

A woman wearing a pink headscarf is shown in a forest setting, holding a plant with a thick, brown root. The background is a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a bokeh effect. A dark green horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title and subtitle.

# CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO CHOOSE NATURE

CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL







“

I BELIEVE THAT IF WE WANT TO LIVE A HEALTHY LIFE, WE HAVE TO PROTECT OUR FOREST...WE REALIZED THAT WE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO GROW OUR COFFEE PROPERLY IN THIS REGION. WE USED TO DO IT, USING SLASH AND BURN PRACTICES, BUT IT DIDN'T PRODUCE THE BEST RESULTS. NOW WE HAVE A GOOD COFFEE SEEDLING AND SOME VEGETABLES THAT WE SELL IN OUR OWN COFFEE SHOP THAT WE BUILT WITH SUPPORT FROM THE CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS.

”

**-MARÍA HERNÁNDEZ**

CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS SUBSCRIBER  
IN AGUAS VERDES, PERU



# CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS: ENDURING SOLUTIONS FOR COMMUNITIES AND NATURE

Over half of Earth's land belong to communities, who often manage their lands through traditional and customary systems. These areas account for 25 percent of global carbon stocks and host exceptional cultural and biological diversity—and, 2.5 billion people depend on them for daily survival.

In many parts of the world, however, communities use their land, water and other natural resources in unsustainable ways simply because they have no economic alternative. Protecting biodiversity and ecosystem services in these places requires conservation tools that create development opportunities for local populations.

**When conservation offers concrete benefits to local communities, protecting the environment becomes a fair, viable choice.**

# CONSERVATION STEWARDS PROGRAM

Since 2005, Conservation International's (CI's) Conservation Stewards Program (CSP) and partners have worked with communities and individuals around the world who agree to protect their natural resources, as well as the benefits they provide, in exchange for a tangible stream of incentives from investors. This approach helps to conserve natural resources while improving the quality of life for local communities.

We emphasize creating sustainable livelihood opportunities, strengthening community governance structures, and cultivating effective relationships between communities, government institutions, and other stakeholders in the landscape.

We do this by providing our partners with:

- Technical assistance in project design
- Training on the conservation agreements model
- Direct funding for specific interventions
- Linkages to impact investments and sustainable supply chains for enterprises



# HOW CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS WORK

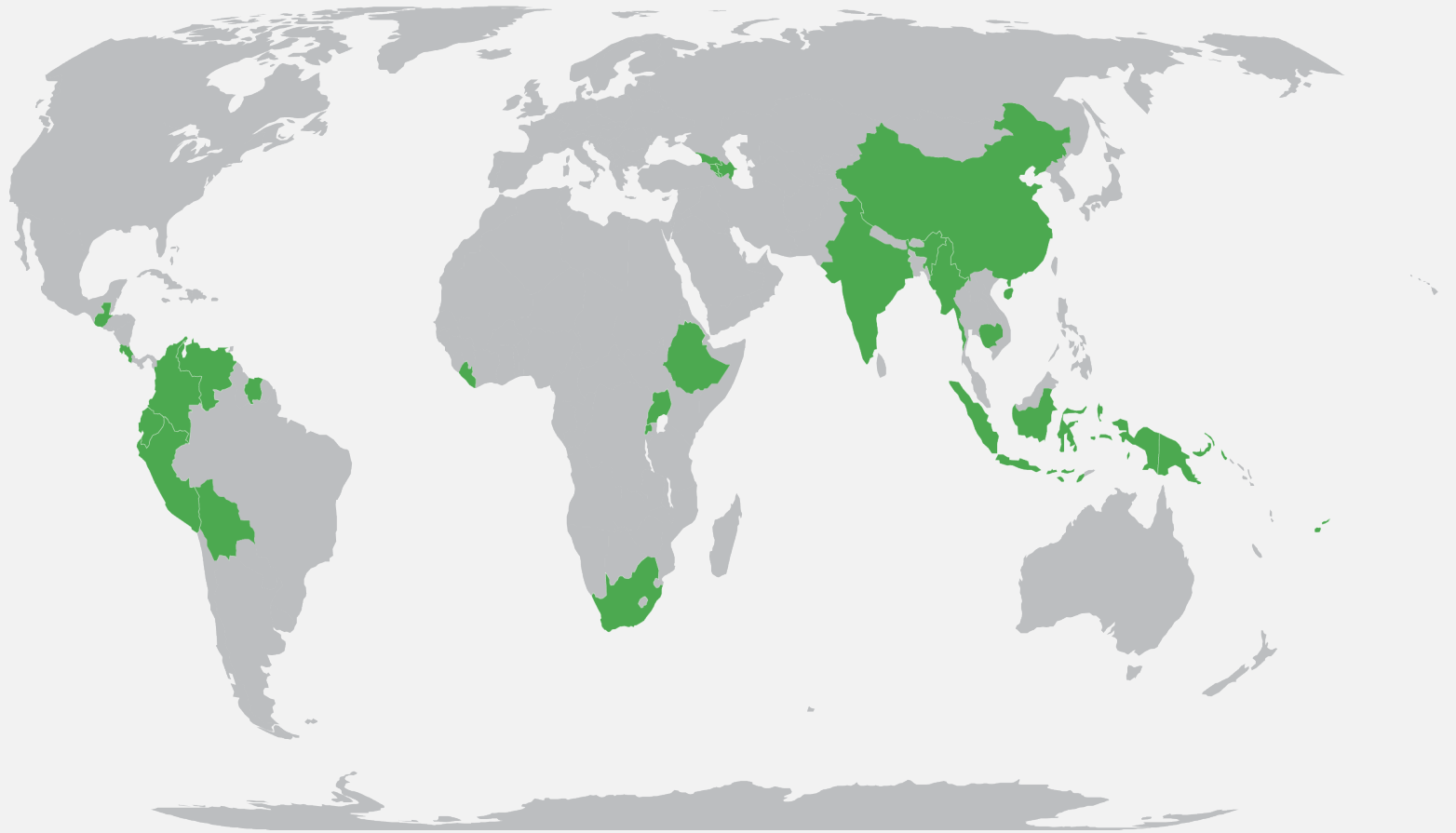
CSP's conservation agreement model offers direct incentives for conservation through a negotiated benefit package in return for conservation actions by communities. Thus, a conservation agreement links conservation funders—governments, bilateral agencies, private sector companies, foundations, individuals, etc.—to the custodians of natural resources.

