

Watershed and AdAstra partner to open-source Orbae, the leading land use change dataset

The move brings the industry's most trusted land use change emissions data fully into the open, backed by the Cornerstone Sustainability Data Initiative

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Watershed](#), the sustainability AI platform, and [AdAstra Sustainability](#), developer of the Orbae land use change (LUC) emissions dataset, today announced a partnership to jointly develop an open-source pipeline for direct land use change data under the [Cornerstone Sustainability Data Initiative](#). Orbae is already used by sustainability leaders in the food and agriculture sector, including Danone and ofi, who have voiced strong support for open access to accelerate adoption across the industry.

The announcement comes as the Greenhouse Gas Protocol's Land Sector and Removals Standard (LSRS), published in early 2026, starts the clock on a new reporting requirement: As of January 1, 2027, companies will need to measure land use change emissions in line with the guidance for compliant reporting in 2028. Given the complexity of the topic, Watershed and AdAstra see an open-source approach that invites collaboration from the broader community as the fastest way to advance the underlying science.

Why open source, and why now:

LUC emissions are often the single largest category in a food or agriculture company's footprint. For high-risk commodities such as cocoa, they can account for over 90% of total product emissions. Despite this, companies, standard-setters and regulators have largely worked from varying, incompatible datasets, making it difficult to agree on where land conversion carries the highest carbon cost or verify progress against SBTi FLAG targets.

Orbae's jurisdictional direct LUC (jdLUC) data and methodology have been openly accessible since early 2025. What's new is that the code behind the data — the pipeline that produces it — will become open source. This extra layer of transparency will let the market verify, scrutinize and build on the methodology itself.

What's coming:

In 2027, Watershed and AdAstra will open-source the next generation of direct land use change (dLUC) data via Cornerstone. Built on a global LUC emissions layer, the code will support both farm-level assessment and jurisdictional calculations covering more than 90% of global

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In the meantime, two datasets will help close near-term coverage gaps. Cornerstone's first release under this partnership will be an open-source and LSRS-compliant global statistical LUC (sLUC) dataset in 2026. AdAstra will also release "jdLUC proxy" later this year — a scalable approach following jdLUC principles — open-sourced under Cornerstone in 2027. jdLUC data, insights and visualizations will continue to be openly available in Orbae.

The addition of this dataset meaningfully broadens Cornerstone's data coverage. Cornerstone began in 2025 with a mission to build and maintain open access to the critical datasets organizations need to measure and act on scope 1–3 emissions. Other open datasets housed at Cornerstone are USEEIO, CEDA, eGRID and the GHG Emissions Factor Hub.

Quotes from the partnership:

"For organizations sourcing high-risk commodities, land use change can be the largest single line in their footprint, and their best lever to decarbonize. But land use change measurement has been opaque and fraught. With SBTi FLAG targets and the new GHG Protocol land standard both arriving at once, this gets even more complex," said Michael Steffen, head of climate data at Watershed. "AdAstra has done field-leading scientific work to build Orbae. We're grateful to partner with them to bring it fully open source and give the industry a shared, transparent, scientifically-rigorous foundation on which to build the future of land use change measurement and action."

"It's time for land use change measurement to move toward a common language everyone can build on. That's why in 2025 we made Orbae's jdLUC data openly accessible. Open-sourcing the pipeline itself is the natural next step. It lets the scientific community stress-test the methodology, improve it and most importantly, use it to the fullest," said Xavier Bengoa, co-founder and CEO of AdAstra Sustainability. "Pairing what we've built with Cornerstone and Watershed's reach accelerates that work considerably. It's how you actually move the needle on a 2030 deadline the world is badly behind on."

About AdAstra Sustainability

AdAstra is shifting the paradigm of agricultural supply chains with data solutions that change our understanding of how agriculture impacts the environment.

Founded in 2022 by experts in quantitative sustainability, geospatial data science, and food and agriculture systems, they support stakeholders along agricultural value chains in taking decisive action for operating within planetary boundaries.

Their core product, Orbae, builds data from the ground up to reveal the impacts of land conversion at any level of traceability. Find open data, maps and insights on how your sourcing affects the Earth at orbae.eco.

About Watershed

Watershed is a sustainability AI platform that helps companies like Airbnb, sweetgreen, Visa, Harris Farm Markets and Zaxby's measure, report on and reduce their emissions. Watershed automates data management for climate and ESG data, produces audit-ready reports, and helps companies surface decarbonization options. Watershed AI is purpose-built for sustainability, based on a database of more than 2.3 million emissions factors and the experience of a team of in-house climate scientists and policy experts. The company's advisors and investors include Christiana Figueres, Al Gore, Sequoia, and Kleiner Perkins. Watershed is dual-headquartered in London, U.K., and San Francisco, CA, with offices in Berlin, Denver, Mexico City, New York, Paris, and Sydney.

About the Cornerstone Sustainability Data Initiative

Launched in 2025, Cornerstone is an open data initiative which aims to preserve and expand access to foundational sustainability data. It was jointly founded by ERG, The Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability's Sustainable Solutions Lab, and Watershed. Open datasets housed at Cornerstone are USEEIO, CEDA, eGRID, the GHG Emissions Factor Hub, and now Orbae. You can learn more and access the datasets at cornerstonedata.org

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