

Annual Report

2025

“This annual report reflects a year of strategic refinement—building on what we achieved, learning from our external evaluation, and setting a clear plan for our next phase, while staying fully operational. I am grateful to the partners and colleagues who made this progress possible.”

—Prof. Dr. Peter Messerli, Director

Cover photo: Delien, a farmer in Fizonon, Mahalevona Valley, northeastern Madagascar, preparing his rice field using a locally adapted plow that helped double his harvest.
Photo: Laby Patrick

2025 **Annual Report**

Wyss Academy for Nature
at the University of Bern

Contents

Letter to our stakeholders

What we accomplished in 2025. And where we are going. – 1

A quick overview of 2025

Weaving a tapestry of evidence and practice – 3

Solutionscape approach explained – 5

Our Solutionscapes: How did they develop in 2025? – 6

Kenya Enabling the coexistence of pastoralism and wildlife in semi-arid rangelands in an insecure climate – 9

Kenya Protecting water, wetlands, and commons under competing claims – 19

Madagascar Environmental justice in Masoala – 27

Laos Ensuring forest stewardship and restoration at cash crop frontiers – 37

Peru Resilient forested landscapes, promoting high-value multifunctionality – 47

Switzerland Development of the Grosses Moos – 57

Other Hub Bern projects: Spotlight on forests and wood – 65

Forest fire management on the northern side of the Alps – 66

Developing regional forest and wood value chains – 69

Key Highlights – 72

Our publications – 82

Facts and figures – 86

About us – 94

Letter to our stakeholders

What we accomplished in 2025. And where we are going.

Dear Reader,

In 2025, the Wyss Academy entered a period of strategic refinement—building on the achievements of its first five years, taking forward lessons from the previous year’s evaluation, and preparing the next phase through focused planning—while continuing its daily work at full speed.

Across diverse landscapes, we pursued a common approach to driving change. We worked with partners to implement and test practical actions on the ground, governed and scaled by coalitions of influential actors and guided by scientific evidence. This interplay between research, policy and practice lies at the heart of our approach: catalyzing systemic solutions to nature–people challenges and enabling added value beyond individual projects.

In Kenya, for example, the Wyss Academy supported the restoration of degraded semi-arid landscapes. By combining a well-established technique—semicircular bunds—with governance mechanisms and revenue generation, we enabled rapid scaling from a few thousand bunds to 170,000 by the end of the year. The broader value of the work, however, lay in the Wyss Academy’s catalytic role: bringing together youth and women’s groups restoring soils, scientists and monitoring experts guiding implementation, elders defining governance structures, and private sector actors supporting value creation. This collaboration proved so energizing that local women’s groups invested more than 90 women-years of labor within just a few months—a powerful sign of confidence, hope, and determination to drive change.



Insights from our Director

Prof. Dr. Peter Messerli

Watch on  YouTube



In Peru, the Wyss Academy, together with academic partners, public institutions, and the private sector, is advancing an agroforestry incubator that brings diverse knowledge systems together to establish diversified agroforestry plots. This initiative demonstrates that ecological integrity and improved rural livelihoods are not competing objectives but mutually reinforcing outcomes. To monitor biodiversity recovery, we are installing camera traps and AudioMoths in newly created agroforestry plots, in mature systems, and in comparable control sites. These tools generate solid evidence that well-designed diversified agroforestry can replicate key features of natural forest structure, creating vital habitat for mammals, birds, and other native species. Beyond its environmental benefits, the initiative produces high-quality data that substantiates the socio-economic viability of regenerative agriculture. These insights are already informing discussions on evidence-based public policy and regional land use planning. Ultimately, the incubator provides a clear pathway for sustainable investment that strengthens long-term ecological resilience and supports prosperous rural communities.

These are just two examples among several achievements across our Solutionscapes, our “real-world labs” in Bern, Kenya, Madagascar, Peru, and Laos, spanning a total of 60 projects. The Annual Report 2025 shares stories from around the world that illustrate how we advance our mission: combining concrete action and governance through Coalitions for Change, and science-based guidance.

The reporting year was also shaped by strategic planning for the period 2026 to 2030. Our vision remains highly relevant: we strive for a world in which the relationship between people and nature is both just and mutually beneficial. To realize this vision, we have further refined our goals for the coming years. We remain determined to catalyze systemic solutions to nature–people challenges in our six Solutionscapes and amplify their impact across landscapes, regions, and scales. We are also committed to sustaining our work beyond

2030 and securing the long-term future of the Wyss Academy. To support these ambitions, we have made targeted adjustments to our organizational structure by better aligning roles and resources with our priorities for the coming phase.

The Wyss Academy is well prepared and highly motivated for the next year, which marks the start of another 5-year strategic phase. A heartfelt thank you goes to our staff for their extraordinary commitment and excellent work, and to our donors and partners for their collaboration, support, and trust.

Prof. Dr. Christian Leumann
Chairman of the Board

Prof. Dr. Peter Messerli
Director

A quick overview of 2025

Weaving a tapestry of evidence and practice

The early years of the Wyss Academy were about setting up the conditions to learn fast in real places—building teams, partnerships, and developing solutions that bring science and practice together.

In 2025, the work shifted from adding more threads to strengthening the weave. It has shown us that change rarely comes from a single project or a single discipline. Instead, it comes from the fabric created when evidence is credible, institutions are engaged, and communities shape decisions that affect land use, livelihoods, and well-being.

In practice, that meant clearer shared priorities, stronger monitoring and learning, and more deliberate pathways for uptake—so grounded insights can travel beyond one landscape and stay useful as conditions change.

Solutionscapes

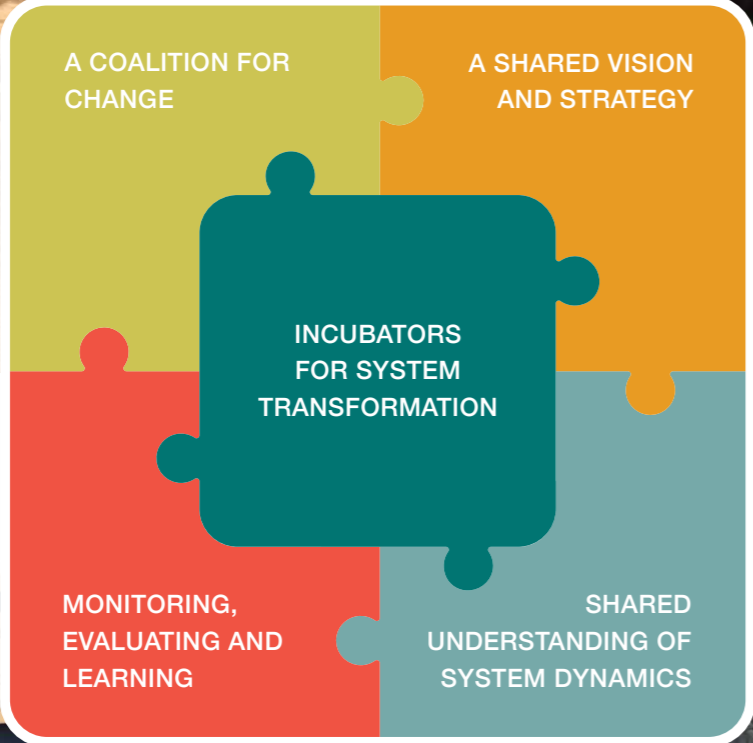
6

Active projects

60

Publications

59



Solutionscape approach explained

The Wyss Academy’s unique approach—known as the Solutionscape approach—is designed to tackle complex challenges that affect both people and nature, such as environmental degradation and competition for resources between wildlife and local communities. By focusing on local priorities and maintaining a global perspective, the approach brings together Indigenous Peoples, local communities, governments, scientists, and businesses to co-create and test real-world solutions. Discover the five key elements that make this approach effective.



Our unique approach explained

Watch on YouTube





Our Solutionscapes

How did they develop in 2025?



Kenya

Enabling the coexistence of pastoralism and wildlife in semiarid rangelands in an insecure climate

The Solutionscape “Enabling the coexistence of pastoralism and wildlife in semiarid rangelands in an insecure climate” focuses on Northern Kenya, a semiarid region increasingly affected by prolonged droughts.

Satellite image of the dry landscape in Naibunga, Kenya, illustrating the increasing challenges posed by climate change and recurring droughts on livelihoods and the ecosystem. Effective adaptation and resilience strategies are crucial to sustaining this vulnerable region.

Imagery credits: Planet Labs PBC (2024)

In this dryland area—unsuitable for agriculture—changing rainfall patterns affect water storage, and excessive grazing has severely degraded vegetation. Wildlife, including elephants, is directly impacted by the loss of vegetation and lack of water, as the area forms a crucial corridor between the lowlands and the highlands of Laikipia. Local communities face the challenges of water scarcity, and pastoralists struggle with shrinking grazing land. These pressures result from expanding human footprints coupled with fenced-off private conservancies, making it increasingly difficult to sustain livelihoods. Efforts to restore the landscape also encounter significant barriers. As vegetation recovers, incentives increase for pastoralists to enlarge their livestock herds, which further depletes resources and causes soil degradation, fueling a vicious cycle. Intensified competition for land and water

has increased tensions between different groups, and human–wildlife conflicts are also on the rise.

Within this Solutionscape, the Wyss Academy collaborates with seven community conservancies and a range of civil society, government, and private sector organizations. Together, the projects address land degradation, habitat and livestock connectivity, and the livelihood pressures facing local communities. They do so by integrating both traditional and scientific knowledge. Current efforts focus on developing alternative income opportunities beyond livestock to reduce pressure on ecosystems and increase community resilience. At the same time, taking a multilevel approach, the Wyss Academy is engaging local communities, town and county governments, and key national agencies to secure vital wildlife migration corridors essential for long-term species survival. The work also generates evidence to inform policies that recognize pastoralist livelihoods and wildlife needs as part of the same landscape.

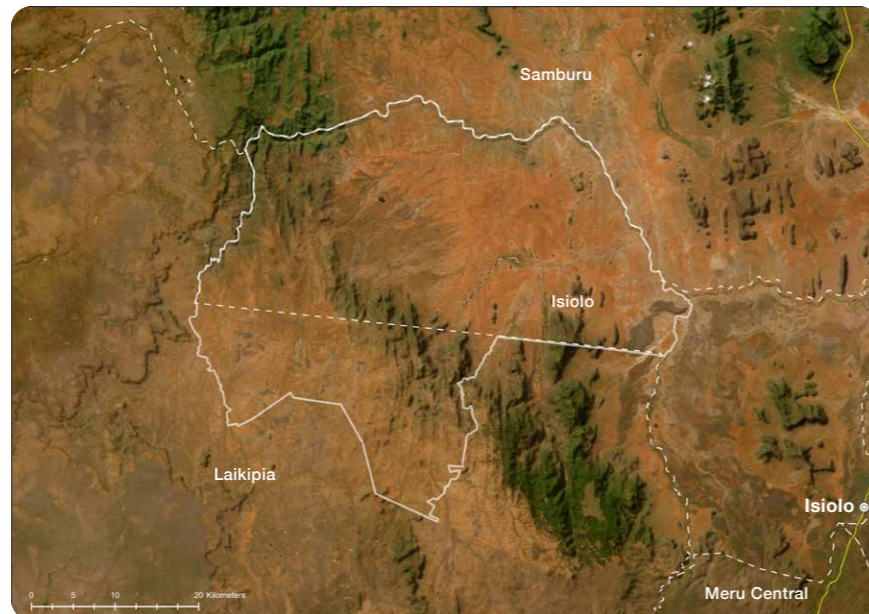
Where we work

- Office: Nanyuki
- Office: Maroantsetra



Our Solutionscape

- Solutionscape boundaries
- County boundaries
- Major roads
- Towns



Key Facts

conservancies stream data for coordinated restoration and grazing plans

22

women engaged in beekeeping, mushrooms, and aloe vera livelihoods

3,529

key wildlife and livestock corridors identified and demarcated

3



The team, including Marcel Wälti Rettenmund (center), during field work at a semicircular bund restoration site in northern Kenya.
Photo: Fiona Stappmanns

2025

In 2025, we enhanced our partnerships and strengthened the Coalition for Change across the landscape. Work focused on rangeland quality, landscape connectivity, nature-positive livelihoods, and the stewardship and governance of rangeland resources.

We continued embedding research and evidence in our interventions, demonstrated by the **National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)** certification of the Wyss Academy Hub Kenya as official Kenyan research institution (one of total 46 in Kenya) and by strides in securing the Oldonyiro wildlife corridor, reflected in the Oldonyiro town plan. None of this would have been possible without research and authentic multi-level partnerships.

We strengthened rangeland restoration by increasing semicircular bunds from 35,529 across 108 ha in 2023 to 176,847 bunds covering 1,064 ha. Additionally, 98.4 ha of land was cleared of *Opuntia stricta* (large cactus), expanding grazing areas for wildlife and livestock.

In parallel, we also strengthened monitoring, evaluation, and learning of land restoration activities, while acknowledging that governance around restoration should take priority in the coming years. By the end of 2025, our collective efforts had laid the groundwork for scaling workable solutions for the coexistence of pastoralism and wildlife in 2026 and beyond.

“Together with our partners and Coalitions for Change, and guided by a shared vision, we are restoring degraded rangelands through evidence-based actions while strengthening their governance and long-term stewardship for the benefit of communities and nature. Leveraging our land restoration efforts, we partnered with the private sector to develop value chains of nature-based products that improve livelihoods. We are now ready to grow, spread and scale the proven approaches and success across Kenya and beyond.”
Benson Okita-Ouma, Director, Hub East Africa.



Community members construct a corridor pillar in Oldonyiro as part of joint site verification—translating mapped natural assets into visible markers that support implementation, monitoring, and the path toward gazettement. Photo: Benjamin Loloju



A completed livestock–wildlife corridor marker in Oldonyiro, northern Kenya—one of three community-verified routes now included in the Oldonyiro town 2024–2034 land use plan, strengthening habitat connectivity through county planning and governance. Photo: Benjamin Loloju

Main achievements in 2025

Corridors in focus: community-verified routes enter Oldonyiro’s land use plan

In northern Kenya’s drylands, wildlife and livestock often move along the same routes—but those routes are rarely protected by planning decisions. Legal recognition at the county level is what turns an informal pathway into something that can be managed and defended. To build on that basis, a mapping exercise identified 5,626 critical natural assets such as migratory corridors, water ponds, rock catchments, salt licks, across Laikipia, Samburu, and Isiolo counties. By mobilizing a Coalition for Change across county planners, national agencies, conservancies, and communities, the work advanced to a catalytic, evidence-driven process, now in its final stages of securing three key wildlife–livestock corridors in Oldonyiro town. Through joint verification with local communities, site assessments, and inclusive planning, the corridors were integrated into the Oldonyiro town 2024–2034 land use plan. The plan now awaits gazettement, placing these corridors on a clear path to legal protection and safer people-wildlife coexistence.

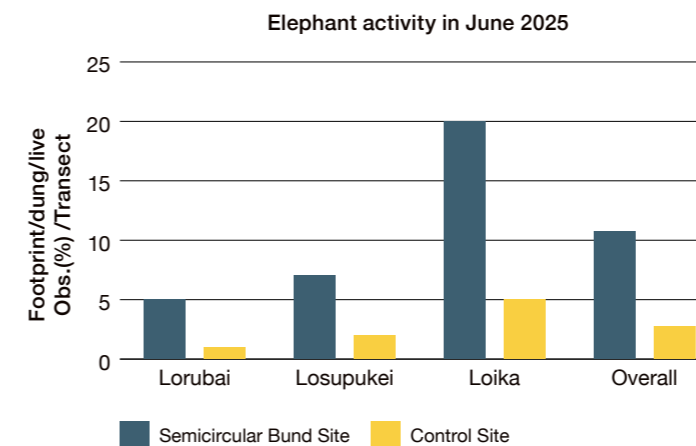
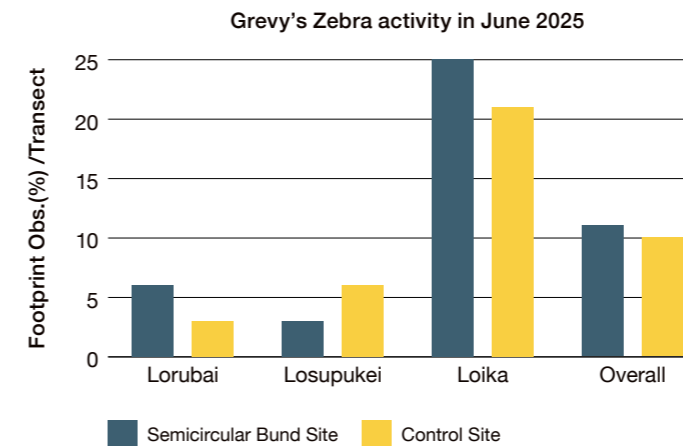
Building on this foundation, partner organizations will move forward with gazettement and practical implementation measures—such as installing signage, enacting locally relevant by-laws, and setting up monitoring systems. Together, these actions ensure that corridor protection is not just a policy on paper but a tangible safeguard that enables safer, more sustainable movement for both people and wildlife.