Incentives typically include investments in sustainable livelihood enterprises and social services like health and education. Incentives can also include wages for locally driven monitoring and patrolling. The size of these benefit packages depends on the cost of changes in resource use, as well as conservation performance. Rigorous monitoring verifies conservation and socioeconomic results and compliance with the negotiated commitments by all parties.





## ACTIVE DEALS



**2.7 MILLION**  
HECTARES PROTECTED



**2,200**  
AGREEMENTS WITH INDIVIDUALS  
AND COMMUNITIES



**78,000**  
DIRECT BENEFICIARIES





**“WHEN YOU VALUE OUR CATTLE...  
THEN WE WILL VALUE YOUR RHINO”**

**—COMMUNITY ELDER IN UTAH VILLAGE,  
NEAR KRUGER NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH AFRICA**



# CREATING A REPLICABLE MODEL

## SOUTH AFRICA

### RESTORING RANGELANDS AND BOLSTERING LIVESTOCK INCOME

*277,000 HECTARES*

*3 LANDSCAPES*

#### THE PROBLEM

One of Earth's most biodiverse ecoregions, the Namaqualand Succulent Karoo hosts about a third of all known succulent plants in the world, half of which are native to the area. During spring, the semi-desert explodes into a phenomenal floral bloom. Livestock production is the most widespread economic activity. However, decades of overstocking communal rangelands with small livestock and ploughing for fodder have led to extensive degradation, negatively affecting both agricultural productivity and ecosystem health.

#### THE AGREEMENT

Communities commit to practice a planned grazing system, control soil erosion and remove invasive plant species. In return, the communities access premium meat auctions organized by Meat Naturally PTY (MNP), a local social enterprise jointly owned by Conservation South Africa and farmers co-operatives. Additionally, farmers access breed improvement support, veterinary care services, and fodder at subsidized rates.

#### THE RESULTS

##### **INCREASED INCOME**

Farmers earned \$1 million through livestock sales in the MNP auctions in 2017-2018.

##### **WETLANDS RECOVERY**

In restored areas, dip well readings after rainfall showed water tables rising to above 50 cm

##### **REPLICATION**

In 2018, Conservation South Africa, MNP and Peace Parks Foundation entered into a partnership to replicate this rangeland restoration model across four transboundary national parks spanning Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia.

A photograph showing two men in a rural, outdoor setting processing coconuts. In the foreground, a man in an orange tank top and blue shorts with red stripes is using a hammer to crack open a coconut. He is wearing sandals. Behind him, another man in a blue tank top is also working. To the right, an older man with grey hair, wearing a light-colored striped shirt and brown pants, is sitting on a blue bucket and using a tool to process coconuts. The ground is covered with coconut husks and shells. The background shows trees and a simple structure.

