

Advancing Public Policy and Services to Support Landscape and Seascape Partnerships: Developing a Landscape Policy Lab

A Concept Note



Contacts:

Sara J. Scherr, PhD
President and CEO, EcoAgriculture Partners, USA,
+1 202-834-8539; skype: sarascherr; sscherr@ecoagriculture.org

Bhushan H. Sethi
Founder, GALLOP Initiative, USA
Goodwill Ambassador, Project Tiger, India
+1 732-636-2953; skype: gallop.initiative; bsethi@ecoagriculture.com



gallop
initiative



To achieve global goals, EcoAgriculture Partners is working with the GALLOP Initiative to establish a Landscape Policy Lab to help governments design support systems for the future and support 1000 partnerships by 2030 based on global learning in integrated landscape and territorial development. A strong backbone of policy and scaffolding institutions is key to scaling actions to meet the sustainable development goals (SDGs), sustainable food systems, land and forest restoration commitments, nationally determined contributions to the Paris Climate Agreement (NDCs), and the new Global Biodiversity Framework. The Lab provides a communications platform and convening space for governments to inform policy reform across sectors and scales, connecting bottom-up approaches with top-down structures.

EcoAgriculture Partners has been working on Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) for over 20 years, helping local communities and indigenous peoples collaboratively manage food systems, biodiversity, and climate change across 60 landscapes. Convening international collaboration and knowledge sharing in the Landscape for People, Food and Nature Initiative and now as lead convener of the 1000 Landscapes for One Billion People initiative (1000L), a network of experts and practitioners working together in a ‘radical collaboration’ to help landscape partnerships operate successfully globally.

The Rationale for a Landscape Policy Lab

The opportunity to support sustainable development through landscape and seascape partnerships.

By working together through an integrated landscape management (ILM) framework, farmer organizations, civil society, and public and private sectors have shown the potential to achieve:

- Highly productive, diversified, and commercially successful agriculture
- Increased incomes and improved livelihoods, with stronger rural-urban connections
- Reduced poverty, particularly among marginalized groups, and their empowered voices
- Restored biodiversity and improved water quality for better human health
- Resilience to climate change while also mitigating climate and other disaster risks.

New funding is available but with unclear implementation mechanisms or coordination.

Public, private, and philanthropic funders have committed billions of dollars to meet these sustainable development challenges. Still, there needs to be greater coherence in how this will reach the communities that need it most and are doing the actual work on the ground. For real change to occur, we must acknowledge the systemic nature of our challenges and the interdependence of all life on Earth. The ecological crisis has multiple causes, many interdependencies, and different stakeholders with different understandings of the problem and how to fix it. Without a clear and comprehensive sustainable development policy and evaluation mechanisms, funding sources may not align towards a national/global (for food security, climate NDCs, biodiversity, and ecosystem restoration), and small tranches of funding may not deliver long-term results. With sound policy approaches, results cascade and amalgamate to help communities and landscapes thrive.





Integrated landscape management responds at scale, connecting bottom-up to top-down approaches.

In the face of such complexity, small-scale responses are bound to be ineffective. We need to generate impact at the large landscape level. This level of impact is the core of the work that EcoAgriculture Partners has been developing for over 20 years. We want to support locally-led multi-stakeholder partnerships to manage and restore their degraded landscapes from the ground up to ensure our species' survival and restore the hope and community spirit that comes with living in harmony with nature. Thriving landscapes are the way to tackle the policy challenge of delivering the SDGs for rural and indigenous communities; our consortium is exploring how to make this a reality through public policy and services.

The opportunity to inspire and implement change through policy can enable systems transformation for rural landscapes and urban territories at a landscape and territorial scale. Many countries have made landscape regeneration and management a vital policy goal, considering the need for locally-led contextualized action. However, there needs to be more action-based research in this area. Few initiatives have this scoping at examining subnational level coordination linking it to national level policy. Some do exist and have worked on these issues, such as ICLEI and the Earth Institute, but these have few examples or research applicable to the broad range of sustainable development required.

