



Seven Key Areas

Faith-consistent use of assets Land, Forests and Nature

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The faiths manage considerable areas of land and nature. They manage or own 7% of the habitable land surface of the planet as well as 10% of forests (including around 5% of commercial forests). They also have influence over 15% of land considered sacred. As a result, they have significant role to play in managing land, protecting biodiversity and in reducing the environmental impacts of their land use.

This guideline provides prompts and pointers to help you identify what steps you can take to mobilise the use of your physical assets for the benefit of people and planet, including land and forest management, and nature conservation and restoration.

Steps and questions to consider as you develop your Faith Plan

<i>Name of faith community/group/organisation</i>	
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Use and protection of land, forests and nature

<i>First steps: Examine the assets under your organisation’s ownership, management or guidance – such as forests/woodland, grasslands/agricultural land/pastures, gardens including community gardens, and areas of open desert/mountain/hillside – and consider the following questions.</i>	
Questions	Space for notes and comments
1. What does your faith teach about land and forests? Do you have access to a theology of land from your own faith tradition, which outlines your faith’s traditional understanding of land, and of the land’s role in your faith today?	
2. Can you use your theology of land to influence people to avoid undesirable behaviours and to adopt positive behaviours in how your land and forests are accessed and managed? What land-based activities might flow from this theology?	

<p>3. Have you mapped and recorded the extent of land under your management/guidance? Have you recorded the biodiversity on your land?</p>	
<p>4. Are your current management or protection programmes ecologically and socially beneficial?</p>	
<p>5. What improvements can you make in your existing management practices over the short and long term to better contribute to sustaining our planet? Eg, can you establish - and meet - ecological targets?</p>	

<p>Next steps: <i>Have you considered other stakeholders?</i></p>	
<p>6. Does the land you own have purpose for non-faith stakeholders or those of other faiths?</p>	

<p>7. Have these relationships been taken into consideration when determining what ecological improvements can be made?</p>	
<p>8. How will you include stakeholders or keep them informed about any activity or decisions made for change?</p>	
<p>9. Can you bring your local community into activities that make a difference at grassroot level?</p>	
<p>10. How is your commitment to gender, racial and societal equality reflected in your long-term land and forest management plans?</p>	

For more information...

To learn more about steps you can take, watch the Faith Plans webinars on [Managing faith assets: Land & Forests, Water, and Wildlife & Habitats](#) to hear examples from experts and to access links to key resources.

Land – forest management, tree-planting and sustainable agriculture

- WWF's Beliefs and Values Programme www.faithnaturehub.org
- Interfaith Rainforest Initiative www.interfaithrainforest.org
- EcoSikh www.ecosikh.org
- Afforestt: [Miyawaki Method of Forest Creation](#)
- Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council: [Eco Mosque Planting Manual](#)

Land – biodiversity conservation and restoration

- WWF's Beliefs and Values Programme www.faithnaturehub.org
- China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF) www.cbcdgdf.org/English/
- The Conservation Foundation <https://conservationfoundation.co.uk>
- Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development <https://www.interfaithsustain.com/?s=biodiversity>
- Learning for Nature, UNDP
- Catholic Toolkit: [Stewardship of God's Creation](#)
- Fatwa by the Indonesian Council of Ulama: [Protecting Threatened Species](#)

Case study

Buddhists ordain trees as monks to save forests

Monks Community Forest

Cambodia has one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world, much of it due to illegal logging. A group of monks have therefore taken action to prevent further degradation of the forests, guided by their faith traditions and values.

The Monks Community Forest is 18,300 hectares (about 183 sq km) of legally-protected evergreen forest in the Oddar Meanchey province of Cambodia, and is the country's largest community-managed forest conservation site.

It owes its protected status to a group of Buddhist monks, who, inspired by the teachings of the Buddha, set out to safeguard the area in the early 2000s by ordaining trees as monks.

[Click here](#) to read the full story.