

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Consultancy to advance the land health index in Tanzania and Mozambique under the SUSTAIN initiative

1 Summary

In 2024, the SUSTAIN initiative launched a dedicated stream of work to assess and strengthen land health across its priority landscapes, with a focus on how Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can contribute to resilient ecosystems and livelihoods. As a first step, a land health monitoring methodology was developed and piloted through a consultancy that resulted in the selection of 19 indicators – spanning three main pillars: soil, water, and ecosystem resilience – from an initial longlist of 110. These indicators were prioritised using a strength-measure assessing feasibility, scalability, and relevance to the SUSTAIN approach.

Baseline data were collected across the Ihemi and Kilombero landscapes in Tanzania, but gaps remain for several indicators at both the landscape and national levels. Importantly, each indicator is being assessed independently rather than combined into a composite index. This approach preserves data integrity and allows for targeted analysis and action based on the specific land health dimension being measured.

This follow-up consultancy aims to both complete and update baseline assessments in Ihemi and Kilombero, and expand the land health monitoring work to two additional landscapes: Sumbawanga in Tanzania and Vanduzi in Bárue District, Mozambique. The consultant will be responsible for collecting missing data, refining indicator thresholds, and supporting the establishment of landscape-level targets for land health improvements. Their work also encompasses helping to establish a robust evidence base to guide future investment in NbS and ILM. This work reinforces the programme's core assumption: that enhancing land health through integrated landscape management (ILM) and nature-based solutions (NbS) creates the enabling conditions for inclusive growth and increased landscape-level investment in NbS.

2 About IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development, and nature conservation to take place together. Headquartered in Switzerland, IUCN Secretariat comprises around 950 staff in more than 50 countries. Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and some 17,000 experts. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools, and international standards.

3 Programme Background

IUCN's Water and Wetlands Team (WWT) manages a large portfolio of initiatives and projects which, inter alia, look at innovative ways to bring financing of integrated water and land management to on-the-ground stakeholders, whether these are smallholder farmers, local groups engaging in agriculture collectives, water user associations, or groups looking to protect, restore and conserve their local ecosystems. The main objective being that funds get to the right people in a way that allows them to

maximise impact, not only through immediate action, but to build-in sustainability to ensure their actions can be mobilised beyond the funding period.

The Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors in Africa (SUSTAIN-Africa) was an IUCN-led initiative implemented from 2014 to 2020 in the Southern Agriculture Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) and in the Zambezi Valley in Mozambique. SUSTAIN was conceived as a multi-year initiative focused on catalysing climate-resilient development that balances economic growth with ecosystem stewardship and social prosperity. The first phase of SUSTAIN established a solid foundation of partnerships with business, government agencies, local communities, farmer groups, and others in the landscapes to deliver on this vision. Building on these networks and the achievements of the initial phase, IUCN is leading the second phase of SUSTAIN through two complementary programmes, SUSTAIN Pro and SUSTAIN Eco, both underpinned by equity and inclusion and striving to accelerate a shift from business-as-usual to development paradigms that build resilience in economies, people, and nature. These terms of reference relate to SUSTAIN Pro programme.

SUSTAIN Productive Landscapes for Inclusive Growth in Tanzania and Mozambique (SUSTAIN Pro) aims for sustainable food systems and healthy productive landscapes in Mozambique and Tanzania. The programme has been designed as a 10-year initiative with an operational plan for the first four years from 2022 to 2025. The delivery strategy encompasses: (i) upscaling solutions for sustainable agricultural production (Pro Outcome 1); (ii) restoring land health through multi-stakeholder partnerships (Pro Outcome 2); and (iii) investing in sustainable and inclusive value chains to drive systemic change (Pro Outcome 3). The programme will be implemented in the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (Kilombero and Ihemi) and the Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor in Mozambique (Vanduzi and Bárue districts).

SUSTAIN Ecosystem stewardship to balance sustainability and growth in Tanzania (SUSTAIN Eco) a sister programme to SUSTAIN Pro, targets healthy ecosystems and prosperous communities in Tanzania through improved governance and rights, sustainable management practices and by catalysing investment in the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems. The delivery strategy encompasses: (i) coordination strengthened amongst governance structures for sustainable and inclusive management of natural resources (Eco Outcome 1); (ii) integrated landscape management improves ecosystem health and generates inclusive business and livelihood opportunities, especially for women, youth, and vulnerable groups (Eco Outcome 2); and (iii) investment in the protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services strengthens climate resilience for people and ecosystems (Eco Outcome 3). It will be implemented in one landscape that overlaps with SUSTAIN Pro (Kilombero) as well as a separate landscape (Sumbawanga).

