Respecting Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Landscape Initiatives

A Guide for Practitioners on Minimum Safeguards and Evolving Best Practices

Proforest & Landesa

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IKI INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE INITIATIVE

Proforest

Proforest is a mission-driven organisation, working towards agricultural and forestry production and sourcing that delivers positive outcomes for people, nature and climate.

We focus on the production base and supply chains of agricultural and forestry commodities including soy, sugar, rubber, palm oil, cocoa, coconut, beef and timber. We use our understanding of production and supply chain activities built through working with companies to inform our work with governments, landscapes and sectoral initiatives.

Conversely, our programmes enable a longer-term engagement that can build a supportive environment where companies can engage with other stakeholders or collaborate with each other to scale impact.

We support this foundation of governance through creating and facilitating multi-stakeholder platforms; developing tools and guidance; providing policy advice; and delivering training to build capacity and ensure local benefits and local ownership of issues in the places commodities are produced.

Landesa

Landesa is an international non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of rural women and men by strengthening their rights to land. Landesa was founded in 1981, and since that time has helped secure farmland and forestland rights for more than 180 million rural families around the world. Today, Landesa employs over 100 staff members and is active in multiple countries across sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Our diverse global staff has collective experience in over 60 nations throughout the world, with sector-specific knowledge in land law, economics, gender and social inclusion, agriculture, climate change and other key development areas.

This tool is open for revisions based upon feedback from users. We invite interested parties to use this guidance and pilot or test elements and are interested in any feedback you have.

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Introduction

Many challenges, such as deforestation, water management, land conflicts, labor rights, and smallholder support, require collective action to address them in a meaningful way. Landscape initiatives provide an avenue for bringing together government, local communities, producers, civil society, and supply chain companies to collaborate on delivering positive environmental and social outcomes at scale.

Whatever the primary focus may be, respect for human rights is a key element of any landscape initiative. With 1 in 3 people depending on communal land for their wellbeing and livelihoods1 and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) owning or governing at least 32% of the world's land,2 the locations of many landscape initiatives include IPLCs as both key rights-holders and stakeholders.

Respect for IPLC rights and participation is crucial for any landscape initiative's success. Ensuring their rights, particularly those linked to land and natural resources, is a cornerstone for realization of the human rights of local people as well as for environmental conservation and climate change mitigation globally.[3] Indigenous Peoples and local communities are critical stewards and protectors of land and

[1] World Resources Institute. 2017. The Scramble for Land Rights. Reducing Inequity between Communities and Companies. 2017. Available at: https://wriorg.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/scramble-land-rights.pdf.

[2] World Wide Fund for Nature et al. 2021. The State of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' Lands and Territories: A technical review of the state of Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' lands, their contributions to global biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, the pressures they face, and recommendations for actions. Available at: https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/report_the_state_of_the_indigenous_peoples_and_local_communities_lands_and_territor.pdf.

[3] Stephen T. Garnett et al. 2018. "A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation," *Nature Sustainability*, 1(7), pp. 369–374. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0100-6.

forests, and secure community land and resource rights foster conservation and sustainable management of those resources.[4,5]

Where IPLCs hold secure rights over their land and natural resources, they use their land more sustainably; they are more likely to invest in their land and access agricultural and financial resources; they are less likely to experience conflicts and are better able to recover when they do occur; and their families enjoy better food security, nutrition, health, and education outcomes. Secure land rights can also contribute to increased agency and empowerment for women and other vulnerable groups.[6,7,8,9] Secure tenure for those communities is linked to lower rates of deforestation than those without.[10,11]

Purpose and target audience

This guidance is a resource for planners and implementers of landscape initiatives—in most cases, staff from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who often represent a multistakeholder coalition seeking to implement the initiative.

In this context, we understand "Landscape Initiatives" as place-based, long-term, collaborative, multistakeholder approaches to realize common goals and positive outcomes for people, nature, and climate in production landscapes. They are often most appropriate to tackle environmental or social issues concentrated in a particular place. The guidance suggests practical approaches to incorporating IPLCs into landscape initiatives at various key steps, including:

- Identifying local issues and opportunities;
- Planning and partnership;
- Implementation; and
- Monitoring and reporting.

[4] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IIPCC). 2019. Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems. Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/.

[5] Indigenous + Community Response to IPCC Report. 2019. Available at: https://ipccresponse.org/our-response.

[6] See, for example: Laura Tuck & Wael Zakout. 2019. "7 reason for land and property rights to be at the top of the global agenda," *Voices*, March 25. World Bank. Available at: https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/7-reasons-land-and-property-rights-be-top-global-agenda#:~:text=Research%20has%20shown%20that%20secure,are%20essential%20for%20urban%20development

[7] Landesa. Land Rights: From the Ground Up. Available at: https://www.landesa.org/land-rights-from-the-ground-up/.

[8] Landesa. Women Gaining Ground: Securing Land Rights as a Critical Pillar of Climate Change Strategy. Available at: https://www.landesa.org/wp-content/uploads/LCWLR_WomenGainingGround.pdf.

[9] Jenny Springer. 2016. USAID Issue Brief: Land and Resource Tenure and Social Impacts. Available at: https://www.land-links.org/issue-brief/land-and-resource-tenure-and-social-impacts/.

[10] See, for example: Forest Declaration Assessment. 2022. Sink or swim: How Indigenous and community lands can make or break nationally determined contributions. Briefing Paper. Available at: https://forestdeclaration.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Sink-or-swim-IPLC-lands-and-NDCs.pdf.

[11] Helen Ding et al. 2016. Climate Benefits, Tenure Costs: The Economic Case for Securing Indigenous Land Rights in the Amazon. World Resources Institute. Available at: https://files.wri.org/d8/s3fs-public/Climate_Benefits_Tenure_Costs.pdf.

Recognizing that landscape initiatives and the activities that comprise them are complex, vary widely, and happen at different levels (See Figure 1), it is important to note that the application of the practices offered here is not a one-size-fits-all approach or a comprehensive checklist. The practices offered here should be tailored to the appropriate scope and situation. For example, inclusion of IPLCs at the village level includes information gathering and consulting at the village level, likely by attending and presenting at a gathering of people living in that village. Where a landscape initiative is engaging at a much larger district, state, or regional level, implementers are unlikely to be able to engage as deeply as a village level initiative in the short term, and so should consider the ways to get input from representatives of affected communities through existing structures and processes or through building new ones, considering how the interests of the broader community are represented in those spaces.

