

# Landscape Initiative Maturity Framework

A joint set of sub-criteria supporting the assessment of landscape initiative maturity



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## Organizations and initiatives which have contributed to this paper:



SCIENCE BASED TARGETS NETWORK  
GLOBAL COMMONS ALLIANCE



DISCLOSURE INSIGHT ACTION



Landscape and jurisdictional [approaches](#)<sup>1</sup> are increasingly being recognized as an effective strategy for building resilience at scale for people, nature, climate and business – unlocking the potential of collective action to tackle complex challenges that require systemic solutions such as deforestation, water pollution, biodiversity loss and poverty.

As the number of organizations participating in and engaging with landscape initiatives grows, a common understanding of what makes a credible, effective and resilient landscape initiative is needed to ensure that the resources available to strengthen and implement landscape initiatives can be targeted effectively to deliver greatest impact.

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In addition to the existing guidance on best practices for Integrated Landscape Management<sup>2</sup>, CDP developed the Landscape Maturity Matrix<sup>3</sup>, where the concept of maturity is used to understand whether an initiative contains the elements necessary for lasting positive impact and resilience over time. CDP's Landscape Maturity Matrix provides a valuable framework for assessing the quality of disclosure data and enabling organizations implementing or supporting landscape initiatives to gain a better understanding of the minimal elements of what constitutes a credible disclosure of corporate engagements in landscape initiatives.

This understanding is essential to determine the credibility and quality of the way that a corporate is engaging in a landscape initiative.

To make this framework more detailed and objective, LandScale, CDP, SBTN and ISEAL have worked together to develop sub-criteria for each of the four criteria covered by the original Landscape Maturity Matrix.

<sup>1</sup> Referred to throughout this paper as landscape initiatives

<sup>2</sup> For example, the 1,000 Landscapes for 1 billion people initiative has developed a [Practical guide for Integrated Landscape Management](#) and ISEAL has developed this [set of guiding practices](#) for effective company actions in landscapes and jurisdictions

<sup>3</sup> CDP's Landscape Maturity Matrix is available on [this link](#)

# The criteria

Criteria	Sub-criteria
<b>Scale</b>	<b>Landscape boundary:</b> The boundary that the landscape initiative is aiming to exert influence over follows the boundary of either a jurisdiction <sup>4</sup> , watershed, or another area considered of ecological or socio-economic importance which is at least 10,000 Ha.
<b>Multi-stakeholder process or platform</b>	<b>Stakeholder engagement:</b> At least 3 different stakeholder groups <sup>5</sup> are involved <sup>6</sup> in the initiative.
	<b>Formal partnership:</b> a written collaboration agreement has been developed and signed by participating landscape stakeholders to formalize the partnership.
<b>Collective Goals and Actions</b>	<b>Goals:</b> At least 3 landscape goals have been identified, including at least 1 environmental goal and 1 social goal. Each goal includes a specific, measurable milestone that the initiative aims to achieve by a specific date e.g. reduce deforestation by 20% in relation to the 2020 baseline by 2030.
	<b>Action plan:</b> a collective action plan that aims to contribute to meeting the defined landscape goals has been developed and is publicly available.
<b>Collective monitoring framework<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Activity monitoring:</b> Regular <sup>8</sup> reports are produced to describe the progress and setbacks in implementing the activities included in the action plan.
	<b>Landscape baseline:</b> A baseline assessment of the ecological and social condition of the landscape has been conducted and is publicly available. This should include at least 1 indicator that is relevant to each landscape goal.
	<b>Landscape performance monitoring:</b> A time-series including at least 2 results (the baseline result and 1 more recent result) is publicly available for all indicators included in the baseline assessment.
	<b>Landscape performance validation:</b> All results included in the baseline assessment of landscape performance, or subsequent assessments of landscape performance, have been validated by an entity with some degree of independence from those involved in conducting the assessment and the landscape initiative.

<sup>4</sup> A first, second or third-order jurisdiction

<sup>5</sup> The stakeholder groups recognized are as follows: Government, NGO and/or civil society, Local communities, Indigenous peoples, Producers, Other private sector and Financial institution(s)

<sup>6</sup> A stakeholder group is considered to be involved if an organization involved in that group is either a formal partner, is involved in the management or implementation of the initiative, or is providing funding towards the initiative

<sup>7</sup> To learn more about the company responsibilities for supporting credible landscape monitoring, [read this joint position paper](#) developed by ISEAL

<sup>8</sup> An activity monitoring report is completed at least once every 18 months



# Applying the sub-criteria

This set of sub-criteria for assessing Landscape Initiative Maturity can be used to conduct a gap analysis of any landscape initiative by organizations currently implementing or supporting these initiatives, as well as those considering doing so in the future. The results can then be used as a basis for identifying aspects of Integrated Landscape Management that should be prioritized for additional effort and investment, in addition to the investments targeted towards the achievements of the landscape initiative's sustainability goals. This framework will also be used by CDP and SBTN as the basis for assessing the quality and maturity of landscape initiatives that companies are reporting engagement with.

From March 2024, LandScale is offering landscape initiatives the opportunity to create a free public profile on the LandScale platform, as a means of showcasing their progress in adopting best practices for Integrated Landscape Management, credibility, and maturity<sup>9</sup>. This includes a free assessment by the LandScale team of the extent to which the landscape initiative meets each of the sub-criteria listed in on page 3<sup>10</sup>. The results of this validation will be clearly indicated on the Landscape Initiative's profile, so that companies and other landscape supporters can easily access this information. In addition, having a profile available on the LandScale platform will facilitate the qualitative and maturity assessment for CDP's framework as the 2024 disclosure questions on landscape initiatives will now include a section where companies are requested to add a public link to the landscape initiative.

These sub-criteria for assessing the maturity of a landscape initiative are designed to provide a reliable indication of how far advanced an initiative is in establishing a comprehensive, effective and resilient Integrated Landscape Management Initiative, based on a desktop analysis of the documentation they have shared. There will be landscape initiatives for which some of these practices are not considered applicable (for example, a formal partnership), or where it is necessary to go well beyond the sub-criteria outlined here for the initiative to be effective (for example, it may be necessary to involve a much broader range of stakeholder groups or to establish goals on a much broader range of topics). Furthermore, some elements of effective multistakeholder landscape initiatives – particularly multi-stakeholder processes or platforms – would require a field assessment to determine the true degree of stakeholder engagement, participation and governance.

**Still, this joint set of sub-criteria is an important first step in providing landscape initiatives with the means to easily and accurately report on and communicate their maturity to stakeholders from governments and companies to donors and investors. As the key actors in the field of landscape initiatives continue to discuss and align on the concept of landscape maturity, we will evolve this joint set of sub-criteria to reflect inputs from stakeholders across the sector.**

<sup>9</sup> This opportunity will be first available to a set of selected landscape initiatives and will become available to any interested landscape initiative in the second quarter of 2024

<sup>10</sup> Note that although this validation from LandScale will support the SBTN validation process, it does not trigger automatic validation by SBTN



## About Landscape

Co-led by Rainforest Alliance and Conservation International, LandScale is a user-friendly assessment tool and validation service that helps generate credible landscape-level insights. By supporting the measurement of trends in ecosystem health, human well-being, governance and production, LandScale helps organizations deliver and communicate sustainability at scale.

## Our steering group



Find out more at [landscape.org](https://landscape.org)

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