



# Landscapes for People, Food & Nature in Africa



## Strengthening Capacities for Collaborative Landscape Management in Africa

---

Recognition is growing that integrated management of rural landscapes is a preferred way to ensure that expanding human demands for food, bio-energy, and ecosystem services do not collide with limitations on land, water, and other natural resources, nor undermine biodiversity (Sayer et al., 2013). Working from a landscape perspective requires a broad spectrum of capacities. A recent study of integrated landscape initiatives (ILIs) in Africa exposes challenges, however, in realizing the capacities required (Milder et al., 2014). This paper summarizes available knowledge about developing capacities for managing integrated landscapes and proposes ways to accelerate the capacity development process.

## State of Knowledge

### Capacities, Landscape Capacities, and Capacity Development

The term capacity development covers three aspects: knowledge, which refers to the understanding from a theoretical background; skills, which are needed to apply the knowledge in real life; and attitude, which shapes all decisions, actions, and behavior. While all three are important, the latter is the most difficult to change, as it includes values, beliefs, and the paradigms that drive them (Hennemann et al., 2014).

Landscape leaders, managers, and professionals must be able to consider landscapes as part of the livelihood system of their inhabitants including the production of food, the generation of income, and the maintenance of socio-cultural identity. They also must be able to see landscapes as part of wider economic and political networks, such as value chains and regional political processes. This implies that working from a landscape perspective requires professionals to be able to 'see the bigger picture.' Thus, in addition to specific technical know-how, landscape professionals need to have a feeling for spatial processes and be able to work in interdisciplinary teams, facilitate complex stakeholder learning and decision-making processes, and be sensitive to local circumstances (Neely, 2010).

Capacity development can mean different things to different people. While training is an important component of capacity development, not all training interventions have the desired result, and long-term solutions in landscapes require more than training alone. They also involve longer-term engagement and on-the-job facilitated collaborative learning (Hennemann et al., 2014). Potential capacity development activities at the landscape level may entail the design, support, and facilitation of multi-stakeholder learning processes; training; training-of-trainers; organizational and institutional support; action research and action learning; mentoring; coaching; advisory support; farmer field schools; and other vehicles for learning.

On-the-job capacity development may not be enough to enable landscape professionals to see the bigger picture. Often, what opens their eyes is exposure to landscape experience elsewhere, to help them think 'outside of the box.' Examples of such cross-landscape learning can be found in study tours, web-based resource portals, e-groups, international training and encounters offered by global knowledge providers, such as universities and knowledge institutes.

### Landscape Capacity Development: Findings from Recent Studies

The study "Integrated Landscape Initiatives for African Agriculture, Development, and Conservation: A Region-Wide Assessment" (Milder et al., 2014), carried out by the Landscape for People, Food and Nature Initiative (LPFN), with support from TerrAfrica, provides an overview of 87 ILIs in 33 African countries. It provides insight into the contexts and challenges of a large variety of landscape initiatives and presents lessons learned with regard to capacity development.

The study concludes that the main motivations for integrated landscape approaches in Africa have been natural resources degradation, sustainable land management, and biodiversity conservation, and these objectives have provided entry points for integrated management. The need to improve agriculture and enhance livelihoods is also an important objective, particularly for stakeholder groups within the landscape. To achieve these diverse objectives, ILIs invest

more often in improving planning, coordination, and governance at the landscape level than in activities with direct linkages to conservation, production, or livelihoods. Although government agencies participate most frequently in the design and implementation of ILIs, respondents often report that they do not provide the support or leadership that other participants hoped they would. Producer groups and non-governmental organizations tend to be the engines of the ILIs, frequently participating and demonstrating leadership. Interestingly, women are often considered important participants, and those ILIs that include them as a stakeholder group report a greater number of outcomes. Participation by the private sector, however, is rare.

Many ILIs invest in capacity development, particularly for agricultural practices, conservation and land management practices, enhancing social development and social equity, and the development of new policies and governance structures. Many of the ILIs' most successful results are tangible achievements related to the conservation of soil, water, and biodiversity, as well as participatory decision-making. Increased awareness or changed attitudes and mindsets are also mentioned as key successes.

The ILI study reveals that the Namibian Coast Conservation and Management Project (NACOMA) undertook a large-scale capacity development program when it adopted an integrated coastal management (ICM) strategy. Since ICM was new to the NACOMA leaders and stakeholders in the landscape, their capacity development program involved raising awareness on the influence of each stakeholder group on coastal management; educating stakeholders on the basic principles of ICM; establishing a neutral platform where stakeholders could meet; and developing coordination skills and building rapport. Building capacity for coordination was especially important for generating greater buy-in for the policy recommendations for improving coastal management.