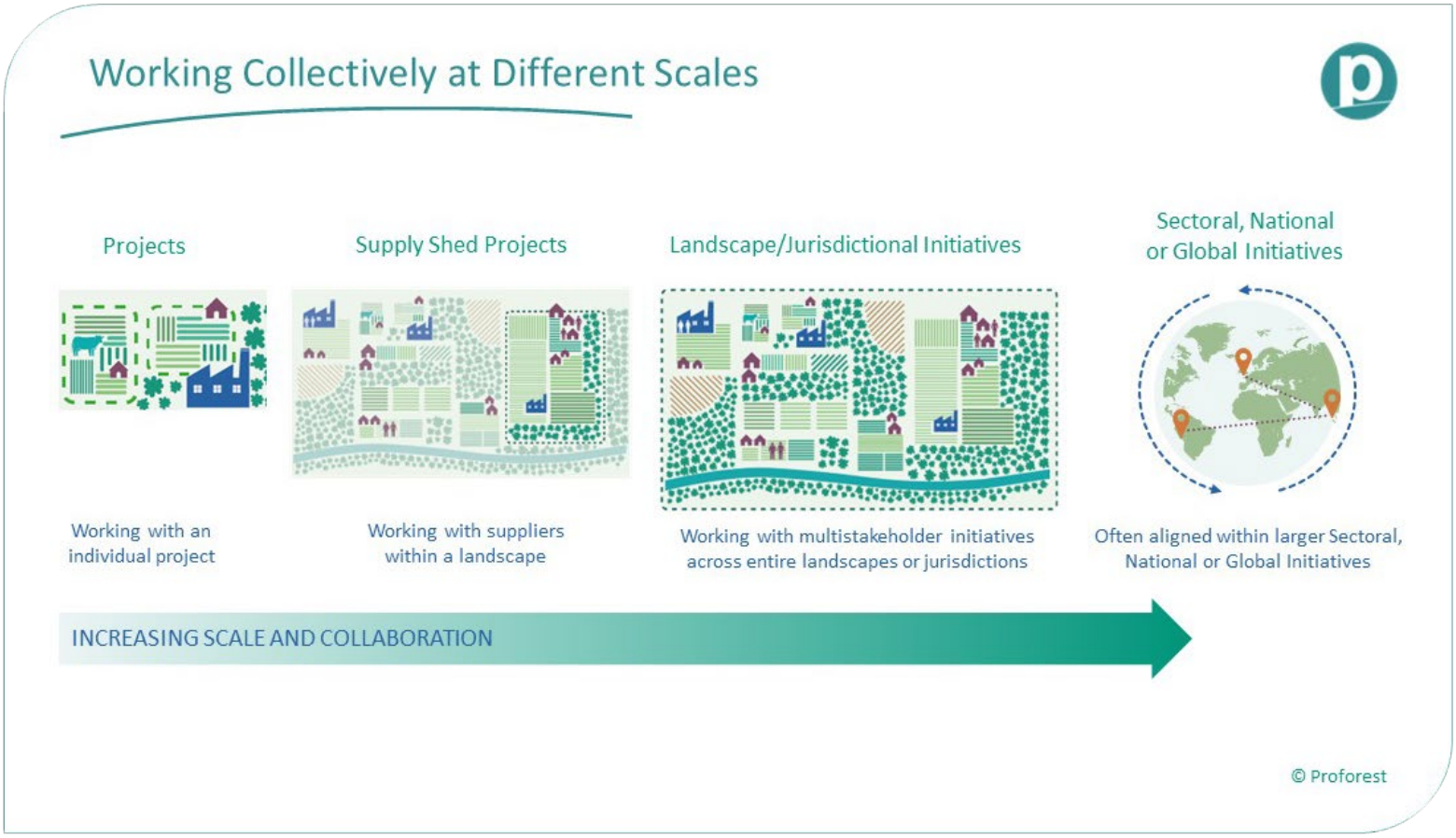

Figure 1: Working collectively at difference scales. *Source: Proforest, 2023*

In developing this guidance, the authors conducted a desk-based review of seven existing landscape initiatives (See Annex 1), including a document review of written materials as well as targeted interviews with programme staff (Interview Guide available in Annex 2). The initiatives reviewed included a mix of geographies, a combination of primary objectives, and different phases of implementation.

What are the rights and livelihoods factors to consider?

In considering IPLCs, the Rights and Resources Initiative's The Land Rights Standard states that landscape initiatives should:

> *"acknowledge, respect and protect all land, territorial and resource rights of: Indigenous Peoples, as affirmed by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO Convention No. 169; local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples, as affirmed by ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and particularly of the women within these groups. These rights include the aforementioned groups' community-based rights to the lands, territories, and resources they customarily own or use, regardless of whether such rights are legally recognized by a state."* [12]

In addition to rights to land, territory, and resources, rights to consider include, amongst others,

- the rights of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) and to self-determination;
- the rights of local communities to free, prior, informed, and substantive participation in consultative processes and decisions that may impact their lands, resources, or livelihoods; and
- the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, as perceived and defined by the owners of that heritage.

Who are IPLCs?

Broadly, thinking of local communities as including all communities – traditional or otherwise – living around and/or potentially affected by the initiative's activities, is the most inclusive view, and landscape initiative planners and implementers are encouraged to think this broadly in landscape initiative planning and implementation.

However, extra care should be taken in considering Indigenous Peoples and other communities with customary tenure systems, as they hold additional rights and protections to their lands, territories, resources, and livelihoods as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ILO 169. [13,14]

There is no formal definition in international law of Indigenous Peoples, in part, because of the variance across local contexts and because a critical right of Indigenous Peoples is to self-identification and determination. However, shared common traits of Indigenous Peoples include:

- "Self-identification as belonging to an indigenous people;
- Descent from populations who inhabited the country or geographical region at the time of conquest, colonisation or establishment of present state boundaries; [and]

[12] Rights and Resources Initiative, Global Landscapes Forum & Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development. 2022. The Land Rights Standard. Available in Bahasa Indonesia, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish at https://rightsandresources.org/land-rights-standard/.

[13] United Nations General Assembly. 2007. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.

[14] International Labour Organization.1989. Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, C169. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:55:0::NO::P55_TYPE,P55_LANG,P55_DOCUMENT,P55_NODE:REV,en,C169,/Document.

- Retain[ing] some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, irrespective of their legal status."[15]

Official designations of who constitutes IPLCs may not be fully inclusive. For example, official government recognition of an Indigenous People or traditional community can be indictive of a group holding status of Indigenous Peoples and the associated rights, but lack of government recognition does not mean that Indigenous Peoples are absent. Also, within Indigenous or traditional communities, community membership is often a prerequisite for participating in formal governance structures and sharing benefits accrued on lands held or managed collectively, but women and other marginalized groups may not be formally considered as community members.[16]

What level of IPLC engagement and participation?

The standard for inclusion lies on a spectrum, illustrated in Figure 2 below.

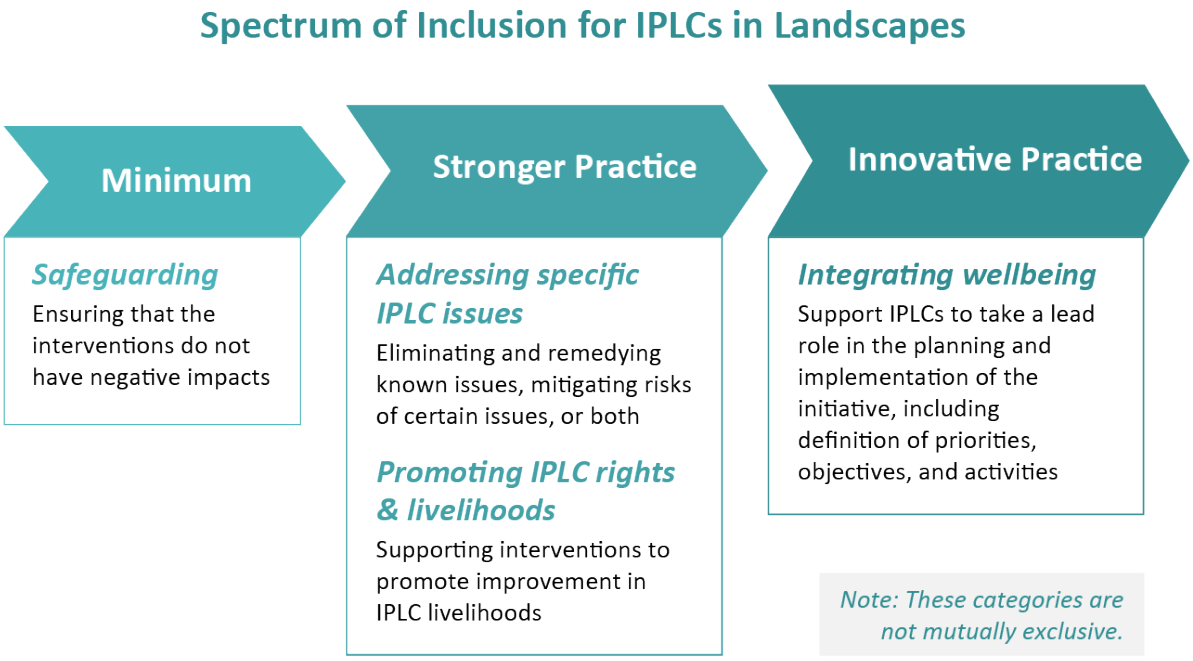

Figure 2: Spectrum of Inclusion for IPLCs in landscapes

[15] International Labour Organization. 2013. Understanding the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169): Handbook for ILO Tripartite Constituents, at p. 2. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---normes/documents/publication/wcms_205225.pdf. Note that this handbook also defines criteria for "tribal peoples," a group to whom the convention also applies and who under this guidance would be included in the "other traditional peoples" that are squarely included in our understanding of "local communities." Those criteria are: (1) self-identification as belonging to a tribal people; (2) their social, cultural, and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community; and (3) their status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations.

[16] World Bank. 2022. Gender Equity in Land and Forest Tenure in 17 FCPF Countries: Report Summary. Available at: https://landwise-production.s3.amazonaws.com/2022/04/Gender-Equity-in-Land-and-Forest-Tenure_ReportSummary_English1.pdf.

At a minimum, every landscape initiative should incorporate safeguards to ensure that their activities do not negatively impact IPLCs or where it is impossible to avoid negative impacts, minimizing them, seeking consent, and ensuring compensation. It is stronger practice to incorporate activities in the landscape initiative to specifically address issues that affect IPLC rights and promote sustainable livelihoods for IPLCs. Stronger still is to support IPLCs in taking a lead role in planning and implementation of the initiative, including defining priorities, objectives, and activities. Improved outcomes for IPLCs resulting from these stronger practices may include:

- Improved access to and use of resources;
- Improved respect and security of the rights to land and resources and to make management decisions over that land and those resources;
- Greater agency, voice, visibility, and rights; and
- Just and equitable enabling environments.

Innovative practice is meant to aim toward the Rights and Resources Initiative's The Land Rights Standard, which expects that landscape initiatives should:

> *"plan, implement, and monitor … in full collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, local communities, Afro-descendent peoples—inclusive of women and youth within these groups—taking into account their self-determined priorities and locally defined approaches, and mitigating any obstacles to women's and other community members' active, free, effective, meaningful and informed participation in collaborative processes…"* [17]

[17] Rights and Resources Initiative, Global Landscapes Forum, & Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development. 2022. The Land Rights Standard. At p3. Available in Bahasa Indonesia, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish at https://rightsandresources.org/land-rights-standard/.

Common Challenges

A number of common challenges exist around the respect and inclusion of IPLCs in landscape initiatives which can emerge at different stages of an initiative. These include the following:

- **Time and resource constraints**: Implementers of landscape initiatives generally see the value in inclusion of IPLCs and would like to collaborate with communities through truly participatory processes, but these processes, and the trust-building required for them to be effective, require significant investment of time and money—more than is generally available, particularly when the focus of the investment is concentrated on a different issue. Recognizing this reality, the following guidance aims to provide a range of options to consider based on the time and resources available.

