GUIDELINES

Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder platforms in integrated landscape initiatives

Working paper

Koen Kusters, Maartje de Graaf and Louise Buck

GUIDELINES

Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder platforms in integrated landscape initiatives

Working paper

Koen Kusters, Maartje de Graaf and Louise Buck

The method presented in these guidelines is based on a scientific article that has been submitted in August 2016 to a special issue on 'institutional configurations for integrated value chain and landscape governance' edited by Mirjam Ros-Tonen, James Reed and Terry Sunderland, of the journal *Environmental Management*. The authors of the article are: Koen Kusters, Louise Buck, Maartje de Graaf, Peter Minang, Cora van Oosten and Roderick Zagt.

Tropenbos International - the Netherlands
P.O. Box 232
6700 AE Wageningen, the Netherlands
E-mail: tropenbos@tropenbos.org

EcoAgriculture Partners
1100 17th St NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036, USA
E-mail: info@ecoagriculture.org

Contents

Abstract

As part of integrated landscape initiatives, organizations increasingly invest in multi-stakeholder platforms. These are institutional coordination mechanisms to enable discussions, negotiations and joint planning between stakeholders from various sectors in a given landscape. They involve complex processes with diverse actors. With growing investments in such platforms, there is a need to reflect on their role and performance. In this guidance document we present three tools to aid the participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder platforms for integrated landscape management. The first tool can be used to look ahead, identifying priorities for future multi-stakeholder collaboration in the landscape. The second can be used to look inward. It focuses on the processes within an existing multi-stakeholder platform in order to identify areas for possible improvement. The third can be used to look back, identifying the main outcomes of an existing platform and comparing them to the original objectives. The three assessments can be implemented together or separately. Here we present practical guidelines for the use of these tools in a workshop setting. Although they are specifically designed for internal learning, the tools can also be adapted for use in external evaluations and for research purposes.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Integrated landscape initiatives and multi-stakeholder platforms

Conservation and development organizations as well as other actors increasingly invest in integrated landscape initiatives. Many of these initiatives support multi-stakeholder collaboration, for example in the form of multi-stakeholder platforms. Such platforms are meant to stimulate discussions, negotiations and joint planning between different actors with a stake in the landscape, such as the local government, communities, conservation agencies and agricultural companies. Platforms provide a space in which stakeholders can share and discuss their interests and coordinate their activities. Defined broadly, they include various forms of organized multi-stakeholder collaboration, including coalitions, partnerships, management boards, etc.

In the context of integrated landscape initiatives, multi-stakeholder platforms are meant to contribute to sustainable landscapes, i.e., achieving conservation, livelihoods and production goals. Within these broad goals each platform will have its own context-specific objectives defined at the onset, which may be further refined or adjusted over time, as the result of negotiations and discussions among its members, and of changing external conditions. With growing investments in multi-stakeholder platforms as part of integrated landscape initiatives, it is becoming increasingly important to understand their role and performance. This demands simple and affordable methods to aid planning, monitoring and evaluation. In this manual we propose such a method.

Purpose

The method presented here contains three tools, each with a distinct objective. The first one aims to identify the priorities for a multi-stakeholder platform in a given landscape. It can be used to look ahead and can function as a starting point for strategic planning of new or renewed collaboration between stakeholders. The second tool aims to look inward, assessing the quality of the multi-stakeholder process within an existing platform. This can be used to identify ways to improve how the platform operates internally. The objective of the third tool is to look back, assessing the performance of an existing platform by comparing its outcomes to its original objectives. This will generate information that can be used by the platform (and organizations that invest in it) to report on the outcomes of their work, while also generating lessons to improve the platform's effectiveness in the future. The three tools can be implemented together or separately, depending on the users' learning needs and resources. Corresponding to the three objectives we distinguish three main assessment questions:

1. Looking ahead: What is the current state of multi-stakeholder collaboration and what are the priorities for collaboration in the future?
2. Looking inward: What is the quality of the multi-stakeholder process within the platform?
3. Looking back: To what extent has the platform met its objectives?

Intended users

The tools presented in these guidelines can be used in a workshop that involves the (potential) members of the platform. Such a workshop can be planned and facilitated by a sponsoring organization or 'investor' in the platform, a boundary or bridging organization that provides technical assistance or capacity development support to a landscape initiative, or leadership of the platform. In some cases, a combination of these organizations and interests may decide to form a team to jointly conduct a self-assessment workshop, or hire consultants to do so.

Design principles

The method was developed in an iterative manner. A literature review informed a first version and resulted in a hierarchical framework of assessment dimensions and criteria. This framework was discussed and revised by the authors, with input from other experts representing a range of disciplines and organizations. Subsequently the method was tested with the Sungai Wain multi-stakeholder management board in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, and with stakeholders in the Juabeso-Bia landscape in Ghana. Based on these pilots the method was further refined, resulting in the current version. Principles underlying the design of the method include:

- *User focus*: The method should be useful for the platform and its members, for example by stimulating discussions on the various aspects of performance, by offering an opportunity to exchange experiences and views, and by the joint identification of options for improvement. In addition, the method should be useful for organizations that support and/or facilitate the multi-stakeholder platform, which can include conservation or development organizations, companies and government agencies. They can use the assessment method to develop recommendations to improve the platform's process or strategy, to inform the design of similar platforms in other places, and to report on successes and failures to colleagues, donors and a wider audience.

