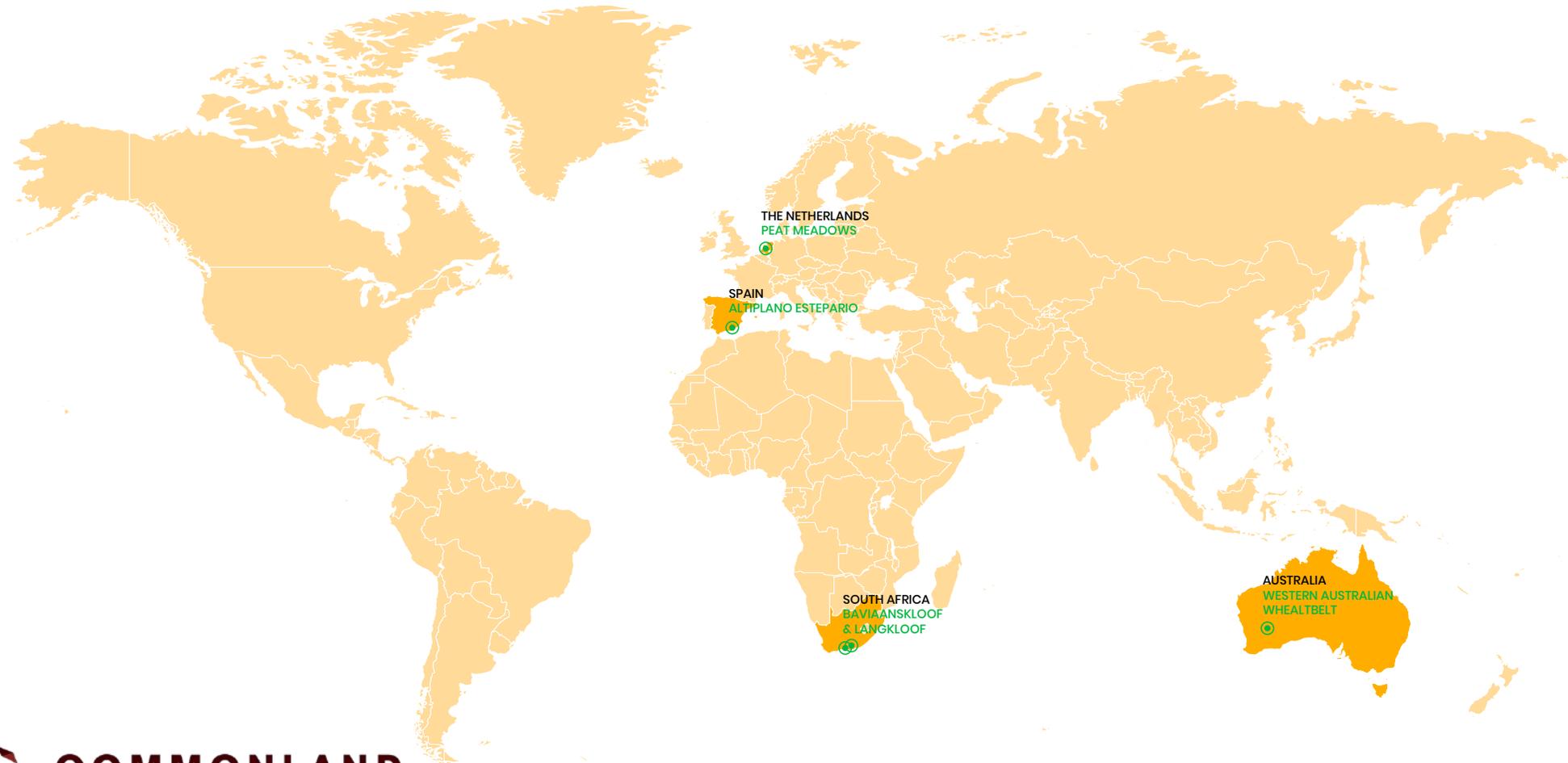


Year 4

Mobilize funds towards landscapes: grants, subsidies, loans, investments



**Since 2013 we have built a proof of concept  
in four large landscapes (100k-500k ha, area size)**



# In four countries we build a proof of concept by testing, finetuning and learning

**ALTIPLANO ESTEPARIO**  
SPAIN, 1M HA



**BAVIAANSKLOOF**  
SOUTH AFRICA, 550K HA



**WHEATBELT**  
AUSTRALIA, 300K HA