Wyss Academy and local partners during a field check at a semicircular bund site, where community-led monitoring supports comparisons between restored plots and nearby untreated rangeland. Photo: Fiona Stappmanns

Restored sites double biomass and guide targeted conflict-reduction measures

Community-driven citizen science was deployed to monitor ecosystem recovery across 35,529 semicircular bunds in 6 pilot sites, with trained local monitors collecting, validating, and reporting vegetation and wildlife-use data. As a result of this, a June 2025 biodiversity assessment found that bund sites had higher biomass (≈ 2.5 t/ha) than control sites (≈ 1 t/ha), nearby untreated rangeland plots in the same grazing units. Wildlife monitoring also recorded increased elephant activity and more frequent Grevy’s zebra sightings in restored plots compared with untreated controls. These findings matter as treated plots function as dry-season forage banks, easing pressure on sensitive pastures and water points, and the wildlife activity patterns point to where bund restoration should extend and where corridor measures will most reduce people–wildlife conflict. The same indicators provide a baseline for ongoing monitoring and maintenance, so work can be directed to the most effective sites over time.





Women from Ol Gaboli restore degraded rangeland by digging semicircular bunds—part of a women-led pilot linking pasture recovery, wildlife connectivity, and local enterprises.
Photo: David Jakinda

Coalition for Change (Women in Conservation)

At Ol Gaboli, a Coalition for Change is enabling women to lead a nature-positive conservation pilot that combines rangeland restoration, wildlife connectivity, and sustainable livelihoods. The Community Land Management Committee formally allocated the pilot site to a women-led committee and mandated it to restore and manage the area, demonstrating effective, inclusive governance.

Women from 35 women's groups are restoring degraded rangelands by digging semicircular bunds to enhance water infiltration in hard-capped soils, regenerating pasture and strengthening wildlife corridors. These restored areas anchor women-managed enterprises, including beekeeping for honey production, *Aloe vera* and African leafy vegetables, and grass-seed banks for landscape restoration. While most groups are in the setup phase, including legal certification for aloe vera soap and honey, a group harvested 150 fodder bales from its bunds, generating approximately US\$ 290.

Private sector partners are strengthening market linkages, and the women's honey is under **Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)** analysis for certification, improving quality and access to higher-value markets. Designed as a self-reinforcing

loop, the pilot shows how women-led governance, restoration, and enterprise can convert ecological recovery into resilient livelihoods while sustaining stewardship and landscape regeneration.



A traditional Maasai Hut (Manyatta) being build by the women of the Chui Mama Women's group in their community garden.
Photo: Fiona Stappmanns



A community member taking a soil sample from a semicircular bund—small earthworks designed to slow runoff and help water soak into the soil.
Photo: Fiona Stappmanns



A member of the Chui Mama Women's Group preparing lunch in their community garden.
Photo: Fiona Stappmanns

Impact Story

How Women in Northern Kenya Are Restoring Land and Livelihoods

Northern Kenya’s Naibunga landscape tells a new story—of women who restore their land and, in doing so, create opportunities for their communities. At OI Gaboli, one of two pilot sites within Hub East Africa’s Solutionscape in Naibunga and Oldonyiro, a committee representing 35 women’s groups now guides the site development and management. Their mandate came through the Community Land Management Committee, following a sensitive 18-month participatory process that bridged traditional norms and formal rules, anchoring decisions in both community priorities and the realities of the land. Around this core sits a Coalition for Change: conservancy leaders, county planners, private-sector partners, and local monitors aligned on a shared plan.

Restoration and livelihoods evolve together in OI Gaboli. When women reseed semicircular bunds, the small earth curves collect the scarce rainwater that revives grasses and provides new grazing grounds. Along the ridges, they plant Aloe vera—its deep roots holding the soil and its leaves offering the base for natural cosmetic products that diversify income. Around the site, beehives form a living fence: the hum of bees deters elephants and, at the same time, yields honey that women’s cooperatives now supply directly to identified buyers. A nearby grass seed bank closes the loop, producing climate-resilient species that feed future restoration efforts across the rangelands. In this landscape, every action supports the next; ecological renewal and economic opportunity grow from the same ground.

What makes OI Gaboli stand out is how these efforts are connected. None of them function in isolation. Their strength lies in how they interact: ecological renewal links to

market access, women’s leadership ties to governance, and local knowledge meets scientific insight. OI Gaboli has become a living laboratory for systems change—a place where restoration, enterprise, and collaboration are brought together to generate co-benefits for people and nature.

Change here is visible not only in the land but in relationships. As women organize, trade, and share decisions, they reshape how their communities engage with nature and with one another. What began as a pilot site has grown into a reference point for what collective action can achieve.



Women’s group representatives and partners at OI Gaboli, where a community mandate supports women-led management of the pilot site.

Photo: Jackson Kuntayo

Women-led work at OI Gaboli, where beekeeping supports household income and sits alongside restoration and site management.

Photo: Jackson Kuntayo



A view across the OI Gaboli pilot site, where aloe plantings sit near beehives used for honey production and elephant deterrence.

Photo: Amanda Koech





Kenya

Protecting water, wetlands, and commons under competing claims

The Solutionscape “Protecting water, wetlands, and commons under competing claims” focuses on the Gambella Wetland in Northern Kenya, located between the water-rich highlands of Mount Kenya and the arid lowlands.

Satellite image of the Gambella wetland, highlighting the complex challenges around water and competing demands from various stakeholders. This dynamic landscape underscores the need for sustainable water management to balance ecological and human needs.
Imagery credits: Planet Labs PBC (2024)

Traditionally, the wetland served as a vital source of water, particularly during the dry season, when it provided grazing ground for pastoralists’ livestock as well as wildlife, including large elephant herds. For a long time, farmers also depended on water from the spring and river flowing from the wetland. In recent years, land use has changed significantly. The growth of small-scale farming has come with an increase in the cultivation of cash crops like tomato and onion, relying heavily on groundwater for irrigation. Water extraction has reduced reservoir capacity, affected the ecosystem, and reduced water availability for various stakeholders. Wildlife and pastoralists, who travel long distances to the Gambella wetland in search of water during dry seasons and droughts, remain among the most vulnerable. Given climate change-driven shifting rainfall patterns and altered flows from Mount Kenya, a functional wetland is critical for the resilience of both nature and people.

To address these growing challenges and secure water in the wetland, the Wyss Academy has brought together diverse stakeholders to form a Coalition for Change. At the community level, a Wetland Management Committee was also established. This community-based body serves as a formally government-approved subcommittee of the Water Resource Users Association (WRUA). These form a crucial basis for sustainable governance of the wetland area and its water resources. Current projects focus on further strengthening local and regional governance of water resources, supporting wetland regeneration and vegetation restoration, and providing access to water for wildlife, livestock, and households—while ensuring that fragile wetland vegetation under restoration remains protected. Additionally, efforts focus on diversifying local livelihoods, particularly through non-livestock-based, high-value products. The aim is to explore alternative, nature-positive livelihood options that generate co-benefits for people and nature while reducing pressure on the wetland.

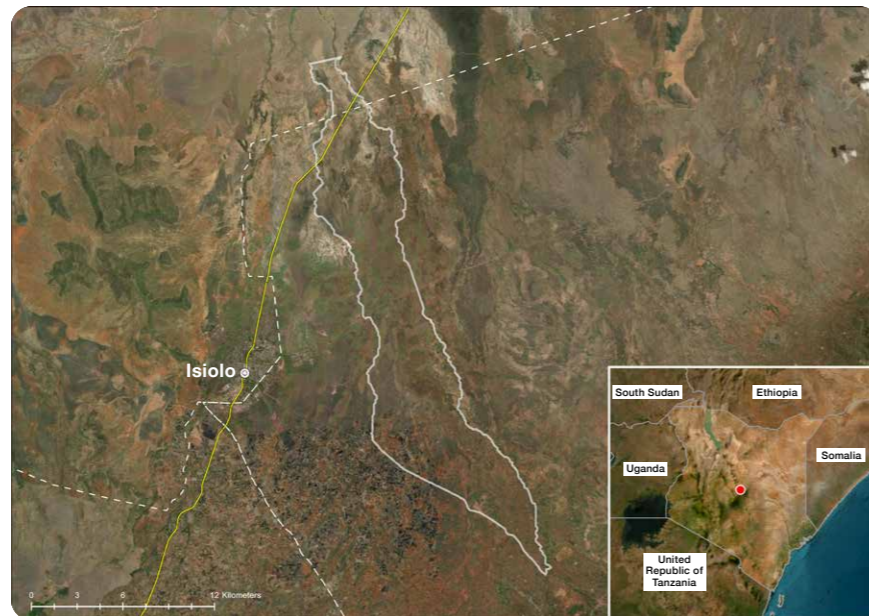
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Key Facts

livestock and wildlife troughs constructed, with 2 community water points

8

acres of wetland demarcated and secured

67

people trained in sustainable gum and resin harvesting

94



Partners, community members, and colleagues during a field visit on riparian restoration in the Gambella Wetland, Kenya.

Photo: Explorer.Land

2025

In 2025, work in Gambella shifted from preparation to delivery. To ease pressure on the wetland and enable regeneration, a water infrastructure package—an elevated tank, watering troughs for livestock and wildlife, and community water points—was launched with broad community participation and used to raise awareness of sustainable wetland use. Day-to-day coordination improved through shared rules and routines for managing access to water and protecting sensitive vegetation. Youth engagement grew through hands-on restoration and training that built practical skills and opened pathways to nature-based livelihoods.

In addition, participatory mapping of wildlife corridors—especially elephant routes—began informing actions to reopen blocked pathways and reduce human-wildlife conflicts.

The year ended with the establishment of Gambella wetland governance structures, better protection of fragile areas, and a renewed sense of possibility—evidence that collective action can turn a pressured wetland into a shared resource, managed for the long term.

“In 2025, Gambella’s wetlands shifted from planning to collective action. Communities, government, and partners worked side by side to ease pressure on the fragile wetland’s ecosystem through practical water conservation solutions, youth-led restoration, and renewed protection of wildlife corridors. What emerged was not only infrastructure, but a culture of trust and shared responsibility—laying the foundation for a future where water security, livelihoods, and biodiversity thrive together.”

Joseph Ombega, Project Lead, CETRAD



A water channel in the Gambella Wetland in northern Kenya, where dry-season water is under growing pressure from competing uses. In 2025, communities and partners worked to reduce pressure on the wetland through practical water access solutions, restoration, and stronger local governance.

Photo: CETRAD

Formation and Capacity Building of the Water Infrastructure Management Unit (WIMU)

To strengthen wetland governance and management for the water infrastructure, a five-member Water Infrastructure Management Unit (WIMU) was established to support the Wetland Management Committee in the day-to-day operations of wetland activities. The unit is responsible for protecting and maintaining water infrastructure, monitoring and addressing instances of encroachment, and collecting revenue generated through self-financing community water points.

Following its establishment, a capacity-needs assessment was conducted for both the Wetland Management Committee and the WIMU to identify gaps that hinder effective governance and operational efficiency. Based on the assessment findings, a series of targeted training sessions was conducted, covering financial literacy, riparian and wetland protection, participatory governance and leadership, and the operation and maintenance of water infrastructure. Following the training, the WIMU support team has, on several occasions, effectively undertaken basic maintenance of the water infrastructure, including repairing burst pipes. They have also established and maintained a simple community water point revenue ledger to support transparent financial management. In addition, the team has demonstrated strong conflict management capacity by peacefully addressing cases of wetland encroachment without escalating tensions.



Livestock drink from a watering trough near the Gambella Wetland in northern Kenya. In 2025, new water infrastructure and clearer community rules for access helped ease pressure on sensitive wetland areas while supporting livelihoods and improving water access for people, livestock, and wildlife.

Photo: Milton Mutuma



A youth-led tree nursery in Kenya's Gambella Wetland Solutionscape supports wetland restoration and local livelihoods, with indigenous and fruit tree species grown for planting during the long rains.

Photo: Joseph Ombega

Main achievements in 2025

Coalition for Change establishment and formalization

Through a series of consultative engagements with key stakeholders, a unified coalition was established around a shared vision and agenda for restoring the Gambella Wetland. The coalition brings together approximately 40 members drawn from national and county government agencies, including the **National Land Commission (NLC)**, **Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)**, **Kenya Forest Service (KFS)**, and the **National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)**, as well as local community representatives and non-governmental organizations.

The Coalition for Change jointly developed its Terms of Reference, clearly outlining its objectives, roles, and a unifying call to action. Through a comprehensive and participatory process, the coalition adopted the name “Gambella Wetland Guardians,” which reflects its collective identity and commitment to safeguarding the wetland ecosystem.

A core mandate of the Coalition for Change is to lead advocacy, coordinate restoration efforts, and provide facilitative leadership for restoration initiatives within the Gambella Wetland, while fostering inclusive participation, accountability, and synergy among all stakeholders.

Youth-led tree nursery establishment

To support wetland and riparian ecosystem restoration while enhancing youth livelihoods, a youth-led tree nursery with a production capacity of 100,000 seedlings was established. By the end of 2025, an initial 40,000 seedlings had been raised in readiness for the April–May 2026 long rains, with an anticipated survival rate of 80%. The youth group expects to make its first sales during the 2026 rainy season, with group members and local communities as target customers. The nursery grows a diverse mix of indigenous tree species (40%) and locally preferred fruit trees (60%), selected through community consultations—particularly with elders—to reflect local ecological knowledge and livelihood priorities.

The nursery site was carefully identified by the Wetland Management Committee—a body of riparian landowners established with the Wyss Academy and **Centre for Training and Integrated Research in ASAL Development (CETRAD)** to oversee wetland governance—with technical guidance from the **Kenya Forest Service (KFS)** and our implementing partner. Daily nursery operations, including weeding, watering, and seedling monitoring, are managed by the locally rooted ENLITE Youth Group, reinforcing effective management, strong community ownership, and the long-term sustainability of the wetland restoration initiative.



ENLITE Youth Group members tend seedling beds at the Gambella wetland nursery, where young people are building practical skills for restoration and future planting.
Photo: CETRAD



Rows of newly propagated seedlings at the Gambella wetland nursery, where local seedling production is supporting restoration at scale.
Photo: CETRAD

Impact Story

Youth-Led Tree Nurseries Driving Livelihoods and Restoration in Gambella

In Gambella, young people are taking the lead in restoring degraded landscapes while building sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their communities. Working with our key local implementing partner, CETRAD, a community-based youth group of twenty young women and men has turned a tree nursery a viable source of both conservation impact and income.

Environmental restoration activities such as tree planting had already been underway to support the recovery of degraded land. However, these efforts were not intentionally linked to youth livelihoods, and environmental conservation was rarely viewed by young people as a livelihood pathway. As a result, young people engaged only

at the margins of restoration activities, with few opportunities to build skills or generate sustainable income.

To address this gap, the ENLITE youth group received practical, skills-based training in tree nursery establishment and management. The training covered seed selection, propagation techniques, nursery maintenance, and preparation of seedlings for planting. The approach emphasized active youth involvement, enabling participants to gain hands-on experience and apply their skills directly within their community.

Following the training, the youth group was tasked to take up the management of the youth-led tree nursery, working closely with the wider

community, and with ongoing technical guidance from our implementing partner. The nursery was designed to complement ongoing restoration efforts and create a sustainable source of income for young people.

The results are taking shape. The nursery has already produced a diverse mix of fruit trees and native tree species, with a target capacity of 100,000 seedlings through continued collaboration with community youth groups. Confidence and leadership have grown alongside practical skills. Young people are now actively engaged as contributors to the wetland restoration rather than passive participants. The youth group is also an active member of the Coalition for Change, demonstrating

their commitment to driving sustainable development and environmental action in their community.

The significance goes beyond one nursery. At the community level, the availability of locally produced seedlings will enhance restoration efforts and reinforce the role of youth as key actors in climate resilience and environmental stewardship.

By linking environmental restoration with diversified, nature-positive livelihood opportunities, CETRAD's support has enabled young people in Gambella to become agents of change, protecting their environment while building more resilient livelihoods for the future.

“At ENLITE Group, our tree nursery is more than a business—it’s a way to serve both our members and the wider community. By supplying seedlings, we earn income while helping conserve the Gambella wetland that sustains us. Young people are now stepping forward as active contributors to environmental restoration, proving that livelihoods and stewardship can grow together.”

Racho Ibrahim,
ENLITE Youth Group member.



At the Gambella wetland nursery, a youth participant (left) checks newly propagated seedlings—part of ENLITE’s day-to-day work to supply trees for local restoration efforts.
Photo: CETRAD



Madagascar

Environmental justice in Masoala

The Solutionscape “Environmental justice in Masoala” is located on a remote, forested peninsula in north-eastern Madagascar, next to the world famous Masoala National Park.

The landscape encompasses a valley stretching from the ocean to the mountains, along with five villages in a forest frontier area under increasing pressure. Madagascar is home to unique species, 90% of which exist nowhere else in the world, making it one of the planet’s most biodiverse areas. Its ecological importance coexists with deep socioeconomic constraints: many local communities face high levels of poverty. Due to the region’s remoteness, they also have limited access to essential public services, such as education and healthcare. Confined to protected-area buffer zones—and with limited, unequally distributed land for farming—younger generations, in particular, struggle to secure their livelihoods, highlighting a central environmental justice challenge: unequal access to land and limited alternatives in a landscape shaped by conservation constraints. Without access to land or compensation for preserving the forest, they often resort to deforestation to produce upland rice through shifting cultivation, or they seek opportunities for cash crops such as vanilla and clove. The region’s isolation creates further difficulties—limiting access to markets, infrastructure, and technical knowledge. Adding to these challenges, conservation and commodity crop production are often subject to uncoordinated, conflicting agendas among local and external actors.

To address these issues and envision a future in which biodiversity is protected, and people’s livelihoods are more secure, the Solutionscape brings together reinforcing efforts to promote environmental justice through a systemic approach.