- *Pragmatism*: Often metrics sets are excessively large; their measurement becomes too time consuming and costly to be practical. This method instead is based on an easy-to-use and small set of criteria – robust enough to be credible, yet simple enough to be practical.

- *Participation*: The active participation of different stakeholders helps to generate information flows in all directions. It also will lead to discussions and better understanding of the issues among the participants. Moreover, the platform is more likely to use the results if its members have been part of the assessment process.

- *Value judgment*: The method partly relies on value judgments of stakeholder representatives regarding the platform's performance. Their knowledge and perceptions are considered a rich source of data. However, value judgments are prone to bias, so it is crucial to obtain the best representation possible of stakeholders in the assessment, and to triangulate results.

- *Scoring*: Two of the three tools contain a simple scoring exercise. Scoring encourages people to make judgments and is expected to trigger discussions. Next to that, scoring can be used for periodic measurements, so that the performance of a platform can be tracked over time.

Workshops for participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation

In the next sections we present three tools to address the questions introduced above in workshops with the key stakeholder representatives, i.e., the individuals that play (or are expected to play) an active role in the platform. The implementation of each tool will take approximately half a day. The assessments depend on the participation and judgments of stakeholders, and thus

cannot replace external independent evaluations. They can, however, be a valuable complement to external evaluations.[1]

When seen through the lens of conventional project interventions, looking ahead would take place at the beginning of the project, looking inward would be part of adaptive management procedures, while looking back would be part of end-of-project evaluation. However, rather than being organized as projects, multi-stakeholder platforms are often long-term collaborative initiatives that catalyze or undertake a series of related projects. This implies that each of the three tools can be conducted at any time, depending on the status and needs of the platform and its members and supporters. Also, each of the tools can in theory be used periodically, to assess progress over time and to inform management. Hence, before embarking on the organization of a workshop, the objective of the assessment will need to be clearly defined: does it intend to look ahead, inward, back, or a combination of these?

Once the objective is clear, the relevant stakeholder representatives will need to be identified and approached to find out whether they are willing and able to participate in the workshop. This involves the communication of the purpose and expected results. It means there should be an idea about how the results will be used, and of the potential follow-up measures, i.e., the ability to act upon recommendations that may arise from the workshop.

---

1   When part of an external assessment, a workshop may need to be complemented with extra interviews, e.g., with: (i) platform members who are not present at the workshop; (ii) constituencies of some platform members (e.g., community representatives); and (iii) stakeholders who are not included in the platform.

Tool 1
Looking ahead
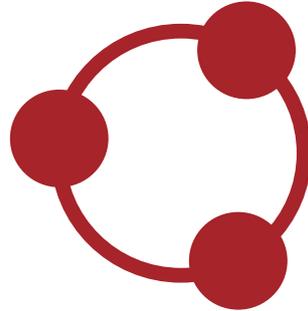
WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION IN THE LANDSCAPE?

Purpose and approach

The tool presented here can be used to identify the future priorities for a multi-stakeholder platform in the context of an integrated landscape initiative. The Landscape Measures Framework developed by EcoAgriculture Partners and Cornell University distinguishes between four sustainable landscape goals that are typically pursued by integrated landscape initiatives. These goals relate to conservation, production, livelihoods and institutional strengthening. The assumption is that multi-stakeholder platforms will help to achieve these goals, by engendering collaboration between stakeholders from different levels of influence and with different interests throughout a landscape. This could lead, for example, to resource mobilization, collaborative research and monitoring, promotion of synergistic land use practices, increased participation in decision-making and planning, market opportunities and policy barrier removal. A variety of tools have been developed to help facilitate this collaborative planning and partnership development process (Buck et al, forthcoming).

Although the exact role and objectives of a multi-stakeholder platform will vary from place to place, we distinguish between four general aspirational outcomes (aspirations in short):

- *Shared long-term goals and action plan*

  In a platform different stakeholders can share their ideas about the future of the landscape, discuss what are the common interests, address potential areas of conflict, and identify shared long-term goals. When common goals have been defined, they can be translated into a joint medium- or short-term action-plan for the landscape, outlining practical steps towards the long-term goals.

- *Practices and policies advance conservation, livelihood and production objectives*

  Through collaboration stakeholders can jointly identify options to optimize synergies between production practices, livelihoods and the conservation of biodiversity and environmental services. For example by means of promotion of agroforestry, eco-labeling, and

sustainable supply chain development. Likewise, through collaboration stakeholders can identify options to align conservation practices with the interests of other stakeholders in the landscape, e.g., through schemes for compensation or payments for environmental services and developing ecotourism.

- *Improved monitoring and land-use planning*

  A multi-stakeholder platform can provide the basis for collaborative monitoring and planning processes. Dedicated monitoring efforts are necessary to track developments in the landscape (including land-cover changes, land-use practices, policies and investments) and will be more effective when stakeholders work together, combining scientific and participatory methods. The results of collaborative monitoring, in turn, can inform adaptive land-use planning processes. Ideally, land-use planning is a collaborative process as well, allowing the full participation of all relevant stakeholders and making optimal use of local and scientific knowledge, in order to inform both public and private decision-making.

- *Responsive institutions*

  Public, private, civic and academic actors often operate in silos. Even within the civic sector, different organizations active in the same landscape may hardly know of each other's activities, which can lead to inefficiency and even conflict. Collaboration in a platform allows stakeholders to align and harmonize their policies and practices. A multi-stakeholder platform offers the space to share ideas and suggestions, which increases the chance that stakeholders will actually use the input from others in adaptive planning and decision-making.

