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For immediate release

## Assessing countries' true land restoration potential now possible, says IUCN

**Gland, Switzerland, 21 March 2014 – The largest land restoration initiative in history gained further momentum today - the International Day of Forests - as IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and WRI (World Resources Institute) provide the world's nations with new guidance on assessing their national restoration potential.**

Published in the form of a handbook, the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) will help countries understand how much of their land offers restoration opportunities, map where those opportunities are and determine which degraded landscapes offer the most value to society.

*"It's time to move from aspiration to action," says Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director-General of IUCN. "We know that there are over two billion hectares of deforested or degraded lands around the world where opportunities for restoration may be found. But before restoration can begin, clear decisions must be made about where the priority landscapes are, what the best mix of restoration interventions will be, and who will bear the costs – and reap the many gains – of long-term restoration and stewardship. The ROAM methodology helps countries answer these questions."*

ROAM, produced by IUCN and WRI, also offers a tangible first step for countries interested in committing to the global 'Bonn Challenge' goal to restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands by 2020. With several countries already having made pledges totaling 20 million hectares, the Bonn Challenge represents the largest restoration movement the world has ever seen.

*"It is possible to restore the world's degraded lands – with a multitude of local-to-global benefits for people and the planet," says Stewart Maginnis, Global Director of Nature Based Solutions, IUCN. "Countries hoping to join the global restoration movement can now apply a new, flexible method that is based on real experience from national assessments undertaken in Ghana, Guatemala, Mexico and Rwanda. The guide we are publishing today is intended as a 'road-test', and we are excited to hear back from countries that will pioneer its implementation, so that we can improve and refine ROAM going forward."*

Restoring landscapes at a national scale delivers multiple benefits to biodiversity and to the economy and helps countries meet global targets in the fight against climate change. With many new Bonn Challenge pledges already in the pipeline, more than a dozen countries are planning restoration opportunity assessments, and are looking to the ROAM methodology to guide them through the process.

The 'road test' edition of the guide to the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM), is published today with the title "Assessing forest landscape restoration opportunities at the national level" by IUCN and WRI. It provides clear guidance for national teams of any size to undertake detailed and rapid opportunity assessments. The step-by-step methodology is designed to produce an assessment process that is locally adaptable, robust and affordable.

Landscape restoration and ROAM will be discussed at the IUCN World Parks Congress taking place in Sydney, Australia from 12 to 19 November 2014.

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Or go to: [www.iucn.org/forest](http://www.iucn.org/forest)

**Notes to Editors****The publication**

“Assessing forest landscape restoration opportunities at the national level – A guide to the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology” is published today by IUCN .

To download a copy, go to: [www.iucn.org/roam](http://www.iucn.org/roam)

**About IUCN**

*IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland. [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)*

**About forest landscape restoration (FLR)**

Forest landscape restoration is the long-term process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested or degraded forest landscapes. It is about “forests” because it involves increasing the number and/or health of trees in an area. It is about “landscapes” because it involves entire watersheds, jurisdictions, or even countries in which many land uses interact. It is about “restoration” because it involves bringing back the biological productivity of an area in order to achieve any number of benefits for people and the planet. It is “long-term” because it typically takes many decades for a forest landscape to recover a full suite of ecological functionalities and benefits to human well-being (Jones and Schmitz, 2009), although benefits such as jobs, income and carbon sequestration begin to flow right away.

**About The Bonn Challenge**

The Bonn Challenge is a global aspiration to restore 150 million hectares of the world’s deforested and degraded lands by 2020. It was launched at a ministerial roundtable in Bonn, Germany, in September 2011. Numerous countries and organizations have made pledges to the Bonn Challenge or are in the process of preparing pledges - to date 20 million hectares of degraded lands have been pledged for restoration, with another 30 million being considered for additional pledges.

The Bonn Challenge is not a new global commitment but rather a practical means of realizing existing international commitments, including:

- The CBD Aichi Target 15,
- The UNFCCC REDD+ goal, and

The Rio+20 land degradation neutral goal.

**About the Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM)**

With the launch of the Bonn Challenge in 2011, leaders from around the world committed to collectively restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands by 2020. Earlier analysis of global restoration opportunity by the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration discovered roughly 2 billion hectares of land ready and suitable for restoration. ROAM represents the next step to support countries to restore the world's degraded and deforested landscapes – a simple, cost-effective, and broadly-participatory method for assessing restoration opportunity at the national and sub-national level.

ROAM is not a spatial planning exercise or specific restoration intervention tool – rather it is a way for interested users to identify the best landscapes for restoration – places where such activity may be the most socially, economically or ecologically feasible – and to estimate the myriad benefits restoration can provide at those sites, from improved livelihoods to cleaner water or conserved soils. In addition to helping users identify the best landscapes for restoration, ROAM will help provide preliminary information on how planners can go about restoration, including analysis of which type of restoration activities would be most suitable and what costs and benefits would be expected.

### **About the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR)**

The Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) is a worldwide network that unites restoration practitioners, policy-makers and supporters from government, international and non-governmental organizations, businesses and individuals with a common cause.

The Partnership works from the grassroots level upward to increase awareness of the many benefits of restoration and share knowledge on best practices for restoration success. The GPFLR mobilizes expert support and increased capacity to implement forest landscape restoration. With the IUCN as its Secretariat, the GPFLR also builds support for restoration with decision-makers at both the local and international level, and influences legal, political and institutional frameworks to support forest landscape restoration.