While working to address unequal access to land by strengthening land governance, the Wyss Academy, in close collaboration with its key partner, is also developing agricultural and non-agricultural revenue streams, strengthening value chains for key products and services. Given the limitations of such a bioeconomy in a remote valley, efforts also focus on income diversification through silk production and improving digital connectivity to reduce isolation and stimulate the regional economy.

Satellite image of the Mahalevona Valley, situated near Masoala National Park in Madagascar. The vibrant landscape showcases the region’s rich biodiversity and the delicate balance between conservation and local livelihoods. Imagery credits: Planet Labs PBC (2024)

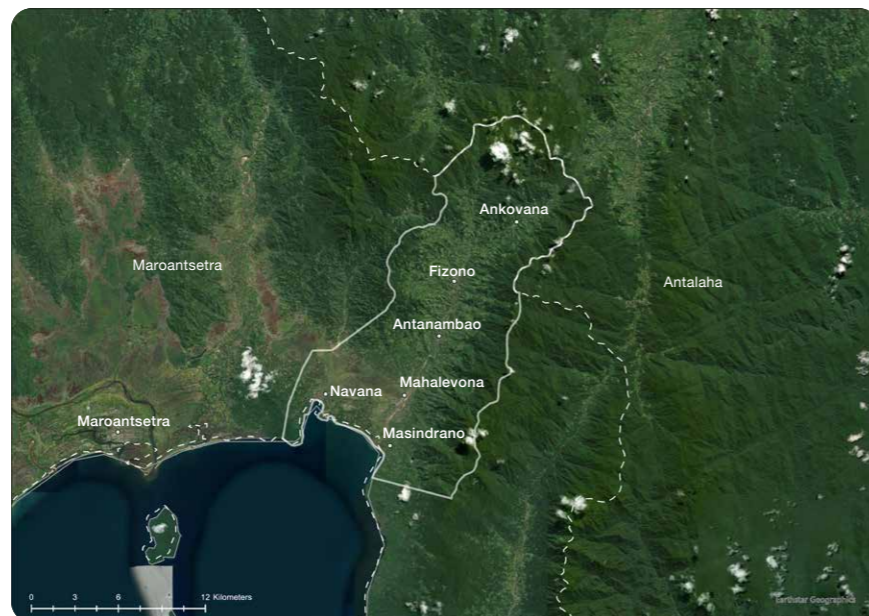
Where we work

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Our Solutionscape

- Solutionscape boundaries
- County boundaries



Key Facts

visits to the community centers for skills development and access to digital tools

6,814

beneficiaries in digital literacy, livelihood skills, governance and employability-related trainings

945

nature-positive jobs created throughout the established silk and vegetal fiber value chain

64



In the Mahalevona Valley near Masoala National Park, rice plots reflect the everyday realities shaping land use and livelihoods. Photo: Drones.mg

2025

The year 2025 was marked by both consolidation and expansion of activities, with a deliberate emphasis on partnerships, dialogue, and institutional anchoring. Engagement broadened to include private sector actors, implementing partners, and innovation-oriented organizations, building momentum around nature-positive value chains, community-based learning, and policy-relevant exchange. A series of stakeholder events and collaborative workshops created spaces for exchange, reflection, and joint action, helping actors working in the same landscape—but often in parallel—to clarify roles and coordinate more effectively. At the same time, the visibility and presence of the Wyss Academy for Nature in Madagascar continued to grow, supporting its long-term positioning in the national landscape. The year also laid important groundwork for future monitoring and learning, notably through a baseline survey conducted in November 2025, providing a reference point for assessing progress and impact in the years ahead.

“The year 2025 marked a turning point—prompting us to pause for reflection and realignment. We refined our Theory of Change and acknowledged the crucial role that strong monitoring and learning expertise plays in evaluating our impact rigorously and efficiently. These actions set the stage for more deliberate, evidence-based actions as we move forward.”

Ntsiva Andriatsitohaina,
Madagascar Solutionscape lead



Beekeepers learn how to fit a queen excluder—used to keep the queen out of honey frames—during a practical training session.

Photo: Davidson Andriansolo



With guidance from Honorette, a young digital coach, participants work on their CVs using a shared laptop.

Photo: Davidson Andriansolo

Main achievements in 2025

Building sustainable value chains with the private sector in the Mahalevona Valley

Private sector engagement in the Mahalevona Valley deepened through further development of sustainable value chains and local product promotion. Key partners included **MC Ingredients** (MCI), **Maroa Market**, and **Floramad**, alongside the **Maison de l'Apiculture Malagasy** (MAM) and innovative start-ups such as **SoaTech** and **Mot'Aratra**. MCI is currently working with 100 bird's eye chili farmers, organized under the producers' association *Ravimaitso*, while Maroa Market serves as a marketplace to promote and sell flagship agricultural products from the valley.

Early in 2025, Floramad committed to sourcing essential oils from responsibly harvested clove leaves, following a year of dialogue, advocacy with local authorities, and engaging farmers ready to make the shift.

With the diversification of nature-positive value chains, we expect the engagement of more than three additional private sector actors in the Mahalevona Valley in 2026.

So far, these engagements have resulted in strengthened producer organizations and improved market access. They also introduced practical innovations—product traceability, more environmentally responsible honey production, and electric mobility to improve transport in this remote context. Together, these partnerships lay the foundation for wider uptake of local value chains and embedding sustainable private sector investment in the valley's long-term development.

“Ivo-toerana Mirohy” as community knowledge hubs

In 2025, the **Ivo-toerana Mirohy** community centers became fully operational as knowledge hubs, advancing the Mahalevona Valley's vision of improved access to information and skills. Powered by solar energy and equipped with high-speed internet, the centers provide access to online resources and AI-supported learning, with local coaches helping participants use these tools in practice.

These centers served young people, women, and farmers from Maroantsetra and the wider Mahalevona Valley, offering inclusive learning opportunities tailored to local needs. A total of 390 young people benefited from digital literacy training, while 174 participants acquired practical, livelihood-oriented knowledge, ranging from cooking and handicrafts to fish farming, beekeeping, sewing, and poultry, using AI as a learning support tool. In parallel, 306 individuals participated in in-person and remote trainings delivered by expert facilitators on topics such as CV and cover letter writing, entrepreneurship, environmental education,

communication skills, self-awareness, and vocational techniques. These outcomes demonstrate the center's role as accessible platforms for capacity building and innovation. As the centers mature, they offer a growing platform for community-based learning, youth employability, and sustained knowledge exchange across the valley.



During a visit to Maroantsetra, the Swiss Ambassador to Madagascar, Stefano Toscano, meets SEPALI staff—local partners supporting conservation-based livelihood work near the Makira–Masoala landscape.
Photo: Davidson Andriansolo

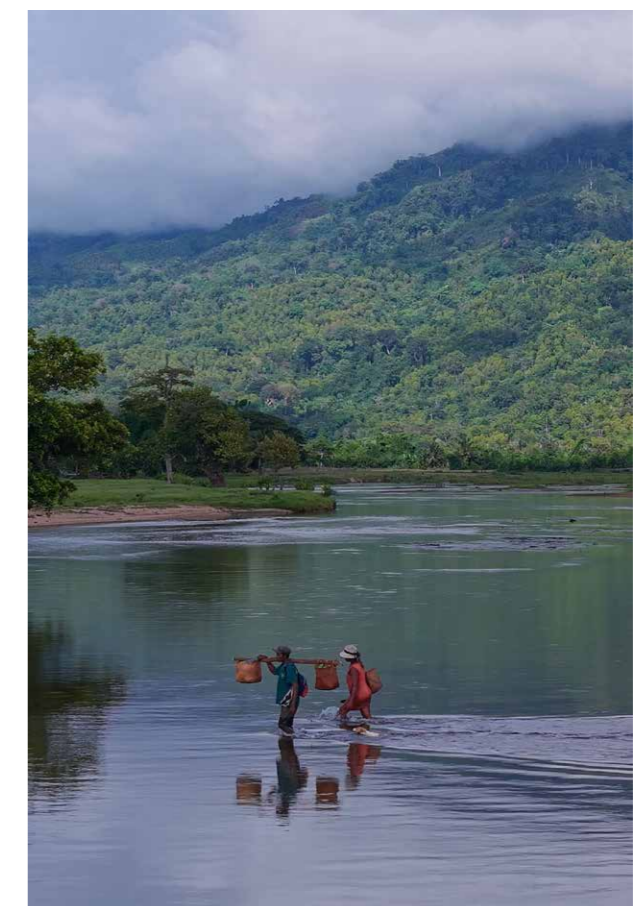
Strategic alliance with the Swiss Embassy to amplify dialogue and visibility

This year, a strategic alliance with the Swiss Embassy in Madagascar took shape. The collaboration began in April with a courtesy visit to the newly appointed Swiss Ambassador, which opened the way for deeper engagement. Subsequently, the Embassy invited the Wyss Academy for Nature, alongside other organizations, to organize a dialogue on the Environment–Economy Nexus with conservation actors and Madagascar-based Swiss private sector representatives. In November 2025, the event **“Voices for the Forest: A Dialogue with Madagascar’s Changemakers”** was hosted at the Swiss Residence, providing a platform for young Malagasy Changemakers to showcase initiatives in women’s empowerment, climate-resilient livelihoods, responsible tourism, and environmental education. These exchanges highlighted links between international and national policies, research initiatives, and sustainable forest-based alternatives. In December, the Ambassador-led delegation visited the Mahalevona Valley and Masoala National Park, gaining first-hand insight into on-the-ground activities. This alliance does more than raise visibility. It connects evidence from the field

with the rooms where agendas are shaped and where private-sector actors commit. It sets a clear path for 2026: keep the dialogue policy-relevant, back it with grounded insights, and translate it into joint measures that benefit forests and communities.



Women in Fizonon practice sewing skills during a community training session.
Photo: Davidson Andriansolo



Two residents wade across a river in northeastern Madagascar, carrying goods between villages and fields.
Photo: Drones.mg

Impact story

One Farmer, One Tool, Twice the Harvest

In Fizonon, a village in the Mahalevona Valley of northeastern Madagascar near Masoala National Park, rice fields lie in small pockets and tools are hard to come by. In this setting, Delien, a young farmer supporting a three-person household, faced a familiar but grinding constraint. In June 2024, he began cultivating rice on land he did not own, renting paddy fields from landowners based in Sambava, a town farther up the coast, in exchange for a share of the harvest. With only himself and his wife doing the labor, the work with just two pairs of hands was slow and exhausting. What would have helped was animal traction: zebu draft power used for plowing. However, the fee would have been 800,000 Malagasy ariary (176 USD) for one planting season, well beyond the household's means.

"After giving the landowner his share, there was almost nothing left for us," Delien explains. "We worked hard, but we were always close to rice shortage."

Determined to find an alternative, Delien built a wooden plow using local materials and knowledge. But the tool struggled in muddy soils, required excessive effort, and failed to properly cut or turn over grass. The challenge was clear: without access to better tools or information, productivity—and food security—would remain fragile. At the beginning of 2025, Delien came to the Ivo-toerana Mirohy local community center in Fizonon, part of the Madagascar Solutionscape initiative. Through the center's digital accessibility project, he used AI tools to explore practical solutions, watching videos and examples of farmer-built tools from other contexts. With the help of youth digital coaches and local facilitators, the center provided not only instructions, but access—to ideas, comparisons, and experimentation. Inspired, Delien redesigned his plow. The new version was lighter, more stable in flooded fields, and better at cutting vegetation. The total cost was

less than Malagasy Ariary 100,000, a fraction of the cost of renting zebu. With the improved plow, Delien was able to cultivate approximately one additional hectare. The results were immediate and tangible. "Harvested rice quantity doubled, and we do not have rice shortage anymore," he says.

Beyond his own household, the change spread. Other farmers began visiting Delien's field to test the plow and learn from his process. Returning regularly to Ivo-toerana Mirohy, he continued refining the tool through hands-on experimentation, passing on what worked through peer-to-peer sharing.

Delien's story shows how access to information can unlock local innovation, especially in a context where farmers have limited access to public extension services and other forms of technical support. By connecting local knowledge with digital tools, the Madagascar Solutionscape enabled a youth-led household to improve livelihoods without external machinery or debt.

"If only these tools and materials were available here, or in Maroantsetra, rice production in our region would be more consequent," Delien reflects. "Until then, we must find solutions. Next step for me would be to build a weeder, a tool that rolls between rows and uproots weeds."

This story speaks directly to the Solutionscape's aim: environmental justice through information access, improved livelihoods, and just land governance. For Delien, access to digital tools and local coaching translated into a redesigned plow and doubled rice production on existing land. What changed for one farmer now seeds resilience and possibilities across Mahalevona.

Delien's wife sorts rice in Fizonon, part of the daily work that keeps the household fed between harvests.
Photo: Laby Patrick



Delien's initial plow design—made from local wood as he experimented with lower-cost ways to work the rice plots.
Photo: Laby Patrick



At the Ivo-toerana Mirohy community center, Delien explores examples and instructions to improve his handmade plow.
Photo: Laby Patrick

Delien's updated plow in action in Fizonon—proof that small design changes matter when tools are scarce.
Photo: Laby Patrick





Laos

Ensuring forest stewardship and restoration at cash crop frontiers

The Solutionscape “Ensuring forest stewardship and restoration at cash crop frontiers” focuses on the Nam Tien Provincial Protected Area in Xayabury, Laos.

Affected by rapid agriculture expansion, only 40% of the Nam Tien protected area currently remains forested. Local and regional authorities responsible for protecting these areas often lack resources, capacity, and enforcement ability. As a result, forestland is treated as an open space for unchecked and unsustainable farming practices, with farmers growing crops like maize, cassava, banana, watermelon, and rubber. The effects include wildlife loss, soil erosion, polluted water, and disrupted water flows. At the same time, local farmers, who depend on these crops, face insecure incomes due to unpredictable market changes. Adding to the pressure, foreign investors target these forest areas for large-scale farming, creating more strain on the landscape and challenges for local communities.

They also test innovative ways to restore tree cover through agroforestry and create nature-positive income alternatives for local communities by combining technical, market-based, and educational approaches.

Satellite image of Nam Tien Protected Forest area in Laos, showcasing the region’s intricate landscape of water bodies and agricultural areas. The scene highlights the delicate balance between land use and conservation, critical for sustaining livelihoods and ecosystems.

Imagery credits: Planet Labs PBC (2024)

To address these issues, the Wyss Academy is working with local governments, communities, private sector representatives, and research groups to develop solutions that protect and restore nature while supporting the people who depend on the land and its resources. The ongoing, highly interlinked projects focus on developing new business models for conservation and working toward the joint management of protected areas.

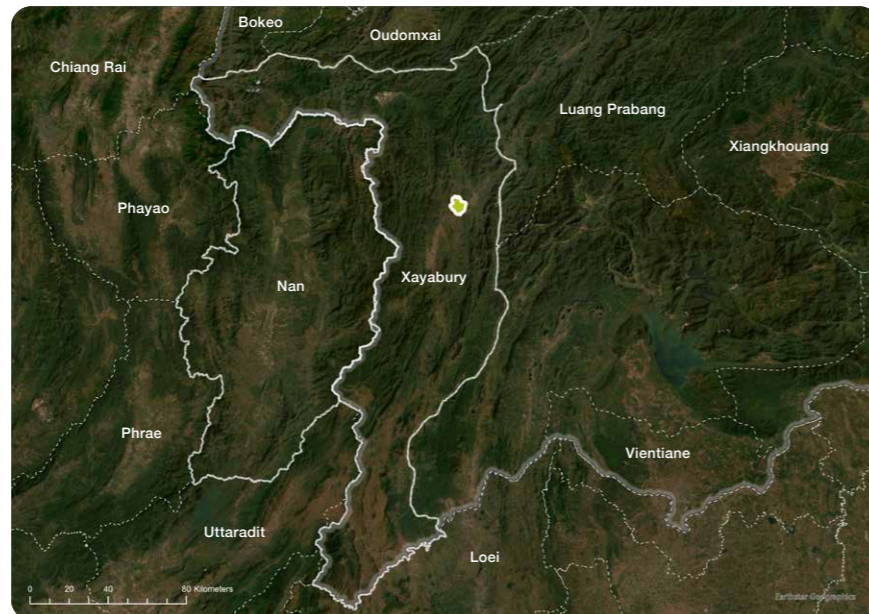
Where we work

- Office: Bangkok
- Solutionscape location



Our Solutionscape

- Solutionscape boundaries
- Solutionscape area
- Province boundaries
- National boundary



Key Facts

local and international partners

15

partner schools received Green School Certificates in July 2025

5

teachers trained in environmental education in the past two years

229

A quiet moment at the Elephant Conservation Center in Xayabury, Laos, where elephants move through a forested enclosure.
Photo: Phokham Latthachack



2025

In 2025, we continued working closely with schools around Nam Tien, Xayabury, strengthening teachers' capacity in environmental education, and ensuring they are equipped to lead this work independently. Local officials at the Agricultural Technical Service Center received agroforestry training to expand their support to local communities. Meanwhile, the WILDMED mobile wildlife clinic strengthened Laos' wildlife rescue system and supported the Education, Conservation and Research (ECORE) program by helping build the **Lao Elephant Conservation Center (ECC)** into a hub for local and regional biodiversity research and education.

At the same time, the operating context in Laos has grown more complex, and achieving large-scale structural change requires sustained policy alignment and effective enforcement capacity, all of which are shaped by broader economic and political conditions beyond the influence of any single program. In view of this, and mindful of our limited resources, we are reflecting carefully on how to best deploy our efforts to maximize long-term systems impact, while remaining committed to the partnerships and locally embedded capacities that have been built in Nam Tien.

