This document applies to companies seeking to improve sustainability performance through their actions or support to the landscapes or jurisdictions from which they source. Landscape and jurisdictional action should build off efforts companies are already taking to improve sustainability performance within their supply chains.¹

In complement to ISEAL’s Jurisdictional Monitoring and Claims Good Practice Guide, this guidance outlines a short set of practices that companies should be aiming towards as their engagement in landscape approaches and jurisdictional initiatives matures. These practices, structured around four practice areas, can be used as a reference by companies to inform how their actions and support can best contribute to improved sustainability performance in a landscape or jurisdiction and how they can communicate about the results of those actions.

Diagram 1: Summary of the four guiding practices

1. Sustainability certification systems, such as those represented by ISEAL’s Community Members, offer a strong foundation for companies to assure the integrity of their supply chains, while The Accountability Framework provides guidance to companies on effective supply chain action.
Prioritising action
Companies determine where and how to engage in landscapes and jurisdictions

a. Companies prioritise which landscapes or jurisdictions to engage in based on where they are potentially well-placed to have positive impacts.

i. Determinations of where to engage can consider among other factors:
   • the company’s sourcing footprint
   • current and future sourcing risks
   • presence of high social or environmental values and threats to these values
   • priority issues or regions for the company’s broader strategy and with its buyers
   • existence of collective action initiatives and
   • the company’s potential to drive positive outcomes beyond its supply chain.

b. Companies refer to a sustainability assessment to determine which sustainability issues are critical to address in each prioritised landscape or jurisdiction.

i. The sustainability assessment considers the relevance of different issues based on status, trends, drivers, risks, specific vulnerabilities, etc.

ii. The assessment includes a participatory process to take into account the views of a variety of landscape or jurisdictional stakeholders including producers, community and indigenous groups, local NGOs and civil society, local government, funding partners, and supply chain companies, among others.

c. Total company investment in landscapes or jurisdictions is determined per commodity and is commensurate with the company’s total global volumes sourced of that commodity.

i. Companies can target their investment or actions to specific regions and do not need to invest in every landscape or jurisdiction from which they source.

ii. Investments can be financial or in-kind and can support:
   • direct, issue-focused actions in prioritised landscapes or jurisdictions (see 2.a)
   • actions that influence the enabling conditions in the landscape or jurisdiction or
   • structural outcomes related to the landscape or jurisdictional initiative, such as co-developing action plans or implementing collective monitoring frameworks.

Towards systemic landscape investments

Determining the relationship between volumes sourced and scale of actions or investment is challenging but, ideally, companies sourcing a commodity can align on what constitutes a proportionate investment. Company transparency on sourcing volumes and investments made will help to establish norms against which to compare scale of investment.

Sustainability investments or in-kind support in landscapes and jurisdictions can complement actions, financing, or preferential sourcing that the company is implementing through its direct supply chain, as well as any broader investments it is making to support better practices in its industry or sector.

Practically, companies will ramp up landscape investments over time. As companies are beginning to invest and generate results, transparency in communicating these is key, specifically that any reports or claims about inputs, outputs or results should be made in relation to the overall scope of the supply base. (See also practice 4.)
Maximising impact

Company actions maximise performance improvement at scale

a. Company actions contribute positively to addressing critical issues within a landscape.

i. Company actions in prioritised landscapes are informed by a context assessment that determines who is doing what, what are the critical risks and their root causes, where are the levers of change, and what actions are most needed.5

ii. Companies define how their issue-focused actions and support are intended to address the root causes of one or more critical risks, and link their actions to prioritised, landscape-wide performance outcomes.

iii. Companies consider and mitigate the potential for unintended negative consequences of their proposed actions, e.g., through the implementation of social and environmental safeguards.6

b. Companies focus on actions that have the greatest opportunity to effect significant sustainability improvements.7

i. Companies seek to align their actions and support with activities of other companies and stakeholders in the landscape or jurisdiction, ideally through a collective action plan that includes performance goals and time-bound targets against which progress is measured.

ii. Where collective action plans do not yet exist, investments are based on consultation with local stakeholders to ensure the actions address priority issues and contribute to prioritised outcomes.

iii. Companies also support development and implementation of landscape or jurisdictional initiatives, particularly those initiatives that engage local or sub-national governments, so as to strengthen resilience and durability of outcomes. Where these initiatives or collaborative structures do not yet exist, companies work collectively with other stakeholders to encourage their development.

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5. This context assessment can be carried out collectively under the auspices of a landscape or jurisdictional initiative. It can include screening for existing landscape projects that companies could support. Where relevant, insight gained from the jurisdictional prioritisation exercise can be used to inform this context assessment. For further practical guidance on company engagement, see Proforest ‘Engaging with landscape initiatives: A practical guide for supply chain companies’.

6. Safeguards are a set of standards, policies, planning and implementation mechanisms, and compliance systems that govern how activities are carried out to safeguard people and the environment from harm (WWF).