Land health is a central pillar of the SUSTAIN initiative, underpinning its goal to build resilient and productive landscapes. It is directly aligned with SUSTAIN's Theory of Change (ToC) second pathway: *Implement and scale up sustainable agriculture and innovative Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to restore land health*. Within this pathway, Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) is applied and NbS are scaled to generate inclusive livelihood opportunities while reversing land degradation. Hence, improved land health monitoring, combined with biodiversity data, is critical to inform decisions around conservation, governance, and natural resource management — and to provide the evidence base needed to accelerate investment in NbS.

3.1 Landscape overview

Ihemi – SUSTAIN Pro, Tanzania

The Ihemi landscape spans six districts including Iringa Municipality, and the District Councils of Iringa, Kilolo, Mufindi, Wanging'ombe, and Njombe, featuring diverse land uses such as agriculture, forestry, urbanization, and industrialization. The region is experiencing a surge in land demand for agricultural

expansion, notably in tree planting for timber and avocado cultivation—known as the “avocado rush.” Soybean, identified as a strategic crop in Ihemi, supports large-scale off-takers like Silverlands, which, along with other aggregators, are developing outgrower schemes that enhance sustainable and inclusive agricultural practices. These schemes capitalize on the benefits of soy for enhancing livelihoods and supporting climate resilience. Additionally, sunflower is also being promoted for its drought resistance and the growing demand in local and regional markets, positioning it as a crop beneficial for economically disadvantaged farmers.

Kilombero – SUSTAIN Pro & Eco, Tanzania

The Kilombero Valley, enclosed by major conservation areas including the Selous Game Reserve and Udzungwa Mountains, is a fertile region known for its agricultural productivity and biodiversity. The landscape supports a range of ecosystems and wildlife, including a significant portion of the world’s Puku antelope population. The Kilombero Valley Floodplain is one of the largest wetlands in Africa and a designated Ramsar Site due to its importance as a freshwater ecosystem. However, Kilombero faces challenges from agricultural expansion and land use changes, leading to habitat degradation and water management issues. Efforts are underway to implement climate-smart agricultural practices (mainly in the Morogoro Region, encompassing the district of Kilosa, the District Council of Mlimba, and Ifakara Town Council), and improve governance and resource management to enhance local and downstream ecosystem health.

Sumbwanga – SUSTAIN Eco, Tanzania

The Sumbawanga landscape, spanning the area between Lakes Rukwa and Tanganyika, is a biodiverse region with an important network of protected areas and wildlife corridors. Its ecological integrity supports the livelihoods of local communities through agriculture, fishing, and tourism. Despite its low population density, recent infrastructure improvements have increased access, leading to pressures on natural resources and potential conflicts over land use. Ongoing initiatives aim to enhance natural resource management and promote systemic change trajectories as well as building trust and understanding among natural resource users and the public sector responsible for resource management (e.g., deliver scalable impacts on social inclusion and green investment in various value chains, including rice, maize, sunflower, and other commodities) in Rukwa and Katavi regions.

Vanduzi and Barué – SUSTAIN Pro, Mozambique

Vanduzi and Barué districts, located within the Beira Corridor, have been selected as primary implementation areas for SUSTAIN Pro due to their high agricultural potential and strategic importance for investment in Mozambique’s agricultural sector. Challenges in these districts include limited use of improved seeds, inadequate coverage of agricultural extension services, and a rapidly growing population. Key crops in the region include maize, which is a staple for most farmers; soy, essential for the poultry industry due to its high protein content and potential for oil production; and horticulture, which offers the highest financial returns but faces significant challenges related to processing and market access. The selection of these districts was reinforced by findings from a baseline assessment and observations made during a field trip, where cooperatives demonstrated these dynamics.

The work falls under Outcome 2 of SUSTAIN Pro and Outcome 3 of SUSTAIN Eco, and is key to tracking landscape improvements, setting future land health targets, and strengthening the case for inclusive, NbS-aligned investments across both countries.

4 Scope of services and expected deliverables:

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this consultancy is to expand the land health monitoring work under the SUSTAIN initiative by updating and filling baseline gaps in the Kilombero and Ihemi landscapes, and by establishing new baselines in the Sumbawanga landscape in Tanzania and Vanduzi and Bárue Districts, Mozambique. This will be done through accomplishing the following objectives:

- Collect and analyse primary and secondary data to complete baseline values for the 19 land health indicators previously defined under the Land Health Monitoring Index (LHMI) methodology in Kilombero and Ihemi and establish new baselines in Sumbawanga, Vanduzi and Bárue.
- Identify clear pipelines to embed land health monitoring indicators and methodologies into national frameworks in Tanzania and Mozambique, particularly in light [of Tanzania's Soil Health Compact](#) and other policy processes.
- Generate a clear evidence base to guide future investment in Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and Nature-based Solutions (NbS), including identifying opportunities for uptake and scaling within national systems and among stakeholders.