"Throughout 2025 we could see our efforts supporting local livelihoods through our work with schools and the education department take off and becoming embedded in the day-to-day operations. Our partners at the Elephant Conservation Center and the Technical Service Centre have the means and the capacity now, thanks also to the collaboration with our Chinese Partner the Kunming Institute of Biodiversity and the Department of Land Administration and Management, to move their conservation and development efforts much further. Although we are proud of the foundations built through strong local partnerships, the current economic and political context presents significant constraints to achieving broader structural change. With limited resources, we are refocusing our efforts on settings where we can have the greatest potential for long-term systems impact."
Horst Weyerhaeuser, Director, Hub South East Asia



Teachers in Xayabury, Laos explored biodiversity around their school as part of a training to strengthen their environmental education skills. Photo: Chertalay Suwanpanich



Veterinary students from a Lao university gain hands-on experience in wildlife treatment through a WILDMED training course in Xayabury. Photo: Chertalay Suwanpanich

Main achievements in 2025

Strengthening environmental education in Xayabury

When we started working in Nam Tien, Xayabury, Laos, we identified local schools as an entry point to reach communities through their young people—the future caretakers of the environment. With no formal environmental education systems or facilities in place, we focused on cultivating a stewardship mindset among students to lay the foundations for lasting environmental protection. Over two years, we worked closely with schools and local authorities to build practical capacity in environmental education, including waste management, organic composting, climate adaptation training and improvements to school facilities to create more enabling learning environments. By July 2025, all five schools that joined our program from the outset received Green School Certificates from the Xayabury Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment, recognizing basic standards in environmental learning and school operations. In parallel, 229 teachers were trained, strengthening schools' ability to lead and sustain environmental learning independently.

Today, each participating school operates its own waste management system, trains students in waste sorting and composting, and collaborates directly with local government agencies—work shaped through engagement with 111 community members and officials. These foundations now enable schools to design their own proposals, expand community engagement, and continue biodiversity-related initiatives beyond the project.

On the frontlines of wildlife care in Laos

To advance biodiversity conservation and research in Nam Tien, Xayabury, Laos, the Wyss Academy is co-supporting WILDMED, a mobile wildlife clinic that strengthens the Elephant Conservation Center (ECC)'s capacity in wild elephant rescue and lays foundations for long-term wildlife protection and biodiversity research within our Solutionscape and across Laos.

The clinic provides essential, on-the-ground support for wildlife response. It equips field teams for extended deployments and helps cover essentials—travel costs, medication, syringes and supplies, and basic diagnostics so responders can focus on treatment and safe transport. WILDMED is operated through our two key conservation partners in Laos, the Elephant Conservation Center (ECC) and the [Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife](#) (LCTW). Through this partnership, LCTW's extensive wildlife-rescue expertise is being shared with the ECC as the center strengthens its capacity in wild-elephant rescue.

WILDMED is closely linked to our work with the ECC, a key actor in elephant conservation in Laos. In 2024, we jointly launched the Education, Conservation and Research (ECORE) program to position the ECC as a scientific basecamp for students and researchers, connecting biodiversity science with social science and community development. The program also supports an alternative business model for ECC's conservation work that goes

beyond ecotourism. In 2025, that foundation enabled WILDMED's fieldwork to feed directly into ECORE—responding to mahouts' calls and collecting biological samples that strengthen ECORE's research mission and the ECC's endocrinology lab.

The program has already enabled concrete milestones: LCTW hired its first local wildlife veterinarian in nearly a decade, and ECC brought on the first Lao woman licensed as an elephant veterinarian. The Wyss Academy for Nature is also helping sustain wildlife-training courses, ensuring that more young veterinarians in Laos gain both knowledge and hands-on experience in wildlife care. Together, these efforts are building durable capacity for wildlife conservation and strengthening biodiversity research within the Solutionscape—and beyond it.



A school compost training session led by ATSC in rural Xayabury—learning that starts in the soil and carries back to classrooms and homes.
Photo: Sisomphone Boudsengngam

Building local capacity for agroforestry in Xayabury

In rural Xayabury, limited resources and market access continue to constrain alternatives to deforestation. Building on the multi-stakeholder group formed in 2024—bringing together government agencies, research institutions, private sector actors, and local communities—progress in 2025 focused on translating a shared agroforestry vision into practice through the Agroforestry Learning Center at the Agricultural Technical Service Center (ATSC).

The project established an agroforestry tree plantation and began producing seedlings for distribution to local communities. Key infrastructure was also completed, including a solar greenhouse and nursery, and the irrigation system was upgraded. Capacity building expanded through compost-making training delivered to ATSC staff, six schools, and four villages, while upgrades to the mushroom laboratory and meteorological facilities strengthened local learning and monitoring capacity.

Through outreach to villages around Nam Tien and collaboration with the Xayabury Ethnic Minority School, the project has strengthened local awareness and interest in agroforestry practices. Together with the improved facilities at the ATSC, these efforts have laid important groundwork for future agroforestry demonstration plots, learning, and potential farm trials, while continuing to build relationships among communities, research partners, and local authorities.



During an environmental education training in Nam Tien, Xayabury, students plant seedlings as part of a hands-on lesson.
Photo: Mongkon Duangkiew



Teachers at a school in Xayabury Province review seedlings and cuttings, linking everyday school routines with environmental education.
Photo: Chertalay Suwanpanich



An elephant health check in the field, with a WILDMED team member taking notes alongside a mahout.
Photo: WILDMED



Wildlife care in practice: a WILDMED veterinary assistant with a young gibbon at the Lao Conservation Trust for Wildlife.
Photo: Chertalay Suwanpanich

A juvenile elephant in Phongsali Province, northern Laos, during a rescue effort involving the WILDMED team and local villagers.
Photo: WILDMED



Impact Story

Paving the Way for Wildlife Care: Elephant Rescue Within and Beyond the Solutionscape

In February 2025, villagers in Mokok-Noy, a remote community tucked into the mountains of Phongsali Province, Laos, discovered a juvenile elephant trapped in a drainage ditch. Its legs were pinned, and its body exhausted. For villagers who live alongside elephants, seeing an animal in distress is always alarming. But in Laos, when an elephant is in danger, help can be days away—if it comes at all.

When the alert reached provincial officials, they immediately contacted the WILDMED mobile wildlife clinic. The team raced along narrow, winding mountain roads. Leading the mission were veterinarians Melody Bomon and Pavina Chalernsouk, who coordinated closely with villagers and provincial officials.

For five days, the community and rescue team labored together, constructing a wooden lifting structure to free the exhausted calf. In the end,

despite everyone’s tireless effort, the young elephant could not be saved. The calf had been trapped in the ditch a few days before the call reached the team. Villagers initially sought help from local authorities, but referral to the province took time as the officials were not yet aware of the mobile clinic. Reflecting on the mission, Melody noted how the system responded: “They [provincial authority] knew us because I had gone to them before and they called us. So, I’m hoping next time will be even faster.” The rescue, though tragic, revealed what is possible when knowledge, community, and systems converge. This was also the WILDMED team’s very first wild elephant rescue, which gave them a rare chance to gain the hands-on experience.

Moukthida Vilasith, the first Lao woman licensed as an elephant veterinarian and hired through WILDMED, now leads elephant care

at the ECC and expands the outreach to local Lao students. “Elephants are an umbrella species. Their day-to-day activities sustain countless other creatures within their ecosystem,” she explained. “Many students are now more interested in pursuing wildlife veterinary work after seeing that I, as a Lao woman, can do this.” Looking to the future, Mouk’s hope is simple yet profound: “We just hope our next generations won’t know elephants only from pictures,” she said. For her, having the same large herds that once roamed the country feels like a distant dream.

Maintaining the elephant population is no easy task. Young elephants, especially in their first fifteen years, are highly vulnerable to the often fatal Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus (EHV). This year alone, while only four calves were born, twelve elephants died. The total number of elephants in Laos is estimated at around 800,

though some believe the actual figure may be lower. These realities highlight the urgent need not only for emergency veterinary response, but also for stronger conservation knowledge systems.

WILDMED addresses this need by combining emergency care with long-term capacity building anchored in the Nam Tien Solutionscape. Alongside rescue operations, the mobile wildlife clinic strengthens the Education, Conservation and Research (ECORE) program, co-developed by the Wyss Academy and the ECC to position the latter as a hub for biodiversity research and professional training. During rescues, veterinary teams collect biological samples for biobanking, supporting long-term research on elephant health and population trends. The ECC, active in Laos and particularly in Xayabury Province since 2010, is a key institution supporting conservation in and around the Nam Tien Protected Forest Area.

Since operations began in November 2024, mahouts have contacted the mobile clinic 21 times, having their elephants receive treatment

that may have prevented fatalities. In its first year, the WILDMED team collected more than 100 different samples from rescued animals. This is the Solutionscape at work in Nam Tien—emergency care linked to capacity and evidence—so each call-out strengthens governance for an umbrella species and for the communities living alongside it. The gains are practical and cumulative: faster coordination, skills that stay in the country, and data that guide the next decision.

Moukthida Vilasith, the first Lao woman licensed as an elephant veterinarian, now leads elephant care at the Elephant Conservation Center, supported through WILDMED.
Photo: WILDMED





Peru

Resilient forested landscapes, promoting high-value multifunctionality

The Solutionscape “Resilient forested landscapes, promoting high-value multifunctionality” covers a large area of the Peruvian Amazon in Tambopata Province, Madre de Dios.

Rich in biodiversity and culture, the Tambopata province is home not only to plants and animals found nowhere else in the world, but also to numerous Indigenous groups with deep ties to the territory. In recent years, unsustainable activities, including extensive agriculture, logging, and mining, have increased income in the region, but they have also driven deforestation and left long-standing inequality unchanged. As a result, the region faces ongoing challenges: habitat loss, riverbank erosion, changes in water flow, mercury pollution, and increased illegal activities.

By collaborating with local partners in Tambopata, the Wyss Academy is co-designing regenerative solutions that preserve biodiversity, strengthen forest management, and create sustainable livelihood opportunities. Together, we are committed to maintaining this forested landscape of global importance as environmental pressures intensify, working to keep forests functional and restore degraded areas with nature-positive, productive options. Our efforts focus on three levers: fostering innovation and sustainable enterprises that utilize non-timber forest products (for example, Amazon Nut), promoting the productive restoration of degraded lands (from extractive activities)

through agroforestry systems, and supporting provincial authorities to integrate nature-positive approaches into policies, planning, and decision-making.

Satellite view of part of the Tambopata Solutionscape, showing the city of Puerto Maldonado and a complex landscape shaped by forests, river dynamics, and zones of expanding land-use activity.

Imagery credits: Planet Labs PBC (2024)

Where we work

- Office: Lima
- Office: Puerto Maldonado, Madre de Dios



Our Solutionscape

- Solutionscape boundaries
- Department boundaries



Key Facts

local partners (organizations that co-delivered Hub engagements)

39

engagement activities (policy dialogues, workshops, community and youth events)

53

participants reached (people involved across Amazonian territories)

1,000+



Hand-harvested aguaje (*Mauritia flexuosa*)—a key forest product that supports local livelihoods in Tambopata.
Photo: Gino Tuesta

2025

In 2025, the integrated setup began to deliver. Partners aligned their activities around a shared direction. Evidence generation matured—from territorial governance and artisanal mining studies to comparable agroforestry metrics. An enabling pathway for nature-positive enterprises took shape, with public backing for a bioeconomy anchor, technical support to close technology gaps, and stronger routes moving forward to advice and finance. On the ground, tourism actors shifted from loose coordination to a corridor model with clearer governance and effective biodiversity monitoring, while territorial dialogue reached national policy spaces. Together, these shifts turned dispersed efforts into a more coherent platform, linking forest protection with viable livelihoods and positioning grounded insights to inform programs, investment, and policy in Tambopata.

“Looking back, 2025 was the year in which coherence truly emerged. I saw our work shift from a set of parallel initiatives to a connected Solutionscape guided by shared outcomes rather than individual projects. The consolidation of our Theory of Change helped align research, incubation, partnerships, and governance around a common direction, while reinforcing a way of working based on learning, collaboration, and adaptation. This shift allowed us to engage with the complexity of Tambopata more tangibly and to support change at the scale at which it actually happens.”
Miguel Saravia, Director, South America Hub



Alejandro Portillo, senior research associate, installing the soil moisture sensors at the Asociación de Agricultura Ecológica.
Photo: Alex Huarecallo

Recognition ceremony honoring the five winning local businesses of the Amazonia 5.0 Award.
Photo: Sofia Bedoya



the management capacity of small nature-positive enterprises in Tambopata. In parallel, partnership with **Amazonia Impact Venture** positioned a pipeline for impact finance.

Partnerships with **GRADE** (Group for the Analysis of Development) and **FENAMAD** (Federación Nativa del Río Madre de Dios y Afluentes) further strengthened knowledge production and territorial leadership. In partnership with CITE Productivo, **AIDER** (Asociación para la Investigación y Desarrollo Integral), **UNAMAD** (Universidad Nacional Amazónica de Madre de Dios), and **EcoDely**, we advanced the implementation of innovative agroforestry systems (AFS) designed to scale nature-positive farming. By replacing conventional agrochemicals with local bio-inputs based on local microorganisms, we demonstrated that ecological restoration and economic viability are mutually reinforcing. The research also confirms that these systems serve as vital habitats for biodiversity by mimicking forest conditions. These results provide a robust, data-driven foundation that translates agroforestry practice into actionable evidence for regional planning, sustainable investment, and public policy.



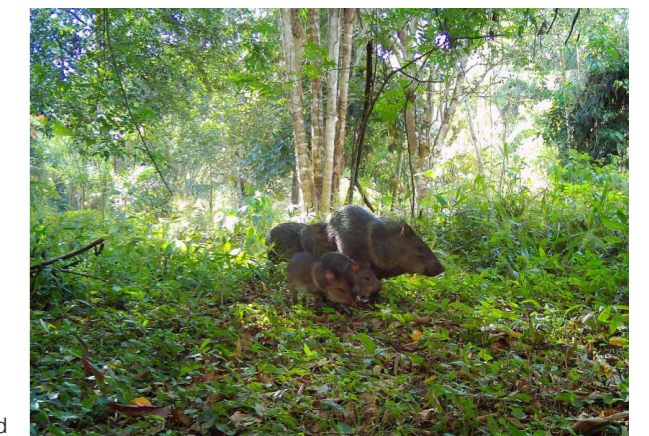
First Tourism Business Summit of the Tambopata Destination, bringing together 45 companies and generating more than 160 B2B meetings. Part of the Destino Tambopata program led by Swisscontact and the Wyss Academy.
Photo: Alex Huarecallo

From individual operators to a unified, trust-based tourism corridor

In 2025, a sustained process of facilitation and technical support by Swisscontact and the Wyss Academy, in close collaboration with public and private actors in the territory, yielded significant results. Local tourism entrepreneurs strengthened their internal governance, advanced formalization efforts, and built shared decision-making spaces. What emerged was the **Bajo Madre de Dios Tourism Association**, now one of the most solidly anchored organizations within the Solutionscape and a key actor in destination-level governance.

Drawing on these strengthened foundations, the Bajo Madre de Dios Tourism Association helped protect more than 18,000 hectares of Amazon forest, supported livelihoods for approximately 350 local families, and generated 162 business-to-business meetings in a single destination-wide encounter. These results reflect a deeper transformation: the consolidation of a previously fragmented tourism landscape into a coordinated, trust-based tourism corridor within the Tambopata destination.

Ultimately, the importance of this model depends on its ability to turn tourism into a concrete conservation strategy. Through voluntary agreements and the use of camera traps and AudioMoths, the association now monitors Amazon forest ecosystems, safeguarding biodiversity and the region's attractiveness for nature-based tourism. To date, acoustic monitoring has recorded 267 species, while camera traps have documented 26 mammal species, demonstrating that when tourism is organized and locally led, it can actively contribute to keeping forests standing while generating long-term value for people and nature.



A family of collared peccaries captured by camera traps in a agroforestry system in Madre de Dios.
Photo: Camera trap record

Main achievements in 2025

From opportunities to enabling conditions for nature-positive enterprises

In 2025, the Hub's facilitation continued to bear fruit. Partners, across different spaces supported by the Wyss Academy, assembled the backbone needed to move nature-positive enterprises from ideas to uptake. The regional innovation ecosystem (DER) secured public funds to launch a Bioeconomy Hub in Tambopata, creating a public anchor for enterprise support. The Amazonia 5.0 Award: Businesses Transforming the Industry was launched under the leadership of **Marca Madre de Dios** and **Fab Lab**. Through a dedicated assessment program, the award aims to acknowledge and incentivize businesses that are closing technology gaps in different areas of their management. Five organizations were selected and are now implementing more resilient and regenerative industrial models. A business development program with **Swisscontact** began working to strengthen



Panel discussion on science and alliances in action for responsible small-scale colluvial gold mining in Madre de Dios.
Photo: Sofia Bedoya

PERUMIN: From silence to constructive dialogues on small-scale gold mining

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) in Madre de Dios is one of the most fundamental challenges for both nature and people. Its environmental impacts and social complexities require sustained, thoughtful attention. Past responses that criminalized miners, excluded them from decision-making, or failed to engage with ASGM’s underlying drivers have not produced lasting change. Leaving ASGM unaddressed does not make the problem disappear. On the contrary, pressures and risks continue to grow.

For this reason, the Wyss Academy applies an evidence-based approach to explore new options and work directly with local actors whose perspectives are often missing from national conversations.

