



Landscapes for People, Food & Nature in Africa



National Policy to Support Landscape Management in Africa

In sub-Saharan Africa, 70 percent of poor people live in rural areas (IFAD, 2014), and, for most nations in the region, the broad goal of alleviating rural poverty involves revitalization of the rural economy. Policy goals include increased agricultural productivity and improved rural incomes, as well as prudent management of natural resources and climate resilience, which is necessary not only for the agricultural economy but also the tourism sector in much of Africa. These challenges are closely linked, yet public policies are often developed and implemented independently, rather than as part of a broad, integrated strategy. These sectoral approaches have their limits (Sayer et al., 2013), as well-intentioned but inefficient or even conflicting policy goals are pursued within the same landscapes. This brief presents a summary of key issues for integrated landscape management-supportive policy, reviews the Africa-specific policy context for integrated landscape management (ILM), and offers recommendations and potential springboards for action.

State of Knowledge

Policy action to support Integrated Landscape Management in Africa

Some African countries are in the process of developing new and powerful visions that harmonize economic development with natural resource conservation, and landscape approaches are key pillars of many of these plans. There are numerous landscape initiatives in Africa, with a variety of entry points that incorporate ILM (Milder et al., 2014), and programs are being developed and implemented at the national level to support these efforts. Examples of these include:

- Ethiopia's community-based participatory watershed development program, implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture with support from the World Bank and TerrAfrica, is an effort to reduce land degradation and improve agricultural productivity for smallholders in watersheds across six regions of Ethiopia through capital investments, technical assistance, and capacity building for farmers and government institutions at the national and sub-national level (TerrAfrica, 2014).
- Through its Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative, the Rwandan government, along with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the United Nations Forum of Forests, and others, are working to restore degraded forest lands (soil, water, land, and forest) by 2035, while boosting development, rehabilitating ecosystems, and improving rural livelihoods (IUCN, 2011). Previously in Rwanda, land use mapping was completed for a highly degraded forest area resulting in the rehabilitation of nearly 3,000 hectares of land (CCDARE, 2014).
- The Sahel Lowland Integrated Ecosystem Management initiative is a 15-year program, funded by the Burkina Faso Government and World Bank in 302 rural communes, to address natural resource degradation and poverty by providing decentralized funding for demand-driven and community-managed projects (GEF, 2012).

Some major landscape-oriented programs have components that operate at national levels, while also coordinating across national boundaries. Examples of these include:

- In the Great Green Wall Initiative the governments of Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan collaborate to address land degradation and desertification, increase food security, and support climate change adaptation by creating a cross-border mosaic of sustainable land uses (GEF, 2013).
- The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area links and integrates several existing conservation areas in Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. This initiative brings together stakeholders from many unique landscapes, including local communities, national governments, private sector actors, and NGOs to engage in a wide range of cross-sectoral approaches to promoting ecotourism, wildlife conservation, and cultural preservation (SANParks, 2014).
- Sixteen African countries are now implementing or launching national initiatives to scale up EverGreen Agriculture, which is a form of farming that integrates trees with annual crops to sustain vegetation cover on the land, while sustainably increasing food and fodder production, with the support of the EverGreen Agriculture Network, a broad alliance of governments, donors, research institutions, and development partners (EverGreen Agriculture, 2014).

- The Lake Victoria Basin Commission of the East African Commission has developed several transboundary landscape management programs, including the Mount Elgon Region Ecosystem Conservation Project (Muhweezi et al., 2007).

Integrated landscape management is also being further supported with regional level policy and coordination.

- TerrAfrica, a regional initiative to improve land management, is working to build coordination linkages between governments in sub-Saharan Africa and other global and regional stakeholders as countries develop national sustainable land management investment frameworks. Much of TerrAfrica's work is built on integrated landscape principles (TerrAfrica, 2011).
- The African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) has played a prominent role in the African response to climate change at the regional and sub-regional scale. In October 2013, AMCEN's 5th Special Session emphasized the relationship of food security and climate adaptation, endorsing Ecosystem-based Adaptation and landscape approaches (AMCEN, 2011).
- The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme process encourages countries to develop long-term visions for agricultural development, including strategies on production and natural resource conservation. The natural resources agenda includes reduced erosion, improved soil fertility, increased yields, greater food security, and enhanced rural livelihoods at the landscape scale, defined by natural, cultural, and administrative boundaries (CAADP, 2009).
- Emerging frameworks are integrating climate change planning and cross-sectoral landscape approaches into agricultural priorities. The United Nations Environment Programme's Ecosystem-based Adaptation program (EbA), which is working to integrate its principles into national development and adaptation programs, has demonstrated how farmers can work to rehabilitate ecosystems, improve crop productivity, and ensure that farming systems are resilient to climate change. The concept of climate-smart agriculture—with a landscape approach as one of its central pillars (FAO, 2010)—is gaining momentum in climate policymaking communities, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' climate-smart agriculture sourcebook presents tools for its mainstreaming into policymaking (FAO, 2013).
- The Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa brings together ten African countries (Botswana, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, and Tanzania), as well as private and public sector partners, in a commitment to implementing all conventions and declarations that promote sustainable development. The declaration contains action points for integrating the values of natural and social capital, poverty reduction, and capacity building through initiatives focused on protected areas, responsible mining, sustainable agriculture and agroforestry, REDD+, sustainable forest management, ecotourism, renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and sustainable urbanization (Gaborone, 2012).

