



## Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by and between:

**Earthmind**, as the manager of the Verified Conservation Areas (VCA) project, with its domicile at the IUCN Conservation Centre, 28 Rue Mauverney, 1196 Gland, Switzerland

and

**Commonland Foundation**, with its domicile at Kraanspoor 24, 1033 SE Amsterdam, The Netherlands hereinafter referred to as 'Commonland'

herein referred to collectively as the 'Parties' and individually as a 'Party,'

Considering that:

- **Earthmind** is professional non-profit association managing the Verified Conservation Areas (VCA) project which is building a **VCA Alliance** of public and private actors that, through the use of the VCA Registry system which strives for accountability and transparency in sustainable area management in order to offer assurance to landowners, investors, governments, NGO's and the wider public that registered areas are being managed sustainably. The VCA approach aims to make conservation visible, accountable, and thus marketable. The Registry contains areas that fulfill a basic number of management requirements including audited management plans and annual audited performance reports. The required contents of these plans and reports are set out in the VCA Standard.
- **Commonland** is an entrepreneurial non-profit foundation founded by Rotterdam School of Management - Erasmus University, the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management and the Comon Foundation, with the aim is to create an investable large-scale landscape restoration industry, in close cooperation with experts and existing initiatives and aligned with international guidelines and policies. Commonland's approach is to restore landscapes by building and (co-) funding sustainable businesses in 3 landscape zones, delivering 4 types of return: inspirational, social, natural and a financial return, within a 20 year time horizon.
- Parties share the vision that large-scale land restoration is urgent and should be developed and executed in a manner that is beneficial to all stakeholders.
- Parties share the vision that involving the private sector is required to address the growing issue of land degradation.

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- Parties aim to achieve involvement of the private sector by identifying businesses and investment opportunities with adequate incentives for the conservation and sustainable management of land.
- Parties aim to promote new tools for measuring and reporting their impacts.
- Parties intend to continue and strengthen their collaboration towards the achievement of mutually shared objectives and wish to identify activities that strengthen each other missions and wish to establish the generic terms of their engagement through this MOU.

Now therefore the Parties agree as follows:

#### Purpose and areas of activity

The purpose of this MOU is to provide a framework for the Parties to engage in an exchange of information, knowledge and networks, with the option to collaborate in projects, studies and joint events in the context of verified conservation.

The engagement could extend to the following areas of joint activities (each joint activity referred to as an 'Activity'):

- Learning: training courses and development of business school education;
- Supporting business driven landscape restoration management;
- Communicating and sharing the VCA approach including its evolving Alliance, and Commonlands 4 returns, 3 zones, 20 year model;
- Contributing lessons learned to relevant policy processes; and
- Supporting the development, testing and implementation of market-orientated approaches for sustainable management of land restoration.

#### Principles of engagement

While executing an Activity, parties intend the following:

- **Support and mutual benefit:** Parties will support each other in achieving their mutual missions.
- **Responsibility and funding:** Parties will take care for a clear scope of an Activity, for a clear responsibility of each Party and for proper funding of each Activity. Specifications will be laid down in a proper Joint Activity Agreement, to be agreed on a case-by-case basis.
- **Bilateral contact:** Parties will encourage regular bilateral contacts between each other's staff.
- **Research:** Parties will on request provide each other input and feed back with regard to research various fields relevant for land restoration.
- **Participation:** When jointly pursuing an Activity, Parties aim to involve relevant stakeholders where possible.
- **Transparency:** The Parties will engage in an open, honest and transparent dialogue.
- **Non-exclusion:** Nothing in this MOU prevents either Party from collaborating or engaging with other organizations for objectives similar to those of this MOU.

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- **Public statements and publications:** Parties aim to communicate their engagement pursuant to this MOU and are free to refer thereto in any materials ('Materials'), provided that a communicating Party gives the other Party reasonable advance notice of such intended use and the opportunity to edit, otherwise amend or reject the reference in the Materials.
- **Duration:** This MOU has a duration of 4 years. Two months prior to the end of this term, Parties will evaluate the collaboration and decide on extension.

This MOU is intended to provide the Parties with a generic framework for collaboration and resulting activities. The Parties agree to develop a work programme, which may, as first steps in the collaboration, include the following activities:

- Further development of respective methodologies, looking for and capturing synergies, e.g. on indicators and best-practice guidance;
- Prospectively, as a next step, aim for listing Commonland area-based projects in the VCA Registry; and
- Jointly look into possibilities of the VCA approach contributing to the verification and assurance of projects under the future Commonland investment fund.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorized to do so, have executed this MOU in two counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original.

Francis Vorhies  
Executive Director  
Earthmind

Sign in Gland, Switzerland, on:

10 July 2015

Willem Ferwerda  
Chief Executive Officer  
Commonland Foundation

Signed in Amsterdam, Netherlands, on:

7 July 2015