



# SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES



Driving coordinated action for inclusive development through a landscape approach

## From global goals to local action

A landscape is a defined geographical area which offers a local perspective on the sustainability challenges we face today. It provides an operational scale to understand the effects of human activities on our environment. We need to understand it from the inside out to grasp the full complexity. Stakeholders in the landscape define the boundaries together as a first step towards a shared agenda for sustainable development. Overlapping jurisdictional and natural boundaries help to define the relevant scope and scale of a landscape. For example, municipalities (jurisdictional boundary) which depend on the same watershed (natural boundary) need to align and coordinate their efforts in water management to effectively protect their shared water resources.

## How to organize change?

Today's global challenges are vast and can be experienced as overwhelming. We need to act with speed and scale, but where do we start? Our natural environment is degrading at a rapid pace and we witness how global market trends change our local landscapes. The growing demand for food, feed, fuel and fibre needs to be met, but we fail to put measures in place which secure the long-term health of vital ecosystems. Exploitation of natural resources remains unchecked by sound governance frameworks: they are either non-existent or ineffective. The costs of externalities are not accounted for by the private sector, while alternative business models, which share the benefits in an equitable way, are not sufficiently explored. What is good for people and planet should be at the heart of decision making to reshape our economy. And local stakeholders - those who reside in and depend on their landscape - should be in the driver's seat, shaping their future.

“Without a unifying context for actions, people promote or support actions that result in conflict and violence. When people, even of different cultures and beliefs, first develop a holistic context with total agreement as is essential, subsequent actions in that context are commonly agreeable to all.”

– *Allan Savory, Savory Institute*

## Our landscape vision

We grow partnerships and knowledge for inclusive development in sustainable landscapes, where people thrive and natural values are protected, maintained and restored.

### WHAT WE DO

- We work in commodity production landscapes in partnership with local communities, the private and public sector.
- We aim to enhance the multi-functionality of the natural and productive landscape for all stakeholders.
- We create space for dialogue to enhance mutual understanding and build a shared knowledge base about the landscape to inform decision making and action on the ground.
- We work towards an inclusive and sustainable economy which fits the landscape.

**Solidaridad**

# SOLIDARIDAD BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A LANDSCAPE APPROACH

The landscape approach stands for an inclusive and participatory process in which various stakeholders jointly define and negotiate the social, environmental and economic values which require protection, maintenance or restoration in a defined landscape.

## **WE CONNECT STAKEHOLDERS AND CREATE A SPACE FOR DIALOGUE AND PLANNING**

We bring together stakeholders in multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms to enable alignment and cooperation. “We see MSPs as a form of governance (...), a way in which groups of people can make decisions and take action for the collective good, be it at local, national, or international scale. (...) where stakeholders can learn together in an interactive way, where people can speak and be heard, and where everybody’s ideas can be harnessed to drive innovation and find ways forward that are more likely to be in the interests of all”. Source: MSP Guide, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation

## **WE POOL INFORMATION AND BUILD A COLLECTIVE BODY OF LANDSCAPE KNOWLEDGE**

Bringing together a variety of stakeholders ensures access to the diversity of their knowledge. We thus gather and share information to build a collective body of landscape knowledge in partnership with local and international research institutions. This shared knowledge base is a critical foundation for analysis, decision making, action, monitoring and communication.

## **WE DEVELOP AND TEST VIABLE BUSINESS MODELS WHICH WORK FOR PEOPLE AND FIT THE LANDSCAPE**

Identified solutions need to be actionable, affordable and have to make business sense. We work with farmers, entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and downstream supply chain actors to ensure a direct market link. Moreover, together we align goals on production practices and product requirements, set up necessary service

provisions for producers and solve bottlenecks in supply chain infrastructure. We seek to develop business models which generate a viable income, support investment in improved practices, and contribute to protection and restoration of natural resources.

## **WE BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE, CONTRIBUTING TO LANDSCAPE GOVERNANCE**

Landscape governance is the set of rules (policies and cultural norms) and decision making processes of public, private and civil society actors that shape the landscape. There are many ways in which landscape governance can fall short. Policies are either not in place, are weak or conflicting, or simply unknown. Institutions often lack the capacity, incentives or means to implement and enforce policies. On the one hand, we raise awareness on existing policy frameworks which affect land use planning and resource management. At the same time, we also identify the requirements to improve governance in practice. Solidaridad fulfils a key role through linking community level issues to district and national level planning and policy dialogues.

“In the Kilimanjaro landscape programme in Tanzania, Solidaridad facilitates stakeholder meetings at community, district and national level. By organizing these dialogues at each level, we are enhancing the flow of information regarding what policies work and which issues need attention. We stand for a bottom up approach and ask attention for issues at the local level.” *Maria Sengelela – Landscape coordinator Kilimanjaro Landscape, Tanzania*

## **WE UNLOCK FINANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES**

Access to finance or capital investment is often required in order to change practices on the ground. Our goal is to match appropriate financial instruments and institutions with a pipeline of projects in the landscape. Providing access to finance at producer level for replanting and enabling investment in renewable energy at municipal level require different means of financial support. We connect in a timely matter with financial institutions to develop viable business models which match private and public sector needs, with attention for risks and return on investment.