Policy Conditions that Support Integrated Landscape Management in Africa

Broadly speaking, ILM in Africa requires the following set of enabling policy conditions (adapted from Shames et al, 2014):

- Coherent and inclusive sub-national and national policies, laws, and regulations need to operate cross-sectorally in order to break government actors out of their siloes and promote synergistic landscape-scale collaborations. Moreover, supportive local rules and bylaws need to be taken into consideration by national and regional policies. Clarified resource and land tenure rights are also necessary to lay the foundation for long-term ILM. Policies should be designed to scale up effective grassroots-level governance systems into national processes.
- Governments support stakeholder engagement and cooperation within landscapes that allows for responsive governance, collaborative decision-making, and trust-building. Supportive multi-stakeholder platforms will actively involve people at the grassroots level, in addition to other actors at the national and sub-national levels. In some cases, government may play a leading role in these multi-stakeholder processes, and, in others, it will find appropriate ways to support processes led by NGOs, community groups, or the private sector.
- Landscape-scale action requires policy that supports the development of specific knowledge and technical capacities among landscape stakeholders. This will include support for appropriate agricultural and ecosystem research and advanced monitoring and evaluation approaches that include spatial information.
- Market-based incentive mechanisms can provide access to the capital needed to effect changes on the ground through mechanisms such as eco-certifications, payment for environmental services, and subsidies. Governments can provide support to these by either setting up such schemes, serving in an aggregator role, or providing direct payments to land managers who implement sustainable practices.
- Supportive public investments in 'green' infrastructure such as well-designed road, rail, energy, storage, and dam construction are needed to lay the foundations for ILM. Such investments will consider spatial layout, materials used, and energy efficiency and include the creative use of green spaces and farmed areas to provide ecosystem services.

Consensus Actions

While these initiatives show major advances in implementing the enabling conditions for ILM in Africa, there is still critical work to be done in the following areas.

Improve alignment of sectoral policies and strategies at local and national levels.

A paradigm shift is needed among leaders and implementing agencies at all levels of government to enable workplans of related government agencies responsible for various elements of agricultural development and natural resources conservation to be coordinated. Mechanisms are also needed to link important informal landscape management and planning processes to the formal policy mechanisms so that policymakers can learn how best to support these efforts.

Develop stronger linkages between rural and urban policy and planning.

As the economic and ecological footprints of urban regions grow in Africa, new linkages will need to be made between rural and urban policy processes (Forster and Getz, 2014).

Use ILM strategies to meet multiple national goals in international policy processes.

A multi-objective landscape framework can provide efficiencies to countries as they work to meet their commitments under international environmental agreements (i.e. UNFCCC, UMCCD, and UNCBD). A landscape approach will also be central to the implementation of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Expand and strengthen integrated landscape initiatives.

Government agencies can play a variety of roles within integrated landscape initiatives. In some cases, a government actor will act as a coordinating entity, but in others, when processes are led by NGOs, community groups, or the private sector, government will have to figure out the roles they can play which will be most supportive.

Accelerate policy support for agricultural production systems that have co-benefits for ecosystems.

Governments can provide farmers with support for training and extension services, inputs, and market coordination to incentivize more sustainable agricultural practices.

Build capacity for policy research.

Africa needs more of its own centers of expertise for evidence-based policy analysis that creates the knowledge base for the implementation of ILM. Policymakers and landscape stakeholders will also need additional expertise in monitoring the effectiveness of various landscape policy approaches.

“Springboards for Action”

- AMCEN's endorsement of a new African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Flagship program to support multi-objective investments for food production, sustainable land management, biodiversity, and climate change adaptation can provide a platform for policy learning and innovation.
- Build on Sustainable Land Management Committees supported by TerrAfrica that have been set up for cross-agency coordination in many African countries.
- Dialogues between landscape leaders and policymakers, as well as policy study tours, can help mobilize policy support for ILM and facilitate joint planning across sectors.
- Take advantage of inter-ministerial meetings to organize and facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue among the production ministries and those representing natural resource and environment sectors.
- Regional policy processes such as NEPAD, the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa can serve as leaders in the development of ILM supportive policy and also serve as platforms to document and share policy experience across countries.
- The rural institutional infrastructure, which is essential for implementation of ILM, can be developed through efforts such as those of the World Agroforestry Centre's Strengthening Rural Institutions project.

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The authors gratefully acknowledge the information and ideas shared by the participants of the Policy session of the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature in Africa conference on July 1, 2014.

Financial support for the preparation of these briefs was provided by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), NEPAD, World Bank/TerrAfrica, EcoAgriculture Partners, the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Government of the Netherlands, and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF).

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