

OUR IMPACT ON NATURE: WHAT ON EARTH IS LEFT?

Humans have transformed the Earth. We've impacted the land surface with multiple forms of development, including urbanization, agriculture, energy, mining and infrastructure expansion. These maps show where 50% of the planet has been highly or moderately modified. They show that to truly save nature for its sake and our own, the moderately modified places—where humans have left a mark but some wild land still exists—are just as critical to conserve as the last remaining pristine areas.

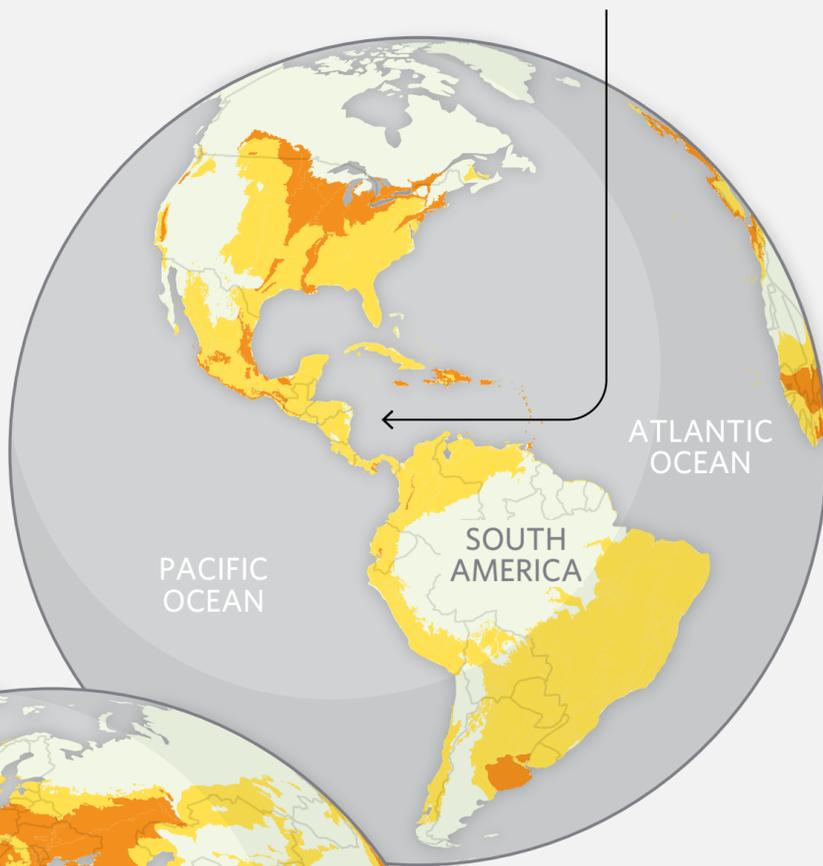
CURRENT STATE OF THE LAND ON PLANET EARTH

