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LANDSCAPES

COLLABORATING
FOR SUSTAINABILITY
AT SCALE



LANDSCAPES: COLLABORATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY AT SCALE

This document is the summary of a workshop on Landscape Approaches held on the 18th October 2016. The aims of the workshop were to explore and discuss the latest thinking and examples of landscape approaches and to provide an opportunity to network with peers in the sector on this subject.

WHAT IS A 'LANDSCAPE APPROACH'?

Taking a 'landscape approach' involves collaborative action to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives at a scale beyond individual farms or plantations within the same landscape¹. A landscape might be demarcated by an existing political area (i.e. a political jurisdiction, hence a 'jurisdictional approach'); a water catchment/basin; or be an area of a particular scale with a defined ecological or cultural character. Landscapes provide various functions for different stakeholders within and beyond the landscape, such as forestry and agricultural production (for local consumption or for export), livelihoods, flood protection and biodiversity conservation. These diverse functions and the needs of the different stakeholders who depend on them have to be considered and as much as possible accommodated.

Why Landscapes, why now?

- Over recent years, progressive businesses have invested hugely in increasing the sustainability of their supply chains but we have not seen change at the pace and scale needed.
- Approaches like certification have taken sustainable production so far but tackling such a complex issue 'one producer at a time' is not going to achieve the transformation

required to avoid irreversible habitat loss and dangerous climate change. For most market facing companies, the volume of commodities consumed is tiny compared with global production; the majority of producers in sectors like palm oil or soy have been left untouched.

- New collaborations could improve the sustainability of whole landscapes so purchasers can be confident that carbon emissions are reduced, deforestation and exploitation eliminated, and social development fostered. This goes a step further than the traditional unit of management under certification.
- Business approaches to working at a landscape level are just beginning to emerge² which creates an opportunity to get sustainability to scale more efficiently and more effectively. Based on the level of interest in landscape based solutions, this appears to be the next trajectory for sustainable development and we are beginning to see some ambitious commitments to 'Produce and Protect'³ and to preferentially source from landscapes/jurisdictions that have comprehensive policies designed to deliver more sustainable forest management, productive agriculture, improved livelihoods and reduced emissions.

¹ A landscape is a socio-ecological system that consists of natural and/or human-modified ecosystems, and which is influenced by distinct ecological, historical, economic and socio-cultural processes and activities. See this and other definitions in [The Little Book of Landscapes](#).

² [Reducing risk: landscape approaches to sustainable sourcing](#).

³ Produce and Protect commitment was made at COP 21 in Paris by Unilever and M&S as co-chairs of the CGF.



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THE TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO ENGAGE AT A LANDSCAPE LEVEL ARE EMERGING AND STARTING TO BE TRIED AND TESTED

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE WORKSHOP?

- Experts provided an overview of what 'landscape approaches' means in theory and in practice, supported by case studies of emerging initiatives, specifically from a GHG emission, deforestation and social perspective.
- Participants explored potential approaches for business to get more engaged in landscape-scale activities – with a strong focus on understanding the opportunities and constraints from a retailers' perspective.
- Presentations from businesses, researchers & NGOs.
- Around 40 individuals attended, primarily representing the private sector, with presence from the NGO and academic research community and a representative from the public sector.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

There is a growing business case for landscape approaches ...

- The climate, deforestation and social justice agendas have come together at a high level through the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), the Paris Agreement and The New York Declaration on Forests (among other initiatives). These provide a foundation on which to collaborate to protect and enhance our natural and social capital.

- However, key commodity supply chains are still associated with unnecessary carbon emissions: witness the recurring forest fires in Indonesia; on-going tropical deforestation and expansion into new frontiers; alongside persistent land grabs and use of forced labour.
- There is a growing consensus on the need to work at a landscape level – this has been on the agenda of policymakers and NGOs for some time, and now business is becoming more engaged.
- The main benefits for retailers to engage in landscape approaches are: creation of resilient agricultural landscapes that give access to sustainably produced raw materials; brand risk management; and process efficiency (finding simpler ways to verify what is happening on the ground and in supply chains).
- The tools and techniques to engage at a landscape level are emerging and starting to be tried and tested. One key tool is spatial planning, to improve the governance of natural resources on the ground and a move from companies to preferentially source from these areas that have robust and consensus-based land use plans. This may offer the best way for companies to address operational and reputational risks that arise from cumulative impacts or system failures that lie beyond the individual enterprise.

It is still early days ...