**PEAT MEADOWS**  
THE NETHERLANDS, 125K HA



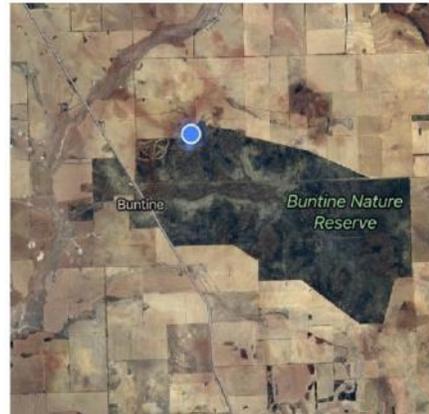
Landscape Partnerships



Regenerative Businesses



# In Western Australia a first public 4 returns company was listed in 2018





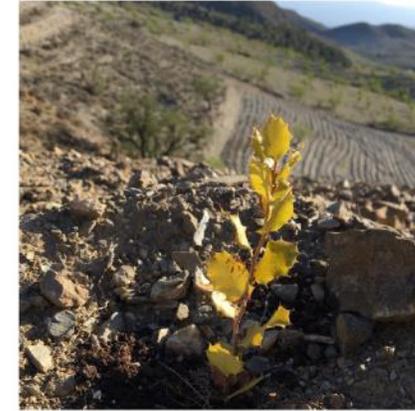
Exemples (before and after) of holistic landscape restoration of the Aboriginal Noongar Enterprise Group, W Australia



Exemples of holistic landscape restoration of the Aboriginal Noongar Enterprise Group, W Australia