7. For an overview of the range of potential actions companies can take and support, see the Practical Guide for Company Landscape Scale Action by WWF, Proforest, and TFA.
Measuring progress
Results of actions and performance on critical issues are monitored

a. Companies work with landscape or jurisdictional stakeholders to develop a collective monitoring framework that measures performance against prioritised issues and defined sustainability outcomes.³

i. The monitoring framework defines metrics and identifies relevant, high-quality data sources for measuring performance against specified targets. The framework also defines the structures needed to support both measurement and data management.

ii. Metrics are designed to be feasible to measure (i.e., relevant, high-quality data exists or can be collected) and appropriate to monitor success of the actions taken and to measure performance improvement.

iii. Where relevant high-quality data does not exist for a specific issue or metric, collective efforts are made to improve data collection or to employ appropriate interim proxy metrics and data sources.

b. Companies monitor the results of their actions and support implementation of the collective monitoring framework.

i. Companies monitor the immediate outputs and short-term outcomes resulting from their actions and support coordinated monitoring and data collection on landscape or jurisdiction-wide performance (financially or in-kind).

ii. Companies share aggregated and anonymised data sets and data layers with the landscape or jurisdictional initiative, where this adds value to the collective monitoring. Any data sharing follows good data governance practices including data use agreements and respecting data privacy and confidentiality.

COLLECTIVE MONITORING FRAMEWORKS

Where a collective monitoring framework is already in place or being developed, a company can choose to support implementation of that framework. Monitoring frameworks should build off the collective action plan and existing change logic and are ideally developed as a collective undertaking of the landscape partnership or jurisdictional initiative. LandScale is an example of a collective monitoring framework that can be adopted by and tailored to the needs of any landscape or jurisdiction.

Where possible, stakeholders should also seek consistency between landscape and jurisdictional initiatives on the metrics measured, referencing international frameworks such as SourceUp and LandScale or national and regional initiatives such as the ITKL Regional Competitiveness Framework and the Tepercaya Initiative in Indonesia, and the PCI Strategy in Brazil.

³ Additional guidance on setting up a jurisdictional monitoring framework is available in ISEAL’s Jurisdictional Monitoring and Claims Good Practice Guide.
Communicating results
Claims and communications are truthful and proportional

a. Companies prioritise data quality and transparency so that stakeholders trust the integrity of data and information about company actions or investments and jurisdictional performance.

i. Companies regularly make results publicly available about the scale and type of their actions or investments and the progress made. They provide evidence to substantiate the results that is sufficient for stakeholders to interrogate the veracity of those results.9

ii. Companies support landscape or jurisdictional initiatives to make timely data on performance outcomes from the collective monitoring framework publicly available.

b. Company claims of contribution to landscape or jurisdictional sustainability are relevant, proportional to their actions, and presented in the context of overall landscape and supply chain progress.10

i. Companies make information available about how their actions or support are intended to contribute to landscape or jurisdictional initiatives and to prioritised performance outcomes, drawing on their root cause analysis or results chain logic.

ii. Companies communicate about a specific landscape or jurisdictional performance outcome only if their actions are relevant to that performance outcome, are timely (leading to improvements in a timely manner), and are at a scale to meaningfully impact performance.

iii. Companies recognise in their communications that performance outcomes are being achieved through collective efforts in the landscape or jurisdiction, including giving visibility to stakeholders that are implementing the actions on the ground, e.g., using statements such as ‘Through working with others, we are collectively achieving these results.’

iv. Companies put claims and communications about performance improvement into context by including information about relative progress (e.g., timeframe, scale, previous performance, confidence levels, etc.)

c. Companies should generally avoid making attribution claims (e.g., we are responsible for this performance outcome), as this overlooks the actions or influence of others in achieving the performance outcomes.

i. Where a company plans to make attribution claims, they need to be able to show a direct cause and effect relationship between their actions and the specific results achieved.11

DEFINING LANDSCAPE APPROACHES AND JURISDICTIONAL INITIATIVES

Landscape approaches are multi-stakeholder collaborations that engage stakeholders within and outside a landscape to align around landscape-level goals and action. Jurisdictional initiatives are a type of landscape approach operating within the administrative boundaries of sub-national or national governments, usually with engagement or leadership from government.

Further definitions can be found in the Little Sustainable Landscapes Book, as well as the Jurisdictional Approaches Resource Hub. To better understand different stakeholder roles and pathways, ISEAL, WWF, Proforest and TFA have developed a Jurisdictional Theory of Change.

9. See also Accountability Framework initiative (AFI) Core Principle 12.3 and Operational Guidance on Reporting, Disclosure and Claims (Sec 4.1.2).
10. See also AFI Operational Guidance on Reporting, Disclosure and Claims (Sec 4.1.1 and Sec 4.2.2).
11. Attribution is generally only feasible when determining links between actions and immediate outputs or short-term outcomes, as there are otherwise almost always multiple causes and contributors to longer-term outcomes. See also AFI Operational Guidance on Reporting, Disclosure and Claims (Sec 4.1.1, element 5).
This guidance was developed in collaboration with the following organisations, with further input from leading landscape and jurisdictional practitioners. It represents an initial understanding of good practice for company action, and we invite interested stakeholders to join the conversation as we collectively refine and improve these guiding practices over time.

About ISEAL

ISEAL supports ambitious sustainability systems and their partners to tackle the world’s most pressing challenges. With our growing global network and our focus on credible practices, we drive impact and make markets a force for good.

From the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis to human rights and persistent poverty, the world needs scalable and effective solutions. Our convening power and thought leadership accelerate positive change on these critical challenges, so companies and governments can meet their sustainability commitments and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We work by:
- defining credible practice for sustainability systems based on emerging global consensus
- convening forums for collaboration, sharing of experience and collective action
- delivering expertise, advice and training
- facilitating and promoting innovation to strengthen sustainability systems.

Together, we can deliver real and lasting change for the benefit of people and planet. Join us.

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