- **Top-down versus bottom-up approaches:** The aspiration of developing and implementing landscape initiatives in full collaboration with local communities is in direct conflict with the way that landscape initiatives initially come about, as these initiatives typically grow out of opportunities related to company goals, locations of company supply chains, and/or existing government or NGO programmes or other enabling factors, such as legislative or regulatory changes. The role of private sector partners and government programmes in funding and initiating landscape initiatives for a specific set of pre-determined goals means that site selection is often a top-down process made with limited (if any) community engagement.

  Full collaboration with communities, on the other hand, requires more of a bottom-up approach. While a fully bottom-up, community-led approach is often not feasible, the practices outlined below attempt to bridge this gap in way that seeks to obtain and maintain community consent for all interventions and engages communities meaningfully in design and implementation, even when, as is most often the case, community demand is not initiating the initiative. See an example of this in *Case Study 1* at the end of this section.

- **Limited knowledge of local context**: Particularly at the beginning of an initiative, limited knowledge of the local context means that initiative design often happens with incomplete information. Local level data on all the relevant circumstances is often not readily available, and extensive fieldwork to gather the data can be time consuming and expensive. At the same time, inclusion of local communities requires a strong understanding of and ability to work within local circumstances, which come with existing conflicts, power dynamics, and unique cultural aspects.

  For example, language barriers may make it especially difficult to engage with some of the most marginalized groups within a community. To address this challenge and the often-limited time and resources available for an initiative, the practices outlined below suggest a phased, continuous learning and adaptive management to foster greater IPLC inclusion. Another example includes navigating the dynamics of a situation in which smallholders within the targeted supply chain may be migrants establishing farms on land that IPLCs previously used. This is a situation in which there is high risk of conflicts arising and of the initiative infringing upon IPLC rights if adequate safeguards are not in place. An understanding of the local context and power dynamics will be crucial to resolving those conflicts and developing and implementing adequate safeguards.

- **Lack of trust:** Successful community engagement requires trust. However, new initiatives are entering communities where either (1) the communities have no experience with initiatives like this and may look at new initiatives with suspicion; or (2) have a history with the parties involved (i.e., as suppliers to a company, with the government agency administering a new programme) or similar initiatives in the past. In the latter case, communities may have had a bad experience of unfulfilled promises or are fatigued by multiple initiatives without seeing tangible benefits. In either of those cases, a new initiative may be coming into a situation in which a community actively distrusts such initiatives. The practices below include a strong focus on building community trust, which is critical to all initiatives, but will require additional time and care where a community is starting from a place of distrust.

- **Respecting existing practices and norms versus ensuring complete and equal participation:** Operating in a new space requires respecting and working within existing norms and practices. However, existing structures contain norms and power imbalances that exclude particular groups and persons from decision-making processes. Such power imbalances often include those based on gender, but also emerge based on other characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion, time within the community, or livelihood/land use. Practices suggested here aim to find a balance between building upon existing structures and respecting traditions on one hand and achieving meaningful participation of women and other potentially marginalized groups on the other. This challenge begins at identification and continues throughout the initiative. Barriers to participation may include household responsibilities, timing of meetings, cultural roles, etc.

- **Existing governance challenges:** Government plays an important role in landscape initiatives, as government action or inaction can make or break commitments to tenure security, livelihoods, and participation. Government may also be best positioned to take activities forward even after a landscape initiative has concluded or to expand a successful initiative to other areas. However, landscape initiatives are often being implemented in places with existing governance challenges, including lack of formal legal recognition of IPLC rights, lack of implementation of land laws and registration systems, inaccurate or incomplete mapping, and overlapping mandates of natural resource governance agencies.

  At the same time, successful landscape initiatives coordinate with government actors at various levels. Engaging with government and using the initiative to help remedy some of these challenges can help to achieve the initiative's objectives and help to ensure the land management and governance structures of the initiative can carry on after the externally supported initiative ends. Where there are existing governance challenges, safeguards may be especially important, as it is strong governance that provides these safeguards at a more systemic level. For example, if a forest area is being protected, either through the landscape initiative or through government designation and enforcement, for those who currently use or manage the area and are at risk of being excluded from decision-making over the resources and compensation for lost use, safeguards should be set in place.

- **Information and power asymmetries:** Communities often lack awareness about their rights and the capacity to assert and enforce them. Building this awareness or ensuring that a community has expert support where needed is essential to ensure that a community can truly give consent to participate in an initiative. Care should be taken to assess and address whether the

community that the initiative is engaging needs an extended sensitization period, additional information, or support in finding appropriate expert assistance or training.

- **Ensuring staff have relevant expertise:** Ensuring staff of landscape initiatives, particularly those providing expertise in disciplines outside of working with communities, may not have a strong understanding of land rights or the skill set necessary to effectively engage with communities throughout the landscape initiative. A common baseline understanding of various related topics across a landscape initiative's implementing team may require a set of training resources at the outset of the initiative and at points of onboarding new personnel. Such topics include social requirements of the High Carbon Stock Approach, FPIC, conflict resolution training, background on legal land tenure systems in the jurisdiction, and facilitation and social research methodologies.

Case Study 1. Adaptive Landscape Design and Management, IDH Liberia[18]

In 2016, IDH began developing two sustainable landscape initiatives in Liberia: one in the northwest (Lofa and Bomi Counties) and one in the southeast of the country (Sinoe County). Initially, the focus was on engaging with the private sector, and the landscape locations were selected based on the presence of large concessions allocated to palm oil companies. IDH's original plan was to work with these concession-holding companies and help them develop an approach to improve their sustainability footprint, while also coordinating with local communities to improve relations and integration between the companies and the communities.

Two years later, while the initiative was still in its early stages, Liberia enacted the Land Rights Law of 2018. This fundamentally changed the balance of power around land in Liberia by formally recognizing the customary land rights of rural communities. In light of this momentous shift, IDH saw an opportunity to adapt their initiative to leverage the rights enshrined in the new law for greater impact. As a result, they shifted to a bottom-up approach with communities as the starting points, focused on supporting communities to register their customary land rights and develop land use plans. The goal of this process is to enable communities to define their own aspirations, with IDH serving as a facilitator, including helping to stimulate investment in the landscapes by identifying private-sector partners whose priorities align with those of the communities.

However, the process has not been without challenges. One key challenge is the limited capacity of local communities, due in part to the erosion of traditional governance institutions during the civil war. Ideally, these communities would undertake land use planning and negotiations with companies without any external influence in order to ensure the communities' true interests are represented and their agency is respected. Currently, though, most communities do not have the capacity to do this, and there is also a lack of local civil society organizations with the requisite capabilities. Consequently, IDH faces the challenge of balancing provision of support to communities with a desire not to impose external influence. Still, the new approach has proven fruitful, as IDH has been able to support participatory land use planning and customary land rights formalization in more than 20 districts in Lofa and Sinoe Counties.

For more information, please visit: https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/teams/liberia/

[18] Interview with Silas Siakor, Liberia Country Manager, IDH. 9 June 2022.

Key Practices for Inclusion and Respect for IPLC Rights Throughout a Landscape Initiative

The actions and recommendations below are structured under the key steps to set up new or engage with existing landscape initiatives (see Figure 3).

