United Nations
Convention to Combat Desertification

Business for Land

Powering a Land-Positive Economy

The UNCCD's main private sector vehicle is uniting global businesses to combat land degradation by driving land-positive practices to protect both economic and environmental resilience.

The Challenge

Half of the global GDP is moderately to highly dependent on nature. Healthy land is central to the economy, providing the foundation for sectors ranging from agriculture and forestry to water and energy supply chains.

USD 878 Billion

The annual cost of land degradation and drought to the economy

However, with **40% of the world's land already degraded, humanity faces a significant challenge**. Land degradation is diminishing productivity and heightens vulnerability to droughts, threatening people, ecosystems, and business operations globally. The economic toll is immense, with the UNCCD's 2024 financial needs assessment estimating annual costs related to land degradation at nearly $880 billion.

The Solution: Business4Land

While industrialization and market expansion have contributed to land degradation, the private sector holds the key to reversing this trend. Forward-thinking businesses recognize that long-term profitability requires sustainable land and water management. By embracing sustainable practices, companies can mitigate risks and unlock new opportunities for growth.

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification is a global agreement focused on tackling desertification, land degradation, and drought. It works with government parties and non governmental observers to promote sustainable land use and restore degraded ecosystems. Its 197 Parties come together at its COPs to review progress, set priorities, and launch initiatives to scale up its efforts. One such initiative is **Business4Land (B4L)**, a global network of companies committed to responsible land stewardship, established at UNCCD COP15.

Three Pillars of Action

B4L operates through three interconnected pillars that address the full spectrum of private sector engagement in sustainable land management:

Operations & Value Chains

This pillar supports companies in aligning their business models with land-positive and drought resilient practices. B4L works to catalyze impactful public-private partnerships and align corporate and national reporting frameworks, ensuring businesses can assess and manage their land-related dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities.

Catalyzing impactful public-private partnerships: While UNCCD supports governments around the world in combating land degradation, these efforts often do not include the private sector sufficiently, limiting the potential for joint impact. B4L is developing comprehensive strategies to integrate businesses into national projects and programs, including a pioneering public-private target-setting initiative with the Science Based Targets Network (SBTN).

Aligning corporate and national reporting and target-setting: Business4Land is collaborating with corporate disclosure and target-setting standard setters. B4L advocates that disclosure frameworks should support businesses in recognizing and managing their land-related risks and opportunities. B4L is pursuing alignment across national and corporate reporting frameworks through a strategic partnership with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and by launching an expert group.

Finance

Under the finance pillar, B4L develops and tests innovative financial products, including funding mechanisms, impact-based insurance models, and corporate contribution schemes, to position sustainable land management as a viable investment opportunity. It also maps existing financial instruments relevant to LDN and drought resilience. To support this work, the initiative is in the process of establishing a multi-stakeholder expert group on sustainable finance.

Innovative finance: With private sector contributing only 6% of funds needed to combat land degradation, B4L is piloting financial instruments that demonstrate the commercial potential of sustainable land management. These include the Drought Resilience Investment Facility (DRIF), index-based insurance models linked to sustainable land practices, and land-friendly market-based mechanisms such as carbon credits. In parallel, B4L is exploring a methodology to assess how private investors align with the UNCCD mandate, encouraging strategies that deliver land-positive and drought-resilient outcomes.

The Initiative supports the design and co-financing of public–private pilot projects, through GM flagship initiatives, such as the SA Great Green Wall, the Sahel Great Green Wall, and Rangelands. By demonstrating the effectiveness and scalability of these approaches, B4L aims to catalyse broader engagement from financial actors and mobilise increased private-sector investment.

Finally, B4L is exploring the establishment of a UN Foundation mechanism to mobilise private-sector funding for sustainable land and water management projects.

Advocacy

This pillar fosters an enabling policy environment for sustainable land, soil and water management practices. Through the B4L Champions Council and global consultations, the initiative builds momentum for corporate leadership and develops policy recommendations driving legislative changes in support of corporate land stewardship.

B4L Champions Council: Recognizing that peer-to-peer business advocacy is essential for driving corporate behaviour change, B4L has established a Champions Council of senior executives to mobilize corporate leadership for sustainable land management. Council members build global momentum ahead of COPs, engage directly with policymakers, and champion the business case for sustainable land stewardship to within their industries and networks.

Enabling environment: B4L is conducting a comprehensive global consultation with businesses and producers to co-create actionable policy recommendations for a just land transition. This participatory process ensures recommendations are grounded in private sector realities while positioning them for effective uptake by public decision-makers and translation into supportive legislative frameworks.

Sectoral Engagement Strategy

B4L pursues a strategic, cross-sectoral approach to private sector engagement, focusing on industries with significant land impacts and those critical to enabling sustainable land management. B4L prioritizes the **food, feed, and fiber sectors**. These industries are fundamental to the land-use economy and present the greatest opportunities for transformation toward sustainable practices.

Through its Finance Pillar, B4L pursues intensive engagement with investors, banks, and insurance companies. This sector is critical for channeling capital toward sustainable land management and creating financial incentives for land-positive business practices. B4L has established significant engagement with the apparel industry through Fashion4Land. Collaborations with the G20 Global Land Initiative have extended B4L's work to the mining sector and the emerging restoration industry.

B4L remains open to engaging companies across **all sectors, including waste management, building materials, and construction, provided there is a strong linkage to land.** This encompasses both sectors with significant negative impacts on land and those playing crucial roles in facilitating sustainable management and restoration.

Value Proposition for Businesses

As businesses face increasing pressure to understand and respond to their land-related impacts, B4L offers comprehensive support:

- Guidance on understanding land dependencies, impacts, and new opportunities.
- Capacity-building in reporting, target-setting, and business transformation.
- A unique advocacy platform connecting the private sector with governments and policy makers within the UNCCD, the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- Opportunities to showcase successful future-oriented business models.

Looking Ahead: A Partnership Approach

As land degradation accelerates, addressing systemic barriers requires collaborative action. B4L's three-pillar framework provides a platform where donors, governments, and businesses work together to transform inadequate financing mechanisms, align reporting frameworks, and strengthen policy incentives for sustainable land management.

With growing corporate recognition of land-related risks, partners in the B4L initiative help expand its reach across high-impact sectors and deepen integration with national Land Degradation Neutrality efforts.

Join us as we channel private sector action toward measurable outcomes that benefit businesses, society, and our planet. The next Business4Land Forum will be hosted at the UNCCD COP17 in August 2026 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Private sector representatives are invited to become B4L members and stay informed about opportunities to engage by filling this form. More information is available on: https://www.unccd.int/our-work/business4land

For any inquiry or collaboration proposal, please contact the B4L team at the UNCCD Secretariat : b4l@unccd.int