- HIGHLY MODIFIED LAND
- MODERATELY MODIFIED LAND
- LOW OR NO MODIFICATION



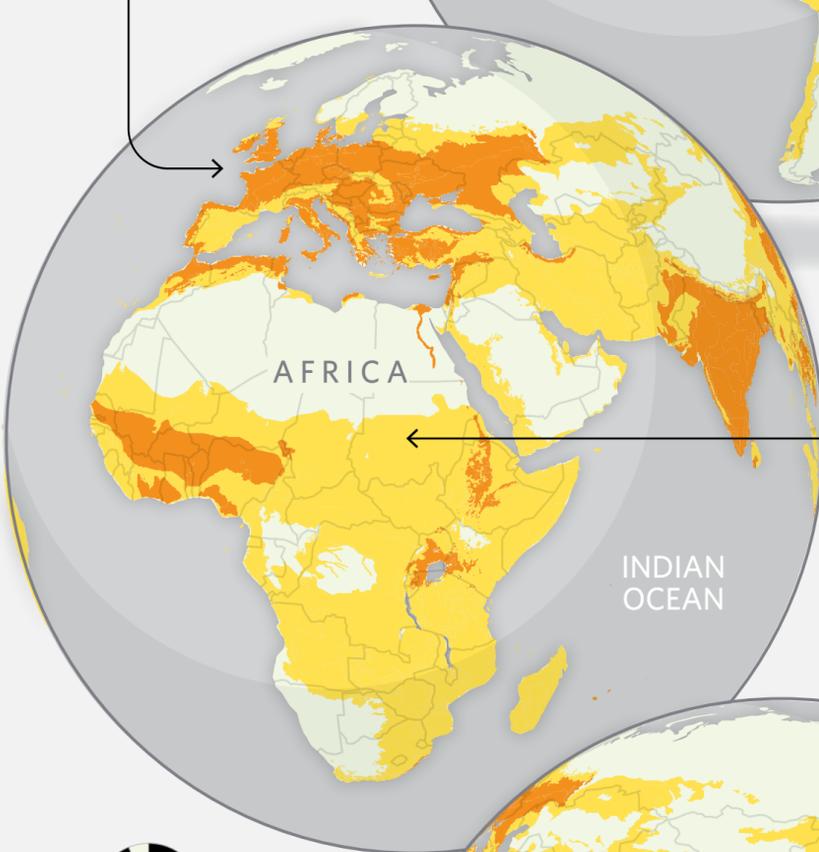
93%

OF CENTRAL AMERICAN LANDS ARE MODERATELY OR HIGHLY MODIFIED



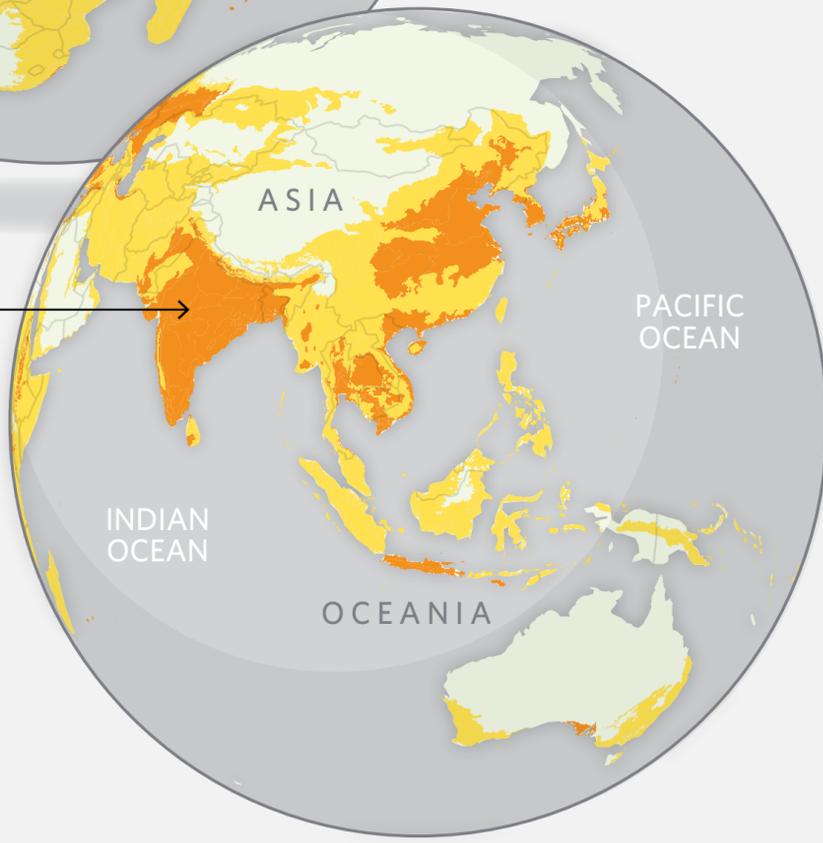
89%

OF EUROPEAN LANDS ARE MODERATELY OR HIGHLY MODIFIED



57%

OF AFRICAN LANDS ARE MODERATELY OR HIGHLY MODIFIED

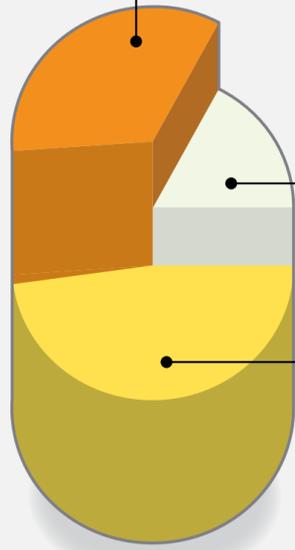


94%

OF SOUTH ASIAN LANDS ARE MODERATELY OR HIGHLY MODIFIED

34%

OF COUNTRIES ARE HIGHLY MODIFIED



18%

OF COUNTRIES HAVE LOW OR NO MODIFICATION

48%

ARE MODERATELY MODIFIED



Conserving nature in these moderately modified places, which make up half of the world's natural systems and countries, presents a huge opportunity to secure a more sustainable future for people and the planet.

