

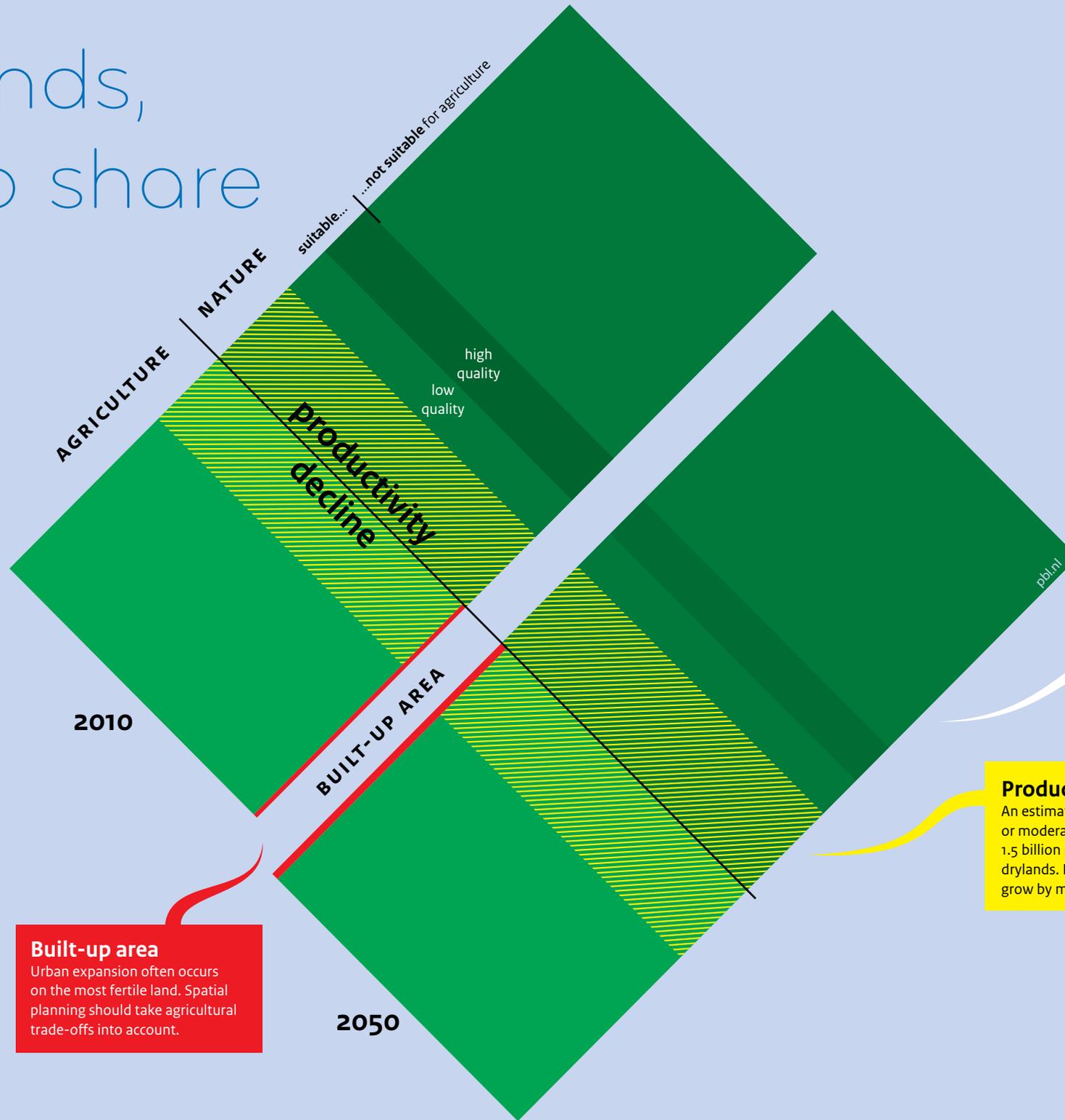
High demands, little land to share

Competing claims on a common resource

Land, in terms of surface area and the quality of soils and vegetation, is essential for the provision of food, fibre, energy and water, for conserving biodiversity and for regulating climate. Fertile land, suitable for agriculture, is abundant in some countries and scarce in others.

Current trends suggest there will be increasing demands on land. More people and growing wealth require more land for the production of food, fibre and bio-energy, for urban settlement and for afforestation for the mitigation of climate change, while an increasing demand for nature conservation areas reduces the amount of land available for other purposes. The difficulty of balancing these competing claims on land are further exacerbated by climate change and land degradation that reduce productivity of the land.

