

Landscape grants

Applicants guide

We are excited to launch a new funding opportunity for projects that seek to establish working models for the uptake of more sustainable practices at a landscape-level. This guide contains all the information you need to apply for these grants.

KEY DETAILS:

- Grants available: 4 grants of up to CHF 250,000 per project
- Matching funding requirements: 1:1
- Maximum length of grant: 2 years
- Funding application window: 2 December 2019 – 2 April 2020
- Decision on funding: 15 April 2020 – 30 April 2020
- Contracting process and proposal development: 1 May 2020 – 30 June 2020
- Grant implementation: 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2022

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1. Why focus on landscape approaches?

Landscape approaches recognize that issues like deforestation, habitat conversion, land rights and rural development are often best addressed at a larger scale – potentially across whole regions or jurisdictions – rather than looking at individual sites, suppliers or sectors. This means bringing together all stakeholders within a given region to work towards common goals, with the potential of driving large-scale, lasting improvements.

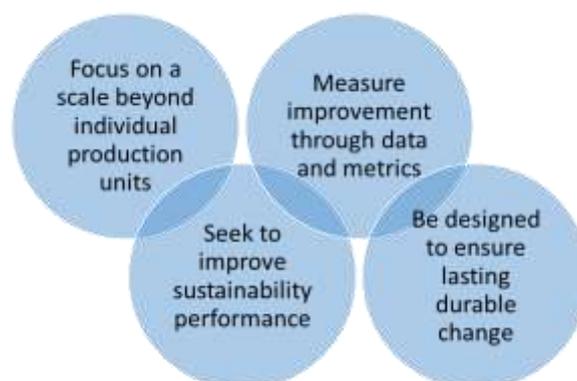
The idea of a landscape initiative is compelling and it is not surprising that support for landscape approaches has grown rapidly in recent years. Against this backdrop, sustainability standards have an opportunity to explore how their systems can be applied at broader scales and whether they are well-placed to deliver improvement services or strategies that go beyond certification¹.

In 2018, we supported this effort by funding five projects that aim to significantly increase the adoption of sustainable practices in multiple sectors across a region or jurisdiction². We are excited to continue this support with a new round of funding that will advance our understanding of how sustainability standards can be effective instruments for driving change at scale through place-based strategies.

2. What are we looking for?

Landscape approaches are essentially about delivering sustainability improvements across a given geography or place. This is something that sustainability standards can potentially achieve by either adjusting their system elements, or having an ultimate strategy to influence the enabling conditions within a given place in partnership with other actors.

With this in mind, we are looking to award **four grants of up to CHF 250,000 per project, lasting a maximum of 2 years**. These grants will support projects seeking to establish working models for the uptake of more sustainable practices at a landscape-level. Successful projects will:



¹ ISEAL has been working on this subject for a few years and you can download several resources from <https://www.isealalliance.org/innovations-standards/operating-landscape-level>

² For more information, please visit <https://www.isealalliance.org/innovations-standards/innovations-projects/projects-operating-landscape-level>

We are keen to support **collaborative partnerships** that aim to achieve one of two things:

1. Create the enabling conditions for the uptake of more sustainable practices within a region or jurisdiction; or
2. Explore how sustainability systems and tools can be scaled to verify good practice and improve the efficiency and value-add of performance measurement at a landscape level.

Many sustainability standards are already involved, sometimes indirectly, in supporting projects and programmes that drive certification uptake. While these can be valuable, innovation needs to come from new ways of addressing sustainability improvements across an expanded scale, and not necessarily with the goal of certifying new producers.

The following are examples of activities that fall within and outside of the scope of this round. Please note that this does not represent an exhaustive list.

Activities within the scope of this theme:	Activities outside of the scope of this theme:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing risk-based assurance models that can efficiently measure outcomes at a landscape level on an issue by issue basis – this might involve the integration of M&E and assurance; • Adapting existing monitoring and evaluation programmes to support data gathering and management at a landscape level; • Developing partnerships with organisations that operate at multiple scales across a landscape; • Working with others to strengthen supply-side conditions in a particular region such as land rights, water rights, access to input markets etc; • Testing the efficacy of improvement incentives or new value creation for enterprises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities that benefit a single ISEAL member / scheme • The business as usual activities of schemes and/or projects that are in the process of becoming a scheme’s core business • Building the capacity of individual producers to adopt good practices and reach certification (unless the intervention addresses the contextual drivers of bad practices at scale) • Convening efforts (meetings / conferences) that are part of ongoing / regular processes, such as standards revisions, adaption, etc. • Marketing and outreach efforts focused solely on downstream clients.