This year, in partnership with the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and the Swiss Embassy in Peru, we brought this perspective to PERUMIN, one of the region’s most important mining conventions. As part of the Technical Group on ASGM, together with Pure Earth, CINCIA, Solidaridad and the Women ASGM Network of Madre de Dios, we highlighted the dynamics and opportunities of colluvial ASGM.

At the Swiss Pavilion, we created an immersive space using videos, miners’ testimonies and printed materials to help visitors gain a deeper understanding of the people and challenges shaping ASGM. The stand generated ongoing conversations with representatives from the public and private sectors, academia, and civil society. In a context traditionally dominated by large-scale mining, we elevated the work of women miners and local leaders, shifting attention toward locally grounded, practical options.

Alongside exchanges and evidence sharing at the stand, the Wyss Academy also contributed to the TIS Forum (Technology, Innovation, and Sustainability Forum), one of PERUMIN’s key platforms. Our main event there brought together more than 100 participants for a discussion on practical steps toward more regulated and responsible ASGM. Additionally, our presence at the “Avenida Académica,” a space shared with other research organizations, enabled deeper exchanges on ongoing research in Madre de Dios.



A moment of informal coordination during a digital creation workshop in the Native Community of Infierno, carried out with our partner FabLab Perú.
Photo: Vico Méndez

Meredith Castro, senior researcher, facilitating a focus group as part of the Indigenous Governance ID in the Native Community of Boca Ishiriwe.
Photo: Vico Méndez



Impact story

Honoring the Past, Producing the Future: Luis Farfán's story

Luis Farfán was born in Puerto Maldonado into a family of farmers. His parents practiced conventional agriculture, growing rice, maize, and subsistence crops. Forest clearing, soil degradation, and low returns were part of the model. "I grew up inside agriculture," Luis says, "but I hated it, I found it boring." For him, farming felt disconnected from nature and offered little long-term promise.

While studying at the university, Luis began exploring alternative approaches to land use. Agroforestry caught his attention. For the first time, he saw the forest not as something to remove, but as a system to understand and emulate. "I started to love the forest in a different way." That shift would shape his life's work.

Luis is a member of the Asociación de Agricultura Ecológica, a collective that has long promoted agroecological and agroforestry practices in Madre de Dios. Building on this collective work, several years later he founded EcoDely (Delicia Ecológica), a small processing enterprise that turns agroforestry harvests into shelf-stable foods. All EcoDely products come from agroforestry systems and are produced without preservatives or artificial flavorings. The processing plant allows products to reach the market with higher added value, strengthening incomes and reinforcing the economic viability of agroforestry.

What has changed is not Luis's vision, but its reach.

Through the support of the Wyss Academy for Nature, agroforestry systems implemented by members of the Asociación de Agricultura Ecológica, including those linked to EcoDely, are now supported with data through the Agroforestry Systems Incubator. The Wyss Academy has supported the installation of agroforestry research plots, helping translate decades of practice into measurable evidence.

For the first time in Madre de Dios, this work shows how much it costs to implement agroforestry systems, what they produce, and how they perform over time. The evidence connects production with data

that can be shared with other farmers and with private and public institutions. This data reduces uncertainty for farmers who hesitate and provides concrete inputs for planning, investment, and policy decisions in the public sector, thereby enabling broader uptake of agroforestry where it fits local conditions.

"Those of us working in agroforestry are not mad. We are on the right path. It's dynamic, you are in constant contact with nature, every element adds value, and most importantly, you are never bored."

Today, the impact of this work reaches beyond Luis himself. His parents continue farming, but have begun integrating agroforestry systems into their own plots. He is also passing this relationship with the forest on to his children—teaching them how forest systems work and how food can be produced without depleting what sustains it. These shifts inside a family matter because they show how practice travels: through everyday decisions as well as through formal collaboration. In parallel, Luis's engagement in the Hub SAM Agroforestry Systems Incubator, a multistakeholder platform supported by the Wyss Academy for Nature, connects lived experience with data—so agroforestry can be assessed, planned, and adopted with greater confidence across Tambopata and Madre de Dios.



Luis Farfán stands among young copoazú seedlings in an agroforestry nursery.

Photo: Alex Huarecallo

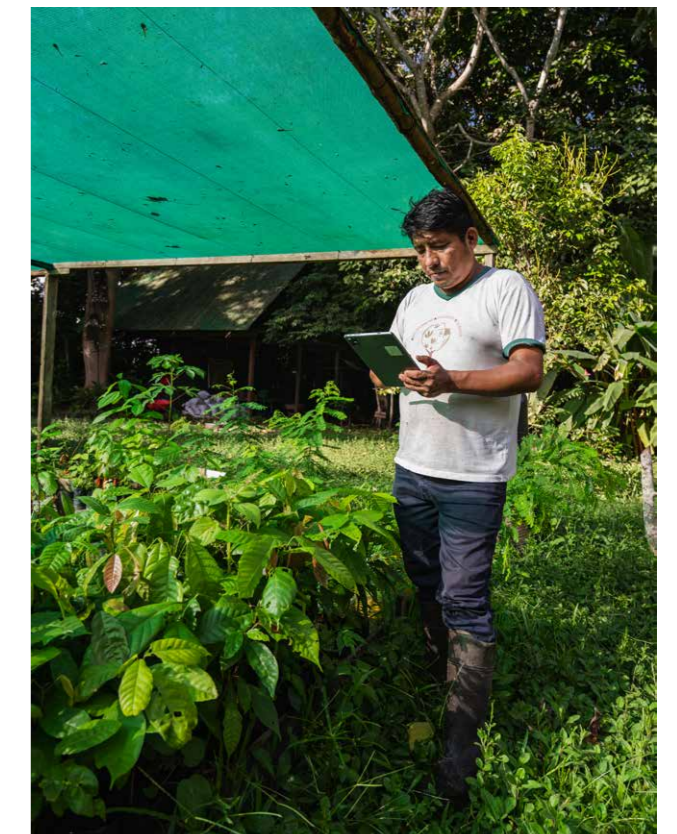
Luis Farfán counts cacao seedlings in the nursery, selecting the plants that are ready for transplanting.

Photo: Alex Huarecallo



Luis Farfán and Elisabeth Lagneaux from the Wyss Academy for Nature installing soil moisture sensors to monitor agroforestry systems.

Photo: Alex Huarecallo





Switzerland

Development of the Grosses Moos

The Solutionscape “Development of the Grosses Moos” is located in a region of the Canton of Bern known as Switzerland’s vegetable garden.

Once a wetland, the Grosses Moos was drained from 1868 onward as part of the Jura water corrections to make space for food production and protect the region from flooding. At the same time, this transformation led to a decline in biodiversity and the steady loss of the nutrient-rich peat soil typical for such peatland landscapes. As a result, the land subsided by up to 2.5 meters.

Today, this creates a set of interconnected challenges. Future crop yields are at risk, water management is becoming more difficult, and there is too little high-quality habitat for threatened species, including migratory birds. The loss of nutrient-rich soil also releases carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change.

To respond to these challenges, the Canton of Bern and the Wyss Academy, together with local partners, developed pilot projects that have been tested in practice since fall 2024. Those involved include farmers, local policymakers, environmental organizations, researchers, and cantonal authorities such as the **Office for Agriculture and Nature (LANAT)** of the Canton of Bern.

Satellite view of the Grosses Moos in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland, highlighting its vibrant patchwork of agricultural fields, densely forested areas and towns, a testament to the region’s diverse and intensive land use. Imagery credits: Planet Labs PBC (2024)

The aim is to help secure future yields, protect biodiversity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the same time. The pilot projects are supported by scientific research and focus on providing proof of concept for possible solutions for healthy, productive agroecosystems.

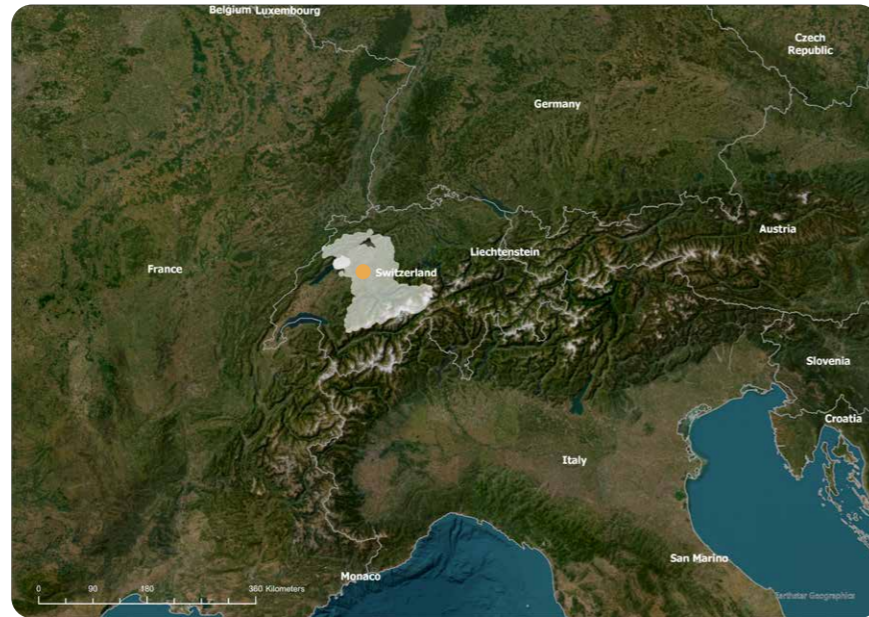
An important foundation for this work is a new soil map, which shows that only limited organic matter remains in the soils of the Grosses Moos today—and that it is distributed very unevenly. This underlines the need for site-specific measures.

In the first growing season in 2025, all five pilot projects made valuable progress and generated important insights.

“Valuable—and in part unexpected—synergies have emerged between the pilot projects.”
Cyrill Hess, Scientific Associate

Where we work

Office: Bern



Our Solutionscape

Solutionscape boundaries



Key Facts

official partnerships
12

exchange and dialogue events
8

pilot projects
5

Daniel Bärtschi, Head of Hub Bern, presenting at Forum Moos in Grosses Moos, where local partners are testing pilot projects for the region's future development.
Photo: Natalia Peralta



Main achievements in 2025

Encouraging yields through passive irrigation

As part of the pilot project "Targeted water management through passive irrigation," a farm in the Grosses Moos is currently testing whether the controlled retention of water in the drainage system can keep the organic soil layers moist while also supplying crops with enough water from below (through capillary rise), thereby reducing the need for irrigation. Measurements from the first growing season in 2025 point to several positive effects. Surface irrigation was reduced significantly, while agricultural yields were higher than expected. At the same time, initial measurements showed lower carbon dioxide emissions compared with similar areas in the region.

(Read more in the impact story.)

A practical view of the passive irrigation pilot in Grosses Moos: Matthias Schwab with the field setup used for monitoring.
Photo: Pia Neuenschwander





A view across the Grosses Moos region—where the Biotopverbund approach focuses on improving and connecting habitat areas, not just adding isolated patches.

Photo: Natalia Peralta

Restored areas bringing multiple benefits

Both agriculture and biodiversity need room to persist. Fifteen percent of the area in the Solutionscape “Development of the Grosses Moos” consists of what are known as biodiversity promotion areas. According to experts, however, two-thirds of these areas provide only limited benefits for biodiversity.

These areas require regular maintenance to retain their ecological value. At the same time, farms are not specialized in managing these biotopes, and the existing incentives are limited compared with the high returns from vegetable production.

The “**Biotopverbund Grosses Moos**,” a local foundation that promotes near-natural areas, has taken on the task of improving these low-value ecological areas through tailored maintenance measures and securing their long-term care. As part of the pilot project “Maintenance and care of biotopes in the Grosses Moos,” the technical basis for this work was created in the form of a digital maintenance tool.

Building on this, a maintenance concept and an innovative governance model were developed. The Biotopverbund aims to improve the quality of these

areas, which leads to higher direct payments. In agreement with the land managers, these additional financial resources are then made available to the Biotopverbund to support ongoing maintenance.

More than 80 restored hedge elements and 40 participating land managers already point to the strength of this approach.



Specially adapted to conditions in Grosses Moos, the “BirdLife rotational fallow” provides birds with a rich supply of insects and seeds.

Photo: Lucas Lombardo

Advisory support helps unlock biodiversity potential

As described before, the Grosses Moos holds considerable potential for creating habitats for species that are now under threat. Led by **BirdLife Switzerland**, the pilot project “Unlocking the potential of biodiversity promotion areas through advisory support” brings together the ecological knowledge of different actors in a comprehensive advisory service that is provided free of charge to farms.

Together with land managers, the project develops farm-specific measures tailored to local conditions and designed to achieve the greatest possible benefit for target species such as the corn bunting, the European turtle dove, the northern lapwing, and the European green toad. The first advisory visits took place in 2025 and were assessed very positively by participating land managers.

The pilot project is complemented by the effort “High-quality biodiversity promotion areas in the right locations.” In this context, new region-specific types of biodiversity promotion areas are being developed. These include site-adapted seed mixes,

combined with groups of shrubs and other structural elements, tailored to the nutrient-rich soils and the local target species. Where needed, plots are also exchanged to ensure strong habitat connectivity.

The impact of the newly developed “Bird&Life rotational fallow” seed mix was examined as part of a master’s thesis. The study compared insect communities on these areas with those found on conventional fallow types in the Grosses Moos. The results show a significant difference in species composition and point to greater taxonomic and functional diversity. The study therefore provides early scientific evidence that site-adapted, target-species-specific seed mixes can make a measurable contribution to biodiversity promotion.

Impact story

Passive Irrigation and Soil Protection – New Pathways for Agriculture in the Grosses Moos

One of the five pilot projects in the Grosses Moos is “Targeted water management through passive irrigation.” Matthias Schwab is testing this new practice-oriented approach on the farm he runs with his family in the Grissachmoos.

Between the Zihl Canal and a major drainage ditch lies one of the lowest points in the municipality of Gals—an area once known by the old field name “Wasserhof” or “water farm.” This is where Matthias Schwab farms today. The name reflects a long-standing challenge with waterlogging. Without drainage, farming in this area would not be possible. “Water always finds its way,” Schwab says. For many, drainage is simply a technical system. For him, it is part of a broader idea: guiding water, protecting soils, and rethinking agriculture.

Pragmatism meets a spirit of inquiry

Matthias Schwab and his family run a farm that includes arable production and dairy farming as part of a joint enterprise. Together with his brother Markus, he also runs a contracting business specializing in potato technology and services related to irrigation and drainage systems. The farm and the contracting business are clearly

separate in organizational and accounting terms. Their roles are equally clear: Matthias develops concepts and ideas for innovation, while Markus assesses them, calculates their feasibility, and takes care of the technical implementation.

Their path was not an easy one. After their father died, the brothers had to take over the family farm at an early stage. “We did not know everything, but we found our way through.” Alongside the farm, their father also passed on a strong spirit of innovation. Back in the 1980s, he installed an electric irrigation system, something unusual at the time. The family also invested early in maintaining the drainage system. Today, Matthias Schwab sees himself as a practitioner with a drive to explore. His motivation is to make agriculture fit for the future, with solutions that benefit not only his own farm, but the wider region as well. “I do not want to make big money. I want to help ensure that our soils are preserved over the long term.”

Demanding soils in the Grissachmoos

The Seeland is fertile, but it is also demanding. The soils in the Grissachmoos are in places heavy, peaty, and sensitive. “Without drainage, our



A working conversation on the Schwab family farm in Grosses Moos—Matthias (right) and Markus Schwab discussing drainage, water, and soil conditions.

Photo: Pia Neuenschwander

farm could not be managed,” Matthias Schwab explains. Heavy rainfall is a particular challenge at this low-lying site: water collects in the fields. In dry periods, by contrast, the upper soil layer quickly becomes hard and cracked. Another factor is the intensive use of the soil after the Second World War, which led to a loss of soil structure. For some time now, however, a mindset shift has been underway, with more care being taken in how the soil is managed. Sustainable land use has become a central concern.

Schwab has tried various approaches to respond to these changing conditions, including soil improvement measures, loosening deeper soil layers, and growing new crops such as sweet potatoes, which are better suited to drier conditions.

Innovation below the surface: passive irrigation

The idea of subirrigation—a passive irrigation method using controlled water retention in drainage pipes—came to Matthias Schwab while driving across his fields. Could it be possible to hold back and use some of the water flowing through the region? It is a striking idea in the Three-Lakes Region, where large volumes of freshwater flow through the landscape.

Schwab brought the idea to the “Forum Ins,” a stakeholder platform launched by the Wyss Academy and the Canton of Bern. There, the concept was developed further together with other actors. The principle is simple: instead of draining water away, some of it is retained in a controlled way. A regulating structure in the main pipe holds back water from the Zihl Canal in the drainage lines. From there, it moves upward toward the root zone through capillary rise, without the need for surface irrigation. The advantages are clear: more even soil moisture, less stress on crops, protection of organic soil layers, and lower carbon dioxide emissions through reduced peat degradation.

Since April 2025, the passive irrigation system has been operating on a large plot. Supported by scientific research from the [University of Neuchâtel](#) and implemented as part of the pilot project “Targeted water management through passive irrigation” in the Grosses Moos, the system is intended to show how well it works, how water is distributed under different conditions, and how hydrogeological processes unfold below the surface.

For Matthias Schwab, making agriculture fit for the future is not a slogan, but a practical responsibility. “It is not about producing as much as possible, but about producing sustainably. At

the same time, not producing is not an option for me.” The next steps are already taking shape. Schwab is considering combining the system with sensor-based surface irrigation and wants to make it accessible to other farms. His message to younger colleagues is clear: “Have the courage to try new paths. Stay open. And above all, always start with the soil.”