Table 1 presents two criteria for each of the above-mentioned aspirational outcomes.

Table 1. Aspirations

Aspirations	Criteria
Shared long-term goals and action plan	Stakeholders have shared long-term goals for the landscape
	Stakeholders work together on the basis of a landscape action plan
Practices and policies advance conservation, livelihood and production objectives	Stakeholders work together to promote environmentally-friendly production practices and policies
	Stakeholders work together to align conservation practices and policies with livelihood and production objectives
Improved monitoring and land-use planning	Stakeholders jointly monitor developments in the landscape
	Stakeholders catalyze more participatory processes in land-use planning
Responsive institutions	Stakeholders keep each other informed and learn from each other
	Stakeholders use information from other stakeholders to make decisions

Workshop guidelines

Introduction

General opening

The objective of the workshop is to identify priorities for future collaboration in the landscape. The first step is to assess the extent to which stakeholders in the landscape are already collaborating. The second step is to discuss ways in which future multi-stakeholder collaboration can be improved.

Clarifying output and privacy

Before starting it may be useful to agree on the intended output of the workshop. The workshop can, for example, be used to develop an internal report with lessons and recommendations for the future. It is up to the platform and its members to decide whether or not such a report (or

parts of it) will be made public, and whether or not the contributions of individual members should remain anonymous.

Defining the landscape

The opening can be used to define the landscape and to discuss each other's interests in general terms. This can for example be done by sketching a map of the landscape and asking people to show their (physical) position and explain their interest and role. Such an opening exercise will also help to break the ice and to establish an environment in which people feel free to speak and give their opinions (for additional ideas for general introduction exercises, see Brouwer et al., 2015).

Optional landscape status assessment

If time permits it can be useful to conduct an assessment of the status of the landscape (particularly the assessment of institutional performance) using the Landscape Measures score card (see Cornell University, 2016).

Scoring

Introducing the exercise

The first exercise is to assess the current status of multi-stakeholder collaboration in the landscape by means of scoring. This can be used to identify needs, and is expected to trigger a discussion about next steps. The assessment will be conducted on an individual basis, using a simple scoring card (Table 2). The card contains eight statements about the current state of multi-stakeholder collaboration. Workshop participants will be asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with these statements. Before starting the actual scoring exercise it will be useful to highlight the following points:

- The scoring cards are anonymous, but participants are requested to circle the sector they represent on top of their form (e.g., NGO; community; government, business, academia, media).
- Participants should not hold back making judgments, and should avoid scoring 3 ('neither agree nor disagree') as much as possible.
- The statements are about the full complement of stakeholders in the landscape, and not just about the participant's own organization.

Discussion and scoring per criterion

The facilitator can start with the first statement ('Stakeholders currently have shared long-term goals for the landscape") and ask to what extent the participants agree or disagree with the statement. In the resulting discussion, participants should be encouraged to give clarifications, specifications and examples. This will ensure that participants have a common interpretation of the criterion. After the discussion, participants are asked to indicate on their own scoring card the extent to which they agree with the first statement. This can be repeated for every criterion. It is recommended to reserve at least 60 minutes for the whole exercise.

On-the-spot analysis

During a coffee break the scores can be entered into an excel sheet for a preliminary analysis, for example by making a bar chart for each aspiration, showing the average scores of the criteria. In addition it can be insightful to look at maximum and minimum scores per criteria, and the standard deviation. In the next part of the workshop the results can be presented to the participants for verification and to trigger discussion (see below).

Table 2. Scoring card: Aspirations (see Annex for printable version)

Please circle the sector you represent: NGO/CSO | Community | Government | Business | Academia | Media | Other, namely:						
Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement about the current situation in the landscape 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neither agree nor disagree; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree.						
Aspiration	**Statement about current situation in the landscape**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Shared long-term goals and action plan	Stakeholders currently have shared long-term goals for the landscape					
	Stakeholders currently work together on the basis of a landscape action plan					
Practices and policies advance conservation, livelihood and production objectives	Stakeholders work together to promote environmentally-friendly production practices and policies					
	Stakeholders work together to align conservation practices and policies with livelihood and production objectives					
Improved monitoring and land-use planning	Stakeholders currently jointly monitor developments in the landscape					
	Stakeholders catalyze more participatory processes in land-use planning					
Responsive institutions	Stakeholders currently keep each other informed and learn from each other					
	Stakeholders currently use information from other stakeholders to make decisions					

Discussion

This is the main component of the workshop. It is meant to stimulate an open discussion about the relevance of the various aspirations, the difficulties and possibilities to achieve them, and priorities and next steps. It is recommended to reserve at least two hours for this.

Difficulties and possibilities, for each aspiration

The facilitator could start with the first aspiration and present the average scores of each of the two criteria. This functions as a starting point for a joint reflection on the reasons for the scores and provides an opportunity to see whether or not there is consensus. After this, the discussion can be structured around the following questions:

1. Do participants think this aspiration is relevant?
2. What are the difficulties to achieve the aspiration?
3. How can multi-stakeholder collaboration contribute to achieving the aspirations?

This can be repeated for each aspiration. It will be helpful to summarize the main points of the discussion on a flipchart, including points that are relevant for the next steps. The facilitator can use one flip chart per aspiration, using different colors for difficulties and opportunities. Participants should be encouraged to present concrete suggestions. If time permits, the discussion can be split up into sub-groups, where each sub-group discusses one aspiration in order to come up with practical suggestions for the future.