What do we expect from a two-year project?

We appreciate that long-term partnerships and projects are essential for driving durable improvement within a landscape. We expect that projects supported by these grants will have a medium to long-term vision that go beyond the duration of the grant. For new projects, two years may be enough to undertake a thorough feasibility or scoping phase, in anticipation of a full-fledged implementation period in the future. For those with projects already underway, applicants may be seeking funding to support a suite of new, complimentary activities.

Regardless of whether it's a new project or expanding on an existing one, remember to detail the whole sequencing of your envisaged intervention, and clearly identify which phase you are seeking support for.

3. How to apply?

Key dates

When applying to the fund, please bear in mind that you must be in a position to observe the timeline detailed below, as we will not be able to sign new landscape grant agreements beyond 30 June 2020.



Submission of funding applications

ISEAL members interested in applying for this round of funding are encouraged to let us know as soon as possible. We can help by sense-checking concepts, connect you to potential partners, and highlight synergies with other initiatives within and outside the ISEAL Alliance.

If your organisation is a subsidiary, sister company or member organisation of an ISEAL member, please note that the lead applicant for one of our grants must be the ISEAL member organisation.

To be considered for a grant, you must **submit a completed funding application template to the fund by email by 12:00pm GMT on 2 April 2020**. The funding application template is available for download from the ISEAL Innovations Fund webpage (isealalliance.org/fund). Submitted funding

applications should not be more than 10 pages in length. Please do not change the font style, size or formatting of the application form. The form requires signatures from the CEOs of both the lead and partner organisations. Signing the form is an indication that all parties have reviewed this Applicants Guide, and that the content included in the application template is correct to the best of their knowledge.

Please note that the funding application is not a final proposal. We will work with successful applicants to develop a final proposal and detailed budget before signing the grant agreement.

Applicants are not expected to have fully secured 1:1 matching funding on submission of their funding application. However, the funding application will ask you to detail how much funding has already been secured, and the likely sources of other funding contributions. At the contracting stage, grant recipients will need to demonstrate to the ISEAL Innovations Fund that matching funding has been formally committed.

Decision on funding

An external, independent and impartial committee will be responsible for making a decision on which organizations will be awarded landscape grants. This Grant Decision-Making Committee will have until 30 April 2020 to meet in order to assess and make a decision based on all funding applications received within the deadline.

Our Grant Decision-Making Committee consists of representatives from the private sector, civil society, technical experts and a representative from SECO. A member of the ISEAL Secretariat also serves as a non-voting member of the Grant Decision-Making Committee to provide guidance and insight related to the activities of ISEAL’s broader community and our innovations objectives.

The Grant Decision-Making Committee primarily assess applications against the fund’s Guiding Principles. Applications are assigned up to five points for each principle, with a maximum score of 35 points per application. Supplementing this score, the Committee reflect on the design of each proposed project, and its ability to generate and sustain positive impact.

Innovations Fund Guiding Principles	Additional Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation: Each pilot tests new ideas, tools or approaches that standards systems can use to increase effectiveness and adapt to new challenges; • Relevance: The innovation forwards the collective agenda and common vision of ISEAL members in improving effectiveness and impact; • Replicability: There is high potential for replicability across different standards systems, sectors and geographic regions. Sharing of lessons learned with the community is integral to all projects; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record of the implementing organisation on the topic and qualifications of project leads; • Expressed need, timeliness and value proposition of proposed innovation, based on research on current state of play in project areas;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging beneficiaries: Where applicable, there is strong buy-in from target beneficiaries, supporting engagement in both the design and implementation phases; • Measurability: The applicant shows how the innovation pilot contributes to ISEALs innovations agenda, particularly how it impacts target beneficiaries, and has a framework in place for gathering and reporting against KPIs; • Collaboration: The innovation pilot takes a partnership approach, engaging multiple standards systems or integrating with other sustainability tools or frameworks. Please note that it is not mandatory for applicants to formally partner with other ISEAL members. • Value for money: That the project’s budget and activities are proportionate to expected impact; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic development roadmap and feasibility of the proposed approach; • Clearly identified target beneficiaries and scale of the potential market for the innovation; • Ability of a project to measure its impact; • Strategy for managing identified risks; • Project activities results in tools or learning that can be shared with ISEAL members; • Ability to demonstrate that 1:1 matching contributions in the form of cash and / or in-kind donations are identified and /or secured and committed;
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As the principal donor to the fund, the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO has requested the fund gives preference to projects with implementation components in the following countries: Colombia, Peru, Vietnam, Ghana, South Africa, and Indonesia.