For Cyrill Hess, Scientific Associate at the Wyss Academy and responsible for the pilot projects in the Grosses Moos, pioneers such as Matthias Schwab are essential to the success of the Wyss Academy approach. “With our support, they are developing solutions with strong potential for the region and beyond.”

This text was first published in August 2025 in the Swiss agricultural magazine “die grüne” (author: Gil Rudaz). It is reproduced here in a slightly adapted and shortened version.

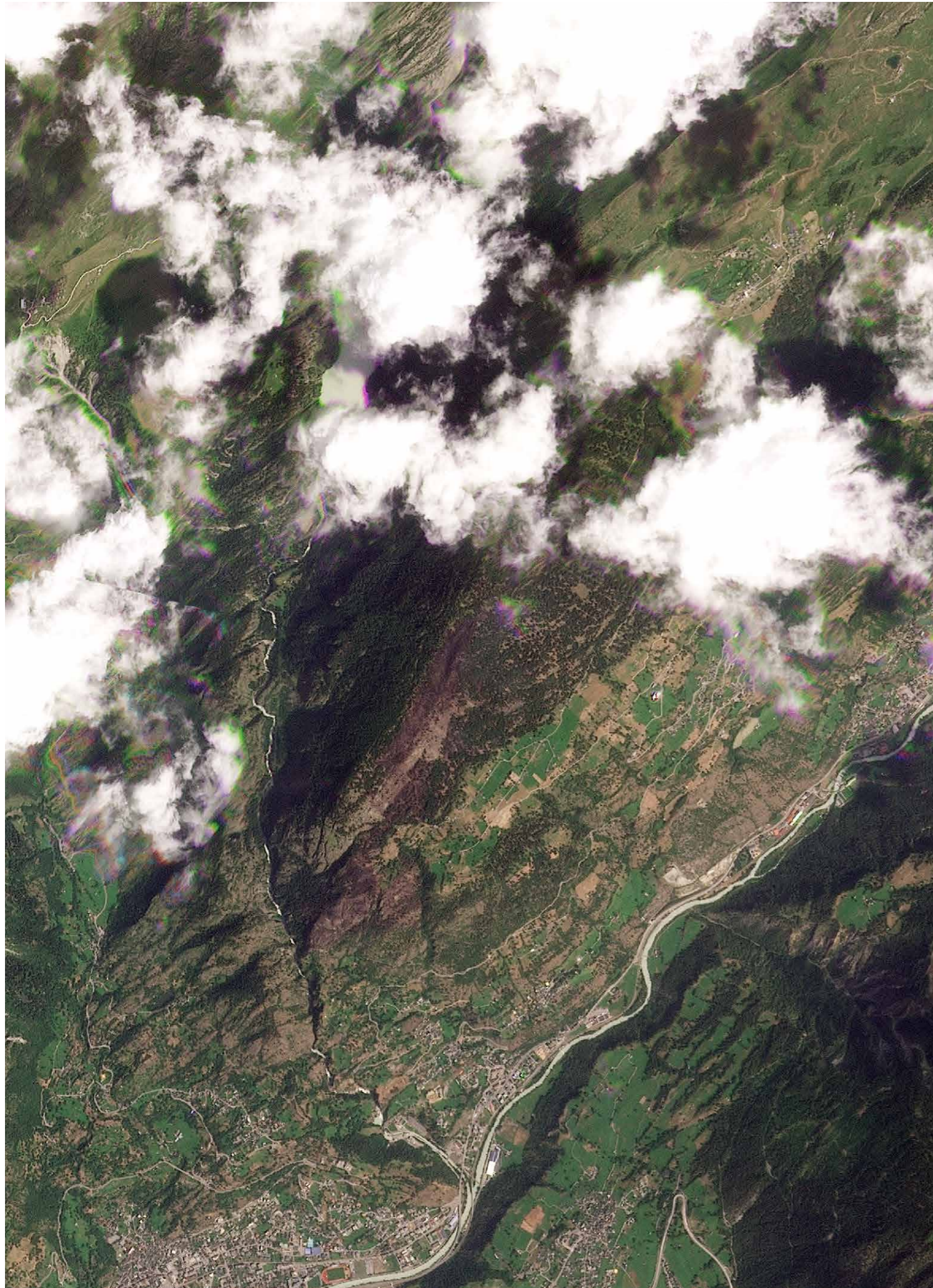
Read the original article here



Fields in Grosses Moos, Switzerland’s “vegetable garden,” where long-term soil health is tightly linked to farm livelihoods.

Photo: Natalia Peralta





Other Hub Bern projects

Spotlight on forests and wood

To ensure that forests in the Canton of Bern continue to meet social, economic, and ecological needs in the future, targeted measures are needed both to address climate change and to support more sustainable forest management.

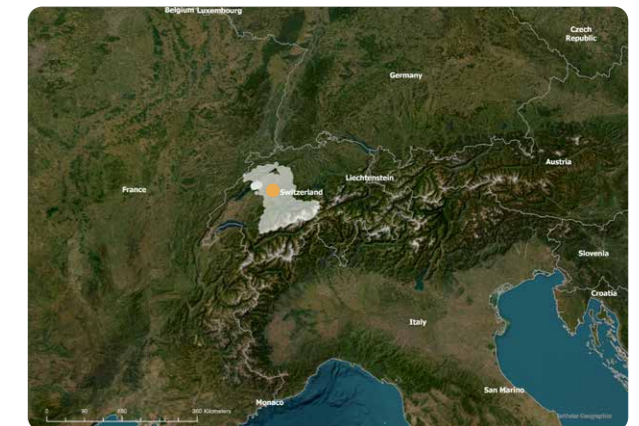
As a result of climate change, the risk of larger forest fires is also rising on the northern side of the Alps. To help prevent them and to respond effectively when fires do occur, Hub Bern at the Wyss Academy for Nature and the **Office for Forests and Natural Hazards of the Canton of Bern (AWN)** are working with partners from research, practice, and local communities in the project “Forest fire management on the northern side of the Alps” to develop tailored strategies and tools. In 2025, the project entered its second, implementation-oriented phase.

The project “Regional value creation in forests and timber” aims to strengthen regional value creation in the forest and timber sector in the canton. In doing so, it seeks to help safeguard forests and the many ecosystem services they provide to society, while also raising public awareness of forest use and timber construction. The first phase of the project was completed in mid-2025, after which it moved into its second phase (2025–2029). Using a participatory approach, the project develops solutions to local challenges in forest management.

Satellite image of July 19, 2023, capturing the Aletschwald forest fire in Switzerland. This devastating event highlights the increasing risks posed by climate change, emphasizing the urgent need for effective forest management and climate resilience strategies to mitigate future disasters.

Imagery credits: Planet Labs PBC (2023)

Where we work



● Office: Bern

Our project region



🗺️ Project region boundaries

Forest fire management on the northern side of the Alps

Larger forest fires have so far been relatively rare on the northern side of the Alps. However, their frequency is expected to increase as a result of climate change. Because reliable projections for the Canton of Bern had been lacking, the first project phase examined how forest fire risk may develop on the northern side of the Alps in the medium and long term.

This work was carried out together with the **Office for Forests and Natural Hazards of the Canton of Bern**, in collaboration with the **University of Bern**, **Bern University of Applied Sciences**, the **Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research**, as well as private sector partners. The Wyss Academy supported and co-financed the project.

In the current second project phase, methods and tools for forest fire prevention and response are being developed based on the findings from Phase 1. This draws on experience and lessons from regions on the southern side of the Alps and in the Mediterranean, adapted to the specific conditions in the Canton of Bern. The project thus contributes to comprehensive risk management that also takes climate change into account.

Key Facts

research partner institutes

5

specialized offices and expert committees involved

5

modules implemented during the first phase of the project

3

new incubator projects started in 2025

2



Photo: Amt für Wald und Naturgefahren

Main achievements in 2025

Developing and testing targeted forest fire awareness measures

In 2025, local implementation began in selected regions of the Canton of Bern, with key findings from the *Perception and Communication* module being discussed and further developed together with local stakeholders. This marks an important step in moving from the development of knowledge bases to practical application. In collaboration with the University of Bern, concrete communication measures to raise awareness of forest fire risk are being developed and tested on site. The three pilot regions, Lauterbrunnen, Meiringen, and Biel/Bienne, differ in their local

conditions, but all are hotspot regions with an elevated risk of forest fires. The project follows a co-design approach in which local stakeholders are actively involved. In Lauterbrunnen, initial workshops were held in August and November 2025 with representatives from the municipality, tourism, the fire service, and the forestry sector.



Local stakeholders are exploring ways to raise awareness that can be tested in the Lauterbrunnen region.
Photo: Amt für Wald und Naturgefahren

Improving hazard assessment

In 2025, the scientific findings from the *Hazard and Risk* module were successfully incorporated into hazard assessment. The identified influence of the foehn and bise wind systems, as well as improved phenological data, were integrated into the existing assessment tool. The new functions were already used during the 2025 forest fire season and were positively evaluated by users.

Site visit as part of the wildfire monitoring in Meiringen: On the burned area, the findings show that trees—especially beech and spruce—continue to die, and the protective forest is increasingly breaking down. Natural regeneration is beginning slowly, but it will take decades before the forest can provide its original protective function again. The monitoring is generating important insights into effective measures after wildfires on the north side of the Alps.
Photo: Amt für Wald und Naturgefahren



Developing regional forest and wood value chains

Sustainable forest and timber management has the potential to become a model for how people and nature can benefit one another. As a renewable raw material, timber plays a key role in supporting more sustainable ways of living. To help realize the vision of a climate-friendly society, timber must be used in ways that also benefit future generations.

Timber can serve many purposes. It is renewable and versatile. It can be used as a construction material, a manufacturing material, or an energy source. At the same time, using timber for the right purpose is essential to ensuring that it is used sustainably and fairly.

The project “Regional value creation in forests and timber” aims to strengthen the regional value created by forests and timber. Working with local decision-makers from the forest and timber sector, politics, and society, the project develops sustainable solutions that support both the protection of forests and the sustainable use of timber as a resource. These measures help sustain the many ecosystem services forests provide while also contributing to economic development.

The first project phase was completed successfully in 2025. Through a total of six incubator projects, the work strengthens the local economy, increases the resilience of the forest and timber sector to climate change, and fosters innovation. In 2025, a doctoral dissertation at the University of Bern and a series of articles were published, offering important insights into transformative, sustainable timber enterprises. The second project phase (2025–2029), consisting of three subprojects, began in mid-2025.

Key Facts

official partnerships with key forestry and timber stakeholders

22

incubator projects completed in 2025

6

doctoral dissertation completed

1

new incubator projects started in 2025

3

Main achievements in 2025

Laying the groundwork for regional value creation in forests and timber

The first project phase (2020–2025) was completed successfully with six incubator projects and a dissertation on transformative small and medium-sized enterprises in the timber-processing sector. In July 2025, this milestone was marked by an event at the Federal Palace in Bern attended by 30 participants.

Overall, the first project phase delivered strong results. It laid important foundations for sustainable regional value creation in forests and timber in the Canton of Bern. For example, it produced a **Timber Compass** on the theme “Municipalities use forests sustainably in carrying out their responsibilities.” A **dialogue platform** was also launched to promote timber as a construction material and, with it, the cascading use of timber. A well-functioning and socially accepted approach to forest management, together with the use of timber as an ecologically sound raw material, makes a substantial contribution to climate protection and broader societal benefits.

Three strategic priorities for the next phase

The project “Regional value creation in forests and timber” entered its second project phase in 2025. The direction of this second phase was shaped to a large extent by feedback from the Wyss Academy dialogue on “**The true value of forests**,” by the findings from the six completed incubator projects, and by the dissertation produced during the first project phase.

The second phase places a stronger focus on broader interconnections and strategic objectives. To support this, three strategic subprojects were defined. They aim to strengthen regional value creation in forests and timber while taking into account the ecologically and socially important ecosystem services provided by forests. First, regional competence centers will provide expert support to clients and project developers building with regional timber. Second, the project “Transformation of the timber value chain” aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the forest and timber sector in the Canton of Bern, foster innovation, and make better use of modern technologies—especially in digital production, processing, and the circular economy. The project also contributes to sustainable forest management and to reducing timber imports. Third, an awareness-raising and information project will help inform the public about the importance of timber use and the many functions of forests.



Participants in the Wyss Academy dialogue “The true value of forests” during a field visit in the Emmental, Canton of Bern.
Photo: Natalia Peralta



Forests in the Canton of Bern provide a wide range of ecosystem services and form the basis for more sustainable regional value creation in timber.

Photo: Natalia Peralta



An audience witnessing an immersive performance piece 'Tany fivelomana – Between Land and Forest' by Artists Antsa Arimalala and Alexandra Baumgartner at Istituto Svizzero, Rome
Photo: Davide Palmieri

Key Highlights

February

The forest: a source of life for everyone

Soft green light. A captivating soundtrack slowly draws the audience in, rustling leaves, flowing water, and the calls of various animals. Amidst it all, two artists invite us to experience “the true value of forests” in their own unique way over the next 40 minutes. **‘Tany fivelomana – Between Land and Forest’** is the first presentation of a work in development, a multichannel audiovisual exploration by artists Antsa Arimalala and Alexandra Baumgartner, presented on February 28, 2025 in Rome. In the Sala Elvetica at **Istituto Svizzero**, the audience witnessed an immersive performance where music, visual installations, forest sounds, and powerful testimonies of people who live with and from the forest came together. The piece features voices from, among others, the inhabitants of Madagascar’s Masoala Peninsula, for whom the rainforest is a vital source of livelihood.

Alexandra Baumgartner and Antsa Arimalala describe their approach as a visible way to present the concept of ‘Tany fivelomana’ – a Malagasy term for ‘sustainable land management’ referring to practices that meet the needs of nature without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

‘Tany fivelomana’ is a work in development resulting from the collaboration between Antsa Arimalala and Alexandra Baumgartner as part of the art&science residency “On Forests”, a project marking the first collaboration between Istituto Svizzero and the Wyss Academy for Nature. The residency revolves around the theme “The True Value of Forests”, based on the series of events held in the course of 2024, the **Wyss Academy Dialogues**. The collaboration began in Switzerland, where the artists met during the regional Dialogues in the Emmental valley and visited the Toppwald forest. Further research and fieldwork took them to Madagascar, where they also participated in the regional Dialogue, explored the Masoala rainforest, conducted interviews with stakeholders, and recorded forest sounds. Their research also included a visit to the

COP16 Biodiversity Conference in Colombia and the Masoala Hall at **Zurich Zoo**. The 2-month residency at Istituto Svizzero in Rome in 2025 allowed them to reflect on their experiences and to collaboratively start to develop their art project.

As the project continues to take shape, Tany fivelomana has already inspired further exchanges — including discussions with Malagasy participants of the regional Dialogue, our Changemakers, and academic audiences such as at the University of Bern. These encounters show how the work is growing through dialogue and shared experiences.



During a field immersion at Castaña Amazon Park, Changemakers traced the nut processing journey and spoke with local practitioners about quality, markets, and the everyday decisions that shape forest-based livelihoods and conservation outcomes.

Photo: Alex Huarecallo

May – December

Changemakers: What youth leadership looks like in practice

The Changemakers Program (CMP) is a youth leadership and innovation initiative of the Wyss Academy for Nature, co-designed with young people and developed in collaboration with Emzingo and Goodwall, to empower emerging leaders from the Academy’s regional hubs to drive positive environmental and social change. Launched in 2023 and continuing with its second and final cohort, the program brings together young entrepreneurs, policy advocates, and community innovators from regions including Switzerland, Peru, Kenya, and Madagascar, offering mentorship, project development support, and a blended focus on entrepreneurship and policy

advocacy. While the CMP itself concludes with this second cohort, youth stewardship, local leadership development, and entrepreneurship will remain core priorities in the Wyss Academy’s next strategic phase. Through a tailored curriculum, strong local and international partnerships, and a global peer network, the CMP equips participants with the skills, tools, and connections needed to design and lead community-driven solutions, while fostering longterm engagement between Changemakers and the Wyss Academy’s broader innovation and impact portfolio.

The 2025 edition kept the six-month arc and strengthened entrepreneurship and policy engagement. This cohort was deliberately rooted in our landscapes, building from place-based insights and partnerships to trigger a ripple effect within local youth communities and ecosystem partners. Local welcome days in all three countries set the tone with cultural exchange and partner briefings (with **Impact Kenya**, **Nature Explorers Peru**, and **Youth**

First Madagascar). The learning journey began with community immersions, interviews, and observation, tools to understand problems before proposing solutions. Participants then moved into ideation and early prototyping, supported by small group coaching and one-to-one mentoring. At key milestones, they presented work-in-progress to peers and experts, received structured feedback, and refined both their concepts and how they explain them.

Mid-year, training shifted to strategy and financing—fundraising options, theory of change, investor relations, and stakeholder collaboration—paired with field experiences through local Hubs, such as a rangelands and pastoralism immersion in Kenya and a skills and reflection workshop in Peru. Storytelling remained central: a participant-led series highlighted projects from Madagascar, showing how narratives can mobilize partners and communities. The cohort closed the cycle with advocacy frameworks, presentation craft, and region-specific showcases. In parallel, the Changemakers Program engaged in a strategic collaboration with Aiducation through the Jumpstart Academy in Kenya, a one-week capacity training designed to strengthen entrepreneurship skills among both the current cohort and Changemakers alumni as well as Aiducation alumni, reinforcing cross-cohort and interorganizational peer learning that can continue beyond the CMP’s formal conclusion.