The study also highlights challenges where capacity development is less straightforward and requires particular attention. These are related to coordinating stakeholders, building trust, reducing conflict, and working within unsupportive policy frameworks. Landscape initiatives carried out at a relatively small scale tend to be more successful than large-scale initiatives that require a lot of investment in effective coordination of actors across large geographical areas. However, 'upscaling' remains challenging, as many initiatives are carried out at a smaller scale under the limitations of weak market access, unsupportive policy frameworks, and low participation of private sector stakeholders.

In the LPFN study, identification of a pronounced need for more investment in capacity development to improve private sector engagement, government support and leadership, multi-stakeholder mechanisms and governance, and knowledge sharing and exchange is in line with other recent studies. *Lessons Learned from the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) Learning Network* (van Oosten, 2013) and *Creating Capacities to Restore Landscapes – a framework for capacity development* (Hennemann et al., 2014) both conclude that technical management capacities are relatively easy to develop, and many courses, trainings, and workshops are already available. Rather, it is the cross-cutting capacities related to stakeholder management, leadership, and governance that are highly in demand. This insight leads to the identification of key action areas for capacity development highlighted below.

## Consensus Actions

### Support the Development of Integrated Landscape Curricula and Generate a New Breed of Landscape Professionals by Finding and Adapting Successful Models

Despite the growing popularity of integrated landscape approaches, most landscape knowledge remains fragmented and divided among various disciplines and professional fields. The LPFN examination of ILs and other synthesis studies about landscape management can provide a basis for better integrating landscape knowledge and creating robust capacity development curricula. These are needed to overcome the reality that, in most countries, the landscape approach is not recognized as an integrated field of study and curricula are not present in academic, vocational, or national extension programs. It will be important to build bridges across academic fields for interdisciplinary landscape learning and to build a new professionalism in landscape management at all levels and scales.

### Improve Government Support and Leadership for Multi-Institutional and Multi-Jurisdictional Landscape Approaches

A recurrent problem is the discrepancy between landscape initiatives and the administrative structures of governments. Many ILs involve governmental agencies as important stakeholders, but the active support and leadership of governments is often limited. A frequent problem is that governmental constituencies do not coincide with landscape boundaries, making it difficult to link landscape-level planning exercises to formal planning structures of states. Also the distribution of funding can be difficult, as funding mechanisms are often defined by administrative boundaries, while institutional mechanisms for the funding of landscape-level initiatives are largely absent. It will be important to help government officials and landscape leaders develop more open attitudes to create more flexible administrative structures and appreciate and support the diverse and effective ways in which landscapes can be shaped from below. This will involve assessing the capacities needed to better align landscape-level planning to administrative planning systems of states and designing capacity development curricula and activities to improve them.

### Strengthen Multi-Stakeholder Mechanisms and Governance

Many ILs are based on multi-stakeholder processes, formally or informally institutionalized in multi-stakeholder platforms for effective dialogue, negotiation, and decision-making. These processes, however, often operate outside the formal realm of democratic governance and are subject to power differences within or between scales. As with any political process, there is the risk of these structures being co-opted by powerful interests to serve their own ends. It will be important to design capacity development programs in ways that contribute to more equitable power relations at the landscape level and between different levels of political decision-making, and to ensure the equitable participation of less powerful actors in negotiation and decision-making.

### Engage Farmers in Landscape Management and Decision-Making

A weak point in capacity development for multi-stakeholder management of landscapes is limited support for preparing farmers to contribute effectively to landscape management and reap the benefits. This refers not only to creating space for producer groups, but also to their

entrepreneurial skills and ability to co-design economically viable landscapes. Until farmers, herders, fisherfolk, and local forest managers engage on a large scale, the impacts of integrated landscape management will be limited. It will be important to help local producers on a large scale develop their skills and gain access to knowledge and information that will enable them to use ecologically sound production practices and sustain ecosystem services in landscapes. Capacity development initiatives will need to pay attention also to helping producers on a large scale learn to create and gain access to markets that will reward their investment in ecologically sound production practices in integrated landscape management systems (Hart et al., 2014).

### Engage Private Sector Actors in Landscape Management and Decision-Making

Too often there is a lack of financial sustainability and economic viability of landscapes. This may be due to weak market linkages but also to assumptions that engaging in strong stakeholder involvement is expensive and risky for private companies and investors. Their relatively low involvement in landscape initiatives widens the gap between public and private investment and does not contribute to more harmonious and inclusive private sector development. It will be important to better understand the reasons for limited private sector involvement in ILIs, and also to design capacity development initiatives that help bridge the gap between the public and private sector and contribute to economically viable and entrepreneurial landscapes (Kissinger, 2013).

### Potential Action Steps

Based on the documentation and suggested capacity action areas above, we propose three priority action steps to accelerate the development of the capacities needed to advance integrated landscape management in Africa.