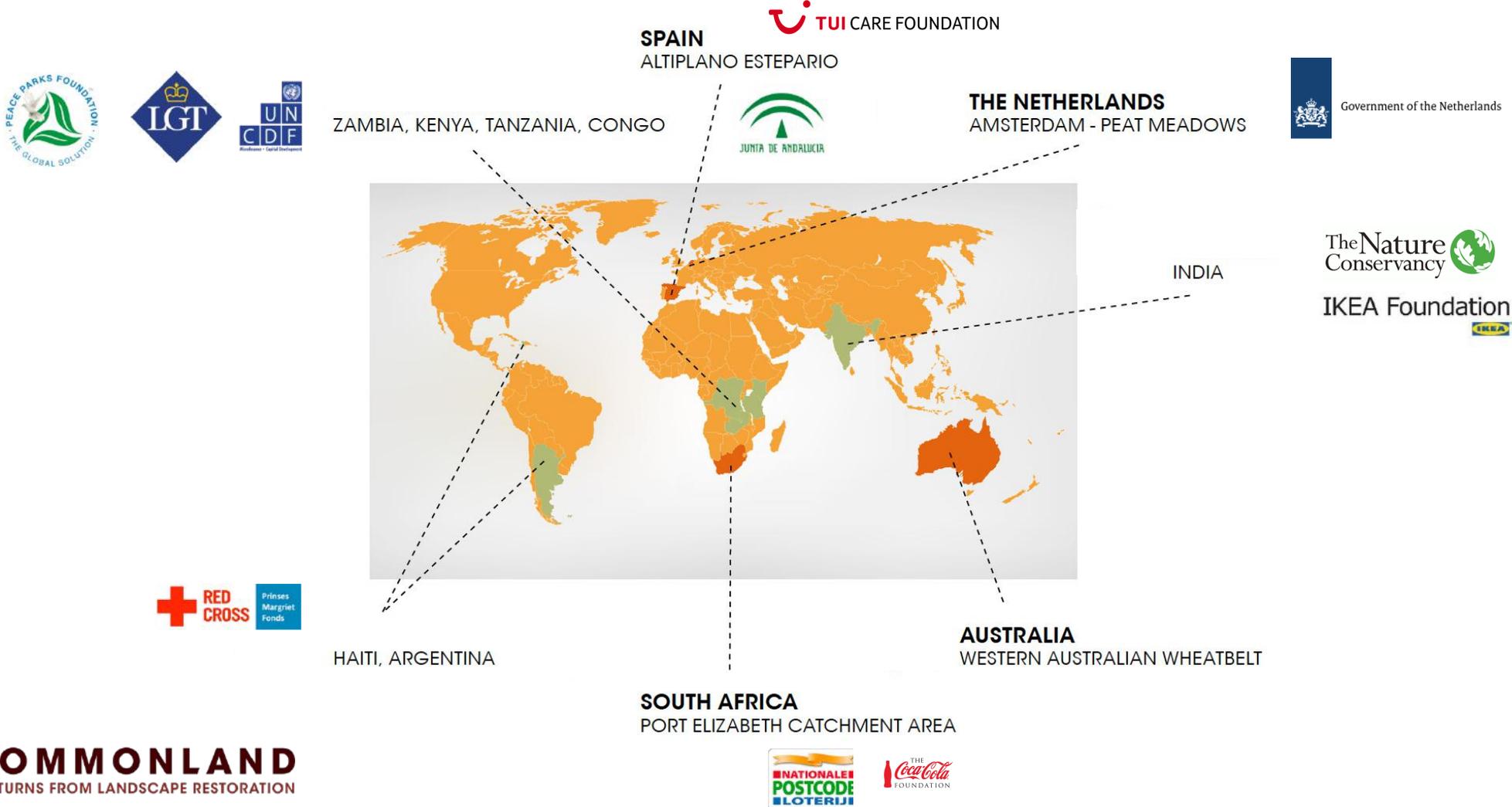


# Spain: developing regenerative investable businesses





# Currently we are building a track record worldwide with others using the 4 returns approach



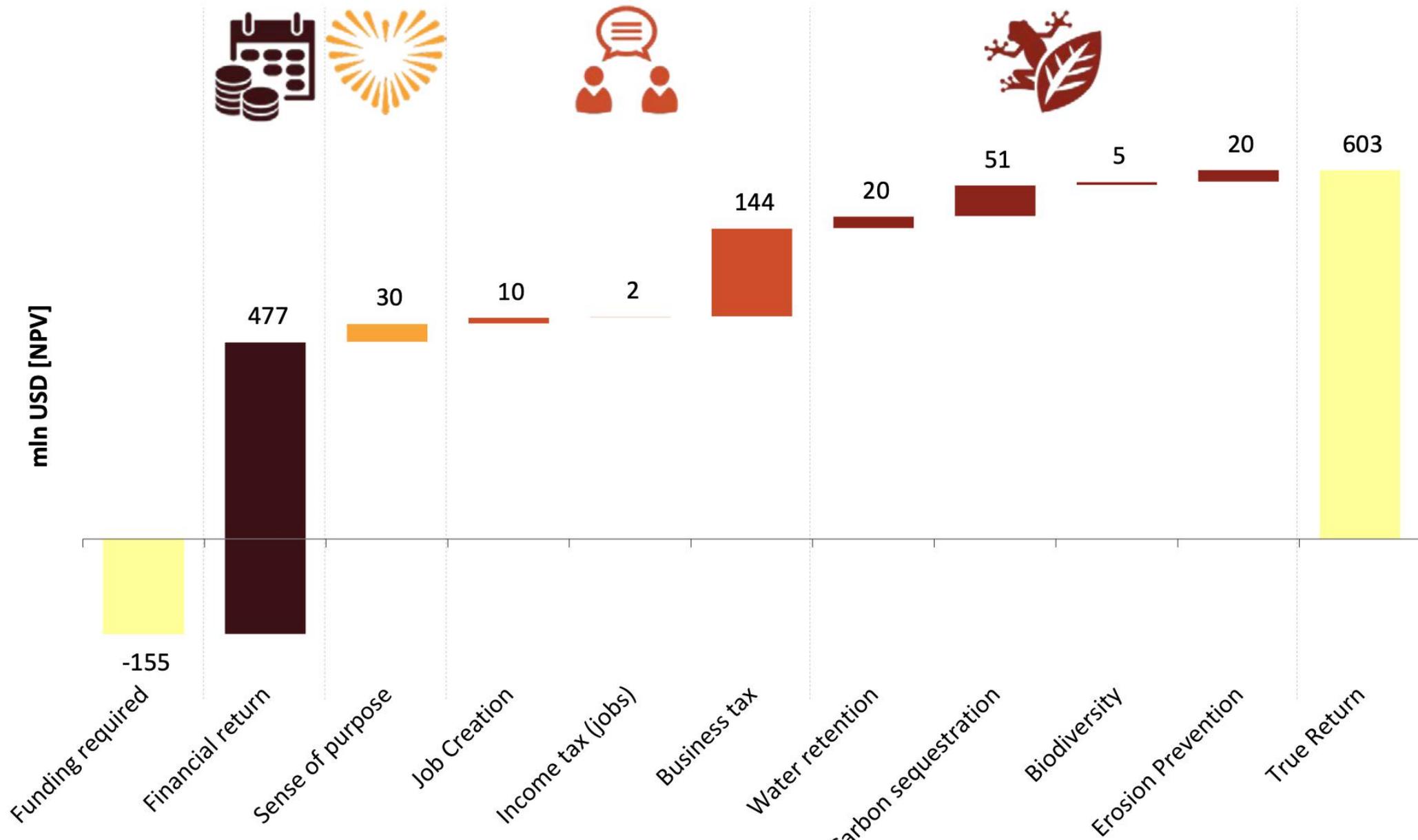
## Nine key impacts converted into either cash flows or risk-reduction are included in the 4 Returns Framework

Return	Impact	Description of impacts
	Financial return	<b>Direct financial returns for all stakeholders</b> , including increased earnings of regenerative farmers and additional local earnings from cluster companies (traders), and tourism.
	Sense of purpose	Inspiration and education activities around landscape restoration give local communities a sense of purpose, <b>lowering future risk</b> .
	Job creation	Newly created companies and regenerative agriculture practices create <b>local jobs</b> and therefore <b>income for the people</b> .
	Income tax (jobs)	<b>Income tax generated</b> through newly created jobs.
	Business tax	<b>Additional local tax</b> arising from more business activities (agriculture and other businesses).
	Water retention	Regenerative agriculture practices in the combined zone and restoration of the natural zone improve <b>water retention</b> and local <b>water availability</b> .
	Carbon sequestration	Regenerative agriculture and natural zone restoration practices result in <b>carbon sequestration, which was valued through a CO<sub>2</sub> market price projection</b>
	Biodiversity	Regenerative agriculture practices and natural zone restoration improve biodiversity, increasing pollination which positively influences <b>agricultural yields</b> for both regenerative farmers and its surrounding farmers.
	Erosion prevention	Regenerative agriculture practices and natural zone restoration prevent land erosion, <b>lowering future risk</b> .