Should you wish to query the Grant Decision-Making Committee’s decision, you may request a copy of your application’s scoring. We will provide you with this within one week of the request. If you would like further information, please contact us for a meeting to explain the assessment of your funding application in the context of other applications received in this funding round.

4. What steps are involved in contracting?

If your funding application is successful, we will work with you and your partners to develop a final proposal, accompanied by a detailed budget. **This contracting period will start on 1 May 2020, and must be completed by 30 June 2020.**

The following documents are available for download from the fund’s webpage as ‘Landscape Grants – Sample Documents’. We recommend you review these documents before applying for a grant. Please note that these are sample documents, and may differ to those ultimately used in the contracting stage.

- 01. SAMPLE - Final proposal template

- 02. SAMPLE - Detailed budget template
- 03. SAMPLE - Due diligence questionnaire
- 04. SAMPLE - Grant agreement template
- 05. SAMPLE – Narrative report template

Developing a detailed budget

When developing a detailed budget, please note that only specific expenses may be covered by our grants. Eligible expenses include staff salaries and overheads, as well as direct expenses such as consultants, travel, workshops and conferences, printing materials and software.

Up to 60% of the matching funding can be composed of staff time from the applicant's organisation. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, where the innovative nature of the pilot or small size of the applicant means that matching funding is unlikely.

Please note that all matching funding must be secured prior to signing the grant agreement.

Due diligence

The fund undertakes a due diligence assessment on each grant recipient, commensurate with the size of the grant awarded. This is carried out during the contracting stage. For landscape grants, our due diligence requirements cover information on financial and governance systems, policies and controls. We recommend grant recipients replicate this for partner organisations. We require grant recipients to provide the following documents:

- Latest audited financial statements
- Copy of certificate of incorporation and constitutional documents
- List of Board of Directors
- Written confirmations of match funding for the grant funded project
- Fraud and conflict of interest policies
- Procurement policy

We also require grant recipients to submit the following information over the course of the grant:

- Annual organisational audited financial statements
- Annual audit discharge process
- Notice of changes in circumstances that could impact an organisations ability to achieve the desired grant deliverables.

Signing the grant agreement

If you are considering applying to the fund, please review our sample grant agreement carefully, particularly Section 9, which relates to Intellectual Property. We require that all materials produced as a result of the grant, be jointly owned by the grant recipient and the ISEAL Innovations Fund to

ensure they can remain available to the general public. If you think this will be an issue when it comes to contracting, please let us know in your funding application.

We use a contract management system called Concord to draft, negotiate, and sign grant agreements. We will give grant recipients access to the platform to review the draft grant agreement, and use the comments section to track our negotiations. The final proposal and detailed budget will be annexed to the grant agreement. Both parties sign the grant agreement through Concord using an electronic signature.

5. What do we ask of grant recipients?

Projects supported by landscape grants will run from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022. Over the course of a grant, we are committed to maintaining close communication and support to grant recipients, and helping them engage with the ISEAL community.

Grant recipient conduct

Recipients of our grants are required to follow the terms of the grant agreement, both in spirit, as well as to the letter. And we expect our grant recipients, wherever they operate, to act in a manner compatible with the ISEAL Credibility Principles, where possible to promote innovation and expertise, and where applicable to contribute to the public good wherever they operate.

Respectful treatment: Everyone has the right to respectful treatment, whether they are an ISEAL employee, ISEAL member staff, project partner staff member or someone being impacted by the activities we fund. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the workplace or in connection with our services, and we expect grant applicants and recipients to provide the same commitment to those they engage with through this project.

