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Executive Summary

Public Policy Guidelines for Integrated Landscape Management



Landscapes for
People, Food and Nature



ecoagriculturepartners



Conventional policy approaches that assume land can have one priority objective while ‘trading-off’ other objectives are no longer viable in much of the world.

In recent years, greater understanding of the scale and complexity of drivers of unsustainable resource use have led to a wide variety of global initiatives and targets, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that seek to achieve sustainable landscapes. ‘Sustainable landscapes’ can be defined broadly as landscapes that can meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by ensuring synergies among economic, social and environmental goals and minimizing trade-offs where these objectives compete. Integrated Landscape Management (ILM), which involves voluntary collaboration among multiple stakeholders from different sectors and social groups, is a process for achieving sustainable landscapes and inclusive rural transformation.

However, national and sub-national policies to support the enabling conditions for ILM are lacking in most areas of the world. Sectorally-siloed government planning and decision-making processes often hinder territorially-oriented development that seeks to achieve multiple, cross-sectoral objectives. Furthermore, negotiation processes that meaningfully involve multiple-stakeholders at a landscape scale are not being sufficiently supported by business-as-usual policy. Finally, counterproductive fiscal and policy incentives continue to lead to unsustainable resource management at a landscape scale.

To support ILM more strategically, policymakers and government agencies will need to use their full complement of tools. We have identified eight categories of actions that governments at various levels can take to support ILM. These include:

Incorporate sustainable landscape vision into strategies and policies.

A high-level vision can help to mediate traditional conflicts between economic growth and conservation interests which can be a substantial impediment to ILM. Governments can act by first creating a strong shared vision of the multiple goals of sustainable landscapes and then embedding that landscape vision into relevant national strategies.

Harmonize sectoral plans to incorporate multiple goals of sustainable landscapes.

Institutional and policy harmonization is necessary at the national level and sub-national levels to help eliminate unintended negative interactions that arise when multiple sectoral plans are implemented independently of each other and to help policymakers recognize potential synergies at a landscape scale. Governments can take steps to improve this harmonization by aligning objectives, budgets and capacities across agencies responsible for different sectors and facilitating and rewarding inter-agency coordination and collaboration. Where there are trans-boundary landscapes, national governments can also work to harmonize programs and policies.

Empower civil society in building landscape partnerships.

ILM needs multi-stakeholder platforms to serve as locally-legitimate bodies to negotiate conflicts and tradeoffs between stakeholders, identify opportunities for synergistic action, and determine the most appropriate spatial-targeting and sequencing of investments. A central challenge to developing and sustaining these platforms is the ability of relevant stakeholders, particularly the less powerful ones, to have an effective voice within them. Effective public policy to support local decision making will shift decision-making power to the local level while also empowering relevant stakeholders to participate in these local decision-making processes.

Recognize land and resource rights and responsibilities negotiated at the landscape scale.

Both the form of land and natural resource rights, which govern who can benefit from those resources, and the security of those rights, which provides the assurance that those rights can be upheld, are important in landscape-scale planning and management. The optimal form of ownership, access, use and other rights, as well as rights to enjoy ecosystem services from the landscape, may vary considerably depending on the landscape context. Governments can play an important role in recognizing and enforcing locally-legitimate systems of rights and responsibilities. In places where stakeholders do not have clear and secure rights, they need to ensure mechanisms for fair conflict resolution.

Develop a regulatory framework that enables collaborative landscape action.

The regulatory framework not only needs to be supportive of sustainable land use broadly, it should also be enforceable and well-coordinated

at the landscape-scale. To accomplish this, governments can work to ensure land use zoning and planning reflects agreed landscape goals. Governments can also work to develop performance-based regulations that consider landscape-scale interactions; ensure the mandate, resources and capacities to implement and enforce laws and regulations; and coordinate regulations across sectors at a landscape scale.

Participate directly in landscape partnerships.

While ILM can occasionally arise with minimal participation by government agencies, in most cases they play a variety of important roles in such partnerships. They may be conveners or facilitators of these partnership platforms, though those roles are also commonly played by civil society, or an international organization. As partners, government actors can play other roles, such as hosting stakeholder meetings, helping identify and engage key stakeholders, bridging inputs from public agencies, advising on policy options, using their outreach mechanisms to raise public awareness, and legitimizing and strengthening support for the multi-stakeholder platform. In some cases, government actors can also help resolve conflict between stakeholders.

Incentivize integrated landscape investments through policy and public finance.

Landscape initiatives often face difficulties attracting supportive investments, steering existing financing to activities aligned with their landscape action plans, and aggregating investment opportunities. Government actors can help to overcome these challenges by supporting joint investment planning among stakeholders, developing market and trade rules supportive of landscape-scale action, mobilizing private demand for ecosystem services, developing fiscal and tax policy to incentivize landscape investments, developing screening criteria for landscape investments, allocating public revenues for integrated landscape programs, and influencing donor priorities and investments.

Build the knowledge and technical capacity to implement ILM.

Planning and managing at a landscape scale requires a unique body of knowledge and technical capacity. To support this process, governments can develop and disseminate spatial information, generate information on sustainable production systems, build the capacities of managers to lead and facilitate collaborative processes, and develop metrics that measure multiple outcomes.

Applying these policy guidelines can put a country or sub-national jurisdiction on the path to creating a more supportive policy environment for ILM. Simultaneously, it can help them meet internationally agreed targets, including those focused on sustainable agriculture production, poverty alleviation, food security, climate, biodiversity, and landscape restoration.

Governments or interested stakeholders can help to lay a foundation for policy that supports ILM by taking three steps: 1) forming multi-stakeholder learning and advocacy working groups on ILM at national and sub-national levels, where appropriate, which include government and non-government actors; 2) reviewing the existing policy framework and enabling environment for ILM; and 3) convening a landscape policy dialogue to identify key actions that government can take to better support ILM.

Download the full report at peoplefoodandnature.org/policyguidelines

Authors

Seth A. Shames, EcoAgriculture Partners

Krista Heiner, EcoAgriculture Partners

Sara J. Scherr, EcoAgriculture Partners

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1100 17th Street NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20036 USA

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Cover image: Autumn in the Awatere Valley, Marlborough, New Zealand, 13 April 2007, by Phillip Capper.

Eight policy guidelines for integrated landscape management



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Harmonize sectoral plans to incorporate multiple goals of sustainable landscapes



Empower civil society in landscape partnerships



Recognize land and resource rights and responsibilities negotiated at landscape scale



Develop a regulatory framework that enables collaborative landscape action



Participate in or convene landscape partnerships



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Build the knowledge and technical capacity to implement integrated landscape management

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