Looking ahead

Reflections

The following two guiding questions can be the starting point for a more general reflection on the aspirations:

1. Are there any aspirations that were not discussed, but which should also receive attention?
2. Are there any stakeholders missing that should be involved?

Priorities and next steps

The guiding questions for a discussion on priorities and next steps are:

1. Of the aspirations discussed, what are the priorities?
2. What are the practical next steps that would need to be taken?

The last part of the workshop can be used to agree on action points (who is going to do what?) and to provide the opportunity for final questions, comments and suggestions. A possible way to wrap up is to ask participants to share one thing that they found particularly inspiring, interesting or helpful during the workshop.

Tool 2

Looking inward
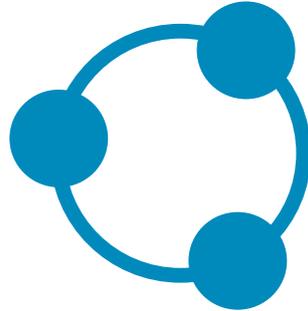
WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESS WITHIN THE PLATFORM?

Purpose and approach

The quality of the process within a multi-stakeholder platform is likely to affect its overall effectiveness. The aim of this tool is therefore to find out how the platform members value the platform's performance in terms of its internal processes, and to then jointly identify options for improvement. We distinguish between two types of process variables: those related to good governance principles and those that can be considered conditions for effective operation of the platform.

Good governance principles

- *Representation:* A multi-stakeholder platform would have to represent the 'relevant' stakeholders in the landscape, which will depend on the objective of the platform. In a self-assessment, platform members can be asked whether they think important stakeholders are missing and whether they accept the way in which members are selected.

- *Participation & equity:* Participation can have various intensities, from passive listening to active decision-making. A multi-stakeholder platform ideally encourages the active participation of all stakeholders in all processes and decision-making. Sufficient attention has to be paid to women, youth, minorities and disadvantaged groups, while at the same time it is crucial that the most powerfull stakeholders are actively involved as well.

- *Accountability & transparency:* Accountability within a platform refers to the extent to which members can hold each other accountable, i.e., whether they can call each other to account related to responsibilities, commitments, promises and decisions. This requires transparency of information and decision-making.[2]

---

2   Issues of accountability between stakeholder representatives and their constituencies are equally important, but fall outside the scope of the self-assessment presented here.

Conditions for effective operation

- *Capacities*: A multi-stakeholder platform will need to harbor, or have access to relevant knowledge and skills. Different types of knowledge and skills are needed for the management of the multi-stakeholder platform itself, as well as for the successful development of joint activities, e.g., to promote sustainable practices and markets, collaborative monitoring and land-use planning.

- *Resources*: A platform will need to have access to sufficient financial resources to operate effectively, both in the present and in the future.

- *Adaptive management*: Landscape processes are dynamic and changing circumstances will have to inform decision-making. This means that the management of a multi-stakeholder platform will need to be flexible and adaptive – continuously reflecting on its outcomes and adapting strategies if necessary.

- *Leadership*: The selection of platform leadership – if required – should be built upon a legitimate and fair process, and it should be accepted and trusted by all platform members. In line with the spirit of the landscape approach, leadership is ideally spread over different sectors and stakeholders.

- *Theory of change*: Discussions among stakeholders ideally lead to the identification of shared objectives for the future of the landscape (e.g., preventing floods and maintaining soil fertility). The next step is to develop a clear and agreed-upon strategy to achieve those objectives – a roadmap that all subscribe to.

- *Facilitation and communication*: Facilitation implies efficient and effective organization of meetings and other partner collaboration processes, and the planning and mobilization of agreed actions. Moreover, it is critical for information to be widely shared among partners, ensuring that everyone is always up-to-date.

- *Trust*: Trust among stakeholders is key, as a lack of trust will likely result in a lack of transparency and commitment. A platform should be a safe 'space of exchange' where stakeholders feel comfortable sharing concerns, values and preferences.

- *Commitment*: The effectiveness of a multi-stakeholder platform will greatly depend on the level of commitment of the various members. This means that they should be committed to the platform itself and to the agreements made within the platform. Finally, commitment to a multi-stakeholder process also implies a willingness to compromise and jointly identify solutions that reduce trade-offs and maximize synergies between different interests.

Table 3 presents two criteria for each of the above-mentioned process principles.

Table 3. Process variables

Type	Principle	Criteria
Good governance	Representation	The platform represents all relevant stakeholders in the landscape
		Members accept the way in which platform members are selected
	Participation & equity	All members participate and are heard in discussions
		All members can influence decision making within the platform
	Accountability & transparency	Members can hold each other accountable for their actions and decisions
		Information and decision-making is transparent
Conditions for effective operation	Capacities	Platform members have the necessary knowledge and skills to realize the platform's objectives
		Platform members have access to outside knowledge and skills that they can learn from
	Resources	The platform has sufficient financial resources to operate effectively
		The platform has a viable plan to secure financial resources in the future
	Adaptive management	Platform's plans can change based on periodic reflection on its functioning
		Members have possibilities to address complaints/suggestions/conflicts within the platform
	Leadership	Members accept and trust the platform's leadership
		Members accept the selection process of leadership
	Theory of change	Members share some concrete objectives for the future of the landscape
		The platform has a clear and agreed-upon strategy to achieve these objectives
	Facilitation & communication	The platform is effective in the organization of meetings and mobilization of agreed actions
		Information is widely shared among members
	Trust	Members feel comfortable sharing information and making agreements
		Members feel welcome, informed and encouraged to contribute
	Commitment	Members are committed to the discussions and the agreements
		Stakeholders are willing to look for compromises

Preparation for the workshop

The aim of this assessment is to assess the quality of a platform's internal process. This is done based on the value judgments of the participating members. To prepare for this assessment it is important to have a good overview of the main process characteristics. Some of the questions that need to be answered are:

1. What is the procedure for joining the platform? (Is the platform open or closed for stakeholders that are interested to join?)
2. Are there stakeholders who do not want to join?
3. What is the procedure for selecting leadership?
4. How is leadership distributed across sectors and stakeholders?