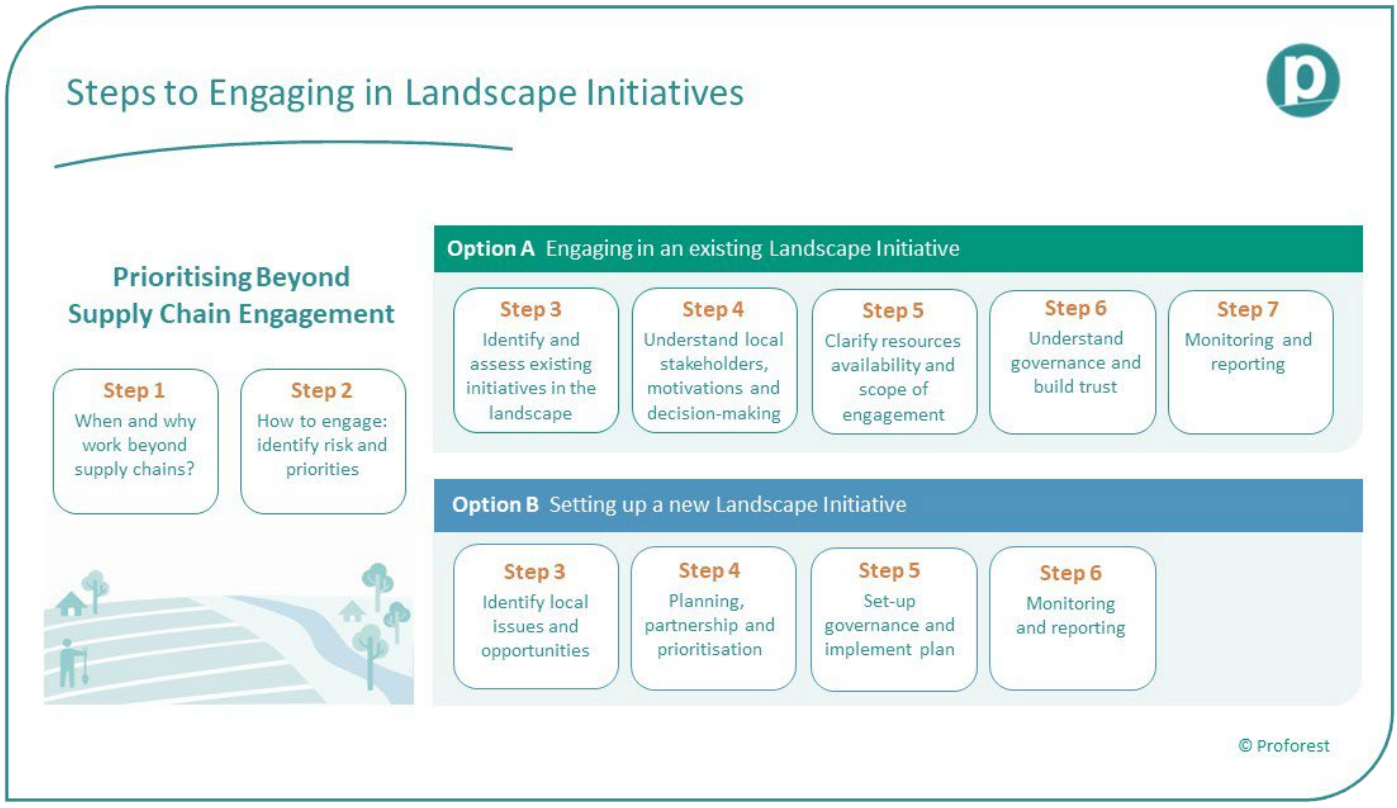

Figure 3. Steps to Engaging in Landscape Initiatives. *Source: Proforest, 2023*

This guidance focuses on elements found in Steps 3 through 7 in Option A and Steps 3 through 6 in Option B depicted in Figure 3. Prior to these steps, the initiative planners have done the initial steps of deciding when and why to work beyond supply chains (Step 1) and some initial work to select the potential locations and identify risks and priorities around how to engage (Step 2). This guidance does not cover these steps, recognizing that currently most landscape initiatives are started due to objectives and goals set by global companies or other organizations looking to address specific issues (e.g., deforestation), and thus are usually selected remotely by these actors with no or limited on-the-ground engagement with communities before the landscape has been selected. For companies sourcing globally, this prioritization often means looking across multiple geographies and necessarily requires use of proxy data or expert advice.

Some crucial safeguards running throughout the steps of setting up a new or engaging an existing Landscape Initiative include:

- **Consent:** Ensuring that communities are continuing to consent to all activities that affect their lands, resources, and rights.
- **Use local languages:** Using communication modes and methods that are appropriate to reach the affected communities. Community engagement should be conducted in local languages. However, this may also include other measures such as considering local literacy rates in a particular language before producing and distributing written materials. Consider the language and format of the information that is distributed as well as the distribution strategy: Does it facilitate understanding for the entire affected community? If not, are there ways to reach those who cannot access the existing information?
- **Demonstrate that you are listening:** Successful collaboration in design requires both listening to the communities and demonstrating to communities that you are listening. This requires incorporating feedback into initiative plans and closing the loop with communities on why some elements of feedback may not be incorporated. Where an initiative is being implemented on a smaller scale, with village-by-village engagement, this may be more straightforward. Where implementing at a larger scale, implementers will need to have clear channels for feedback, transparent processes for addressing that feedback, and communication back to communities about what was or was not done in response.
- **Consider the composition of the team:** The team should be diverse (in keeping with the intersectionality of the communities involved), multidisciplinary, and to the extent possible, local. Ensuring that women and other groups at risk of exclusion are represented in the team can help to encourage participation of those groups. Additionally, a multidisciplinary team working together can help to create a fuller picture of the local context.

Identifying local issues and opportunities

Selecting a location for a landscape initiative generally involves gathering information to make an evidence-based site selection based on a defined set of factors. However, it is likely that (1) localized data is not fully and readily available; and (2) time and resource constraints make it unlikely to do a full on-the-ground information gathering before selecting a general location or potential sites for the landscape initiatives. At the selection stage, planners[19] are often left with open questions about what communities are present, how those communities engage with and hold rights to land and natural resources, how those communities make decisions, and how those communities would welcome or oppose the activities that the planners have in mind.

Once a landscape has been selected or the potential locations have been narrowed down, the planners should gather additional information that was not possible to obtain remotely before selection and

[19] Here, "planners" are the individuals or organizations in charge of Steps 3 and 4, the baseline assessment and planning for the following steps. "Implementers," on the other hand, carry out the plans of the initiative through step 5.

which is crucial in planning the landscape intervention. Where that includes an on-the-ground assessment, these interactions allow the team the opportunity to: (1) gather additional information about the communities to inform final site selection and initiative design; and (2) begin to engage directly with community members and other key stakeholders to gauge interest in the initiative and begin to build relationships. Although community engagement is an ongoing process throughout the life of the intervention, **a truly inclusive and participatory scoping stage can lay the foundations for an intervention that reflects and respects the needs and perspectives of all members of a community.**

The following practices can help to better include IPLCs at the "Identifying local issues & opportunities" step of the initiative:

Minimum Safeguards

- **Do desk-based research and review existing information before the on-the-ground scoping:** Note that this information may feel incomplete; some information may not be available or may be reported only at a national level, which may or may not offer insight into the particular locations of the initiative. However, the information that is available can be informative and may help the planners to choose the appropriate participatory tools and methodologies for the on-the-ground scoping. Note that even where a significant amount of secondary information is available, it likely does not offer a truly complete picture. In such instances, the on-the ground scoping can be used to verify information from desk-based research as well as to gather new information.
- **Obtain consent:** Initial engagement with communities will be a first step in informing and gauging interest in the initiative and considering the possibility of changing the initiative design based on community input. Ultimately, the initiative planners will need the community's consent for their participation in the initiative. **That consent is an ongoing process.** Where possible, initiatives should seek consent from communities to engage in the baseline assessment. Although that is not always possible, at a minimum, initiatives should obtain consent from specific communities which will be directly involved in and/or affected by activities. Formalizing the communities' agreement to join the initiative, through a signed memorandum of understanding or letter of intent, can help to clarify expectations and ensure mutual commitment.
- **Develop a communications strategy prior to engaging with the stakeholders:** Two particular challenges that may arise at this stage are sharing a consistent message across stakeholders and not raising unrealistic expectations among the stakeholders about what the initiative will ultimately do. A strong and consistent communications strategy that all team members are familiar with and use can help to ensure that these messages are consistent and realistic. To the extent possible, the strategy should build upon existing functional channels of communication.

- **Conduct socio-economic baseline, tenure assessment, stakeholder mapping, and land mapping:** Through a combination of the desk-based research and on-the-ground information gathering, conduct a stakeholder mapping that includes the identification of potentially affected communities and the rights that may be affected by the initiative. Where the number of communities affected is broad, the on-the-ground information gathering may be a representative sample of communities, rather than all.

Although many landscape initiatives are focused on particular supply chains, the scoping should go broader to all potentially affected people and communities. While this is critical to avoid unintended harms, considering circumstances of the broader community early on can also help to ensure the initiative is more effective by helping to frame and design the initiative to truly address issues most pressing in the landscape.

Resources that may be helpful in designing and implementing these sorts of assessments include:

- Proforest's Discussion Paper on human rights related risks and issues within landscape initiatives (2020)[20]
- Accountability Framework's Operational Guidance on Respecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (June 2019), particularly Annex 1: Land Tenure Study and Annex 2: Land Use Study[21]
- High Carbon Stock Approach's Implementation Guide for Social Requirements (April 2020), particularly Appendix 2 : Social Knowledge [22,23]

Where **there are time and resource constraints**, consider some of the following strategies:

- Consider a phased approach to the information gathering. Which information is essential to move the initiative forward? Which information can be gathered as part of a later stage of the initiative? Which of this is easily accessible through governmental census data or other reputable and publicly available primary research or secondary sources?
- If the geographic scope of the initiative is broad, start gathering more detailed information from communities that would be most impacted by the initiative or consider methodologies to construct a sample of representatives across the impacted area that you can engage with to get much of the additional needed information before engaging with the entire community. This may include local leaders, government representatives, or NGOs who are based in or work with some of the potential site community. This approach can be especially useful where the potential landscape area is large.

[20] LandScale, SourceUp, & Proforest. 2020. Overview of key elements for an approach to respect human rights related risks and issues within a landscape initiative. Discussion Paper. Available at: https://www.proforest.net/fileadmin/uploads/proforest/Documents/Publications/HRIA_Landscape_level_IDH_Landscale_Proforest_8Dec20.pdf.

[21] Available at: https://accountability-framework.org/operational-guidance/respecting-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities/.

[22] Available at: https://highcarbonstock.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/HCSA-Implementation-Guide-Apr-2020.pdf.

[23] Available at: https://highcarbonstock.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/HCSA-Implementation-Guide-Appendix-2-Apr-2020.pdf.

