

# An Integrated Landscape Target for the Sustainable Development Goals

A POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LANDSCAPES FOR PEOPLE,  
FOOD AND NATURE INITIATIVE TO THE OPEN WORKING  
GROUP ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**IF** the post-2015 sustainable development agenda is to be effective, an integrated approach that recognizes and embraces the interdependencies of social, economic and environmental goals is required.<sup>1</sup> Rather than set goals that codify old sectoral conflicts over increasingly scarce land and resources, we must adopt strategies that encourage collaboration and build coalitions. To achieve this, each Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) must be supported by cross-cutting targets and shared multi-scale indicators that promote efforts to capitalize on positive relationships between the goals and avoid or minimize negative interactions. With this in mind, the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative proposes a general target for landscape management. This target provides the foundation for a menu or “dashboard” of targets and indicators, with explicit potential synergies and trade-offs, for country implementers to choose from, according to context and need, for each goal.<sup>2</sup> We, the signatories of this statement, urge the Open Working Group to incorporate it into the development of all related Sustainable Development Goals.

## THE PROPOSED TARGET

***All landscapes are managed by their stakeholders, across sectoral and administrative boundaries, in a way that integrates food security, sustainable production, livelihood development and ecosystem services.***

## WHY AN INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE TARGET FOR THE SDGs

The Open Working Group’s March 2014 update emphasizes that goals related to poverty eradication, sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, water and sanitation, health and population dynamics, sustainable cities and human settlements, ecosystems and biodiversity, climate, and sustainable production and consumption will necessarily be linked.<sup>3</sup> A cross-cutting integrated landscape target offers a mechanism by which the international community can implement such interrelated SDGs, because such a target fits well within any number of proposed SDGs, and provides clear guidance for countries, both developed and devel-

oping, as they examine the interrelationships and impacts across all of the goals and then seek to implement integrated approaches to these inter-connected challenges.<sup>4</sup>

The cross-cutting landscape target we propose meets the filter for targets offered by UNEP—to leave no one behind, to achieve greater prosperity, and to increase capital to achieve greater resilience<sup>5</sup>—and, it is applicable for implementation across scales. Simply put, the landscape target offers a mechanism by which the international community can most effectively and efficiently implement interrelated SDGs.

## IMPLEMENTING AN INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE TARGET TO ACHIEVE THE SDGs

Landscape is a generic and politically neutral term for a socio-ecological system that consists of a mosaic of natural and/or human-modified ecosystems. Integrated landscape management (ILM) requires the development of shared or agreed management objectives that encompass multiple benefits from the landscape; the adoption of field, farm and forest practices designed to contribute to multiple objectives; the management of ecological, social, and economic interactions among different parts of the landscape to realize positive synergies; the existence of collaborative, community-engaged processes for dialogue, planning, negotiating, and monitoring decisions; and the development of markets and public policies to achieve the diverse set of landscape objectives and institutional requirements.<sup>6</sup> ILM promotes collective action capitalizing on the knowledge, interests and passions of all stakeholders so that our activities restore and protect the planet while improving outcomes for people.

Integrated landscape approaches are already being used around the world in places where challenges and opportunities clearly demanded simultaneously increasing food production, improving livelihoods, and protecting biodiversity and ecosystem services.<sup>7</sup> The activities of many national governments and international organizations reflect the increasing appreciation for the value of these approaches.

For example, Rwanda has adopted a national landscape restoration strategy with a goal of improving rural livelihoods. Eight nations in Central America are implementing



Figure 1. Achieving food security, poverty reduction, clean and safe water provision, basic health and sanitation, and many other goals in landscapes like this one in Nepal requires a wide variety of resources, sectors and actors, including upstream and downstream communities, agricultural markets in nearby villages and cities, energy alternatives, forestry departments and policies, and more. Photo by Sajal Sthapit, EcoAgriculture Partners.

an area-based approach to rural development that supports participatory regional planning to address agriculture, environment, health, human development and climate change in an integrated way. Ethiopia is overcoming chronic food insecurity with landscape approaches to agricultural restoration and water management. In Colombia, public-private partnerships for integrated watershed management are improving water quality and lowering municipal water treatment costs while also reducing business risks for commercial brewers. Indonesia is adopting integrated landscape approaches to conserve forest in areas of rapid agricultural development. The United States is supporting large multi-stakeholder initiatives to restore water quality in intensive crop production landscapes. Proponents of sustainable cities are using an integrated city region approach to achieve food security and environmental goals. The first Global Landscapes Forum, held at the UNFCCC in December 2013, demonstrated the rapid growth in expertise, practical tools and organizational capacity to implement and support integrated landscape management, as well as the emerging coalitions behind integrated approaches.

The Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative's Global Review has compiled the evidence on integrated landscape management. Our studies have called out critical factors for successful governance of integrated landscapes, pointed to policy barriers for implement-

ing ILM, prescribed new financing strategies to improve landscape performance for multiple objectives, identified key areas for technical research on ecosystem and agricultural interventions, and investigated the opportunities for private sector involvement in landscape initiatives.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, more knowledge of the details of integrated landscape management is emerging through program and project evaluations and from research institutions around the world.