NOTE: DATA DOES NOT INCLUDE ANTARCTICA

The Nature Conservancy 

NATURE NOW

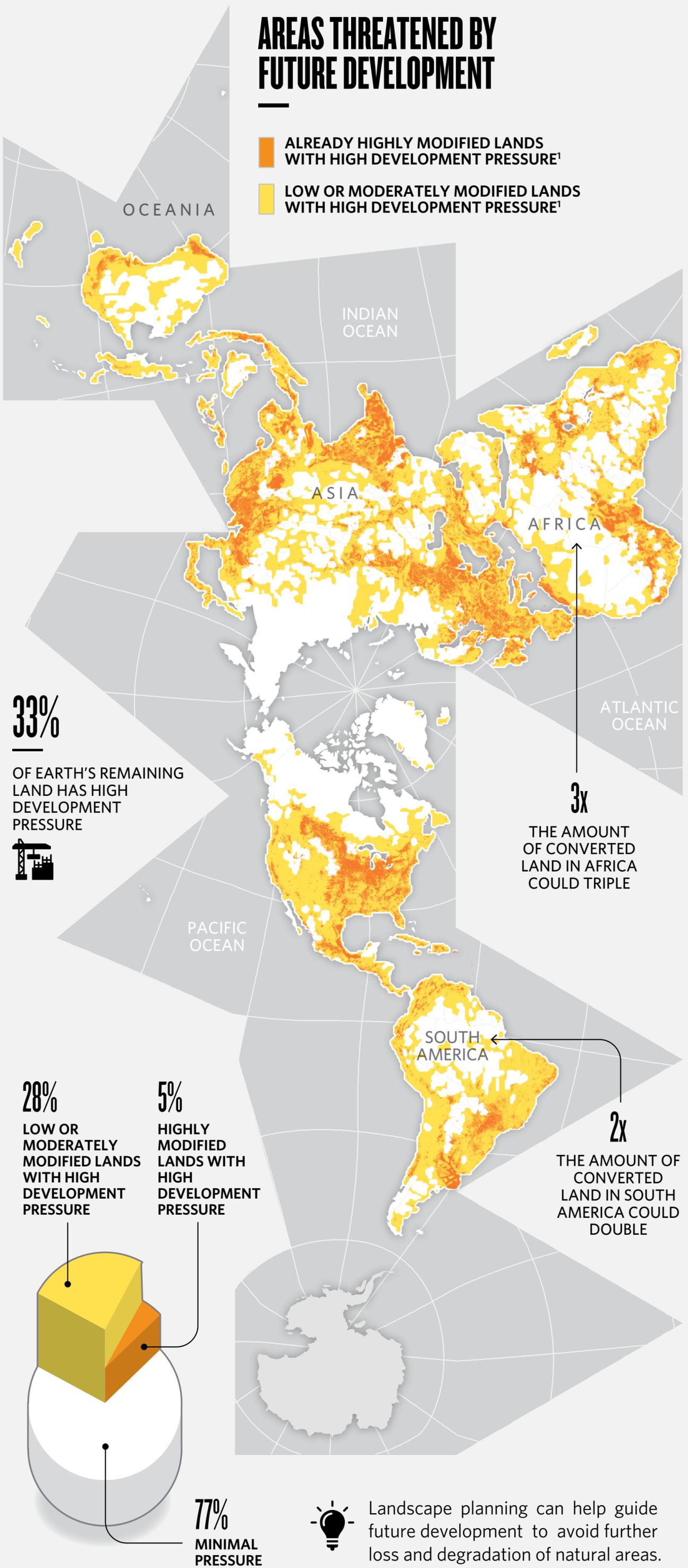
DATA SUPPORTED BY Christina M. Kennedy, James R. Oakleaf, David M. Theobald, Sharon Baruch-Mordo and Joseph Kiesecker, *Managing the middle: A shift in conservation priorities based on the global human modification gradient, Global Change Biology, 25, (2019).*

EXPLORE PRACTITIONER TOOLS HERE: [Global Development Risk Assessment](#)

FUTURE LAND PRESSURE: HOW TO MAKE SPACE?

Global economic output is expected to double over the next two decades, and trillions of dollars will be invested in new energy, mining and infrastructure projects around the world. Can we balance this growth and meet human needs while still conserving the nature on which all life depends?

AREAS THREATENED BY FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



¹High development pressure lands are those mapped with high suitability for development expansion for a given sector.



DATA SUPPORTED BY

- Christina M. Kennedy, James R. Oakleaf, David M. Theobald, Sharon Baruch-Mordo and Joseph Kiesecker, Managing the middle: A shift in conservation priorities based on the global human modification gradient, *Global Change Biology*, 25, (2019).
- James R. Oakleaf, Christina M. Kennedy, Sharon Baruch-Mordo, James S. Gerber, Paul C. West, Justin A. Johnson and Joseph Kiesecker, Mapping global development potential for renewable energy, fossil fuels, mining and agriculture sectors, *Sci Data* 6, 101 (2019).