5. In what way are communities represented?
6. What are the accountability procedures between representatives and constituencies?
7. How is the platform funded and for what time period?
8. What are procedures to address complaints, suggestions and conflicts?
9. Is the platform based on a clear strategy/approach? If so, how was this strategy established?

Such information can be obtained through an interview with a platform leader, facilitator or coordinator, and a review of background documentation (e.g., management plans, meeting notes or annual reports).

Workshop guidelines

Introduction

General opening

The objective of the workshop is to reflect on the processes within the platform, because the quality of the process is expected to affect the platform's overall performance. The aim is to stimulate discussion between the members, and to jointly identify what is going well, and what can go better. The facilitator can stress the importance of an open attitude and critical reflection. The intention is to not only focus on successes, but also on problems and difficulties, as this will help to identify opportunities for improvement.

Clarifying output and privacy

Before starting it may be useful to agree on the intended output of the workshop. The workshop can, for example, be used to develop an internal assessment report with lessons and recommendations for the future. It is up to the platform and its members to decide whether or not such a report (or parts of it) will be made public, and whether or not the contributions of individual members should remain anonymous.

Breaking the ice

Depending on the situation it may be useful to insert a playful introduction exercise, which can help to break the ice and establish an environment in which people feel free to speak and give their opinions (for ideas, see Brouwer et al., 2015).

Scoring the process

Discussion and scoring per criterion

The facilitator can start with asking to what extent the participants agree or disagree with the first statement presented in the scoring card (Table 4). The ensuing discussion will allow participants to share their ideas and will ensure that participants have a common interpretation of the criterion. Clarifications, specifications and examples should be encouraged. After a short discussion, all participants can indicate on their own scoring card the extent to which they agree with the first statement. This can be repeated for every criterion. It is recommended to reserve at least 60 minutes for the whole exercise.

On-the-spot analysis

During a coffee break the scores can be entered into an excel sheet for a preliminary analysis, for example by making a bar chart showing the average scores for the criteria of each principle. In addition it can be insightful to look at maximum and minimum scores per criteria, and the standard deviation.

Table 4. Scoring card: Process quality (see Annex for printable version)

Please circle the sector you represent: NGO/CSO | Community | Government | Business | Academia | Media | Other, namely: ……………						
Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement about the current situation in the landscape 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neither agree nor disagree; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree.						
Principle	**Statement about current situation**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Representation	The platform represents all relevant stakeholders in the landscape					
	Members accept the way in which platform members are selected					
Participation & equity	All members participate and are heard in discussions					
	All members can influence decision making that is relevant to them					
Accountability & transparency	Members can hold each other accountable for their actions and decisions					
	Information and decision-making is transparent					
Capacities	Members have the necessary knowledge and skills to realize the platform's objectives					
	Members have access to outside knowledge and skills that they can learn from					
Resources	The platform has sufficient financial resources to operate effectively					
	The platform has a viable plan to secure financial resources in the future					
Adaptive management	Platform's plans can change based on periodic reflection on its functioning					
	Members have possibilities to address complaints within the platform					
Leadership	Members accept and trust the platform's leadership					
	Members accept the selection process of leadership					
Theory of change	Members share some concrete objectives for the future of the landscape					
	The platform has a clear and agreed-upon strategy to achieve these objectives					
Facilitation and communication	The platform is effective in the organization of meetings and mobilization of agreed actions					
	Information is widely shared among partners					
Trust	Members feel comfortable sharing information and making agreements					
	Members feel welcome, informed and encouraged to contribute					
Commitment	Members are committed to the discussions and the agreements					
	Stakeholders are willing to look for compromises					

Looking inward

Discussion

This is the main component of the workshop. It is meant to stimulate an open discussion about the ways in which the multi-stakeholder process can be improved. It is recommended to reserve at least two hours for this.

Difficulties and possibilities, per principle

The facilitator could start with the first principle and present the average scores of each of the two criteria. This functions as a starting point for a joint reflection on the reasons for the scores and provides an opportunity to see whether or not there is consensus. After this, the discussion can be structured around the following questions:

1. Do participants think this principle is relevant?
2. What are the difficulties faced by the platform that prevent it from scoring higher on this principle?
3. What should be done to improve the platform's performance on this principle?

This can be repeated for each process principle. It will be helpful to summarize the main points of the discussion on a flipchart, including points that are relevant for the next steps. The facilitator can use one flip chart per aspiration, using different colors for difficulties and opportunities. Participants should be encouraged to come up with concrete suggestions.

Reflections

It may be useful to reflect on the process principles and discuss whether there are additional process principles or criteria that are important for the functioning of the platform, but which are not yet mentioned on the scoring card.