The information gathering and stakeholder mapping should include several key pieces of information:

- What individuals and communities are potentially affected by the initiative;
- How the communities are identified under the legal system and how they self-identify (i.e., are they Indigenous?);
- What rights of these communities may be affected by the initiative;
- The existing governance structures, institutions, decision-making mechanisms, and communication channels (including the information on language);
- An understanding of the power dynamics and cultural norms within and among the communities, including groups within and around the communities that are at risk of being excluded from decision-making processes or benefits of the initiative;
- Historical grievances and existing conflicts and conflict resolution mechanisms;
- Existing social issues that the communities would prioritize to address; and
- What other projects have been introduced or implemented in the area, and how has the community engaged with them.

Stronger Practices

- **Allocate time and resources for community participation and capacity building:** Engaging with communities as early in the initiative as possible and allocating plenty of time and resources helps to ensure that community engagement and participatory processes are not rushed. This can allow time to include capacity-building activities for communities to empower them to be informed and to more effectively exercise their rights and represent their own interests throughout the course of the initiative and beyond.
- **Conduct land mapping with a focus on participatory mapping processes:** Early engagement with communities and stakeholder mapping may also include land mapping activities to help define existing rights and uses where those are not clear. Even where seemingly

Resources that may be helpful in conducting participatory land mapping include:

- High Carbon Stock Approach's Implementation Guide for Social Requirements (April 2020), particularly Appendix 3: Participatory Mapping [24,25]
- International Fund for Agricultural Development's Good Practices in Participatory Mapping (2009) [26]
- International Land Coalition's Participatory Mapping as a Tool for Empowerment (2008) and case studies on participatory mapping from the ILC Learning Hub's Database of Good Practices [27,28]

[24] Available at: https://highcarbonstock.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/HCSA-Implementation-Guide-Apr-2020.pdf.

[25] Available at: https://highcarbonstock.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/HCSA-Implementation-Guide-Appendix-3-Apr-2020.pdf.

[26] Jon Corbett. 2009. Good practices in participatory mapping: a review prepared for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Available at: https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39144386/PM_web.pdf/7c1eda69-8205-4c31-8912-3c25d6f90055.

[27] Stefano Di Gessa. 2008. Participatory Mapping as a Tool for Empowerment: Experiences and Lessons Learned from the ILC Network. International Land Coalition. Available at: https://www.participatorymethods.org/sites/participatorymethods.org/files/particpatory%20mapping%20as%20a%20tool%20for%20empowerment.pdf.

[28] Available at: https://learn.landcoalition.org/en/good-practices/.

clear, participatory approaches should be used to validate existing maps. In other cases, the team and communities may engage in participatory mapping activities to create new maps. **Land mapping for a sample of communities should be included as a minimum safeguard, while stronger practice requires land mapping for all communities, although this may be done in a phased manner throughout the project.**

- **Involve local champions and partners:** This can help to gain entry to communication channels that may not otherwise be available. Such partners already know much about the local community and may be able to bridge gaps in language and cultural and social norms that would otherwise slow progress. It may be challenging to find partners with both local presence and sufficient familiarity and expertise on the topics and skills needed to support the landscape initiative, so it may be helpful to include partner capacity development in the implementation plan for the initiative.

Connecting to community-led initiatives

Communities often have structures and systems in place for planning and managing their territories. However, the ability a community may have to implement those plans will vary for a variety of reasons, including limited formal rights or decision-making authority and control over the territory, limited financial resources or access to technology and tools, or difficulties in accessing enforcement mechanisms.

Landscape initiatives may have the ability to address some of these barriers to further the priorities already set by communities themselves. Several factors or actions could be helpful to achieve this:

- **Where possible, let the community specify what they need.** The authors spoke to personnel involved in some initiatives that, during the scoping, conducted broad outreach across an area, let the communities know what supports and capacities they had available, and then communities asked for specific supports based upon already set priorities and efforts that were already in process. This approach is not always feasible, but where it is, this more targeted response to a clear demand can set the stage for a strong relationship of trust between the communities involved and those supporting and facilitating the initiative.
- Although most communities do have some level of systems in place to identify and address community needs and priorities, **there is wide variation across communities on:** (1) clarity of communicating those needs and priorities; and (2) the inclusion of individuals and groups within the community in the processes for defining those needs and priorities. **Enhancing clarity and inclusive process may be areas of support** from landscape initiative planners and implementers that could provide value to communities where those aspects are lacking.
- **Understanding or supporting an enabling environment for community-led approaches** can help to even power dynamics between communities and others. For example, in one initiative that the authors studied, initiative staff noted that recent legislative changes that strengthened community rights as well as heightened expectations from downstream companies helped to bring together communities and the companies whose activities were affecting them on a more level negotiating field that allowed an environment of open dialogue, listening, and increased trust needed to have a productive engagement and come to mutually beneficial agreements.
- **Clearly defining roles is critical in these sorts of collaborations.** To support a community led initiative, it is important that funders and other partners are clear about the communities and their own roles in the initiative. As a facilitator, funder or supporting organization for a community -led initiative, this may mean stepping back to allow the community to set its goals, and the landscape initiative can provide supports focused on whether or not those goals and priorities are respected.

Innovative Practice

- **Using initial engagements to inform the initiative design in collaboration with the affected communities:** While similar to some of the stronger practices listed above, a collaborative design process would come to the affected communities with an openness and willingness to co-design the initiative or activities within it or to build upon community-led initiatives.

Planning, partnership, and prioritization

The planning and partnership stage includes developing the plans for implementation as well as setting up the governance mechanism of the landscape initiative. Both should, as much as possible, be developed in collaboration with local communities. Collaborative design is an opportunity to build local ownership over the initiative, rather than bringing in a set plan from a global or national context. Initial site selection and broad objectives, which are often linked to a company's sustainability or supply chain goals such as forest restoration or supporting smallholder suppliers in getting certified, are likely set very early on in the conception of a landscape initiative. However, much of the design of an initiative should happen later:

(1) with a strong understanding of on-the-ground reality; and

(2) after affected communities have been informed of initiative plans, indicated interest in (or no objection to) participating, and consented to move on to the next stage.

This helps to ensure that the initiative can employ a rights-based and collaborative design process that is truly driven by community priorities and perspectives, rather than simply asking communities for their approval of an already-designed plan. The goal of the design phase should be to work collaboratively with communities and other stakeholders to develop the plan for the initiative **that upholds the rights of all stakeholders, establishes goals that balance the priorities of all stakeholders in accordance with their rights,** and leverages the strengths of each stakeholder to help achieve those goals.

The following key practices can help to better include IPLCs at the planning and partnership stage of the initiative:

Minimum Safeguards

- **Inform affected communities and seek consent:** Clear, consistent, and honest communication is essential to build and maintain support for the initiative. Before expecting community members to engage in a design process, it is important to build awareness or sensitize communities about the initiative. Some of this may be accomplished during the scoping or baseline assessment, but in some cases, this may require additional communication before developing the implementation plan. As with the previous step, the affected communities should consent to moving forward with the implementation plan and governance mechanism.
- **Engage with communities:** At the core of plan development is sitting with communities (with a facilitator) to develop a plan together that can meet the broad initiative goals and related community development needs. This requires engaging with the communities to understand each other's aims, needs, and priorities and how those may overlap or intersect with the

initiative's priorities (or those of the funders or implementers). Discuss issues with communities, prioritize with them, work with them to decide on interventions to address those prioritized issues. Ask for community ideas on needs and solutions. Where engaging multiple communities, look for and address common needs where possible.

- **Engage all the stakeholders** for sensitization activities and consider each of them and how they should be engaged to understand their role in the initiative and the plan development process. Such stakeholders include government, companies in the area, etc. Not informing a key stakeholder early in the process and keeping them informed at regular or key intervals through planning and implementation may lay the groundwork for future conflicts that may undermine the initiative's aims.

Resources that may be helpful in conducting inclusive engagement with communities include:

- Resource Equity's A Starting with Women Approach (2014), particularly the section on Engagement with Groups (pp. 88 et seq.)[29]
- Rights and Resources Initiative's From Darkness to Blue Skies (2022) [30]
- Conservation International's Sustainable Landscape Approach: Implementation Guidebook (2018), particularly section 1.4 on Multi-stakeholder engagement[31]

- **Define the process and roles:** While it is important to inform and engage all community members and stakeholders in some way, not everyone will be fully involved in the development of the implementation plan. Work with these stakeholders to clearly define the process and roles of the various stakeholders in the process. Certain points in the plan may engage all stakeholders, while others may include only key representatives. Where those representatives are speaking for communities or groups within the communities, ensure that those communities or groups are defining how they are selected to ensure legitimacy.
- **Avoid or minimize negative impacts:** Within initiative plans, avoid (or minimize) negative impacts on local communities and consider inclusion in benefit-sharing. Where possible, indicate what elements of the plan in relation to impacts are non-negotiable lines.

Stronger Practices

- **Engage a facilitator:** A good facilitator can help to encourage participation and ensure input is incorporated and that loops are closed. A good facilitator in this setting is strong, neutral, and understands the communities' needs. Locating the facilitator in the community for a significant amount of time may help to build community trust in the initiative.
- **Find and work with local champions:** Local champions who believe in the initiative and are willing to voice concerns of others can build support and participation within the community. These champions may or may not be formal leaders within the communities. Such champions

[29] Leslie Hannay & Elisa Scalise. 2014. Improving Land Tenure Security for Women: A Starting with Women Approach. Landesa Center for Women's Land Rights. Available at: https://landwise-production.s3.amazonaws.com/2018/12/Starting-with-women-RE.pdf.