The Landscape Policy Lab can act as a catalyst for landscape-scale transformation. Developing a Policy Lab can catalyze policy change through a model bridging the weak links between research and policy action. Providing impartial analysis without institutional or political constraints through guidance, tools, and examples of how policy can transition to sustainability could help support policymakers in this effort. We envision an agile and lean “Lab” that can experiment and leverage existing global networks with landscape and seascape multi-stakeholder partnerships and other actors-to learn, disseminate, access expertise, and link to each other. Furthermore, EcoAgriculture’s convening of the 1000L program has demonstrated a strong need for policy to achieve scale in ILM and for actively learning across scales and actors. The Policy Lab’s learnings around global best policy practices will complement 1000L’s work to spearhead bringing ILM to scale and be a systems-changing addition to this space.

Galvanizing a large consortium of partners to share learnings at the intersection of policy, research, and practice can help scale solutions globally while ensuring local adaptability. Many organizations worldwide are working at the landscape level, supporting locally-led action. However, more cross-sharing is necessary for institutionalizing policy for this work. We are already in discussion with key organizations working on these issues, including the African Centre for a Green Economy (AfriCGE), CIFOR-ICRAF, Evidensia, Tropenbos International, World Resources Institute (20x20 initiative and AFR100), WWF, and partners in the 1000 Landscapes for One Billion people.

Advances to Date in Understanding and Advancing Landscape Policy

EcoAgriculture Partners has been working on landscape policy issues since its founding in 2005. EcoAgriculture Partners has developed and provided Publications and guidelines based on landscape leaders' locally-led work to international and national policymakers and institutions advancing landscape policy. Policy work has encompassed territorial development with the Territorial Perspective for Development (TP4D) coalition, analysis, and advocacy around landscape policy for the Conventions for Biological Diversity, Combatting Desertification and Climate Change, and regional policies in Africa and Mesoamerica.

EcoAgriculture Partners, GALLOP, Cornell University, and Columbia University co-published a public policy white paper and brief highlighting the opportunity to strengthen and design policy support for multi-stakeholder partnerships across territories and landscapes worldwide. The report was developed based on interviews and feedback from key supporters of landscape partnerships and programs, including UNDP, the World Bank, and European government representatives. This was supplemented by a literature review and input from multiple dialogues and roundtables with the FAO-EcoAgriculture Dialogue series, the UNFSS workstream on territorial governance, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration in 2021, the ten-year knowledge synthesis of Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative (convened by EcoAgriculture Partners), the Territorial Perspectives for Development (TP4D) working group and earlier consultations with landscape leaders in Africa and Mesoamerica.

The findings identified four major critical areas for government action: supportive policy framework, financial and business services, technical services and local capacity development, and connections for knowledge exchange and learning.

Seven key 'ingredients' identified for success:

- 1 Commitment to participatory landscape governance
- 2 Public policy frameworks that explicitly strengthen landscape partnerships
- 3 Long-term support services responding to locally defined needs
- 4 Strategic coordination among service providers
- 5 Long-term financing for landscape enabling and asset investments.
- 6 Construction engagement with landscape partnership networks.
- 7 Proactive engagement of businesses in landscape partnerships

EcoAgriculture Partners is catalyzing policy support, building on existing experiences and success by critical institutions working on sustainable and territorial development. The organization is socializing these findings across key actors and forums through case studies and figures. Our results highlight the importance of coherent policy support for Landscape and Seascape Partnerships, identify four key types of support needed, specify seven ingredients to implement these successfully, and outline steps to advance policy and program development. The collaborating partners have also identified Initial country case studies and partners. The policy brief was presented at the UNCCD in Abidjan, shared at the UNFCCC and UNCBD in 2022, and the white paper was launched at a joint Evidensia-1000 Landscapes Learning Event featuring practitioners from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), ISEAL Alliance and the authors in July 2022, and shared at a Global Development seminar at Cornell University.