## **LAND USE SCENARIO MODELLING - A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO CREATE LANDSCAPE KNOWLEDGE**

With the support from the Dutch Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL), Solidaridad tested a land use scenario modelling tool which integrates socio-economic, cultural, biophysical and multi-level planning dynamics of the landscape. The scenario building exercise was informed by input and feedback from local stakeholders through workshops, discussions and field visits. This process generated insight in future land use trends and associated impacts. Stakeholders identified necessary technical, market and institutional interventions to meet several SDGs including ‘Zero Hunger’, ‘Clean Water and Sanitation’, ‘Climate Action’, and ‘Life on Land’.



### **MESO AMERICAN LANDSCAPE ACCELERATOR – AN INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO FOR LANDSCAPE IMPACT**

The Meso American Landscape Accelerator is a design process piloted by Solidaridad in Central America. Its purpose is to help with identifying the necessary speed and scale elements as well as enabling the financing of investments for sustainable agriculture and landscape restoration. The accelerator model helps to develop a portfolio of interlinking investments within a landscape, provide a blended support and financing model, and bring together concrete commitments from government, private sector and civil society. By pitching investment propositions to impact investors and progressive financial institutions, we take the lead in linking funds to finance opportunities which contribute to positive landscape impact.



### **SECTORS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP IN THE GANGA LANDSCAPE**

Ground water extraction for agriculture combined with severe pollution by the industry pose a major threat for the quantity and quality of water in the Ganga basin. Solidaridad aims to transform the sugarcane and leather industry towards environmentally sound and socially just economic development. The area of work in the Mid Gangeatic plain in Uttar Pradesh includes major sugar production areas as well as clusters of leather tanneries, which are the point source of pollution. Solidaridad is recognized by sector and supply chain players and government as a solution-oriented civil society organization. This approach thus enables us to trigger change at multiple levels. Solidaridad advocates for policy reform to deal with current bottlenecks in municipal waste water management, builds capacity with stakeholder groups and promotes good practices for water use efficiency and waste water disposal.



### **PASOS – NATIONAL OIL PALM SECTOR INITIATIVE TRANSFORMS INTO A LANDSCAPE APPROACH**

In Honduras, rapid expansion of oil palm plantations threatens the future of remaining forests and other fragile natural ecosystems as well as the food security of communities. Solidaridad has identified a unique opportunity to orient the entire palm oil sector towards the implementation of sustainability measures as the sector expands. The Sustainable Honduran Palm Oil project (PASH) stimulates countrywide implementation of RSPO. PASH includes 10 companies jointly representing 80% of Honduran palm oil production as well as 11,000 families of palm oil producers and workers.

Building on the momentum of this sector commitment, in 2016 PASH expanded its scope and transformed into the landscape initiative Paisajes Sostenibles (PASOS). PASOS now drives a landscape approach which includes a broader range of stakeholders including not only palm oil, but also cocoa and ecotourism companies; indigenous peoples' and community-based organizations; farmer organizations and cooperatives; municipal governments; research institutes and universities; community water associations, and non-profits. All respective actors have a specific role in the uptake of identified landscape solutions.

# HOW WE WORK IN LANDSCAPES

Wherever we are, we are part of a landscape. At Solidaridad, we distinguish between working on a landscape scale, contributing to landscape impact, or being part of a landscape approach. For example:

In our support to coffee farmers - building their resilience in the face of climate change - we work on a **landscape scale** in a coffee production area. We focus on improving farm practices, but with an eye for changing dynamics in climate and land use.

In our partnership with oil palm mills - improving their effluent management and greening their energy footprint - we safeguard the quality of water before it is discharged. We hereby contribute to positive **landscape impact**, protecting life on land and life below water from polluted waste water.

Through facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms among the government, private sector and civil society actors, we enable key landscape stakeholders to set a joint agenda. Stakeholders in the landscape are best placed to make their own values explicit and prioritize actions. This process of building partnerships, commitments and overall coordination of efforts is the core of our **landscape approach**.

## **SYNERGIES TO REACH SCALE**

Each of the strategies above requires strong partnerships to deliver results. This cooperation enables us to build trust and gain knowledge which helps to move the goalpost towards more sustainable practice and sound resource management. We seek synergies between these different strategies as they are all valid pathways to drive change and - when coordinated - have the power to reinforce efforts at scale. However, to change gear and move to the next level is not always a choice, but more often a hard won position over a longer period of time.

# JOIN US FOR CHANGE THAT MATTERS



## **CONTACT US**

### **Katie Minderhoud**

Learning Advisor Landscape Innovation  
[katie.minderhoud@solidaridadnetwork.org](mailto:katie.minderhoud@solidaridadnetwork.org)

[www.solidaridadnetwork.org](http://www.solidaridadnetwork.org)