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PLANNING FOR A BETTER PLANET

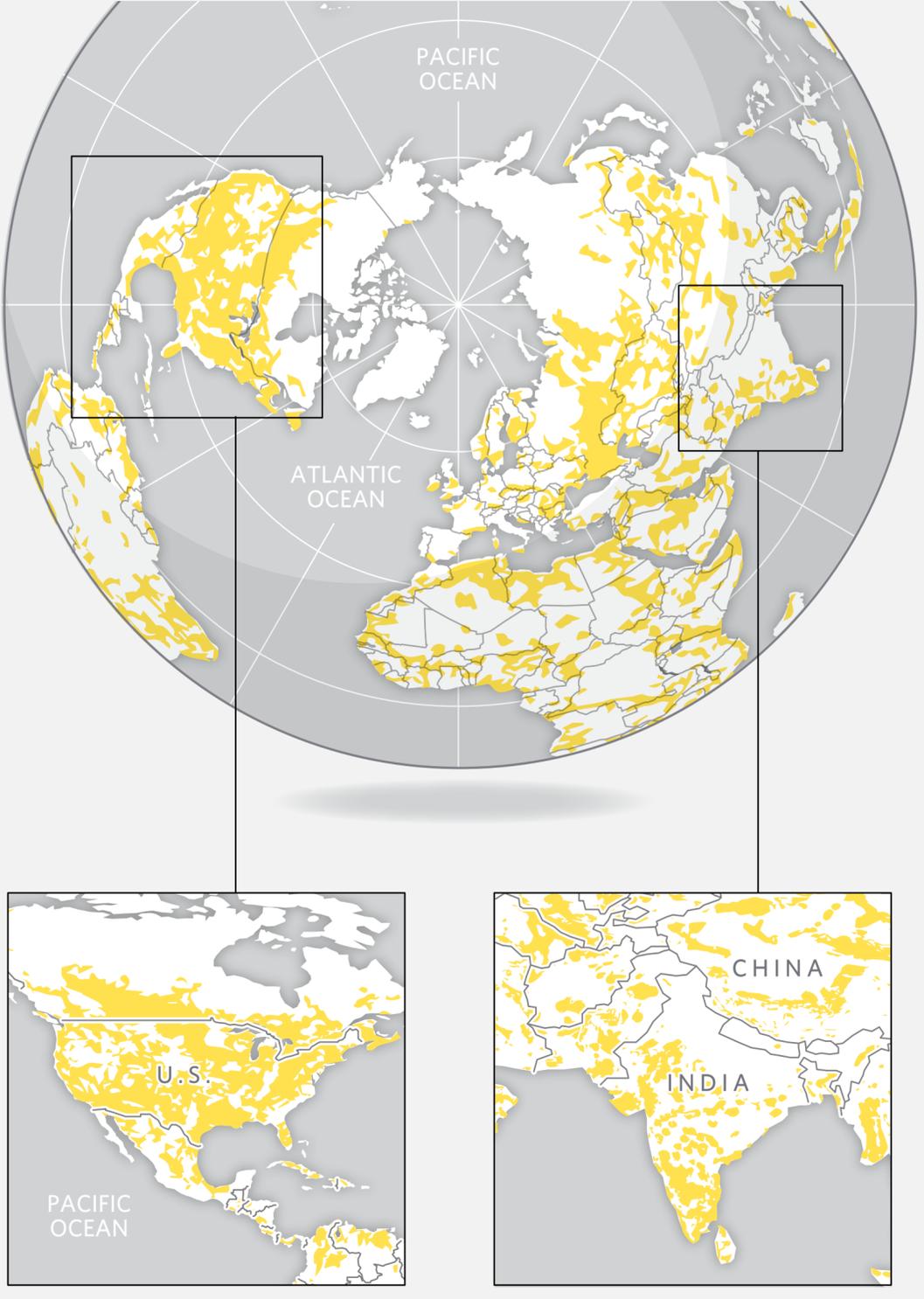
We need to plan if we want a balance between nature and development. That means we need to understand what's driving land change and where. While agriculture is expected to remain a major driver, future energy and infrastructure development could impact more lands than agriculture and urban growth combined.

Protecting nature can no longer fall to environmentalists alone. Better planning will require collaboration across all society and in particular across economic sectors and the government ministries that regulate them.