The Kenya Landscape Coalition is working to drive policy change using the white paper framework. 1000L is supporting a coalition of Landscape Partnerships all over Kenya to undertake a participatory policy change, linking goals of restoration, conservation, food systems, and livelihood. The Coalition has democratically elected a core working group of six landscape leaders representing Kenya's governments, research groups, and NGOs. This interim governance group is developing the strategic plan and advocacy agenda by December 2023, building on the policy framework of the White Paper. Through the already functioning Brazilian Model Forest Network, experts will use the experience and knowledge gained from Kenya to advise policy advocacy coalitions in other countries, including Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil.



Kenya Landscape Coalition in Lake Naviasha, Kenya. May 2023



Project Mission, Goal, and Objectives

Mission

The mission of this initiative is to support governments in developing institutionally solid support for landscape partnerships and territorial actors to meet their potential for achieving multiple local and national goals. We can achieve systems change by building on existing lessons learned from different policy contexts, making information publicly accessible, demonstrating efficient and effective policy development and implementation strategies, and promoting policy dialogue.

Goal

The goal of this project is to design and demonstrate the model for a Landscape Policy Lab that could provide long-term guidance, knowledge, and services to national and sub-national governments and catalyze policy action and innovation.

Objectives

The project would be incubated for five years as a program of EcoAgriculture Partners. Then, if successful, it may spin off as a separate organization. Its objectives are to:

- Promote attention and dialogue about policy challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions in landscapes, through strategic outreach.
- Document relevant landscape policies and public programs already underway at national and subnational levels in different contexts through a scoping study and two in-depth country cases.
- Develop and test tools and prototype best practices to support national and sub-national governments in policy analysis and design.
- Design a Landscape Policy Lab.



Proposed Activities and Outputs

The project will involve three sets of activities and outputs that will run in parallel:

1. Policy Dialogue and Communications

We will undertake a series of policy dialogues and communication activities, initially to share the results of the white paper and later the findings from the case studies. Key messages would highlight landscape partnerships as supporting national security and meeting national goals and commitments. For mayors and governors, supporting LPs can boost critical city services like improving water supply and the food shed from where there food originates. Activities will include:

- **Virtual and in-person events** with influential organizations and networks, including the 20x20 initiative, Ad-Hoc Working Group on Territorial Development, AFR 100, Agroecology Coalition, German Development Agency (BMZ/GIZ), Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification, United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank Group; UNFCCC; Global Environment Facility, various landscape networks.
- Production and dissemination of op-eds, blogs, and case profiles.
- Implementation of **National Landscape Policy Dialogues** in Kenya and either Colombia or Costa Rica.

2. Global Scoping, Comparative Analysis, and Policy Support in Two Countries

- Project leads will undertake project preparation, including methodology development, partner engagement with national and subnational policy actors, and sub-grants with local institutions to co-generate the body of experiences and comparative analysis.
- Using the Landscape Policy White Paper framework, the study team will work with partners in 8-10 selected countries to evaluate specific policies that have supported landscape partnerships. We will look at examples in India, Colombia, Costa Rica, Kenya, South Africa, Indonesia, Vietnam, Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and Ethiopia. The scoping cases will follow a common analytical framework and include policies related to national/state policy frameworks, finance, capacity strengthening, and network support.
- The project leads will conduct an in-depth study and policy engagement in two countries with contrasting socio-political and ecological conditions: Kenya and one additional country, either Costa Rica, Colombia, or India. These represent contrasting socio-political and ecological conditions and already have a relatively strong foundation of existing policy action, partnership-building, analysis, and pilot actions. However, they face scaling, systematizing, and financing challenges. EcoAgriculture Partners is actively involved in landscape development and coalition-building in all three countries and has strong local partners skilled in policy analysis. The cases will analyze ground-level successes at national, provincial, and district scales with the government policymakers, NGOs, and any other stakeholders involved and the active involvement of landscape or seascape partnerships involved. The analysis will describe the process of cross-sector and inter-ministerial collaboration.
- Using a synthesis of insights from our framework and the case studies, we will prototype best practices for policy, governance, finance, and information technology.