#### 1. *Conduct comparative analysis of approaches, methods, and results of current capacity development initiatives.*

It is important to develop a systemized and transparent landscape leadership program across the African continent, to accelerate and integrate learning and the design of curricula that reflect this learning from diverse landscape initiatives. A careful inventory of existing integrated landscape capacity development initiatives and programs should precede the analysis. The assessment should fully explore the question of responsibilities and opportunities for landscape capacity development. The assessment should also offer opportunities for institutionalizing integrated landscape management into related policy frameworks at the national and regional level, as there is a clear linkage between the development of skills and competencies and the actual bringing together of constituencies and stakeholders into a process of transformational change.

#### 2. *Build a dynamic curriculum for landscape capacity development.*

Develop a collaborative network of diverse organizations with interests and expertise in respective components of landscape capacity development for public, private, and civic sectors and stakeholder groups to design and test. Ensure the curriculum and corresponding network of expertise in capacity development methods includes components on entrepreneurship and business models that can help create economically viable landscapes. Among other priority components, an Africa-wide landscape curriculum that is designed to build leadership across multiple sectors will include youth engagement and mobilization, landscape governance, policy advocacy and support, landscape financing and investment, and monitoring and evaluation.

### 3. *Initiate a Landscape Capacity Development 'Market Place'.*

This forum for information exchange about capacity development needs and resources will ideally become a 'Landscape Academy.' Landscape knowledge is dispersed over various educational sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, natural resource management, rural economy, and rural sociology. A flexible institutional mechanism is needed for interdisciplinary exchange and the development of truly integrated capacity development products across levels, sectors, and scales. A 'Global Landscape Academy' would provide expert guidance in assessing capacity development needs and opportunities and matching providers with users. Such a landscape capacity marketplace would offer a creative forum for designing and exchanging interdisciplinary curricula. Key questions to explore include how such a market place may be operationalized; who would be the major partners and what role would they play; and who would contribute, benefit, and cover costs.

## "Springboards for Action"

Many groups across Africa are developing tools and programs to enhance capacity for different aspects of landscape management. The opportunity exists to draw from these resources for more widespread use through the following platforms:

- Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation, together with its partners, organizes regular landscape learning events around the world. These learning events are unique opportunities for landscape leaders and professionals to meet, exchange, and mutually learn. Some topics for such learning events are landscape leadership, landscape governance, and economically viable and entrepreneurial landscapes.
- The Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative Working Group on Landscape Strengthening carries a capacity development mandate. It is investing in the design and development of curricula and the pilot testing of successful capacity development workshops and courses.

---

**Authors: Cora van Oosten (Wageningen University), Louise E. Buck (EcoAgriculture Partners and Cornell University), Abigail K. Hart (EcoAgriculture Partners and Cornell University), and Mariteuw Chimère Diaw (African Model Forests Network)**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the information and ideas shared by the participants of the Capacity Development session of the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature in Africa conference on July 2, 2014, as well as the contributions of Effatah Jele (Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions), Wilkister Moturi (Egerton University), Richard Nasasira (Kitabi College of Conservation and Environmental Management – Rwanda), Leah Mwangi (Kijabe Environmental Volunteers), Joseph Munyarukaza (New Forest Company), Christine Negra (EcoAgriculture Partners), Sara Scherr (EcoAgriculture Partners), and Jes Walton (EcoAgriculture Partners), for comments on earlier versions.

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).

## References

- Hart, A. K., McMichael, P., Milder, J. C., & Scherr, S. J. (2014). Multi-functional landscapes from the grassroots? The role of rural producer movements (submitted).
- Hennemann, I., Mundie, M., & Rizopoulos, M. (2014). *Creating Capacities to Restore Landscapes – a framework for capacity development*. Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation (draft).
- Milder, J. C., Hart, A. K., Dobie, P., Minai, J., & Zaleski, C. (2014). Integrated Landscape Initiatives for African Agriculture, Development, and Conservation: A Region-Wide Assessment. *World Development*, 54, 68–80.
- Kissinger, G., Brasser, A., & Gross, L. (2013). Reducing Risk: Landscape Approaches to Sustainable Sourcing. Washington, DC: EcoAgriculture Partners, on behalf of the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative. Retrieved from [http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org/documents/files/reducing\\_risk\\_synthesis\\_report.pdf](http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org/documents/files/reducing_risk_synthesis_report.pdf).
- Neely, C. (2010). Capacity Development for Environmental Management in the Agricultural Sector in Developing Countries. OECD Environment Working Papers, No. 26, OECD Publishing.
- Sayer, J., Sunderland, T., Ghazoul, J., Pfund, J. L., Sheil, D., Meijaard, E., Venter, M., van Oosten, C., & Buck, L. (2013). Ten principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land-uses. *PNAS*, 110(21), 8349–8356.
- Van Oosten, C. (2014). *Lessons Learned from the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) Learning Network*. Wageningen UR Centre for Development Innovation.
- Van Oosten, C. (2013). Restoring landscapes—Governing place: A learning approach to forest landscape restoration. *Journal of Sustainable Forestry* 32, 659–676.