[30] Rights and Resources Initiative. 2022. From Darkness to Blue Skies: Listening to Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendent Peoples about their journey to a better future. Available at: https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/FinalBlue-Skies-Narrative-v5_2022-1017-WEB-1.pdf.

[31] Available at: https://www.conservation.org/docs/default-source/publication-pdfs/ci_laf-sustainable-landscape-approach-implementation-guidebook.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=b772ba44_2.

may be especially helpful in bringing forward voices of groups who are usually marginalized from such discussions within communities. They may also help implement a train-the-trainer model to cascade engagement within communities and other local relevant actors.

- **Work with the community to build out an agreed process for continued engagement and plan development**: Share that planned process with communities. A strong understanding of the stakeholders and local context established during the scoping or baseline can lay a strong foundation for success for a collaborative design process. The process should be built with the affected communities in mind and using the knowledge of local context gained in the scoping stage. For example, the plan development process should build on existing community communication channels and decision-making mechanisms where those exist and are inclusive and functional.
- **Consider potential complementarity, avoid overlaps, and build from existing initiatives in the landscape:** This requires learning more about these initiatives through the scoping stage. Building on previous or existing government or NGO initiatives can be helpful, as the initiative may have already made inroads on organization and capacity-building of communities and building trust with communities. This can help to ensure that government partners are well-positioned to support community engagement efforts, not only in the design phase but across the initiative. However, it is important to be aware of community perceptions of the previous or existing intervention, as the new initiative may inherit some of those perceptions (positive or negative) by association.
- **Support capacity development for local communities and traditional leaders:** This is often needed to familiarize these groups with relevant processes and ensure they can make informed decisions. This is often an important role for civil society organization (CSO) partners. Capacity building should include support on organizational development to ensure everyone understands their roles (regarding land management and governance) and how to continue carrying them out. Starting this capacity building early can ensure that communities and their leaders are prepared to represent themselves in discussions on initiative design.
- **Incorporate some interventions with early and visible returns:** Consider taking advantage of a phased approach to help to build community trust and support for the initiative. Are there shorter term interventions that may yield some more immediate results that the community can see? Can these start early in the initiative while the longer term plan is still under development or getting set up. It can be frustrating for communities to put in time and energy into these collaborations without seeing results for several years.

Resources that may be helpful in considering community benefits and incentives include:

- High Carbon Stock Approach's Implementation Guide for Social Requirements (April 2020), particularly Appendix 4: Community Benefits and Incentives for Conservation [32,33]
- Case studies from The World Bank's Gender Equity in Land and Forest Tenure in REDD+ Programming (2022)[34]

[32] Available at: https://highcarbonstock.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/HCSA-Implementation-Guide-Apr-2020.pdf.

[33] Available at: https://highcarbonstock.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/HCSA-Implementation-Guide-Appendix-4-Apr-2020.pdf.

[34] The World Bank. 2022. Gender Equity in Land and Forest Tenure in REDD+ Programming: Deep Dive Country Profiles. Available at: https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/sites/fcp/files/2022/MArch/gender_equity_in_land_and_forest_tenure_deepdivecountryscans.pdf.

Innovative Practice

- **Build on local opportunities:** Seizing opportunities from the grassroots level can help to ensure that the landscape initiative is responding to on-the-ground demand. Landscape initiatives need some sort of opportunity to get going, and existing programmes often mean that some organizational and institution building foundational work has already been done. Many times, these programmes are introduced in a top-down way. However, where there are opportunities tied to programmes that included public consultation in their design or opportunities arise from a request from communities themselves, a landscape initiative is generally starting out with a higher level of community trust and buy-in, and the initiative itself is more likely to address the communities' stated priorities.
- **Explore external funding options for community capacity development:** Where communities and their representatives lack needed capacities to fully engage in the design process, consider what funding may be available for communities for them to build capacity and adequately participate in initiative.
- **Share learnings:** Where similar initiatives have been launched in other communities, sharing learnings and experience may help to build community trust. Consider whether other community representatives may be willing to come and share their experience firsthand. Such sharing should cover challenges as well as successes.

Resources that may be helpful in exploring funding options include:

- RRI's Building Bridges discussion paper (2022)[35]
- Specific funding mechanisms focused on strengthening local capacity, funding front-line civil society organizations, and empowering and building agency of excluded communities. Such mechanisms include the African Women's Development Fund or the Legal Empowerment Fund.[36,37]

Governance and implementation

Governance and implementation of a landscape initiative is all about delivering on the plans, ensuring continued consent and community participation in ongoing decision-making, and adjusting plans as new challenges and opportunities arise.

Community involvement in landscape initiative governance is critical to their involvement in ongoing decision-making and long-term buy-in to the initiative. To ensure legitimacy, communities should be engaged in the set-up as well as the operation of the governance structure.

Governance mechanisms of the landscape initiative will need to coexist with existing governance structures but may, in some cases, need to be distinct from them to ensure that they can operate outside the politics, elitism, and other constraints that may exist and hamper effectiveness and inclusion

[35] Jenny Springer. 2022. Building Bridges: Innovations and Approaches to Increase Financing to Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples and Local Communities for Climate and Conservation Goals, Discussion Paper for the Path to Scale Initiative. Rights and Resources Initiative. Available at: https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/BuildingBridges_web.pdf.

[36] Available at: https://awdf.org/.

[37] Available at: https://globalhumanrights.org/what-we-do/legal-empowerment/.

under existing governance structures. This should be done where possible in a way that ensures efficient information flow and clear decision making to avoid being overly bureaucratic.

The following key practices can help to ensure ongoing IPLC inclusion and participation throughout the implementation of an initiative:

Minimum Safeguards

- **Communicate with affected communities**: As with previous steps, continued consistent and open two-way communication with affected communities is important throughout implementation to ensure that communities are informed throughout the initiative. A communications strategy can help to ensure that all members of the implementing team are delivering a consistent message.
- **Hold regular consultative meetings throughout the course of an initiative:** This is one piece of continued communication. Depending on the context, this can include more frequent meetings with a group of selected community representatives, focus group discussions separated by gender (and in some cases by age), as well as larger public meetings.
- **Consent is an ongoing process: Communities should have opportunities to opt out if they no longer want to be part of the initiative**, even after implementation has begun.
- **Understand how communities make decisions:** Before set-up of the governance mechanism, the implementing team should have an understanding of how community decisions are typically made and who makes those decisions. This is essential to developing inclusive engagement plans and participatory decision-making processes. Typically, an inclusive process will engage and respect existing authorities, both governmental and traditional, while also enabling engagement with the broader community. Where functioning and inclusive decision-making structures or multi-stakeholder platforms are already in place, landscape initiative staff can engage with those structures or platforms. Where they do not yet exist, new structures may need to be formed.
- **Understand and adjust for existing power imbalances:** The structure and operating procedures of the governance mechanism should include elements to address existing power imbalances. For example, the governance mechanism will need to build in steps to ensure external transparency, community participation, and representation of groups often excluded from decision-making, such as women and youth. Some such measures may include ensuring regular meetings or other spaces to engage with the broader community. Where the mechanism is hierarchical, ensure that middle layers do not impede community access to or direct communication with higher levels.
- **Be realistic about outcomes and what is achievable within particular time periods**: Being too optimistic about outcomes and communicating this optimism to communities may lead to unrealistic expectations that result in disillusionment with the initiative when those outcomes do not materialize. A monitoring forum or platform to share progress and concerns can be useful to ensure that the implementing team can keep apprised on community support for (or opposition to) the initiative's activities.

- **Ensure communities have access to an effective grievance mechanism:** During the set up and operation of the landscape initiative, **implementers must ensure that there is a grievance mechanism that all affected communities and individuals can access**. The mechanism may build on existing structures but should comply with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights criteria for non-state dispute resolution processes (legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, rights-compatible, source of continuous learning, and based on dialogue and engagement).[41] A well-functioning mechanism should have the following components:
    - Policies and procedures that provide implementers with explicit steps on how to process and resolve complaints;
    - Procedures to ensure cooperation between those managing the grievance and initiative implementers with close knowledge of the subject of the grievance;
    - Guidance on the types of performance data to be recorded for monitoring and reporting purposes;
    - Periodic internal review to ensure the mechanism's functionality; and
    - Set time frames for responding to complaints to ensure consistency within the initiative and predictability for complainants.

  Implementers will need to communicate about the existence and process of the grievance mechanism and ensure that it is in a format that affected communities can easily access.

Resources that may be helpful in developing and operating grievance mechanisms include:

- **Accountability Framework Initiative's Operational Guidance on Remediation and Access to Remedy (2020)[38]**
- Landesa's Grievance Mechanism Primer (2018)[39]
- Harvard University's Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative's guidance on rights-compatible grievance mechanisms (2008)[40]

- **Implement measures to ensure safety of community members and Human Rights Defenders who raise concerns and issues:** Those who raise complaints should not fear reprisal of any kind.
- **Where coordinating with other initiatives, ensure regular communication with those efforts:** This can help to ensure strategic coordination and potential co-financing arrangements.