Interacting with vulnerable groups: Some project activities will mean engaging with people in potentially vulnerable positions. Grant recipients must ensure that at all times, these people are treated with respect and that their dignity, safety, security and wellbeing is treated as a priority concern.

It's crucial that grant recipients ensure that everyone who takes part in grant funded activities understand the boundaries of appropriate behaviour. We encourage grant recipients to develop their own internal guidance, training and procedures to assist their employees, and those of their project partners, whenever they interact or otherwise engage with vulnerable groups. This should cover being able to identify and act for vulnerable groups, to understand what constitutes improper conduct or abuse, and also how to act on that.

Grant recipients must comply with all applicable human rights and employment laws in the jurisdictions in which they work and have robust means of ensuring that the subcontractors in their supply chain also comply.

Reputation: We expect grant recipients, in delivering the funded activities, to ensure that neither they, nor any of their partners, intermediaries, or subcontractors, engage in any act or omission, which is reasonably likely to diminish trust in the ISEAL Secretariat, ISEAL membership, or SECO.

Reporting obligations

Our reporting obligations allows us to keep up to date with what is happening in the projects we support, and identify how we can best help.

We schedule quarterly check-in calls to discuss:

- Learnings that have come out of the project, especially those applicable to other members;
- Any challenges that may have been faced so far,
- Areas where the fund could offer additional support;
- Future opportunities to share learning with the ISEAL Community

In addition to our calls, we require bi-annual narrative and financial reports. A sample reporting template is available in 'Landscape Grants – Sample Documents', available at isealalliance.org/fund.

At the end of the project, we will work with you to prepare a final report that summarizes the results achieved and lessons learnt. We will also help you package resources and outputs from the project, to ensure their relevance to the ISEAL community and share them through our online platforms.

Grant payments

We pay our grant recipients in bi-annual instalments. The first payment is made upon execution of the grant agreement. Instalments are subsequently paid following our acceptance of narrative and financial reports, in line with the timeline agreed in the grant agreement.

Invoices submitted to the fund should be in Swiss Francs, as this is the currency of our principal donor, SECO.

Communications

By accepting one of our grants, you are committing to provide our principal donor, SECO, visibility in your communications about the project. We have produced a donor visibility and communications guide to support our grant recipients with this. The guide is available at isealalliance.org/fund.

Modifications

Request for budget modifications: A grant recipient wishing to make changes to any specific budget line item in the budget included in the grant agreement of CHF 5,000 or more will require the prior written approval of the fund. Grant recipients should contact the fund with a brief description of the substance and extent of the proposed modification. If the fund determines that additional documentation is necessary, we will invite the grant recipient to submit a revised financial report with appropriate reallocation, or, where appropriate, a new budget may be submitted using the detailed budget developed during the contracting stage. The Budget Reallocation Request form will be annexed to the grant agreement.

Request for project extensions: A grant recipient wishing to extend the term of a grant should provide the fund with a brief description of the substance and extent of the modification. If the fund determines that additional documentation is necessary, the grant recipient will be asked to complete and submit an Extension Request Form with all required attachments. This submission should occur three months prior to the end of the grant term. The Extension Request Form will be annexed to the grant agreement.

Please note that we will be unable to extend projects beyond 31 June 2022.

Audits

Annual audit: Over the course of a project, the ISEAL Innovations Fund may undertake an annual audit on grant recipients. This audit will include similar requests for information as in our due diligence pre-contract questionnaire, and also requests for information regarding the use of the grant, the appointment and use of third parties and record keeping, as well as site visits or off site meetings.

Books and records: We ask grant recipients to maintain an accurate record of all expenses related to the project for at least four years after the grant has closed. In the event of a financial audit by either the ISEAL Innovations Fund or our principal donor SECO, we ask grant recipients to give reasonable access to its files, records, premises and personnel as needed.

The English version of this document shall always prevail in case of any discrepancy or inconsistency between the English version and other translated versions

We are always open to feedback at the fund, and welcome any suggestions on how we can make the applicant experience better. Let us know what else we can do by contacting fund@isealalliance.org.