### OPTIONS FOR INDICATORS AND MEASUREMENT

A variety of biophysical, socioeconomic and institutional indicators are needed to efficiently track progress on a landscape target. Recent advances in scientific research and spatially sensitive assessment methodologies have made multi-objective landscape monitoring a practical option. The "dashboard" approach allows indicators like those suggested below to be tailored for each goal.

### NUMBER OF INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE INITIATIVES

Integrated Landscape Initiatives (ILI) are institutional entities in which stakeholders plan and implement activities together across sectors and administrative boundaries. Recent reviews of agricultural ILIs in Africa and Latin America demonstrated practical methods and criteria for documenting and tracking the improvements in the number, inclusivity and effectiveness of ILIs.

### PROPORTION OF AGRICULTURAL AREA MANAGED WITH WATER-, CLIMATE- AND BIODIVERSITY-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

The proportion of agricultural area managed for multiple ecosystem benefits is an important measure of the multifunctionality of a landscape. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets, for example, already promote on- and off-farm agrobiodiversity and monitor trends in these areas via a suite of indicators, including the area of agricultural ecosystems under sustainable management, the population of agriculture-dependent species in production areas, and the proportion of products derived from sustainable sources. These indicators could be used or modified to monitor the proportion of agricultural area in landscapes managed for multiple objectives.

### AREA OF LANDSCAPES WITH CONTINUOUS VEGETATIVE COVER

Indicators can be designed to reflect a variety of biophysical and economic improvements in landscapes. For example, the Bonn Challenge on Forest Landscape Restoration to restore 150 million hectares of forest by 2020 (including 50 million hectares under agroforestry) can serve as a model for a biophysical indicator, and its tracking process can serve a dual purpose within the SDGs.

### NATIONAL POLICY SUPPORT FOR INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Strength of national policy support for ILM, including integration into national development strategies, correlates strongly with the effectiveness of integrated landscape initiatives within a country. National support for ILM could be tracked using sub-indicators such as the existence and implementation/enforcement of supportive policies and programs, increased or streamlined public sector financing, and the extent of inter-sectoral or inter-ministerial coordination.

### PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN WELL-BEING OF HOUSEHOLDS WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE

An important indication of the vitality of a landscape is the well-being of the people within it. Indicators that measure human well-being across multiple dimensions, such as indices to track multidimensional poverty, household livelihood security or household food security could be tailored to track spatial and temporal patterns and changes across landscapes.

### CALL TO ACTION

We urge the Open Working Group to formulate goals that reflect the clear interrelationships between the many aspects of the future we want.

We urge all those involved in drafting and defining those goals to include this landscape target in the final language that will direct the global project of sustainable development for the next generation: "All landscapes are managed by their stakeholders, across sectoral and administrative boundaries, in a way that integrates food security, sustainable production, livelihood development and ecosystem services."

We invite all individuals, organizations and governments who support this target to sign this statement and otherwise advocate for its adoption.<sup>9</sup>

*Signed,*

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\*Titles and institutions listed with individuals' names are for reference only and do not imply endorsement by the institution.

## NOTES

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2. Government of Colombia. "The Integrating Approach: A Concept Paper from the Government of Colombia to assist in defining the architecture of the SDG Framework," 2014.
3. Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. "Annex 1: Interlinkages", 2014, [http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/3387Annex\\_interlinkages\\_1903.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/3387Annex_interlinkages_1903.pdf) (accessed 26 March 2014).
4. Weitz, Nina, Annette Huber-Lee, Måns Nilsson, Marion Davis, and Holger Hoff. "Cross-sectoral integration in the Sustainable Development Goals: a nexus approach," Discussion Brief. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute, 2014.
5. UNEP. "Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development," *UNEP Post-2015 Note #1*. Nairobi: UNEP, 2013.
6. Scherr, Sara J, Seth Shames and Rachel Friedman. "Defining integrated landscape management for policy makers," *Ecoagriculture Policy Focus*, No. 10. Washington, DC: EcoAgriculture Partners, 2013.
7. Milder, Jeffrey C., Abigail K. Hart, Philip Dobie, Joshua Minai, and Christi Zaleski. "Integrated landscape initiatives for African agriculture, development, and conservation: a region-wide assessment." *World Development*, 54: 68-80, 2013. **and** Estrada-Carmona, Natalia, Abigail K. Hart, Fabrice DeClerck, Celia A. Harvey, and Jeffrey C. Milder. In review. "Integrated landscape management for agriculture, rural livelihoods, and ecosystem conservation: an assessment of experience from Latin America and the Caribbean." *Landscape and Urban Planning*.
8. For more on the results of the Global Review, which is ongoing, please visit [http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org/global\\_review/](http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org/global_review/)
9. To sign the statement and see the complete list of signatories, go to [http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org/action\\_and\\_advocacy/sdg\\_statement](http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org/action_and_advocacy/sdg_statement).

The Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative partners aim to understand and support integrated agricultural landscape approaches to simultaneously meet goals for food production, ecosystem health and human well-being. The more than 60 partner organizations foster cross-sectoral dialogue, learning and action.

For more information about the LPFN and how landscape approaches can help us achieve the future we want, please visit: [landscapes.ecoagriculture.org](http://landscapes.ecoagriculture.org).