Scope of Work

The consultant will undertake the following activities:

1. Primary and secondary data collection: Gather existing data and conduct fieldwork as necessary to collect soil, water, and resilience-related data. Where required, this will include the collection and analysis of physical samples, potentially in collaboration with laboratories.
2. Apply the existing LHMI methodology to analyse the 19 land health indicators across the four target landscapes, ensuring consistency and comparability of results across sites.
3. Identify and document national and sub-national policy frameworks, institutions, and programmes where land health monitoring can be integrated, including linkages to the Soil Health Compact in Tanzania and relevant Mozambican strategies.
4. Where essential, conduct consultations with key government, research, and landscape-level stakeholders to validate findings, identify entry points for institutional alignment, and discuss implications for NbS investment planning.
5. Support the development of one peer-reviewed publication on land health monitoring under the SUSTAIN programme, with the consultant acting as lead author or named co-author.

Methodology

The consultancy will adopt a multidisciplinary, data-driven approach. The methodology is expected to include:

- Desk review of relevant studies, national policies, and datasets.
- Field research, including soil and water sampling in the target landscapes, and on-the-ground data collection aligned with the LHMI indicators.
- Laboratory analysis of samples where required.
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data, using the LHMI framework.
- Targeted consultations with stakeholders, limited to those necessary to validate findings or support national integration of the results.

Expected Deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

1. **Inception Report:** including a detailed methodology, work plan, and timeline (to be submitted within two weeks of contract start).
2. **Complete Dataset and Landscape Report:** a full data set and analytical report on the land health status across all four landscapes (Kilombero, Ihemi, Sumbawanga, Vanduzi- Bárue), including gaps filled and new baselines established.
3. A concise **policy brief** summarising key recommendations for how land health monitoring can be positioned within national policy and institutional frameworks in Tanzania and Mozambique.
4. Development of one **scientific article** based on the land health monitoring work, submitted to a reputable journal, with the consultant named as lead author or co-author, co-drafted with IUCN focal points for this work.
5. **Presentation of Results:** participation in at least one internal SUSTAIN technical meeting or stakeholder workshop to present key findings and discuss the implications for programme implementation.

Deliverables:	Details	Deadline
Inception Report	a detailed report outlining the proposed approach, methodology, work plan, and timeline for the study	within two weeks of contract signing
Interim Report	a progress report providing an overview of preliminary findings, stakeholder engagement activities, and any challenges encountered	halfway through the consultancy period
Complete Dataset and Landscape Report	Full data set and analytical report on land health status in Kilombero, Ihemi, Sumbawanga, and Vanduzi- Bárue landscapes, with indicator-specific analysis.	end of the consultancy period
Peer-reviewed Publication	One scientific article developed and submitted to a relevant journal, with the consultant named as lead author or co-author.	end of the consultancy period
Presentation of Results	Delivery of findings in at least one SUSTAIN internal technical meeting or stakeholder workshop.	end of the consultancy period

Technical Competencies and Experience Requirements:

The consultant or consulting firm should possess the following technical competencies and experience to successfully undertake the study:

- Proven expertise in land health assessment and monitoring, including soil, water, and ecosystem resilience indicators, preferably in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Technical capacity to design and conduct field-based data collection and sample analysis, including familiarity with laboratory protocols, indicator frameworks, and geospatial or environmental monitoring tools.

- Experience aligning field research with national or regional policy frameworks, ideally in Tanzania and/or Mozambique, including contributions to policy integration or institutional reform related to land or soil health.
- Track record of producing peer-reviewed scientific publications and ability to lead or contribute to high-quality research outputs and technical documentation.
- Familiarity with government structures, rural development, and natural resource governance in Tanzania and/or Mozambique will be considered a strong asset.
- Proficiency in English is required. Working knowledge of Kiswahili and/or Portuguese is an advantage.

Timeline

A detailed project timeline with milestones, deadlines, and submission dates is expected with the submission of the proposal and will be agreed in collaboration with the selected consultant(s) conducting the study.

Budget

The budget for the study will be determined and allocated based on the proposal submitted by the consultant(s) and agreed upon by the budget available in the projects.

5 How to apply

Interested consultants, should email Technical and Financial proposal (fees and reimbursable expenses). The proposal is expected to detail the proposed approach, methodology and work plan for the assignment, it should be accompanied by detailed CVs outlining the consultant's academic qualifications, previous relevant experience, contact information as well as links or sample of previous work. The application should be sent electronically by email to ala.al-dwairi@iucn.org no later than Monday, 19th of May 2025, 17:00 hrs CET.

Kindly note that, no promise explicit or implicit is made to any individual/ institutions/ organizations/ firms submitting a proposal to IUCN on making any funds available (including reimbursement of proposal preparation costs).