Resources that may be helpful in designing and implementing safeguards for human rights defenders include:

- UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998)[42]
- IUCN's brief on women human rights defenders and gender-based violence (2020) [43]

[38] Available at: https://accountability-framework.org/operational-guidance/remediation-and-access-to-remedy/.

[39] Available at: http://ripl.stage.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/ckeditor/attachments/87/RIPL_Grievance_Mechanism_Primer_-_Final.pdf.

[40] Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. 2008. Rights-Compatible Grievance Mechanisms: A Guidance Tool for Companies and their Stakeholders. Available at: https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/files/reports-and-materials/Grievance-mechanisms-principles-Jan-2008.pdf.

[41] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2011. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Sections 28 et seq. and related Commentary. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf.

[42] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-human-rights-defenders/declaration-human-rights-defenders#:~:text=The%20declaration%3A,fundamental%20freedoms%20through%20peaceful%20means.

[43] IUCN. 2020. Women Environmental Human Rights Defenders: Facing gender-based violence in defense of land, natural resources and human rights. Available at: https://www.iucn.nl/app/uploads/2021/03/iucn-srjs-briefs-wehrd-gbv-en_01.pdf.

How to encourage community representation and participation in landscape initiative meetings and consultations:

- Ensure communities are given adequate advance notice of the meeting through communication channels that will reach all members of the communities.
- Hold meetings and consultations at times at which all members of the communities can join (e.g., not during work or harvest times), taking into account gender roles and dynamics, holding a series of meetings that can collectively be used to make a decision.
- Hold meetings and consultations in locations accessible to communities. These can be held within the communities themselves or at a location that is easy for them to get to. If meetings have to happen farther away (e.g., in the local city or capital), resources should be provided to communities so they can attend (e.g., travel, accommodation, and food).
- Compensate communities for attending meetings if needed. This is especially the case if the meeting is at a time when community members are at work or harvesting and therefore would lose income for attending the meeting.
- Ensure communities and all members with the community feel safe and empowered to speak during the meeting. This can include various considerations and methods:
    - Reviewing who is attending the meeting and ensuring that it will be possible to manage the power imbalances (e.g., if there are government representatives)
    - Ensuring that the community feels safe, especially if the initiative is in an area with a history of violence
    - Holding separate meetings if needed, especially if at the beginning there is a high-level distrust between communities and companies or government
    - In some contexts, leveraging existing structures or community meetings that community member had already planned on attending in order to encourage higher participation
    - Holding separate meetings or breakout groups for groups recognized as potentially marginalized in the earlier phases of the project in order to capture all points of view, which can be particularly important to ensure the voices of women are heard
    - Having a good meeting facilitator or moderator

Stronger Practices

- **Establish a regular and sustained presence in the affected communities:** Initiative representatives should spend significant time in the communities where the initiative is being implemented. This may mean hiring initiative staff from the communities or having staff relocate to live in the communities for a period of time as the initiative gets started. Establishing a regular and sustained presence in the communities in which the initiative is to be implemented is often critical in building the initiative's understanding of the community, establishing trust with the community, and enabling robust community engagement. In some cases, this can be done by hiring local initiative staff who are based in the communities for the long (or at least medium) term, rather than only dropping in for occasional visits.
- **Leverage existing structures and norms:** Leveraging and building on existing community structures and norms of participation and decision-making will help to ensure the governance mechanism is familiar and understandable to community members. Take care to ensure that

formalization of a new governance will not forces them to make problematic changes in their customary governance systems. See Case Study 2 below for an example of this.

- **Employ adaptive programme management and flexible budget:** Unforeseen challenges to inclusion will arise during the course of implementation. An adaptive management model and some flexible budget lines are some of the most useful elements to ensure that these challenges can be addressed in the course of the initiative. See more in Case Study 1 above.
- **Partner with local organizations:** Partnering with local CSOs, ideally ones who are already established in the communities in question and who have local rapport and connections, can be a useful route to successful community engagement. These partners, who you may have also engaged earlier in the initiative, can lead on community engagement, helping to identify and contact community leaders, convene and facilitate community meetings and workshops, and collect data. Multiple local partners may also bring specialized skills to the team, such as women's rights, land use planning, or water management. Such partnerships can have several benefits:
    - It can help with the process of trust-building in communities.
    - It is more practical and economical than trying to implement an initiative without staff based in the area.
    - It can help build local CSO capacity and contribute to sustainability of the effort after the initiative's funding period.
- **Partnering with relevant government agencies,** such as agencies focused on land, agriculture, and/or forests, are also important for many initiatives. In these cases, government partners may be able to support or supplement community engagement. Regardless of whether an initiative involves partnerships with national or sub-national agencies, it is also important to work closely with decision-making authorities at the community level.

Innovative Practice

- **Consider the role of communities in co-implementing the initiative or elements of the initiative:** Where communities are participating in activities (i.e., where they are spending time to participate), consider how to compensate for that time**. Do not assume that community members will contribute for free.** Communities may also have the knowledge and ability to implement core aspects of the initiative but may be lacking in funding or equipment needed or training in specific methodologies like High Carbon Stock and High Conservation Values. Explore what aspects of the initiative could be carried out by the communities if funding and training is provided. Also, particularly where the scale of the initiative is broad, consider to what extent one community can help other communities with implementation.
- **Invite funders and partners to see the initiative:** Bringing funders to visit the landscape at key points in the initiative can be helpful in having those funders more familiar with local context and challenges, and perhaps, more flexible as activities need adjustment.

Case Study 2. HIA Governance Structure in Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape, Ghana[44] [45]

In the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape, a cocoa-producing area within Ahafo Region in Ghana, a unique multi-stakeholder governance mechanism has been developed to facilitate the collaborative management of the landscape. This landscape programme is being developed as one of the Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs) under the Ghana Cocoa-Forest REDD+ Programme, led by the Forestry Commission of Ghana and Ghana Cocoa Board. To support the development and management of the Asunafo-Asutifi HIA, the Government has partnered with a broad coalition of CSOs, including Tropenbos Ghana and Proforest, as well as private sector actors, such as the World Cocoa Foundation and Mondelez International.

This coalition of external stakeholders coordinates directly with representatives of the communities within the landscape to govern and implement the initiative. The inclusion and representation of communities in the governance of the programme occurs through a hierarchical representation structure with four levels:

1) **Community Committees** form the base level and include representatives of all interest groups in the community, with a minimum of 30% of representatives being women.
2) **Zones/Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs)** are geographical clusters of communities, governed by an Executive Committee with representation from all constituent Community Committees.
3) **Sub-HIAs** are composed of one of more Zone/CREMA, governed by an Executive Committee with representation from all constituent Zone or CREMAs.
4) The **HIA Management Board (HMB)** is the highest governing body and includes representation from all Sub-HIAs.

Figure 4. Simplified Schematic Presentation of the HIA Governance Structure in Ghana.

Community Committee representatives are elected by members of their community, and each committee then elects which members will represent them at the next level. Importantly, although these committees coordinate with and seek the advice of traditional authorities, traditional leaders themselves do not directly participate in the governance structure, due to concern that other members of the committee would simply defer to their decisions.

This structure allows for ease of engagement between external partners and communities at the highest level, while still including representation of all constituent community members in decision-making. It also enables differentiated levels of responsibility and distributed decision-making for more localized matters and helps to increase accountability within the landscape.

For more information, including challenges and lessons learned from this model, please see: Asumang-Yeboah (2021).

[44] Doreen Asumang-Yeboah. 2021. Achieving inclusive governance in GCFRP implementation in Ghana: Lessons and Experiences in Setting up, and the Functioning of Companies and Government Collaborations in the Asunafo-Asutifi Landscape Programme. Proforest. Available at: https://www.proforest.net/fileadmin/uploads/proforest/FGMC_Report_Lessons_and_Experiences_04_May_2022.pdf

[45] Interview with Augustus Asamoah, Principal Project Manager, Proforest Ghana. 27 April 2022.

Monitoring and reporting

There are four main elements to consider in including IPLCs in monitoring and reporting: (1) incorporating the communities' inclusion, impacts, and benefits within the monitoring framework; (2) involving the community in developing the monitoring framework and plan; (3) defining the role of the community in the monitoring process; and (4) upholding applicable ethical standards in data collection and management.

The following key practices can help to better include and reflect the interests of IPLCs in monitoring and reporting for landscape initiatives:

Minimum Safeguards

- **Include relevant indicators:** Including specific indicators on IPLC involvement, impacts and benefits is important for staying aware of how communities are affected by the landscape initiative.
- **Disaggregate data:** Disaggregating data by Indigenous status, gender, and other relevant and historically marginalized groups can help to ensure that the team can identify different or disproportionate impacts on these groups so that they may be addressed. Disaggregated data is also a tool for monitoring the equitability of benefit sharing.
- **Data collection and management must adhere to all relevant research ethics protocols:** If monitoring will involve data collection directly from community members, any staff members involved should have received proper training on ethical conduct for research involving human subjects, including but not limited to the need to receive informed consent from all participants in data collection. Data collection should be limited to the data necessary for activity monitoring, and data management should be discussed transparently with participant communities.
- **Use monitoring data** to improve or adjust activities, as needed.

