TERRAFRICA
REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Landscapes for
People, Food and Nature
An International Initiative for Dialogue, Learning and Action

Integrated Landscape Management in Africa: A synthesis of evidence

Background

'Integrated landscape management' (ILM) refers to long-term collaboration to achieve landscapes that provide livelihoods, ecosystem services, and biodiversity as well as supportive markets and policies. There are many possible approaches and entry points for ILM, but broad community engagement in negotiation and adaptive management are core features. Based on community priorities in Africa's diverse agro-ecosystems, ILM has taken the form of participatory watershed management, conservation of biological corridors, farmer-led restoration of land and waterways, and many other context-appropriate approaches. Growing interest to scale up ILM across Africa has been documented through a recent survey of 87 integrated landscape initiatives, in 33 African countries, which revealed tangible achievements in conservation of soil, water, and biodiversity and important leadership roles played by producers groups and civil society, especial women.

In July 2014, the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative (LPFN) joined the World Agroforestry Center, the United Nations Environment Programme, EcoAgriculture Partners, NEPAD/ TerrAfrica, and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs to organize a conference on Landscapes for People, Food and Nature in Africa. The conference brought together in Nairobi more than 170 participants – leading minds from African government, research, civil society and the private sector – to generate an African Landscapes Action Plan, an ambitious agenda to enhance and scale up effective integrated landscape management in Africa.

To ground the Action Plan in the best evidence available, teams from the LPFN drew on partners' studies and experience in landscape research and lessons from local and national initiatives in Africa to generate six draft synthesis briefs. These were critically reviewed in special sessions at the conference and subsequently revised in light of that input.

Major Findings

These syntheses sought to answer six central questions:

Policy: How can national/sub-national policy more effectively support integrated land management in Africa?

This paper emphasizes the need to establish policy at the national, sub-national and grassroots levels with coherent laws and regulations to improve the process of stakeholder collaboration and engagement, while developing multi-sector mechanisms for scaling up. Measurable indicators of impact and transformation, along with clear targets and the evidence that integrated approaches are more effective or efficient than the alternative, will also assist in the transition to integrated land management in Africa. To better achieve African development and conservation goals, priority objectives include aligning policies and strategies across different units and levels of government, harmonizing planning processes across urban-rural and formal-informal gradients, using ILM approaches to more efficiently meet commitments under international agreements, investing in 'green' infrastructure, and clarifying resource and land tenure rights. Meeting these objectives requires building African capacity for evidence-based policy analysis and outcome monitoring.

Governance: How can local landscape governance support multiple landscape objectives?

This session determined that no single model for implementing a landscape approach works in every setting because context, stakeholder incentives, and power relationships affect what is needed in a particular location. Across these varied systems, landscape governance requires negotiating what and whose landscape values are at stake, balancing power dynamics, and resolving governance options. The role of institutions—including local institutions and those that consider indigenous knowledge—and increased capacities is also a crucial component of supporting multiple landscape objectives. To expand the practice of multi-stakeholder governance of multi-functional landscapes, it will be important to enrich knowledge sets for key dimensions of ILM (e.g. landscape design, holistic decision-making, accountability metrics), and incubate robust innovation systems that foster social learning and communication, and develop guidelines for effective ILM governance models. These objectives could be accelerated through establishment of a Pan-African Platform to synchronize knowledge and activities of ILM practitioners and their networks.

Business: How can businesses become engaged more effectively in integrated land management?

This paper highlights that the private sector is absent in most multi-stakeholder, integrated landscape initiatives in Africa, despite the fact that businesses are critical to achieving multi-functional landscapes that support economic growth, food production, ecosystem conservation,

and rural livelihoods. More effort is needed to evaluate the business case for private sector participation in ILM initiatives, including medium- and long-term risk and opportunity assessments, especially in African agricultural commodity sourcing regions. In response to growing private sector interest in landscape approaches, it will be important to build awareness of basic ILM concepts, construct models and methodologies that can be easily applied by small and large companies to identify priority actions that account for landscape-scale issues, and advance innovative market-based strategies such as landscape labeling. Public and civic sector actors can do more to support private sector engagement in ILM by forming partnerships for shared learning and coordinated action toward agricultural value chains that deliver improved livelihoods and sustainable agro-ecosystems.

Research: What are the top priorities for research in African landscapes?

This paper acknowledges the persistence of agricultural yield gaps and rural poverty in much of Africa despite existing commitments to research and development to address these issues. Research priorities include strategies to anticipate and respond to climate change as well as targeting appropriate agricultural practices and technologies to specific regions. Research partnerships that engage practitioners and policy makers are needed to identify essential design features of multi-functional landscapes, as well as optimization strategies for different regions and agricultural systems, and to test this understanding in long-term landscape 'observatories.' Effective, networked agroecological research systems and systematic assessments are needed to understand how agricultural practices in different socio-ecological contexts lead to yield, income, human well-being and ecosystem services outcomes at multiple scales. Strategic and coordinated investments in R&D and monitoring systems by national governments and global donors can shrink yield gaps and build social and ecological resilience.

Finance: How can integrated landscape investment in Africa be financed?

This paper focuses on the role of both asset investments and enabling investments and the need to incorporate donor-driven funding and encourage investment by the private sector for longer-term sustainability. To accelerate simultaneous achievement of multiple social and environmental objectives in African landscapes, it will be important to enhance coordination of public sector and donor financing strategies as well as to build the capacity of national and sub-national actors, including those at the grassroots level, to access and manage financing for ILM strategies. In parallel, governments can support clear definitions and enforcement of sustainability guidelines for foreign direct investment. Also noted was the need for optimizing existing financing, coordinating activities and developing partnerships to decrease competition over funding resources. There was discussion on the need for training, education and sensitization for policymakers and implementers and incorporating the value of natural resources.

Capacities: How can capacities for collaborative landscape management in Africa be strengthened?

This paper explores the broad spectrum of capacities required for collaborative landscape management and surveys several existing ILM initiatives. It also reviews key challenges including coordination of landscape stakeholders, trust-building and conflict reduction, improving private sector engagement, fostering government support and leadership, and facilitating knowledge exchange. To scale up ILM in Africa, an expanded cohort of professionals with

knowledge and experience in implementing landscape approaches will be needed. This will require development of appropriate multi-disciplinary curricula, practical training and extension programs, and academic centers. To reduce the disconnect between integrated landscape initiatives and governmental planning, administrative, and funding structures, awareness-raising with public sector professionals about multi-stakeholder processes and landscape geographies will be an important counterpart effort. Preparing farmers to contribute effectively to design and implementation of integrated landscape management will require carefully designed programs that increase capacity and access to information and markets.

Conclusion

The African Landscapes Action Plan builds on these analyses to identify priorities for new learning and action. All the papers noted that building political will and private sector engagement will be necessary to scale up integrated landscape management, as well as the importance of mechanisms for monitoring and documenting the value of multi-stakeholder approaches and multi-functional landscapes. Participation and education of all stakeholders, including those at the grassroots level, and stronger institutional support networks are necessary for ensuring that African landscapes are better able to sustain people, food and nature. The Action Plan represents a powerful set of policy and programmatic recommendations for national, regional and international action, anchored in research and direct experience and supported by a growing coalition of partners. To unlock the potential of integrated landscape management in Africa, these action strategies can build on solutions that are already underway, scale up what works, fill major gaps, and involve the full set of stakeholders.

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