Sensitive issues

There may be issues that participants find too sensitive to discuss in group, for example related to participation, equity and trust. Some time can be reserved for participants to write down on a piece paper – anonymously – those ideas and experiences that they wish not to discuss in the group.

Priorities and next steps

The last part of the discussion can be used to identify practical next steps. Questions to guide the discussion could be:

1. Which process principles and criteria are considered most important to ensure an effective platform?
2. What are the practical steps that would need to be taken?

The last part of the assessment can be used to agree on action points (who is going to do what?) and to provide the opportunity for final questions, comments and suggestions.

Tool 3
Looking back
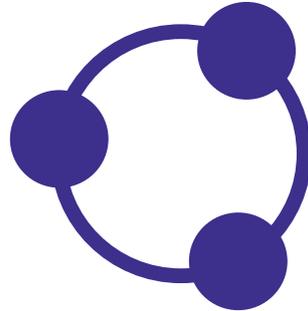
TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE PLATFORM MET ITS OBJECTIVES?

Purpose and approach

When a multi-stakeholder platform has been operational for some time the assessment of achievements can be used for accountability and learning purposes, and it may sometimes be required by financers. In this section we present a tool for the assessment of a platform's outcomes. We define outcomes as the short- and medium-term changes that the platform helped to bring about – be it large or small, intended or unintended, positive or negative. This tool will typically be used as a complement to other tools used for monitoring and evaluation (e.g., land-cover change maps, evidence on livelihood improvements or agricultural productivity change, or community observation of endangered species). It has a particular value as an integrative tool that actively engages stakeholders representing different perspectives.

To understand how the platform has been performing, we will have to identify the platform's objectives and compare these to the platform's actual achievements. If the platform has a short- or medium-term action plan for working together toward realizing long-term objectives for the landscape, this should provide a useful basis for performance assessment. An action plan may not always be in place, however, and platforms are dynamic and unpredictable settings. Their objectives and ways to achieve them may not be specified in great detail at the onset, and objectives are likely to change over time as a result of discussions and negotiations between the members. For such cases the outcome harvesting approach is particularly well suited (see, e.g., Wilson-Grau and Britt 2012). Outcome harvesting starts with identifying all the relevant changes brought about by the institutional entity to be assessed, in this case the landscape platform.

A complication with applying outcome harvesting to multi-stakeholder platforms is that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between outcomes of actions by individual members, and outcomes of the platform. After the outcomes have been identified, it is therefore important to explore how the outcome was achieved, and by whom. This can lead to relevant discussions about the added value of multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Preparation for the workshop

The aim of this assessment is to examine the performance of a platform in terms of its outcomes vis-à-vis its original objectives. This is done based on the value judgments of the participating members. To prepare for this assessment it is important to have a good overview of the objectives and intended outcomes of the platform (these may have been identified in an action plan). Questions that need to be answered are:

1. What are the objectives of the platform?
2. Considering the objectives, who are the relevant stakeholders in the landscape?
3. Which stakeholder groups are represented in the platform and how?
4. What have been the main activities of the platform?
5. What have been the main outputs of the platform?

This information can be obtained through an interview with a platform leader, facilitator or coordinator, and a review of background documentation (e.g., management plans, meeting notes or annual reports).

Workshop guidelines

Introduction

General opening

The goal of the assessment is to reflect on the performance of the platform. It will be a participatory assessment with the intention to stimulate discussion and jointly identify what is going well, and what can go better. It will be important to focus not only on successes, but also on problems and difficulties, as this will help to identify opportunities for improvement. It may be useful to decide on a certain period to focus on, e.g., the last five years.

Clarifying output and privacy

Before starting the intended output of the workshop should be discussed. The workshop can, for example, be used to develop an internal assessment report with lessons and recommendations for the future. It is up to the platform and its members to decide whether or not such a report (or parts of it) will be made public, and whether or not the contributions of individual members should remain anonymous. It should also be made clear whether or not the workshop is part of an external evaluation.

Breaking the ice

Depending on the situation it may be valuable to insert a playful introduction exercise, which can help to break the ice and establish an environment in which people feel free to speak and give their opinions. For ideas see: http://www.mspguide.org/tool/introductions.

Outcome harvesting

Objectives

The facilitator can present the platform's objectives (for example on a flipchart, or using a projector) and ask whether there are any additional ones that would need to be added.

Performance

The facilitator can write down the first objective on top of a flipchart and ask participants to mention:

- An outcome of the platform (i.e., a change brought about by the platform) that has influenced this specific objective.
- Evidence for, or an example of that particular outcome. Here the results of additional monitoring and evaluation efforts can be discussed as well.
- How the outcome was achieved.
- The added value of the multi-stakeholder platform (what would have been different if there would have been no interaction between the different stakeholders?)

The main points can be summarized on the flipchart (see Figure 1 for an example). The exercise continues until everyone agrees that all the main outcomes of the first objective have been covered. This should be repeated for each objective.

Difficulties and improvements

Participants can be asked about the factors that may inhibit the achievement of each objective. These difficulties can be related to the way the platform is operating, but they can also be external, e.g., developments in the landscape that take place outside of the platform's influence. After this, the discussion can move on to identifying the improvements that can be made in order to increase the platform's effectiveness in achieving the objective.

Next steps

The last part of the workshop can be used to agree on action points (who is going to do what?) and to provide the opportunity for final questions, comments and suggestions.