The final in-person summit of the Changemakers Program brought together participants from regional hubs, creating a shared space for exchange, reflection, and connection at the close of the six-month journey. By convening Changemakers from different geographic and thematic contexts, the summit enabled participants to share the challenges youth are facing across regions, recognize one

another as collaborators rather than isolated actors, and deepen their mutual understanding of the people–nature dynamics shaping each other’s landscapes. As the CMP concludes after its second cohort, this collective moment served as a bridge toward the Wyss Academy’s future youth engagement pathways, ensuring continuity in relationships, learning, and leadership despite the program’s closure.

The 2025 cohort leaves with community insights, workable drafts of solutions, and the confidence to communicate their ideas to different audiences, built over a year of varied methods and place-based learning. Their work embodies the program’s intention to seed change locally and catalyze a broader ripple effect across landscapes and youth networks. It reflects a way of working that starts with what people share and see on the ground, improves ideas in the open, and then carries them into the rooms where choices are made.



Changemakers in a workshop during the Summit Opening in Peru
Photo: Alex Huarecallo



Sarah-Lan Mathez-Stiefel
during a workshop
Photo: Juan Carlos Huayllapuma

July – December

Indigenous knowledge, on the record—Dr. Sarah-Lan Mathez-Stiefel’s role in GEO-7

Global Environment Outlook 7, the flagship assessment of **UN Environment Programme** (UNEP), was released on 9 December 2025 at **UNEA-7** in Nairobi. It synthesizes evidence across climate, biodiversity, land degradation, and pollution, and frames action around the transformation of five systems: energy, food, materials and waste, economy and finance, and environmental management. One achievement sits behind the pages: a consent-based way to bring Indigenous and local knowledge into a global report, on the record and with accountability. For the first time in the GEO series, Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge was systematically included through a documented process, with dedicated space in the report and in the **Executive Summary** for decision-makers.

Dr. Sarah-Lan Mathez-Stiefel, an Associated Senior Researcher at the Wyss Academy for Nature, played a central role in that work. As co-convenor of the Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge Task Force, she helped guide how this knowledge was brought into GEO-7 in collaboration with the report’s Co-Chairs. At the same time, she served as Coordinating Lead Author for one of the report’s Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge chapeaux and was part of the wider author team that helped shape this contribution across the assessment.

The process mattered as much as the outcome. GEO-7’s approach combined several elements: a dedicated task force, Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge content embedded across all

chapters, five stand-alone chapeaux, and a series of dialogues with representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The dialogues report informed both GEO-7 and the Executive Summary, helping ensure that Indigenous and local perspectives were not treated as an add-on, but as part of the evidence base used to inform global environmental decision-making.

The same standards guide our work with Indigenous communities in Peru, with Sarah-Lan in the lead. Since 2023, the Wyss Academy for Nature, **FENAMAD**, and the **Centre for Development and Environment** (CDE) have co-developed an Indigenous governance project in Madre de Dios. The focus is on characterizing Indigenous territorial governance schemes and assessing their impacts on the well-being of people and nature. It also includes developing strategies to support these schemes and strengthening leadership through an Indigenous Researchers Program.

The continuity is deliberate: the principles that helped shape GEO-7—consent, review, attribution, and accountability—are the same ones that guide Sarah-Lan and the team’s work with Indigenous communities in Peru. In practice, this means that knowledge is not extracted and translated elsewhere. It is co-produced, reviewed with participants, grounded in relationships, and carried forward in ways that recognize authorship, strengthen governance, and connect local realities to larger processes of environmental change.

A fireside chat at the Locarno Film Festival: Carolin Roth moderating a discussion on “The Changing Prerequisites for Peace—Adapting to New Realities” with Laurent Goetschel (swisspeace), Pierre Krähenbühl (ICRC), Carlos Álvarez Pereira (Club of Rome), Amina Mohamed, Nathalie Chuard (DCAF), and Peter Messerli (Wyss Academy for Nature).
Photo: Predrag Tripkovic



August

Impact partnership with the Locarno Film Festival

In 2025, the Wyss Academy launched a pilot partnership with the **Locarno Film Festival**, one of Europe’s most renowned film festivals, drawing on its conviction that culture – and cinema in particular, holds the power to spark the systemic change needed to transform our relationship with nature, going beyond scientific evidence alone. Through this collaboration, held in August, the Wyss Academy engaged with leaders from philanthropy, science, policy, business, and culture to explore opportunities for accelerating systems change.

Co-hosting Diplomacy Day proved to be one of the highlights of the collaboration, where Peter Messerli, Director of the Wyss Academy, discussed the links between peace and nature in a conversation with Laurent Goetschel (**Swisspeace**), Kenyan Ambassador Amina C. Mohamed, Pierre Krähenbühl (**International Committee of the Red Cross**), Carlos Álvarez Pereira (**Club of Rome**), and Ambassador Nathalie Chuard (**Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance**). Marking the 100th anniversary of the Locarno Peace Treaties, the event brought together over 200 leaders from diplomacy, business, and civil society. Peter Messerli stressed the need to tackle the root causes of conflict, environmental damage, and inequality—and to rethink the systems that drive them. A key point: see people and the planet as one, not as separate.

The partnership with the Locarno Film Festival also extended to the **Open Doors Connect – Wyss Academy Development Track**, where we support film production in Kenya and Madagascar, two countries where the Wyss Academy’s Hub East Africa promotes the coexistence of nature and people by preserving the connectivity, functionality, and health of ecosystems. This initiative includes a Film Production Fund and is aimed at filmmakers whose work highlights innovative approaches to biodiversity conservation and human well-being alike.

As part of its engagement, the Wyss Academy also contributed to the Pardo Verde, an award which honors films addressing environmental and societal challenges. Despite their diversity, all of the 12 works that the jury viewed shared a common thread: an urgent concern for the environment and the natural world, each expressed through a unique artistic lens. This year’s **Pardo Verde** was awarded to *Mare’s Nest* by Ben Rivers, a cine-poem inspired by a play by Don DeLillo.



Tatjana von Steiger (left) joins partners and peers at a UN General Assembly roundtable on youth-led entrepreneurship for climate resilience, New York. Photo: Justin Sission

September

Youth entrepreneurship for climate resilience in focus at UNGA roundtable

At the [UN General Assembly](#) in New York on 25 September 2025, the Wyss Academy for Nature joined [Goodwall](#), [JA Worldwide](#), [Generation Unlimited \(UNICEF\)](#), and [WISE-Qatar Foundation](#) to host a leadership roundtable on youth-led entrepreneurship for climate resilience. The event brought together leaders from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors to explore how youth entrepreneurship can drive inclusive growth while addressing climate and biodiversity challenges.

Tatjana von Steiger drew on lessons from the [Changemakers Program](#), piloted with Goodwall and partners in 2023. She pointed to the overwhelming interest in the program as evidence that young people are eager to shape sustainable futures. Yet she stressed that opportunities must go beyond job creation: Youth-led ventures rooted in nature and backed by science have the power to strengthen livelihoods and support ecosystem health.

Thanks to the program's design—grounded in the landscapes where the Wyss Academy works—young participants gain practical skills. In Madagascar, for example, these are used to design business models to sustain information centers in the buffer zone of the Masoala National Park.

“Let’s invest in youth-led, locally grounded initiatives—ones shaped by the priorities and solutions of those who live the challenges. The health of these landscapes is in all our interests. Supporting youth visions backed by science is not just the right thing to do—it’s a smart, high-impact investment,” said Tatjana von Steiger.

For the Wyss Academy for Nature, the roundtable was a space to bring its perspective into global debates: that youth innovation cannot succeed in isolation. It needs clear pathways—from skills to finance to markets—and partnerships that connect public, private, and local actors. Building such connections is not only about creating opportunities for young people but about shaping more resilient futures for nature and people alike.

A moment with the Wyss Academy for Nature team at FLARE 2025—connecting research and on-the-ground experience from Madre de Dios with wider forest and livelihoods debates. Photo: Sofía Bedoya



October

Forest governance and livelihoods: insights from FLARE 2025

From 23–27 October 2025, the [FLARE](#) Network, an international community linking research on forests and livelihoods to practice and policy, met in Lima with [Universidad de Ingeniería y Tecnología \(UTEC\)](#). Opening the week, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal warned that the climate agenda is in “its most fragile moment,” citing denialism, weakened institutions, and shifting geopolitics. That diagnosis set the tone: if credibility is strained, the work is to make pathways from knowledge to decisions more visible and more trusted.

The Wyss Academy for Nature served as host, presenter, and convener, bringing field evidence from Madre de Dios and our way of linking science, policy, and local knowledge into the conversation for policy audiences. Our focus was clear: forests and livelihoods, seen from territorial realities. Colleagues presented work from Madre de Dios on setting a shared research agenda, rethinking land governance, learning from Indigenous territorial governance, and linking land use change to ecosystem services and well-being. We also shared lessons from Dialogues with Purpose and a standardized approach to measuring social and human well-being. Across sessions, the common thread was straightforward: bridge science, policy, and local knowledge; co-design with those who carry out decisions; keep methods and measures open.

A core outcome follows from that stance. The Wyss Academy will lead a synthesis for policymakers—distilling insights, debates, and innovations into guidance that institutions can use. To advance this, we co-hosted “Science and Policy: Transforming Forest Governance” with the [FLARE Secretariat](#) and [University of Notre Dame](#), bringing together public agencies, Indigenous organizations, civil society, the private sector, and universities.

[FLARE 2025](#) left a clear task: turn shared knowledge into accountable choices. That means trust across sectors, evidence legible to institutions, and steady follow-up, so forests and the people who depend on them benefit from better decisions.

October

Novartis Lecture: From Insight to Impact—Transforming Systems for Nature and People

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and the rise of inequality and conflict make one thing unmistakably clear: profound transformation is not optional. The only question is whether it will happen by disaster—or by design. In his lecture at **Novartis Campus** on October 30, Professor Peter Messerli, Director of the Wyss Academy, explored how just and equitable transformations can safeguard both people and the planet. Drawing on research and concrete examples from the Wyss Academy’s work in Kenya, Madagascar, Switzerland, and Peru, he demonstrated how insights can be transformed into impact by bridging science, policy, and practice. “Science is key for achieving just transformation”, he said. “And lasting transformation happens when science listens to local communities.”

The lecture was followed by an inspiring conversation – moderated by Nelly Riggenschach, Director Brand Experience at Novartis, with Hansjörg Wyss, whose recently published biography *The Art of Impact* underscores how visionary action can shape the world we live in, Korab Zuka, Chief Sustainability Officer at Novartis, and Peter Messerli.



Watch on YouTube

A moment from Peter Messerli’s lecture at Novartis Campus, drawing links between environmental change, inequality, and decision-making.

Photo: Novartis



November

COP30 in Belém: Science, policy, and practice for the Amazon and beyond

From 10–21 November 2025, **COP30** took place in Belém, bringing negotiations into the Amazon’s political and ecological realities. Scrutiny of access, safety, and footprint turned attention from symbolism to delivery: how, then, do decisions made in plenary rooms become actions in specific places?

On this occasion, the Wyss Academy for Nature hosted two discussions at the Goeldi Museum, bringing science, policy, and practice into the same room to examine how place-based approaches can link forests and local economies, so that commitments become workable programs for people and nature. The sessions reflected long-term commitments in the South American Solutionscape: co-creating grounded insights with partners, strengthening governance, and advancing equitable pathways that protect biodiversity and livelihoods.

Territories for resilience: connecting climate, forests, risks, and economies

Our first session’s core insight was practical: territorial approaches are foundational for building resilience — connecting climate risk reduction, near-forest economies, and inclusive governance. By focusing on places, as well as the people and institutions shaping them, actors can co-develop solutions that fit socio-ecological realities, then share grounded lessons across borders. The event also highlighted the importance of co-creating knowledge, empowering women and youth, and leveraging regional cooperation platforms like **ACTO** to amplify local voices and scale impact.



Miguel Saravia, Wyss Academy for Nature, opening up a discussion on territorial approaches to climate risk, forests, and local economies at the Goeldi Museum.

Photo: Alem Viana

Alliances under the canopy: co-creating the future of the Amazon

Our session “Alliances under the canopy” invited participants to reflect on the multidimensional value of forests and to identify synergies for stronger regional governance. The discussion surfaced how narratives, policy instruments, and investments can be aligned to support a low-carbon, resilient future in which forests are protected, and local well-being improves.

Participants discussed the connections of regional cooperation to on-the-ground collaboration, pointing to opportunities where science can inform policy choices and where local knowledge can guide program design. The conversation was less about declarations and more about values and working principles: shared evidence, clear roles, and practical coordination across institutions.

As Tatjana von Steiger notes in her **ÖBU report on COP30**, “Lasting change only succeeds when knowledge is shared, new forms of cooperation are tested, and those affected are heard.” In Belém, that meant convening partners, clarifying roles, and surfacing methods we can adapt and apply across the Amazon Solutionscape, so that commitments become programs that work for people and forests.



Cecilia Olima, pictured above, and Simangele Sithole, pictured below, PhD candidates in the Integrative Biodiversity and Conservation Sciences Research Team, work on questions that link ecosystem services and conservation finance to more resilient pathways for people and nature.

Photo: Predrag Tripkovic

Our publications

In 2025, Wyss Academy members authored, contributed to, or commissioned a total of 59 scientific articles and other publications. Discover their insights and findings by exploring the full list of publications.

Wyss Academy co-authored publications:

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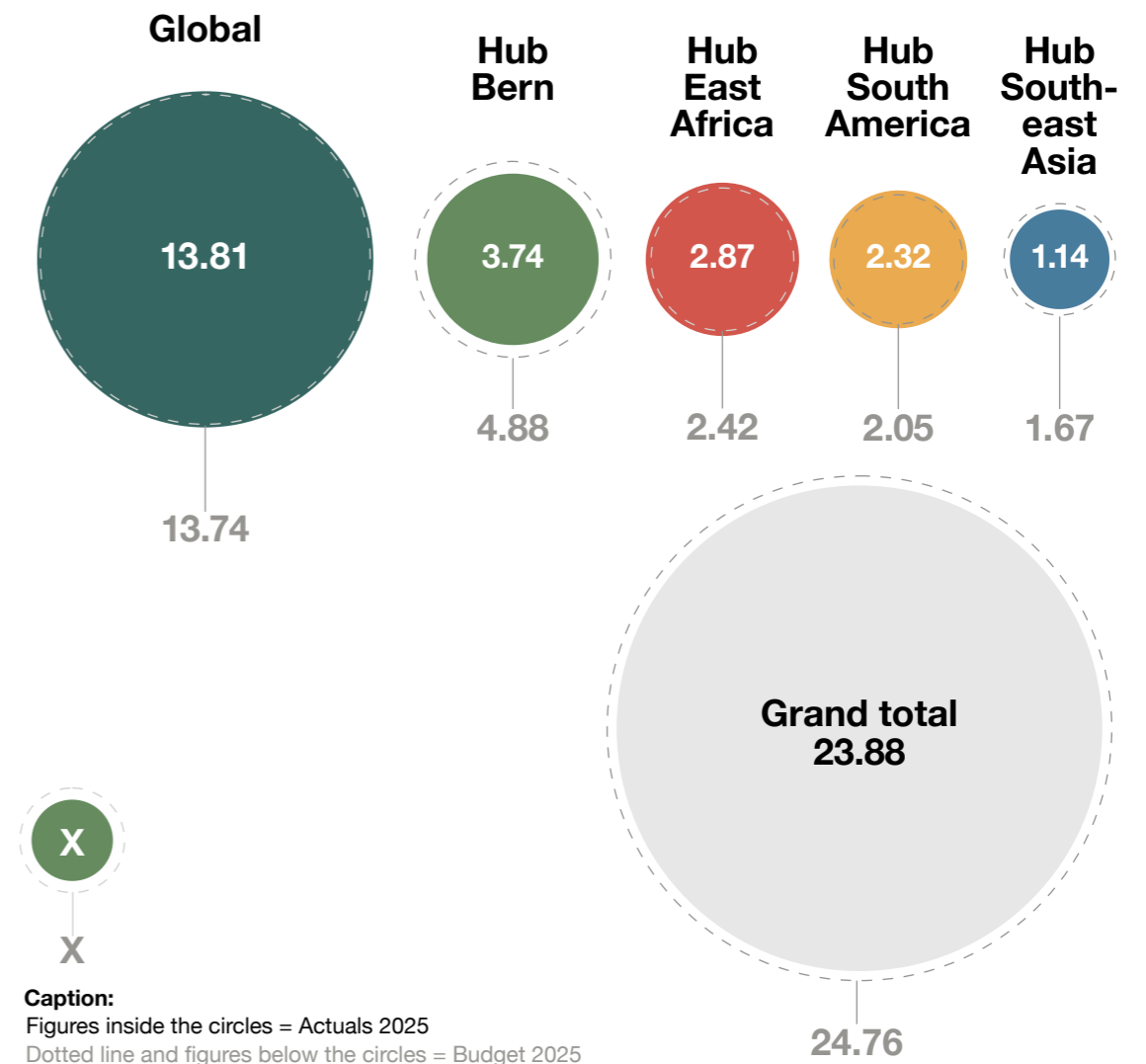
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Facts and figures

A few key figures offer an overview of how 60 Wyss Academy projects contributed in 2025 to achieving 11 of the 12 strategic objectives, in alignment with the organization’s three overarching strategic goals. The year marked a transition phase for the Wyss Academy, as the organization built on the achievements of its first five years, sharpened its focus, and prepared the next phase while remaining fully operational. An overall implementation rate of 96.5% was achieved, representing a slight decrease compared to the previous year. These 2025 outcomes were made possible through the joint efforts of 104 staff members, along with partners and allies around the world.

