



Our Vision for Regenerative Agriculture

2026

How SAN defines Regenerative Agriculture

SAN defines regenerative agriculture as a **farmer-led, socially inclusive, rights-based context-specific and outcomes-based process** that restores and strengthens the ecological, social and economic foundations of food systems. It connects healthy soils, well-managed water resources, functional biodiversity, resilient landscapes with dignified, safe, and equitable livelihoods for all producers. It reinforces circularity by **closing nutrient and resource loops, reducing waste and dependence on external inputs**, and thus enhancing conditions for **long-term food security, climate resilience, and shared and equitable prosperity** regardless of demographics and operation scale.

At its heart, regenerative agriculture is a pathway that **honors indigenous and local knowledge, respects human rights**, and contributes to secure and equitable land tenure by recognizing and protecting **Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights** to make farming more resilient, inclusive and capable of nourishing people and healing the planet.



The Rationale Behind Our Vision

Regenerative agriculture is not a fixed set of practices or a one-size-fits-all model. It is a journey of continuous learning, innovation and adaptation, grounded in indigenous wisdom, traditional heritage knowledge, local realities, science, monitoring, and shared accountability. **Farmers, workers, pastoralists and their communities**, across genders, backgrounds, legal statuses and operation sizes, **should meaningfully co-design solutions**, select locally appropriate practices, generate and own their data with sovereignty, exercise Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and benefit from the transition. At the same time, their leadership must be **supported by enabling policies, incentives, technical assistance, finance, and markets** that recognize and reward regenerative outcomes, so that regenerative choices are practical, economically viable, and attractive over time.

Regenerative agriculture can deliver measurable positive outcomes at both farm and landscape scales when done correctly. At the landscape level, it contributes to **ecosystem connectivity, biodiversity recovery, watershed health, climate resilience, collective risk reduction, and more inclusive sustainable territorial economies**. In this sense, regenerative agriculture is more than an environmental strategy; it is a practical risk-reduction and value-creation strategy. At the farm level, regenerative agriculture can reduce risk and create value by improving soil health, presence of beneficial microorganisms, water resources, and agrobiodiversity; reducing reliance on harmful inputs and minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, while strengthening climate resilience, long-term productivity, profitability, and safe and dignified livelihoods. It can also reduce market and financial risks, improve supply resilience, create equitable market returns for all target groups, protect farmer data sovereignty and establish more attractive conditions for investment and insurance. Ultimately, it will make clear economic sense for farmers, workers communities, businesses, investors, consumers and society as a whole. It is one of the few strategies that can protect nature, strengthen livelihoods, and improve the resilience of food and agricultural value chains at the same time.

Because regeneration cannot be achieved farm by farm, SAN situates regenerative agriculture within a broader landscape approach. **This requires radical, inclusive collaboration and shared governance** among farmers, workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local communities, producer organizations—including women and youth-led groups—supply-chain and financial actors, governments, civil society, and researchers across shared landscapes, watersheds, and sourcing regions. By working toward common and measurable outcomes, these actors can **move regeneration beyond isolated pilots**, align ecological recovery with economic equity and resilience, and support people, nature, and agricultural, food, and fiber systems in thriving together.



The Outcomes Regeneration Can Support

Regenerative agriculture should deliver visible and measurable improvements for ecological and social systems that sustain farms, communities, and landscapes. For SAN, this means working on five main pillars (outlined below): restoring soil health, protecting and improving water resources, strengthening farming and Indigenous communities, supporting regenerative livestock systems and animal welfare, and enhancing agrobiodiversity. Together, these pillars can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support biodiversity recovery, and strengthen the resilience of agricultural, food, and fiber systems and landscapes.



Soil Health and Restoration supports fertility, water retention, productivity and climate resilience considering local conditions. Practices such as crop rotation, cover crops, reduced tillage, organic matter application and agroforestry can help regenerate degraded lands, increase biological activity, improve productivity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support carbon storage. when applied in the right context.

Water resources protection is central to regenerative agriculture and essential for the human right to safe and sufficient water. It includes protecting upstream and downstream water sources, improving soil water infiltration and retention, reducing water pollution, using water efficiently, implementing rainwater harvesting systems and restoring riparian areas where relevant. It is also the adoption of affordable, and locally accessible technologies and drought-resilient varieties. These actions strengthen farm productivity, ecosystem health, and community resilience by supporting equitable access among water users.