Figure 1: Framework for outcome harvesting exercise

Objective 1: ……				
	Outcome	Evidence/example	How	Added value
Performance	…	…	…	…
	…	…	…	…
	…	…	…	…
Difficulties (internal and external)	…			
	…			
	…			
Possible improvements	…			
	…			
	…			

General considerations

Reporting and follow-up

Above we have described three tools to aid participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder platforms in a workshop setting. The interactions and discussions during each workshop will provide a learning opportunity for the individual participants as well as for the platform as a whole. To capture the main points of the discussions, the results can be documented in a report with specific attention to lessons, recommendations and action points, to be distributed among the platform members. In addition, workshop results potentially can be used to prepare publications to inform donors, colleagues and a wider audience (e.g., in the form of a policy brief or a blog post). If time and resources permit, a follow-up workshop can be organized to discuss the main findings and recommendations with platform members, and to plan the implementation of agreed-upon action points. In case the platform intends to use the same tool(s) on a regular basis, this follow-up workshop can also be used to reflect on the tool(s) used and to discuss the need for adjustments.

Participation and ownership

To make sure that all voices are being heard and a comprehensive picture is obtained, it is important to ensure sufficient diversity in the group of workshop participants as well as in the assessment team (if any). Ideally a diverse group of stakeholders does not only participate during the workshop, but also during the preparation of the workshop (adjusting the workshop's program so it fits the specific needs of the platform), and during the organization of follow-up activities. In this way platform members will have ownership over the process. This will increase the likelihood that the results of the workshop will be used. It also increases the chances of the platform adopting participatory planning monitoring and evaluation as part of its modus operandi.

Critical reflection

Critical reflection is a main element of each of the three tools. It implies that surprises and failures are considered material for learning. Platform members are stimulated to ask themselves: Is the platform doing what it should be doing? What is going well and what can be improved? What factors outside of the platform influence its operations and success? Are the assumptions underlying the platform's strategy still valid? Is there a need to revise the platform's organization, or strategy? Such questions are key, but do not always receive sufficient attention. Often the focus will be on 'doing', and there may be little time for more fundamental discussions. Creating a moment for joint critical reflection not only will provide the possibility for a reality check, but will also strengthen a shared understanding of the platform's theory of change.

Applicability for research

The tools presented in these guidelines are based on theoretical foundations as well as on practical experiences. Although they were specifically developed for participatory learning in workshops with platform members, they could also be used by researchers as an analytical framework, for example as the basis for comparative studies. When the method is used to collect data for a large number of multi-stakeholder arrangements this will allow for an analysis of the relationships between aspirations, processes and outcomes.

Feedback

We encourage practitioners and researchers to adapt the method to their own needs and use it in a variety of cases, and we invite them to share experiences and suggestions with us, using the contact details below.

Tropenbos International - the Netherlands
P.O. Box 232
6700 AE Wageningen, the Netherlands
E-mail: tropenbos@tropenbos.org

EcoAgriculture Partners
1100 17th St NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036, USA
E-mail: info@ecoagriculture.org

Resources

Brouwer, J.H., W. Hiemstra, S.M. van Vugt, and H. Walters (2013) "Analysing stakeholder power dynamics in multi-stakeholder processes: insights of practice from Africa and Asia." *Knowledge Management for Development Journal* 9(3):11-31.

Brouwer, J.H., A.J. Woodhill, M. Hemmati, K.S. Verhoosel, and S.M. van Vugt (2015) T*he MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-stakeholder Partnerships*. Wageningen, the Netherlands: Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research centre.

Buck, L.E., J.C. Milder, T.A. Gavin and I. Mukherjee (2006) *Understanding Ecoagriculture: A framework for Measuring Landscape Performance.* Discussion Paper Number 2. Washington DC, USA: EcoAgriculture Partners.

Buck, L.E., S. Scherr, C. Planicka, and K. Heiner (forthcoming) *Building Partnerships for Landscape Stewardship*. In: Bieling, C. and T. Plieninger (eds.) *The Science and Practice of Landscape Stewardship*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Crawford P. and P. Bryce (2003) "Project monitoring and evaluation: a method for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of aid project implementation." *International Journal of Project Management* 21(5):363-373.

Cornell University (2016) *Landscape Measures Resource Center – Guidelines for Using the Landscape Performance Scorecard*. http://blogs.cornell.edu/lmrc/2007/09/27/instructions-for-using-the-landscape-scorecard. Accessed 23 August, 2016.

DAC (Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Aid Evaluation) (2002) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Denier, L., S. Scherr, S. Shames, P. Chatterton, L. Hovani and N. Stam (2015) T*he Little Sustainable Landscape Book*. Oxford, UK: Global Canopy Programme.

Gertler, P.J., S. Martinez, P. Premand, L.B. Rawlings and C.M.J. Vermeersch (2011) *Impact Evaluation in Practice*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Guijt, I. and J. Woodhill (2002) *Managing for impact in rural development: A Guide for Project M & E*. Rome, Italy: International fund for Agricultural Development.

Kusters, C.S.L., S. van Vugt, S. Wigboldus, B. Williams and J. Woodhill (2011) *Making evaluations matter: A practical guide for evaluators*. Wageningen, the Netherlands: Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research centre.

Kusters, K. (2015) *Climate-smart landscapes and the landscape approach – An exploration of the concepts and their practical implications*. Wageningen, the Netherlands: Tropenbos International.

Mascia, M.B., S. Pailler, M.L. Thieme, A. Rowe, M.C. Bottrill, F. Danielsen, J. Geldmann, R. Naidoo, A.S. Pullin, and N.D. Burgess (2014) "Commonalities and complementarities among approaches to conservation monitoring and evaluation". *Biological Conservation* 169 (2014): 258-267.