Resources that may be helpful in ethical data collection and management protocols for Indigenous Communities include:

- The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (2020)[46]

Stronger Practices

- **Indicators should be tailored to the local context:** If applying a standardized monitoring framework (as is often required to align with broader monitoring efforts by the sponsoring company or organization), consider supplementing with additional indicators as needed to accurately capture impacts within the context of the landscape. For instance, to capture the impacts that Indigenous people (or other specific ethnic groups) consider most important or relevant, the initiative may need to use different indicators than those designed for non-Indigenous communities. The initiative should work with representatives of the communities to design indicators that are response to the desired outcomes identified during the planning process.

[46] Stephanie Russo Carroll et al. 2020. The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance. Data Science Journal 19(1): 43. Available at: https://datascience.codata.org/articles/10.5334/dsj-2020-043/.

- **Data collection processes must also be tailored to the local context:** When seeking to collect data directly from community members, is important to understand what is appropriate and convenient from their perspective. For example, separate meetings may be needed to allow for input from different groups within a community. Differentiated data collection methods may also be needed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- **Conduct joint programme or activity reviews with communities:** Joint reviews can serve to get feedback from communities on what is or is not working and should also revisit theories of change developed earlier on in the initiative in light of these conversations and the results yielded by monitoring efforts, feeding into the adaptive project management suggested above. This should include sharing data from monitoring efforts back to the communities. These can be important venues for uncovering and correcting any inaccurate assumptions that may have been made during the baseline or design phases. These reviews can also serve as a venue to get consent from communities for changes to the initiative or activities.

Resources that may be helpful in considering community-based data and collecting stories of impact include:

- Interlaken Group's forthcoming Guide on realizing the potential of community-based data and information[47]
- Blak Impact's Impact Yarns Tool (2020)[48]
- Ford Foundation's Outcome Harvesting (2013)[49]
- Guidelines on participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder platforms in integrated landscape initiatives (2016)[50]

Innovative Practice

- **Consider community-based or community-supported monitoring systems:** Employing monitoring systems in which impacts are reported by members of the communities themselves feeding into a community-based or supportive adaptive review can be an effective mechanism. Local (community-based) CSO/NGO partners are often involved in data collection for monitoring efforts. This helps to reinforce the community-based lens for monitoring, while also being more efficient in terms of time and resources required.
- **Conduct outcome workshops:** In mid- to later stages of implementation and beyond, outcome harvesting workshops can be held to identify changes that have been brought about by the initiative, as perceived by members of the community. This can also help to discover what achievements can be claimed as a result of the initiative.

[47] Interlaken Group. 2023 (forthcoming). Realizing the potential of community-based data and information for company due diligence and compliance with international standards and best practices: A guide for companies and investors. Expected to be available at: https://www.interlakengroup.org/resources.

[48] Blak Impact, National Center for Indigenous Excellence & Kowa. 2020. Impact Yarns Tool. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/12YYw55lWi8v4FMSIspAxjmsjtVwAQNNI/view.

[49] Ricardo Wilson-Grau & Heather Britt. 2013. Outcome harvesting. Ford Foundation, MENA Office. Available at: https://www.outcomemapping.ca/download/wilsongrau_en_Outome%20Harvesting%20Brief_revised%20Nov%202013.pdf.

[50] Koen Kusters, Maartje de Graaf, & Louise Buck. 2016. Guidelines: participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation of multi-stakeholder platforms in integrated landscape initiatives. Working Paper. Tropenbos International and EcoAgriculture Partners. Available at: https://ecoagriculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/guidelines-PME-MSP-printfriendly-ok.pdf.

Conclusion

Landscape initiatives have the potential to harness collective action to address complex and systemic problems through multiple impact pathways. To be successful, that collective action must include and center the rights and needs of those that will be most affected. Participation of IPLCs is important at each stage of the initiative. While the groups involved and the appropriate modes of participation may vary from context to context, this guide can serve as a starting point to understand the considerations needed in embedding community inclusion and participation in different types of landscape initiatives and interventions.

While this guide focuses on set up and implementation, IPLC rights and participation are also critical in ending a landscape initiative, which may involve finishing or ending interventions or moving them outside the initial landscape initiative structure to another evolution of it (e.g., community or government led systems). Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' inclusion in such plans is critical for the sustainability of outcomes from the initiative as well as the long-term success of continued activities or workstreams (which with proper planning and community will, community structures may take on directly).

Annex 1: Landscape Initiatives reviewed

Initiative	Organisation Interviewed	Jurisdiction	Approximate Date Established	Primary Objectives/Interventions
Agrovita	Proforest	Tabasco & Chiapas, Mexico	2021	• Promote strategies to contribute to community development in the project area, with a focus on food sovereignty and water autonomy • Create long-term agreements for sustainable production of plantain, cocoa, and palm oil • Social development will include local communities as well as plantation workers and their dependents • Improve agricultural processes and implement best practices re: regenerative agriculture
Asunafo Asutifi Landscape Programme	Proforest	Asunafo North, Asunafo South, & Asutifi North Districts, Ahafo Region, Ghana	2018	• Eliminate deforestation, within framework of Cocoa and Forests Initiative • Establish Landscape Governance structure in collaboration with key landscape stakeholders and a consortium of private sector companies to implement a Landscape Management and Investment Plan to eliminate deforestation risk • Adopt cocoa production standards • Deliver cocoa agroforestry models • Farm productivity enhancement through climate-smart production system • Legal or customary land use rights by all producers • Livelihoods improvement for smallholder farmers • Community development
Lebrija River Basin and Landscape	Proforest	Lebrija River basin, Colombia	2021	• Select and develop a landscape programme within the Lebrija watershed to help address existing challenges related to responsible palm oil production at scale, including addressing deforestation and water management • Provide applicable solutions at scale to commonly identified problems in the palm sector through multi-stakeholder collaboration, starting at the supply level • Test multi-stakeholder collaboration as a basis for scaling up the project in jurisdictional levels • Empower and build the capacity of local orgs to address issues related to water management, deforestation, agriculture, and social conflict. Remove

				bottlenecks to replication, ensure local empowerment, and increase scope for scaling up • Understand what solutions can be offered to improve the livelihoods of smallholders, as they are key producers of palm oil and generally lack the knowledge and incentives to adopt more responsible practices • Coordinate and share lessons learned with other landscape-level initiatives that aim to accelerate sector-wide transformation towards sustainable landscapes
The North West Landscape and the South East Landscape, Liberia	IDH	Lofa, Bomi, and Sinoe Counties, Liberia	2018	• Incentivize forest and biodiversity protection through IDH's Productions Protection and Inclusion approach, which rests on three pillars: (1) land governance; (2) improving livelihoods; and (3) private-sector investment • Participatory land use planning and customary land rights formalization • Improve livelihoods of farmers and forest-dependent communities by diversifying income sources and creating local ownership through participatory land use planning
Siak Pelalawan Landscape Programme	Proforest	Siak & Pelalawan Districts, Riau Province, Indonesia	2018	• Protect and enhance forests, peatlands and natural ecosystems • Empower oil palm smallholders and surrounding communities to achieve improved livelihoods • Respect labor and community rights within the palm oil sector • Pursue sustainable palm oil production goals through improved district policies and plans • Establish the SPLP platform to effectively govern and implement the landscape programme
Sungai Linau Landscape Conservation and Livelihoods Programme	Proforest	Sungai Linau, Bengkalis District, Riau Province, Indonesia	2017	• Support community-based land use development and strengthen village members' livelihoods while protecting HCV and HCS forest and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through forest and peat protection
Supporting First Nations' Sustainable Resources Management	Earthworm Foundation	British Columbia, Canada	2019	• Support a First Nations community's efforts to help respect their rights to decide how their territory is managed, including protecting key areas in their territory from unwanted harvesting of pulp and paper or other industrial activities

Annex 2: Interview Guide

Interview Questions: IPLCs and Landscape Initiatives

Background Notes – Overview information about the initiative and any relevant detail found during background research. (NOT an interview question)
Does your initiative include a specific focus on IPLCs or their relevant rights?
How do you define IPLCs?
What IPLC rights and livelihood factors are considered in the initiative? How do you approach them?
How did you consider IPLC rights and impacts on IPLCs in design of the initiative: • **In selecting the location of the initiative?** • **In designing activities (i.e., safeguards to ensure IPLC rights are respected/not negatively impacted, intended benefits for IPLCs)?** • **In reporting and monitoring impacts and outcomes (i.e. specific indicators/metrics)?**
How are you considering IPLC rights in implementation? • **Are IPLCs included as active stakeholders in the initiative? Is there direct financing for IPLCs to carry out activities?** • **How do you ensure IPLC participation? What are the relevant governance structures you engage? At what stage(s) do you engage them?** • **How do you ensure IPLCs benefit from the initiative?**
In ensuring IPLC rights, are there processes that can be developed and applied at a landscape level (i.e., FPIC, grievance management, engagement with key stakeholders (e.g., local/regional government)?
What have you tried that works? What have you tried that didn't work? (successes/challenges)
What challenges, opportunities, and achievements have the initiative seen in addressing human rights risks and issues?