- Particularly for the retail sector. The 'business case' needs further definition, and delivery mechanisms have yet to be developed.
- There is a lot of confusing terminology about landscapes but the key is that they deal with multiple land holdings within the same area; either politically defined (a 'jurisdiction') or ecologically defined ('landscape').

**THERE IS AN
OPPORTUNITY
TO INFLUENCE
LAND USE POLICY
DOMESTICALLY
AND ABROAD**

Some examples of landscape approaches are emerging:

- Palm Oil: Work within RSPO to certify sustainable palm oil for the whole of Sabah, Malaysia ('Jurisdictional Certification').
- Zero-deforestation policy and commitments in Mato Grosso, Brazil, with key crops including soy, beef, leather and cotton.
- The FAIR partnership: an emerging attempt to create landscapes that deliver a shared benefit model for smallholders and mills in palm oil producing landscapes In Indonesia.
- These examples have in common: the need to engage multiple stakeholders; provide incentives; and supporting leadership and policy commitment from local government.
- All of the landscapes discussed provide multiple functions – landscape approaches are broader than a single commodity and we need systems that will deliver value for a range of sectors e.g. agriculture, water, energy, livelihoods etc.

An understanding of what needs to happen on-the-ground is growing ...

- Landscape interventions must be collaborative: landscapes provide many products and services to many different stakeholders.

Business is very diverse ...

- And so the point of entry into landscapes may be diverse too. Retailers and manufacturers that don't have a direct presence in a landscape may still play a role in catalyzing supply chain actors to engage, preferential sourcing, and using their voice to influence business and regional policy. Producers and companies with (e.g. processing) infrastructure in a landscape are probably best placed to join and participate in landscape initiatives directly and engage with landscape-scale ecosystem service markets.
- There is an opportunity to influence land use policy domestically and abroad, as well as engaging policy makers in producer landscapes to forge good relationships between producer and buyer countries.
- Landscape approaches have the potential to include restoration of ecosystems and remediation for past exploitation, as well as preventing worst practices happening in the future.
- The role of finance in supporting sustainable agriculture and emission reductions is poorly understood (philanthropy funding, local and international agricultural lending, carbon based finance etc.) and more work needs to be done to integrate into operational programmes in an ad hoc or systemic way.

Participants felt that there are significant benefits of sharing ideas and seeding new relationships ...

- Participants also felt that collaboration was key to moving forward and spoke of the need for:
 - Future events providing further opportunities to learn and to create new and build on existing relationships;
 - More evidence of landscapes approach working on the ground;



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- The opportunity to call on one another for support and guidance;
 - Materials to help build the business case and showcase the benefits;
 - Facilitation of working groups to identify priority landscapes and provide visibility of who is interested in what, who is ready to engage and act;
 - Better definition of key operational landscape principles to build on and strengthen existing responsible sourcing guidelines;
 - Identifying collective opportunities to influence policy – potentially within EU/UK as well as internationally.
- Participants appreciated the space to network with other organizations and the safe environment to learn.
 - In the end, the success of the landscape-agenda will be determined by the strength of the partnerships formed to support its development and implementation, and so fostering cross-sector collaboration is critical.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS: CREATING A LANDSCAPES NETWORK

- The ‘Landscapes Network’ would consist of a coalition of interested representatives of businesses, NGOs, policymakers and researchers – engaging those who have been involved in this landscape workshop from the outset, as well as other interested stakeholders. We anticipate this will primarily be formed of UK based companies for practical reasons, but welcome interest from other parties if they feel able to participate in UK based events.
- It would position itself as pragmatic, responsive to the needs of members, non-aligned (politically or ideologically), evidence-based and be time bound. In practical terms, it would be run as an independent platform, accountable to a steering committee, and could be subscription/membership based.
- The overarching aim of the Network is to provide a forum for continued learning and knowledge exchange that will increase the capacity and competency of stakeholders to enable engagement in landscape approaches. This will be refined as the concept is developed.
- Examples of future activities of the Network might include: creating and supporting working groups to collaborate on specific landscapes; commissioning white papers/communication briefs to promote landscape-approaches with policy makers; defining a strong business case for a range of different supply chain actors; developing best practice/guidance/standards for landscape collaboration; developing tools/data to enable/influence landscape collaborations; training landscape-facilitators; participation in global landscape initiatives/events.
- A number of workshop participants have expressed interest in the ‘Landscapes Network’ concept. Subsequently terms of reference and a business plan are under development and will be shared in due course.





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