Milder, J.C., A.K. Hart, P. Dobie, J.O. Minai and C. Zaleski (2014) "Integrated landscape initiatives for African agriculture, development, and conservation: a region-wide assessment." *World Development* 54:68-80.

Patton, M.Q. (2008) *Utilization Focused Evaluation*. 4th ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks.

Sayer, J., C. Margules, A.K. Boedhihartono, A. Dale, T. Sunderland, J. Supriatna and R. Saryanthi (2014) "Landscape approaches: what are the pre-conditions for success?" *Sustainability Science* 1-11.

Sayer, J., T. Sunderland, J. Ghazoul, J.L. Pfund, D. Sheil, E. Meijaard, M. Venter, A.K. Boedhihartono, M. Day, C. Garcia, C. Van Oosten C. and L.E. Buck (2013) "Ten principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land uses." *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences* 110(21):8349-8356.

Scherr, S.J., S. Shames and R. Friedman (2013) *Defining Integrated Landscape Management for Policy Makers*. EcoAgriculture Policy Focus Series No. 10. Washington DC, USA: EcoAgriculture Partners.

Scriven, M. (1991) *Evaluation Thesaurus*, fourth ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. Wilson-Grau, R. (2015) *Outcome Harvesting. BetterEvaluation*. http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting. Accessed 18 February, 2016.

Thaxton, M., T. Forster, P. Hazlewood, L. Mercado, C. Neely, S.J. Scherr, L. Wertz, S. Wood, and E. Zandri (2015) *Landscape Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Achieving the SDGs through Integrated Landscape Management. A White Paper to discuss the benefits of using ILM as a key means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*. Washington DC, USA: Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative.

Zagt, R.J. and J. Chavez-Tafur (2014) "Towards productive landscapes – a synthesis". In: Chavez-Tafur, J. and R.J. Zagt (eds.) Towards Productive Landscapes. *ETFRN News 57*. Wageningen, the Netherlands: Tropenbos International.

Annex 1: Scoring card - Aspirations

Please circle the sector you represent:
NGO/CSO | Community | Government | Business | Academia | Media | Other, namely:

Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement about the current situation in the landscape
1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neither agree nor disagree; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree.

Aspiration	Statement about current situation in the landscape	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Shared long-term goals and action plan	Stakeholders currently have shared long-term goals for the landscape						
	Stakeholders currently work together on the basis of a landscape action plan						
Practices and policies advance conservation, livelihood and production objectives	Stakeholders work together to promote environmentally-friendly production practices and policies						
	Stakeholders work together to align conservation practices and policies with livelihood and production objectives						
Improved monitoring and land-use planning	Stakeholders currently jointly monitor developments in the landscape						
	Stakeholders catalyze more participatory processes in land-use planning						
Responsive institutions	Stakeholders currently keep each other informed and learn from each other						
	Stakeholders currently use information from other stakeholders to make decisions						

Annex 2: Scoring card - Process quality

Please circle the sector you represent:
NGO/CSO | Community | Government | Business | Academia | Media | Other, namely: ....

Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement about the current situation in the landscape
1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neither agree nor disagree; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree.

Principle	Statement about current situation	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Representation	The platform represents all relevant stakeholders in the landscape						
	Members accept the way in which platform members are selected						
Participation & equity	All members participate and are heard in discussions						
	All members can influence decision making that is relevant to them						
Accountability & transparency	Members can hold each other accountable for their actions and decisions						
	Information and decision-making is transparent						
Capacities	Members have the necessary knowledge and skills to realize the platform's objectives						
	Members have access to outside knowledge and skills that they can learn from						
Resources	The platform has sufficient financial resources to operate effectively						
	The platform has a viable plan to secure financial resources in the future						
Adaptive management	Platform's plans can change based on periodic reflection on its functioning						
	Members have possibilities to address complaints within the platform						
Leadership	Members accept and trust the platform's leadership						
	Members accept the selection process of leadership						

Principle	Statement about current situation	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Theory of change	Members share some concrete objectives for the future of the landscape						
	The platform has a clear and agreed-upon strategy to achieve these objectives						
Facilitation and communication	The platform is effective in the organization of meetings and mobilization of agreed actions						
	Information is widely shared among partners						
Trust	Members feel comfortable sharing information and making agreements						
	Members feel welcome, informed and encouraged to contribute						
Commitment	Members are committed to the discussions and the agreements						
	Stakeholders are willing to look for compromises						

Integrated landscape initiatives often involve multi-stakeholder platforms. These are meant to enable discussions, negotiations and joint planning between stakeholders from various sectors in a given landscape. With growing investments in such platforms, there is a need for simple and affordable methods to aid their planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME). This report presents such a method. It provides practical guidelines for participatory PME workshops.

The method consists of three tools. The first one supports looking ahead, identifying priorities for future multi-stakeholder collaboration in the landscape. The second one can be used to look inward. It focuses on the processes within a platform in order to identify areas for possible improvement. The third tool can be used to look back, by identifying the main outcomes of a platform and comparing them to the original objectives.

There is still much to learn about how multi-stakeholder platforms can best play their role in the landscape. These tools will provide a starting point for this learning to take place. They have been developed to uncover diverse views and stimulate discussions, making full use of platform members' knowledge and experience.

TROPENBOS INTERNATIONAL

ecoagriculturepartners