Thriving Farmers, Workers, Indigenous People and Rural Communities are key to regeneration. Regenerative agriculture should strengthen livelihoods, social inclusion, labor rights, trust, cooperation, and local leadership, while respecting local and gender differentiated knowledge and ensuring FPIC whenever Indigenous Peoples, their lands, resources or rights may be affected. When farmers, agricultural workers, and Indigenous peoples as right holders help shape the transition, regenerative agriculture is more legitimate, locally adapted and durable.

Regenerative Livestock and Animal Welfare can contribute to ecosystem regeneration when they produce measurable ecological, social, and animal-welfare outcomes. Well-designed grazing and integrated crop-livestock systems can stimulate plant growth, recycle nutrients through manure, improve soil cover, create habitat heterogeneity, and close nutrient loops. To be inclusive, grazing management frameworks must respect customary land tenure, community-managed pastures and communal land governance against land grabbing. Poorly managed livestock, however, can degrade soil, water and biodiversity, so regenerative outcomes depend on adaptive management, monitoring and context.



Enhanced agrobiodiversity can reduce pressure on natural resources and strengthen ecosystem functions and resilience. Practices such as integrated pest management, responsible input use that protects workers from toxic chemical exposure, diversified cropping systems, agroforestry, hedgerows and tree lines planting, live fences and flower strips can increase ecological infrastructure at both farm and landscape levels, support pollinators and natural enemies, improve habitat connectivity and contribute to more resilient production systems. Equitable access to diverse, native, and locally adapted seed varieties protects farmers' seed sovereignty and ensures that all farmers can fully participate in and benefit from these biodiversity gains.

Core Principles of SAN's Approach



Measure what matters: use credible, affordable and farmer-useful metrics that track improvements in soil, water, biodiversity, climate resilience, livelihoods, working conditions and landscape health while protecting data sovereignty.



Put farmers and workers at the center: ensure that farmers and agricultural workers of all genders, generations, physical abilities and legal statuses alongside their communities' co-design priorities, test solutions, and access adequate technical-scientific training and to make informed decisions and benefit fairly from the transition.



Create enabling conditions: align policies, incentives, technical assistance, finance and markets so that regenerative outcomes are recognized, rewarded, and economically viable for producers at all scales guaranteeing equitable value distribution throughout the supply chain.



Adapt to context: tailor practices to local agroecological, cultural, social and economic realities, using indigenous wisdom, traditional heritage, human rights frameworks, and continuous learning to improve over time.



Connect farms and landscapes: link farm-level transformation with watershed health, biodiversity corridors, supply sheds, inclusive territorial governance, the human right to water and broader landscape outcomes.



Reduce risk and create value: strengthen the natural and social foundations of production to reduce ecological, climate, production, market and financial risks while creating equitable shared value, ensuring safe working environments, and protecting communities from corporate land displacement.



Practice radical collaboration: bring together farmers women-led cooperatives, indigenous authorities, suppliers, offtakes, retailers, financial institutions, insurers and reinsurers, philanthropists, governments, civil society, researchers and consumers around shared outcomes and inclusive shared governance. and mutual accountability.

About the Sustainable Agriculture Network

The Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) is a global impact network transforming agriculture into a force for good — healing and nourishing our extraordinary planet. Together with 41 diverse member organizations across more than 140 countries, SAN advances sustainable, equitable, and climate-resilient farming systems that empower communities and restore nature.

Through radical collaboration, SAN connects farmers, businesses, researchers, and civil society to co-create solutions that tackle the world's most pressing challenges — from climate change and biodiversity loss to social inequity. Our network's collective efforts have already helped transform over 40 million hectares of farmland, driving measurable progress toward regenerative and inclusive food systems.

Rooted in integrity, inclusivity, curiosity, empathy, adaptability, and evidence-based action, SAN leads with both urgency and hope. We envision a future where agriculture heals, communities thrive, and nature flourishes.

Learn more at www.sustainableagriculture.eco