Spending 2025: Implementation by regions

in million CHF



Looking at the project costs from a regional perspective, 16% of the total cost was spent on projects in Hub Bern, while the Hubs East Africa, Southeast Asia and South America accounted for 26% of the project expenditure. 58% of project expenditure was allocated to global projects and strategic objectives in 2025. They serve the further development of all four Hubs, as well as the global projects, research activity of the Research & Innovation teams, and the Policy Outreach engagement activities around the world.

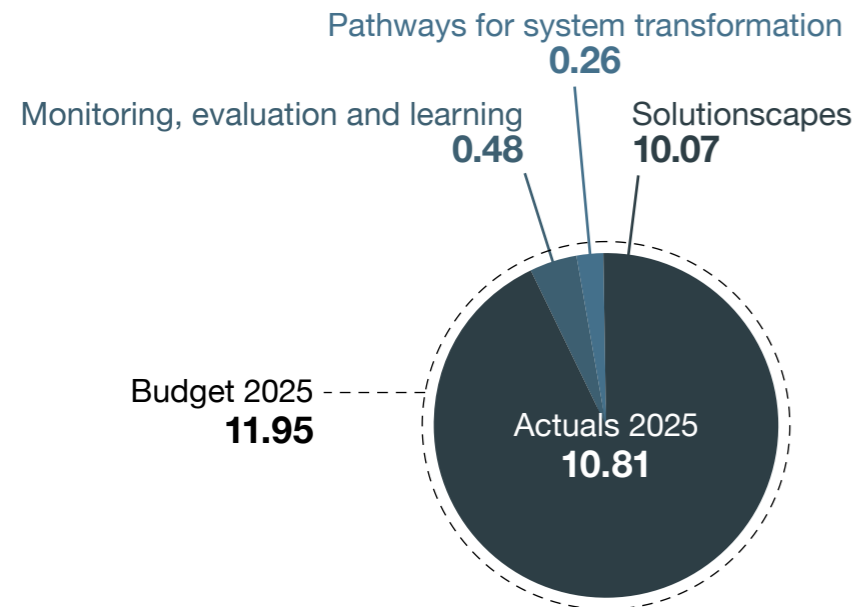
Spending 2025: Implementation by strategic goals and objectives

in million CHF

In the sixth year of the Wyss Academy, a total of 60 projects contributed to the implementation of 11 out of 12 strategic objectives, which are structured according to the three strategic goals defined in the 2022-2025 strategy process. An overall implementation rate of 96.5% represents a decrease of 5% compared to the previous year.

Goal 1 Demonstrate concrete pathways

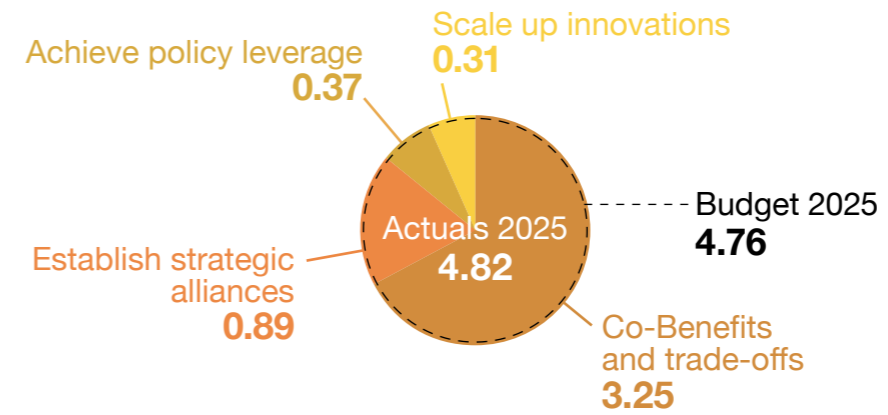
in million CHF



An implementation rate of 90% was observed under Strategic Goal 1, which aims to identify very specific transformation paths. This amounted to 45% of the total expenses in 2025 and 35 projects.

Goal 2 Inspire a new social contract

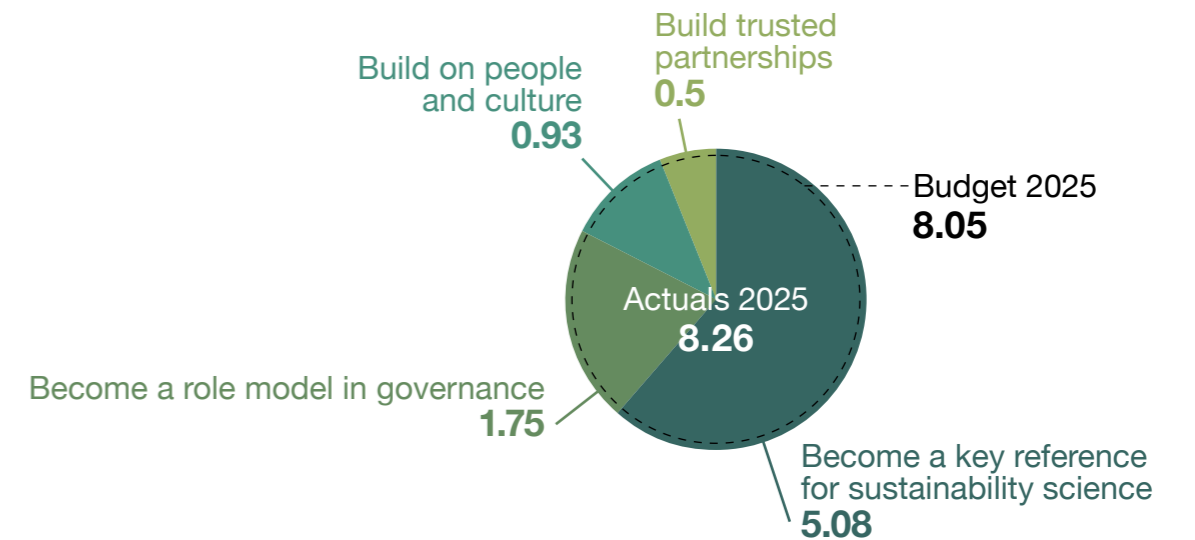
in million CHF



Strategic Goal 2, which focuses on inspiring a new social contract with nature, was implemented just above 100% of the expenditure of the planned activities in 12 projects, and accounts for around 20% of the costs in 2025.

Goal 3 Become a global enabler of innovations

in million CHF



Strategic Goal 3, centered on becoming a global enabler of innovation for a just system transformation, was implemented at a rate of 103% of the planned budget, which corresponds about 35% of the total project costs in 13 projects.



The Wyss Academy in numbers

In 2025, while the total number of projects initiated decreased by 33% and turnover decreased by 6%, the proportion of costs accounted for by additional third-party funding acquired for innovation projects amounted to 9.8%. In 2025, outreach through scientific articles and other publications totaled 59, while teaching activities increased from 14 to 18 in 2025. Across 130 engagement and outreach activities, the Wyss Academy connected with people, institutions, and stakeholders, while communication and campaign activities led to a 34.8% increase in social media audience growth, reaching 15,905 followers. The Wyss Academy and its members also gained visibility through

84 media features, mentions, and outreach items on external websites around the world. The number of employees increased by 13.3% in 2025, growing to 104 employees by the end of the year. Our employees have an average age of 40 years and come from 19 countries.

*The methodology for flight emissions was updated in 2024, including an increase of the Radiative Forcing Index from 2 to 3 (see details: myclimate). The change in methodology resulted in a median increase of CO₂eq emissions per flight of approximately 25%. Additionally, note that around 2/3 of flight emissions reported are non-CO₂ emissions, such as nitrous oxide, water vapor, soot and sulfate aerosols, and increased cloudiness due to contrail formation.

Financial overview

During the 2025 financial year, the Wyss Academy entered a phase of strategic refinement following the comprehensive institutional evaluation conducted in 2024. Activities across the Regional Stewardship Hubs largely continued as planned, with the transfer of our operational focus from Laos to Thailand leading to a lower level of implementation in that Hub. Research activities generated scientific evidence in support of Solutionscape implementation and the Policy Outreach activities were dedicated to policy-relevant engagements. The organization reached a stable size, with the workforce increasing slightly from 92.6 to 94.7 FTE (full-time equivalent) at year-end.

Project implementation continued at a high level, with an implementation rate of 96.5% against the approved budget. Although compared to 2024, operating expenses decreased by 6% year-on-year. Project expenditures at Hub Bern were below projections, resulting in lower overall income, together with the approved one year no-cost extension of the funding period, which spread funding inflows across 11 instead of 10 years, without reducing the overall core funding commitment.

The financial result reflects operating income of CHF 10.36 million, operating expenses of CHF 23.88 million, and financial income of CHF 0.04 million, leading to a negative result of CHF -13.48 million. As planned, accumulated equity was further utilised, reducing the carried forward balance to CHF 7.29 million by year-end and marking the conclusion of the Wyss Academy's first strategic period.

Financial overview

Balance sheet 2025

Assets	CHF
Cash and cash equivalents	12,858,882
Current financial assets	3,215,208
Receivables from services	2,465,575
Other short-term receivables	5,081,465
Advance payments Regional Hubs	353,241
Prepayments and accrued income	90,536
Current assets	24,064,907
Tangible fixed assets	684,610
Intangible assets	42,092
Non-current assets	726,702
Total assets	24,791,609
Liabilities and foundation capital	CHF
Payables from goods and services	3,765,710
Other short-term liabilities	80,938
Accrued liabilities and deferred income	1,836,279
Short-term provisions	1,822,192
Current liabilities	7,505,120
Foundation capital	10,000,000
Result carried forward	20,768,668
Result of the year	-13,482,178
Total foundation capital	17,286,489
Total liabilities and foundation capital	24,791,609

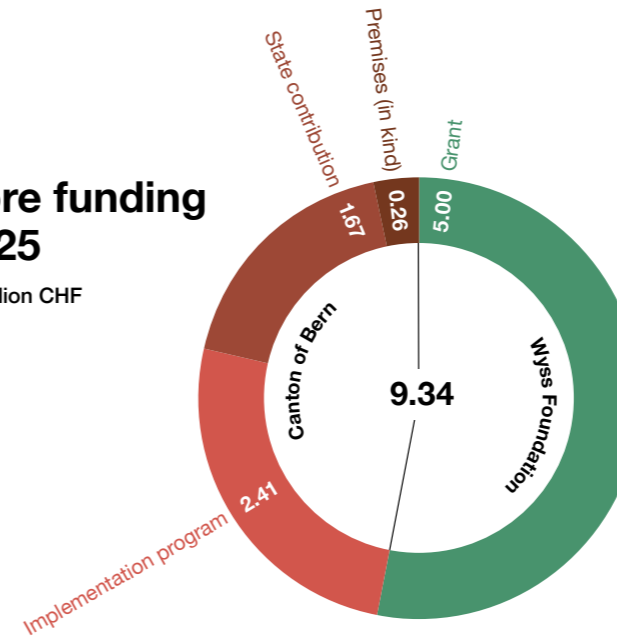
Income statement 2025

	CHF
Donor contributions	6,930,000
Income for implementation program Hub Bern	2,414,544
Other third-party funding by Canton of Bern	794,384
Other third-party funding for projects, research and services	214,821
Other operating income	9,256
Total operating income	10,363,004
Project expenses	-10,146,316
Personnel expenses	-11,997,290
Other operating expenses	-1,388,514
Depreciation of tangible assets	-274,657
Amortization on intangible assets	-77,123
Total operating expenses	-23,883,900
Operating result	-13,520,896
Financial result	38,718
Ordinary result	-13,482,178
Extraordinary result	0
Result of the year	-13,482,178

Funding

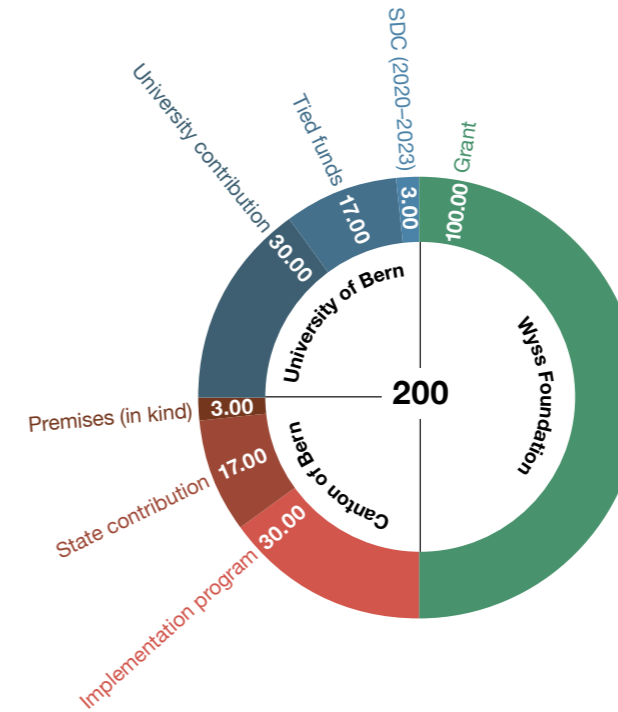
Core funding 2025

in million CHF



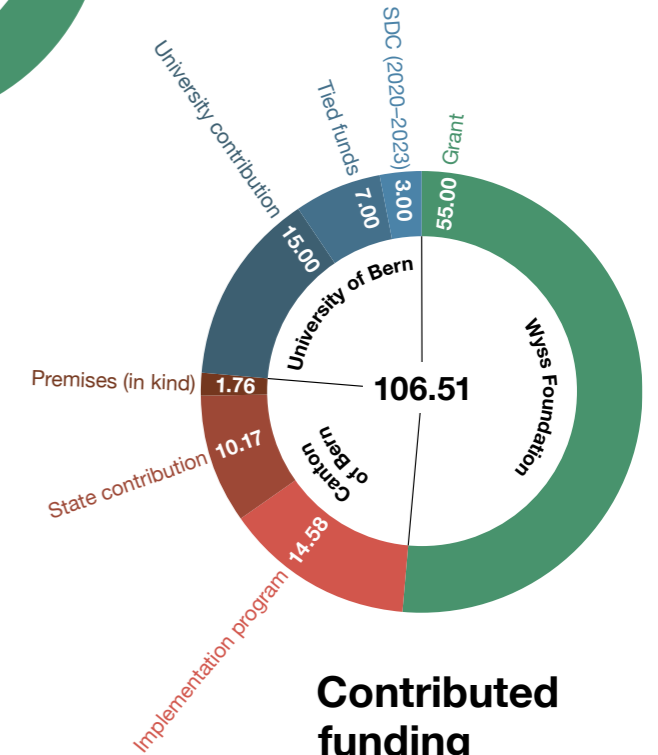
Committed funding 2020–2030*

in million CHF



Contributed funding 2020–2025

in million CHF



Donor	Purpose	Committed funding 2020–2030*	Average per year	Core funding (Income) 2025	Contributed funding 2020–2025	Remaining commitment 2026–2030
Wyss Foundation	Grant	100.00	10.00	5.00	55.00	45.00
Canton of Bern	Implementation program	30.00	3.00	2.41	14.58	15.42
	State contribution	17.00	1.70	1.67	10.17	6.83
	Premises (in kind)	3.00	0.30	0.26	1.76	1.24
University of Bern	University contribution	30.00	3.00	–	15.00	15.00
	Tied funds	17.00	1.70	–	7.00	10.00
SDC	SDC (2020–2023)	3.00	0.30	–	3.00	–
Total		200.00	20.00	9.34	106.51	93.49

*including one year of no-cost extension

About us

The Wyss Academy for Nature is a foundation that offers a new approach to pressing issues at the intersection of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land use change, including their implications for human well-being and inequality. Operating across four different Hubs around the world, it aims to bridge the gap between understanding these problems and implementing concrete action in response.

What we do

Our mission is to develop and catalyze solutions that transform the relationship between people and nature. We use the power of knowledge and the creativity of engagement to empower agents of change.

The Wyss Academy for Nature was created to do things differently – to help solve complex problems that have been affecting not just the environment, but ever more people around the world.

The challenges we face

Our vision for the future is a world in which the relationship between people and nature is both just and mutually beneficial.

But our planet is facing existential problems: such as climate breakdown, biodiversity loss, poverty, and inequality.

In an increasingly hyperconnected world, these cannot be addressed separately. They are interconnected and may have multiple causes. There is no silver bullet answer to these wicked problems: A solution that works

in one landscape or for one person (or animal, or plant) can be another's burden. Untangling the knots may bring surprises and unexpected side-effects.

Our answer

To deal with the complex existential problems of biodiversity loss, climate breakdown, unjust land use, poverty and inequality, a new approach is needed. We must address the driving forces behind them, by fundamentally transforming the systems that affect our relationship with nature and with each other – such as how we produce our food, run the economy, generate energy, or plan and organize our cities.

At the Wyss Academy for Nature, we follow a unique approach to overcome the growing gap between understanding the problems and concrete action. In our four Regional Hubs in South America, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central Europe, we bring together researchers and other knowledge holders with local communities, civil society organizations, businesses and policy makers. Together, we co-design, test, and implement solutions that have the potential to change local and transregional systems. Such solutions are tested and evaluated within real-world labs, uniting scientific and traditional knowledge. We call this approach: Solutionscapes.

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Back cover photo: Two residents wade across a river in northeastern Madagascar, carrying goods on a pole between villages and fields
Photo: [Drones.mg](https://www.drones.mg)

Together, we create
a new relationship
with nature

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