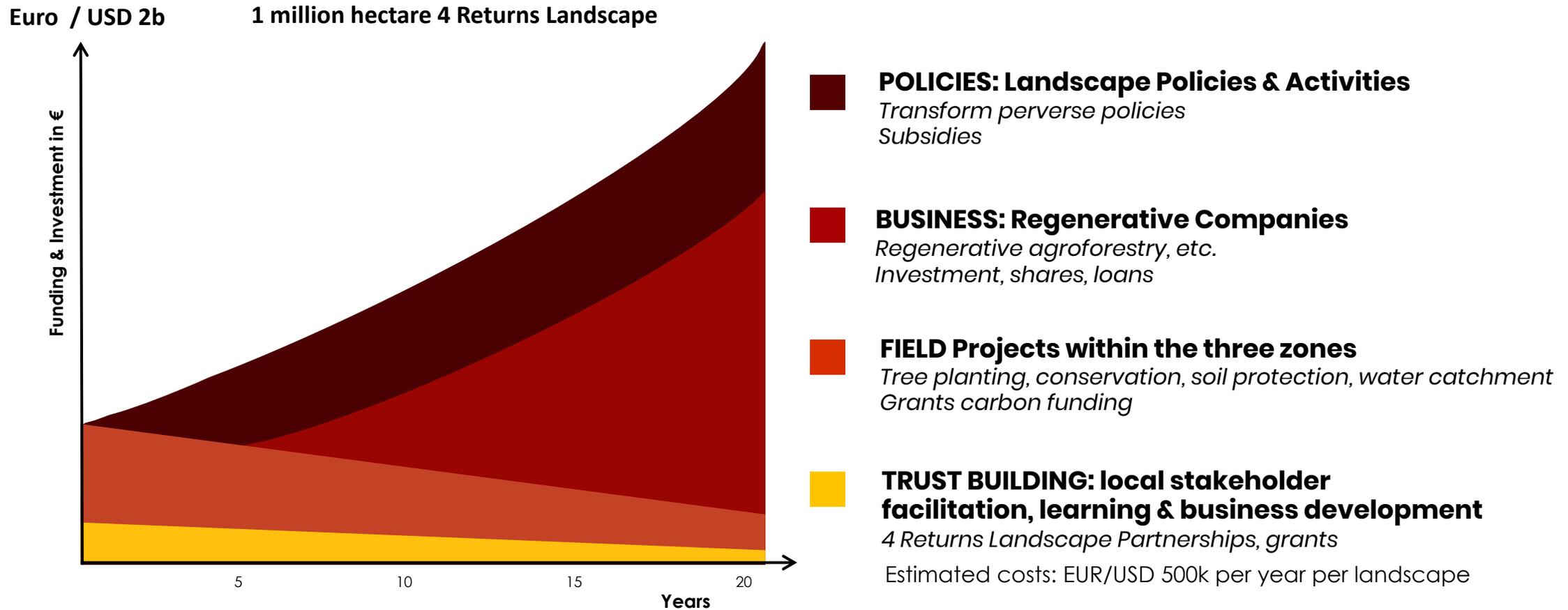
# We work on showing the benefits for other stakeholders/funders

FUNDER	EXAMPLE	BENEFITS						
								
		Stable and long term financial return	De-risking	Increase in tax income	Retention and return of inhabitants	Growth of local economy and job creation	Contribution to SDG's	Restored natural capital
Farmer	Almond farmer	✓	✓		✓			✓
Local communities	Farmer families in the region		✓		✓	✓		✓
Local, regional and national governments	Murcian, Andalusian, Spanish government		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pension funds	APG	✓	✓				✓	✓
Private investors		✓	✓				✓	
Impact investors	Meraki Impact	✓	✓				✓	✓
Foundations	TUI Care Foundation				✓	✓	✓	✓
Insurers	Santam	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Water intense industries	Beverage companies		✓				✓	✓
CO <sub>2</sub> intense industries	Chemical companies		✓				✓	✓

# And make a true value bridge to show the benefits for all funders



# Financial leverage can be done through a blended regional landscape finance governance structure



# Our learnings

- Commonland develops pipeline for carbon, investors and governments with local partners on the ground
- The 4 Returns framework works in all landscapes
- Building a true value bridge gives insights of risks/returns to investors, governments, business and land users
- Using 4 Returns in Regional Financial Governance Structures will catalyze restoration including carbon
- Per landscape the costs to cover facilitation and business development is <1% of total landscape investment. This is max. USD 500k/year per landscape
- Philanthropists are needed as changemakers
- If investors & governments step in based on true risks / returns: landscape restoration will be accelerated