FUTURE PRESSURES FROM ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE



LAND WITH HIGH PRESSURE¹ FOR FUTURE ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



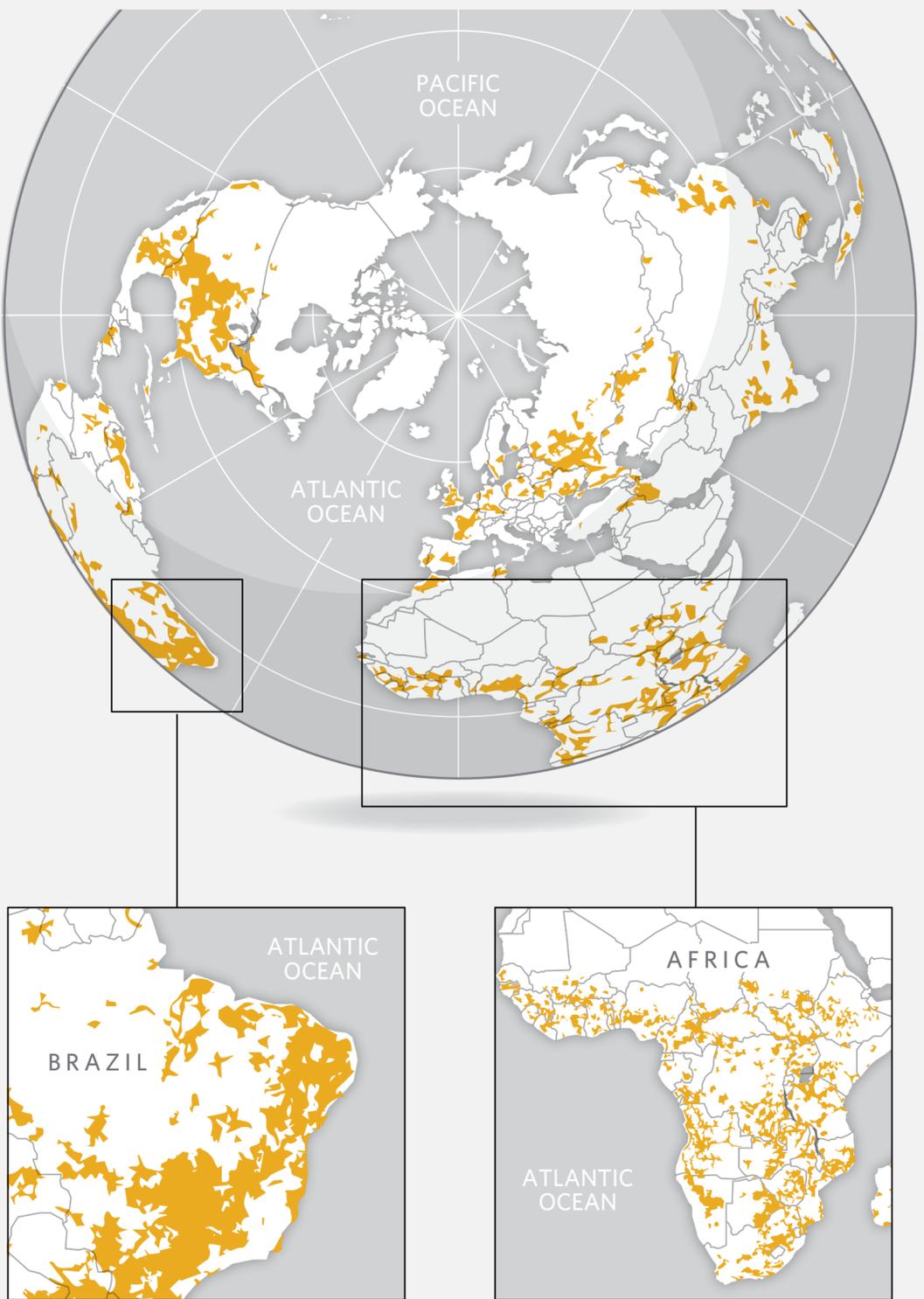
PRESSED AREAS

In North America and South Asia, increasing energy needs will likely drive new development. This development, including much-needed renewables, must be sited wisely to avoid lands that naturally store carbon and provide wildlife habitat.

FUTURE PRESSURES FROM AGRICULTURE



LAND WITH HIGH PRESSURE¹ FOR FUTURE AGRICULTURE EXPANSION



PRESSED AREAS

In South America and Sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture is expected to be a major driver of land-use change, especially for commodity crops like soy. But science, economics and conservation practice prove that it is feasible to increase global food production without converting more natural habitat into farmland.

¹High development pressure lands are those mapped with high suitability for development expansion for a given sector.