**“BY WORKING IN  
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE  
LOCAL PEOPLE, THE COMPANY  
CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND ITS  
SUPPLY CHAIN AND IMPROVE  
TRACEABILITY”**

**—OLIVIER FALLET  
HEAD OF PROCUREMENT AT GIVAUDAN**



# CREATING SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS

## VENEZUELA

### PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS LIVELIHOODS

*150,000 HECTARES*

*100 FAMILIES*

#### THE PROBLEM

While a key area for biodiversity, the Caura Forest Reserve faces a range of threats, from illegal mining and timber extraction to agricultural expansion and uncontrolled hunting. For indigenous and creole communities, the harvesting of tonka beans—a prized ingredient in fragrances and flavors—has been a traditional income-generating activity for generations.

#### THE AGREEMENT

CSP brokered a relationship between the communities, a local NGO, and Givaudan, a leading fragrance and flavor company and a major user of tonka beans, to conserve the forest (through activities like a community patrolling system) while also ensuring a sustainable supply of tonka beans and other non-timber forest products like copaiba oil.

#### THE RESULTS

##### **RELIABLE INCOME**

A storage facility helps the farmers survive weaker harvest years

##### **BIODIVERSITY PROTECTED**

Key species benefiting from better forest management include the American tapir, jaguar and spectacled caiman

##### **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

Thanks to capacity-building workshops, community members are now taking over leadership of the administration and technical aspects of the agreements, including their livelihoods, having a stronger hand in their future



**“WITH STABLE INCOME FROM HARVESTING  
HONEY, SOME LOCAL VILLAGERS NO LONGER  
NEED TO RESORT TO HUNTING OR INTENSIVE  
EXCAVATION OF MOUNTAIN HERBS”**

**—GUANBA COMMUNITY LEADER**





# ADOPTING AGREEMENTS THROUGH POLICY

## CHINA

### FROM ILLEGAL LOGGING TO DIVERSE LIVELIHOODS

*600,000 HECTARES*

*10,000 VILLAGERS*

#### THE PROBLEM

Deprived of their main source of income after a logging ban went into effect, timber-dependent residents of Guanba valley turned to illegal hunting, logging and harvesting products from the forest, often at the expense of giant panda habitat.

#### THE AGREEMENT

Local NGO Shanshui Nature Conservation Center is using conservation agreements with villagers to develop less destructive livelihoods, including beekeeping and fish rearing, to take pressure off the valley's ecosystem. They also formed a patrol team to combat illegal poaching and logging.

#### THE RESULTS

##### INCREASED INCOME

\$100,000 of honey sold each year, 2015-2017

##### REVIVED FISH POPULATION

Size grew from 6cm in 2014 to 15cm in 2017

##### GOVERNMENT ADOPTION

Shanshui and partners have replicated the model in multiple landscapes and in neighboring Myanmar. A national nature reserve used the model to invest money from the central government's Eco-compensation funds in communities who agreed to protect the forest—demonstrating the model's use in protected areas management

# LEVERAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FINANCE CONSERVATION

In many places, conservation agreements are an impactful tool that support communities sustainably increase their agricultural productivity as well as their enterprise governance capacity. The communities become dependable business partners for the private sector, thus de-risking their investments.

[In fact, half of CSP's project portfolio includes partnering with community enterprise and the private sector to develop sustainable supply chains and improve local economic development.](#)

Given the popularity of the conservation agreements model with private-sector partners, Conservation International launched the Conservation Agreements Private Partnership Platform (CAPPP) in 2015 to catalyze private-sector support for biodiversity conservation and maintenance of ecosystem services in globally important sites. With support from the GEF Earth Fund, and in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme as implementing agency, the CAPPP [forges mutually beneficial links between the private sector and local communities or](#)

[landowners who commit to achieve biodiversity conservation, reduce land degradation, support climate regulation efforts and promote sustainable natural resource management.](#)

As of April 2019, the CAPPP includes 17 conservation agreements, each with unique environmental and socioeconomic objectives and metrics. Results to date include:

- Nearly 10,000 square kilometers (3,800 square miles) of areas important for nature under improved management across the portfolio
- 30,000 people directly benefitting through conservation agreements
- Improved water production and improved management of 14,000 hectares (35,000 acres) of key watersheds in Bolivia, benefiting 264 families
- Protection of important mangrove forests and key species by communities on Colombia's Pacific coast



A close-up portrait of a smiling man with dark skin, wearing a red plaid shuka (a traditional Maasai garment). He is looking slightly to the left. The background is a blurred natural landscape under a clear blue sky.

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# LEARN MORE

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