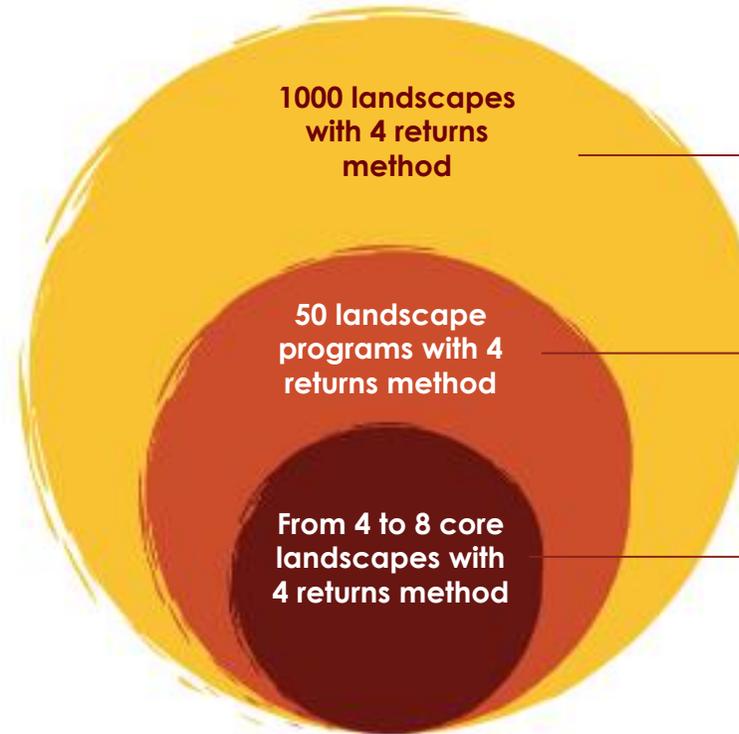
Source: Commonland

# Our 2040 strategy is to make the 4 returns the new normal

## Goal

In partnership with many others we aim to create 100 million hectares of thriving ecosystems and communities.

This is our contribution to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and Sustainable Development Goals



## The role of Common land in three scales:

Commonland as “an enabler” of restoration

Commonland as “a catalyst” of restoration

Commonland as “an initiator” of restoration

## Vision



We see a world where restoring ecosystems has become the new norm and we are re-connected to ourselves, each other and our landscapes.

## Mission



To achieve this, we turn degraded and poor managed landscapes into thriving ecosystems, local economies and communities.

## 2040 Goal



By 2040, Commonland aims to create 100 million hectares of thriving ecosystems and communities

## Focus Areas



### Landscape development & support

Our **international team** of experts gives guidance and supports restoration practitioners with the tools, advice and networks that they need to deliver large scale 4 returns landscape restoration.



### Knowledge exchange & innovation

We provide practitioners and professionals **knowledge, tools, communities, networks and training** through an open access, digital platform enabling them to initiate and sustain their own 4 returns landscape restoration initiative



### Fund mobilization

We mobilize different **funding streams** to allow 4 returns landscape initiatives to grow, implement landscape-level interventions and develop 4 returns business, as well as enabling Commonland teams to drive the restoration economy



### Building influence

By engaging and enabling with experts and practitioners we inspire and **influence businesses, investors and governments** to change funding streams and policies towards a holistic landscape approach that delivers 4 returns