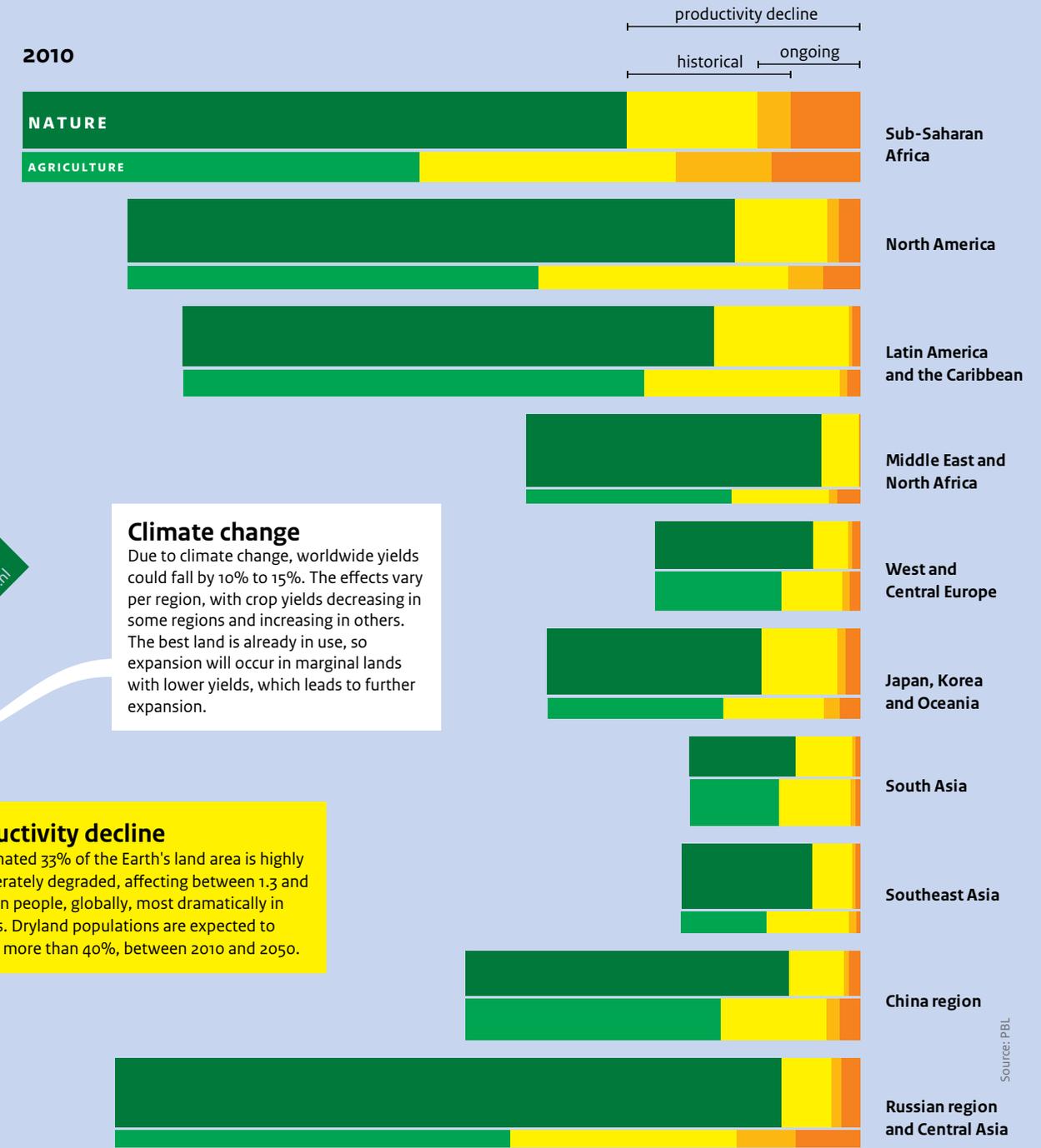
The sustainability of future land use depends primarily on effective land management, including land-use allocation and access to land. The scope of land management is mostly local or national, whereas land itself has increasingly acquired a global dimension, through trade, foreign investment and global concerns about climate change, food security and nature conservation. Despite these emerging challenges, there is reason for hope. Improving the sustainability and efficiency of land-use management could connect many of the SDGs.



Built-up area
Urban expansion often occurs on the most fertile land. Spatial planning should take agricultural trade-offs into account.

Productivity decline
An estimated 33% of the Earth's land area is highly or moderately degraded, affecting between 1.3 and 1.5 billion people, globally, most dramatically in drylands. Dryland populations are expected to grow by more than 40%, between 2010 and 2050.

Climate change
Due to climate change, worldwide yields could fall by 10% to 15%. The effects vary per region, with crop yields decreasing in some regions and increasing in others. The best land is already in use, so expansion will occur in marginal lands with lower yields, which leads to further expansion.



Source: PBL