3. Design of the Landscape Policy Lab

- Use the findings and partner engagements exploring landscape policy work to prototype a best-of-kind global program for analysis and implementation by host countries, customized to the national context. Project leads can scale the prototype with global partners if this works well.
- As part of the design process, experts will consult with governments and agencies on desired modalities for working and services for implementing support to locally-led LPs.
- Project leads will engage networks and partners to design the Policy Lab's structure, services, and offerings based on the case studies and framework learnings.
- Project leads will evaluate alternative organizational models for the most effective design and service delivery methods, such as a centralized lab, regional labs, or a fully decentralized model.
- Project leads will evaluate funding and revenue models for cost and impact effectiveness of the Lab service delivery (e.c., mixed philanthropic/private/government, fee for services, impact-based revenue).
- Project leads will produce, test, and validate the Policy Lab plan and funding model with a network of partners and practitioners and develop a plan for the Policy Lab design.

The project will be led by EcoAgriculture Partners in collaboration with GALLOP and will involve a group of international and national policy analysts in all stages. Annex 1 describes these organizations.



Annex 1. Partners & Roles in Implementation

Organizers

EcoAgriculture Partners (EcoAg) is an international nonprofit 501(c)3 organization registered in the United States. EcoAg is recognized internationally as an ILM thought leader and field-builder that works at the intersection of policy, research, and implementation. EcoAg's work has included developing landscape planning and action tools, strengthening landscape partnerships, training landscape leaders, and mobilizing business and finance to support ILM. EcoAg has provided training, advisory services, and analysis for more than 50 landscape partnerships in over 20 countries. From 2006 to 2010, EcoAg organized and led the Landscape Measures Initiative, working with more than 20 international experts to address the challenge of assessing ILM's impacts across multiple objectives and in complex landscape mosaics. From 2011 to 2020, EcoAg founded and convened the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature initiative (LPFN) to promote ILM knowledge-sharing. EcoAg is the convening partner of the 1000L initiative. The role of EcoAgriculture Partners will be as the primary coordinator of the research, partnership development, case study editing, outreach efforts, and fundraising.

GALLOP Initiative has been looking over the past decade at policies and institutional design to facilitate and bring scale for the coming together of all stakeholders in ILM. The aim is to encourage true bottom-up fulfillment of the community and its landscape/watershed needs and map these into the top-down sectoral outlays, amalgamating these institutionally at the middle level, combining this with services, CSR, and other needs of stakeholders to achieve SDGs & NDCs towards the 2030 agenda and 2050 goal. The GALLOP initiative initially focused on the policy experiences of India, identifying the need for holistic policy, planning, and guidance for institutionalizing support for landscape and territorial partnerships and the community-based organizations therein. GALLOP initiative will support the Policy Lab through fundraising, analysis, and strategy development for the business, organizational and delivery model of the Policy Lab Design throughout the 3-year programme. GALLOP will also lead case studies co-developed in India. For further details, visit the [GALLOP Initiative - Build Up and Design / Way Forward](#).

Prospective Partners

EcoAgriculture Partners, through its landscape policy work over the past 20 years, has developed relationships with leading policy research organizations who have expressed interest in collaborating:

1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People initiative convenes international partners and organizations from across the globe to support Landscape Partnerships to deliver sustainable landscape solutions-contributing powerfully to Sustainable Development Goals and aligning actions to meet global targets for addressing food and water insecurity, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and climate change. The initiative delivers key services to landscape partnerships: capacity strengthening, an open-access digital toolkit, landscape finance solutions, and support to coalitions for joint learning and policy advocacy.