## Strategic aims

## Enabling actions



Inspire and empower talented staff



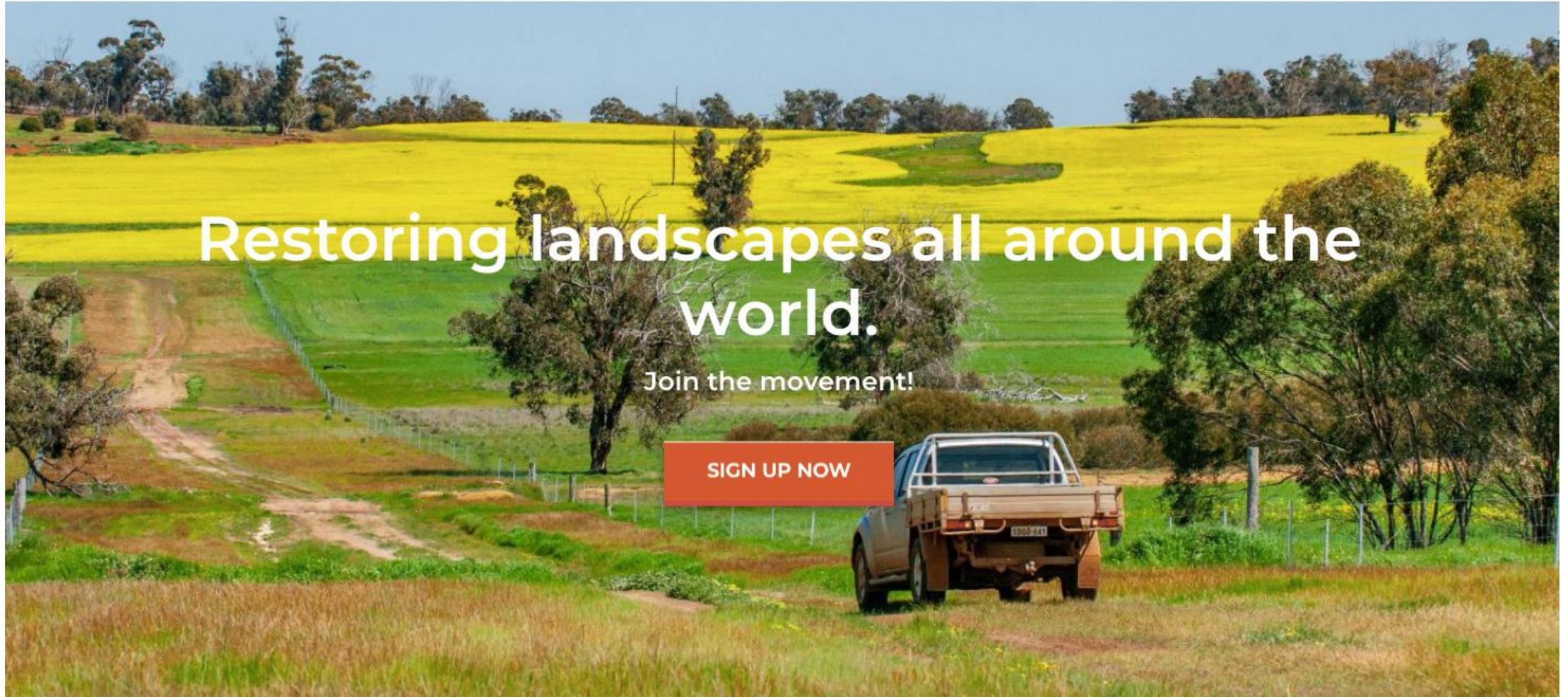
Create purpose-driven partnerships



Restoring soils = restoring souls (social innovation)



Business-driven interventions



# Restoring landscapes all around the world.

Join the movement!

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

# intro

## Vision

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## Mission

To achieve this, we turn degraded and poor managed landscapes into thriving ecosystems, local economies and communities.

## Activities

- Develop 4 Returns: a new PPP model for holistic ecosystem management
- Develop, initiate, catalyze and enable large holistic landscape restoration projects - in partnership with others

## Organisation

- Founded in 2013 by IUCN CEM, business schools and private foundations to develop and implement '4 returns' a holistic landscape restoration model.
- Active in eight countries, ready to scale with partners



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**COMMONLAND**

4 RETURNS FROM LANDSCAPE RESTORATION