

‘Bright spots’ in landscape-scale restoration: insights for governance and innovation

Why do some large landscape-scale restoration efforts succeed? What makes some programs able to overcome challenges and navigate changing circumstances? A new action-research collaboration between the Valuing Sustainability Future Science Platform at CSIRO and Gondwana Link is seeking to answer these questions to help define how we can better support restoration across large landscapes in the future.

A spotlight on restoration governance

This is the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). Initiatives to prevent, halt and reverse the loss of nature and restore ecological function, biodiversity and cultural values are of local significance and global importance. To achieve these initiatives, and also meet the Sustainable Development Goals adopted globally, innovative approaches are needed to accelerate and scale up proven restoration approaches. This includes innovations in governance arrangements, yet it is widely acknowledged that there has been insufficient focus on the societal dynamics and governance arrangements needed to support effective and ‘just’ restoration outcomes.

CSIRO’s VS FSP and Gondwana Link

A timely project within CSIRO’s Valuing Sustainability Future Science Platform (VS FSP), run in partnership with Gondwana Link, seeks to address this need through action-oriented research. We ask:

What forms of governance principles, measures or processes are valuable or required for landscape-scale collaborative restoration programs in order to ensure ‘good’ or ‘just’ practices are embedded?

The Valuing Sustainability Future Science Platform is focused on transdisciplinary science to support the development of principles, measures and metrics to drive societal shifts towards sustainability outcomes.



Image: A mosaic of land uses in the Fitz-Stirling section of Gondwana Link, WA. Source: Green Skills, 2014 for Gondwana Link Ltd.



Gondwana Link is an internationally recognised, large-landscape scale restoration program and one of the *#founding50* initiatives in the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration. Operating in south-western Australia since 2002, Gondwana Link has been, actively engaged in enabling and supporting large scale conservation and restoration to reconnect natural habitats across 1000km of diverse habitats and land tenures.

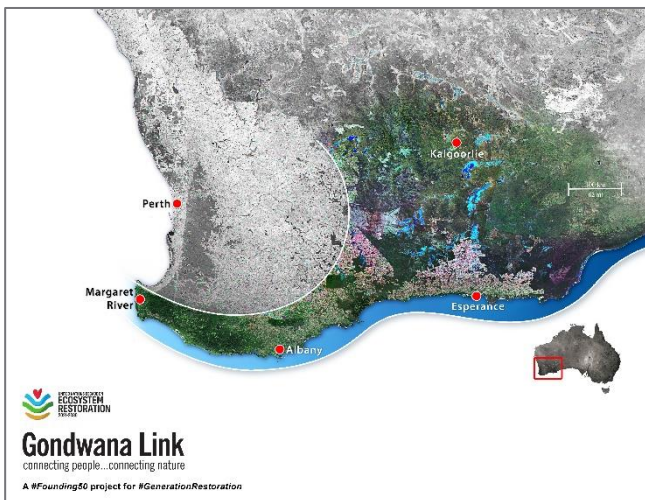
The project aims to

Over the coming year (April 2024- May 2025) this project will understand relationships between governance contexts and outcomes over the 21 year experience of Gondwana Link. It will test findings from Gondwana Link in different contexts, engaging with other large landscape scale restoration projects across Australia. There is also an opportunity to examine particular examples of 'bright spots' within Gondwana Link, such as transformative work with First Nations groups, to accelerate understandings of First Nations aspirations for restoring Country and the governance conditions supporting the successful actions of these groups.

Co-producing relevant insights for governance underpins our partnership and will ensure the findings are relevant and applicable for both Gondwana Link and other restoration networks and programs in Australia.

G-Link web: <https://gondwanalink.org/>

VS FSP web: <https://research.csiro.au/vsfsp/>



Gondwana Link acts as a backbone organisation attracting and connecting diverse landholders and stewardship groups, including farmers, First Nation organisations, community environmental groups, national and international non-government organisations, and businesses. Across all of these there is a wealth of insight and experience to share regarding successful restoration initiatives and overcoming challenges. In a timely alignment, Gondwana Link are currently reviewing their social measures and governance processes, with a view to more inclusive and effective governance and informing future needs.



Restored woodlands on Greening Australia Peniup property, planted in 2008, led by Justin Jonson on what was bare farmland in the Fitz-Stirling section of Gondwana Link. Source: Gondwana Link, 2023

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