20X20 Initiative is a multi-country-led effort to change the dynamics of land degradation in Latin America and the Caribbean. So far, 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries and three regional programs have committed to improving more than 52 million hectares of land. 20X20, working with the World Resources Institute, supports partner countries to develop national policies enabling restoration at scale.

African Centre for a Green Economy (AfriCGE) provides thought leadership, raises awareness, and builds capacity to support the transition towards a green economy by providing research and advisory, green enterprise development, and investment services to government, business, and civil society in Africa.

CIFOR-ICRAF, the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry Centre, has led landscape-related policy research for decades. Major research is underway now through their Landscapes for Life network, and their project on Collaborating to Operationalise Landscape Approaches for Nature, Development, and Sustainability (COLANDS), which focuses on comparative analysis in Ghana, Indonesia, and Zambia <https://www.cifor-icraf.org/colands/>

Columbia University is one of the world's most important centers of research and, at the same time, a distinctive and distinguished learning environment for undergraduates and graduate students in many scholarly and professional fields. Its Earth Institute (<https://www.earth.columbia.edu/>) and the newly-established Climate School (<https://www.climate.columbia.edu/>) focus on interdisciplinary research and practice in many aspects of sustainable development in response to global issues.

Commonland is an international organization focusing on integrated landscape restoration and sustainable development. They work with public and private stakeholders to design and implement holistic landscape restoration projects, guided by 4 Returns, to restore degraded land and ecosystems, create economic opportunities, and promote social inclusion. They aim to create regenerative landscapes that benefit people and the planet. As part of Commonland's work supporting landscape initiatives in Europe, they have been involved in political advocacy efforts with the European Union.

Conservation International is a leading organization on climate policy, including the Exponential Roadmap for Natural Climate Solutions. CI is also developing a Landscape Policy Toolkit to support its global network of landscape and seascape initiatives advancing biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable development.

Cornell University is a privately endowed research university and a partner of the State University of New York that makes contributions in all fields of knowledge in a manner that prioritizes public engagement to help improve the quality of life in the state, the nation, and the world. The Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability (<https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/>) is the hub of collaborative sustainability research at the University that stimulates innovation in climate, energy, food, health, and intersections.

Evidensia is a collaboration between ISEAL Alliance, Rainforest Alliance, and WWF, supported by the Global Environment Facility. Its overall focus is research on the sustainability impacts of supply chain initiatives and tools based on studies evaluating the impacts and effectiveness of these initiatives. Jurisdictional and landscape work is a key focus area. EcoAgriculture is co-designing with Evidensia a platform for research on ILM and Policy work under this new initiative, including dialogue and outreach activities.

Living Landscapes is an organization working primarily in India on rural landscapes and ILM, convening partners in the Common Ground initiative, who jointly have decades of experience with grassroots movements. Living Landscapes is also developing a collaborative policy initiative for India.

Tropenbos International brings the knowledge together to address complex questions regarding the sustainable management of forests and trees, organizes interactions with all the stakeholders, and actively helps create broad support. The network has members in Indonesia, Vietnam, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Suriname, Colombia, and the Netherlands. The members share a common vision, mission, focus, and approach while tailoring their efforts to the specific local context.

United Nations Development Programme is the UN's lead agency on international development, working in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, helping countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities, and resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Their work has three focus areas; sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience.

Policy Lab Advisory Group

The Policy Lab is forming an Advisory Group to broaden our connections for policy learning and influence. Potential members will be drawn from other partners who have been involved in the White Paper and other policy research of EcoAgriculture: UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Climate KIC; Global Environment Facility; the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Territorial Development (FAO, BMZ.GIZ, UN-Habitat, UNESCO, et al.); the Policy Group from the Agroecology Coalition (originating with the UNFSS); the World Bank, the Government of Germany Development Agency–GIZ), Regional Program of Research on Development and the Environment–PRISMA, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology–RMIT, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency–RVO Biovision Foundation), Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality - LNV, and UN-Habitat.