



# Aligning Company and Government Action on Deforestation

Lessons from Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Peru

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# Executive Summary

In the past decade, companies have made substantial progress to eliminate deforestation within their individual supply chains. However, over time it has become increasingly clear that companies involved in the production and sourcing of agricultural commodities need to drive collective action beyond their own supply chains to support positive outcomes for people, nature and climate and to help deliver company commitments by addressing root causes and de-risking landscapes where commodities are produced. This is reinforced by the new policies and expectations that are being developed by consumer countries for companies to deliver on sustainable production and sourcing.

Moving from no deforestation supply chains to sustainable landscapes and sectors can be achieved through working beyond individual supply chains, which entails multistakeholder and multilevel collaboration. This sustainable transition requires collaboration with producers, supply chain companies, local communities, local authorities and Civil Society Organisations at global, sectoral, regional, national and landscape level. It notably encompasses collaboration and partnerships between producer and consumer countries.

As part of its Production Landscape Programme (PLP), and thanks to a three-year grant from Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI), Proforest worked to better coordinate and align private companies' zero deforestation activities with public climate change mitigation programmes in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Peru. Indeed, one key element for successful deforestation mitigation actions by supply chain companies in the long term is alignment of their actions with national processes and frameworks. This allows for local solutions, actions, buy-in and ownership.

Based on the experience that Proforest gained across the three years of implementation at the landscape level in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Peru, this document provides concrete examples of how collaboration was fostered at global/sectoral, national, jurisdictional and production levels to promote alignment in deforestation mitigation actions at scale in the three countries. It synthesises the main lessons learned in supporting such collaborative processes. Finally, it provides recommendations for supply chain companies to engage effectively in collaborative initiatives and to align with producer country-led initiatives.

# Acronyms

<b>APOI</b>	Africa Palm Oil Initiative
<b>ASCI</b>	The Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative
<b>CFI</b>	Cocoa & Forests Initiative
<b>CGF</b>	Consumer Goods Forum
<b>CMS</b>	Cocoa Management System (COCOBOD)
<b>COCOBOD</b>	Ghana Cocoa Board
<b>CREMA</b>	Community Resource Management Area
<b>CSDD</b>	Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence
<b>EFI</b>	European Forest Institute
<b>EUDR</b>	European Union regulation on deforestation-free products
<b>FGMC</b>	Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme (UK government)
<b>FMCG</b>	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
<b>FPC</b>	Forest Positive Coalition (Consumer Goods Forum)
<b>GCFRP</b>	Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme
<b>GCTS</b>	Ghana Cocoa Traceability System
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GIZ</b>	German Agency for International Cooperation
<b>HRDD</b>	Human Rights Due Diligence
<b>IDH</b>	The Sustainable Trade Initiative
<b>IKI</b>	International Climate Initiative
<b>IPLC</b>	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
<b>ISCOS</b>	European platforms on Sustainable Cocoa
<b>JRC</b>	European Commission's Joint Research Centre
<b>NDPE</b>	No Deforestation, No Peat Expansion, No Exploitation commitments
<b>PLP</b>	Proforest's Production Landscape Programme
<b>POCG</b>	Palm Oil Collaboration Group
<b>PPBC</b>	Production and Protection Beyond Concessions (POCG)
<b>RBA</b>	Responsible Business Alliance
<b>REDD+</b>	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
<b>RLI</b>	Responsible Labor Initiative
<b>SBTi</b>	Science Based Targets initiative
<b>SBTN</b>	Science Based Targets Network
<b>SIWG</b>	Social Issues Working Group (POCG)
<b>TFA</b>	Tropical Forest Alliance
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>WCF</b>	World Cocoa Foundation

# Introduction

Many global companies have made public commitments to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains. These companies are involved in the trading and use of agricultural commodities including palm oil, cocoa, rubber, soy, beef, and paper pulp. Such commitments offer real potential for sectors to have transformational impacts on reducing deforestation rates across the tropics, but it is evident that deforestation associated with agricultural commodity production cannot be tackled by individual company action through their own supply chains alone. Collaboration with producer country stakeholders and other companies is key and company efforts need to be widened from their direct supply chains to the landscapes they source from. These efforts must align with producer countries' UNFCCC commitments and programmes (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions associated with deforestation. However, often private and public sector efforts move at different speeds and are not fully integrated.

On the global and demand-side, new policies and expectations are being developed at pace for companies to deliver on sustainable production and sourcing (e.g., European Union regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR), Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDD); and voluntary frameworks such as the [Science Based Targets initiative](#) (SBTi)/ [Science Based Targets Network](#) (SBTN), and Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) as set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.) However, these new global frameworks do not always recognise the reality and challenges on the ground, notably the need for locally led action, the time required to transition ownership and practices, and the need for providing incentives to companies for collaborating and taking collective action in the production landscapes they are sourcing from.

## Box 1: Proforest Production Landscape Programme

Proforest's Production Landscapes Programme (PLP) brings together key stakeholders in the responsible production of agricultural commodities around a common goal: protecting and restoring forests and improving the living conditions of rural populations in production landscapes.

Thanks to a three-year grant from the International Climate Initiative (IKI), Proforest is working with companies, public institutions, civil society and international stakeholders in the cocoa value chain to better coordinate and align private companies' zero deforestation activities with public climate change mitigation programmes in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Peru.

Our activities at national, local and international levels involve developing recommendations, building capacity and providing technical assistance to support decision-making processes in which local stakeholders are directly involved, and creating spaces for dialogue.

# 1. The need for collective action

Companies, governments and NGOs are recognising that implementing responsible sourcing and production commitments in commodity agriculture is complex. Commodity production and sourcing can have negative impacts in production landscapes such as deforestation, water scarcity, land conflicts, forced labour, and a myriad of other issues. Many of these sustainability issues are complex and systemic; they cannot be solved by individual companies. This means that working with individual producers in individual supply chains is not always effective at tackling root causes, or efficient due to duplication of efforts by companies.

## 1.1 Action within and beyond supply chains

Sustainability issues in production landscapes need to be addressed collectively and at scale by producers, supply chain companies, local communities, local authorities and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). They require a place-based approach and collaboration beyond the supply chain so that environmental and social issues concentrated in a particular production landscape can be mitigated. For instance, in the context of smallholder-produced commodities such as cocoa, deforestation may be carried out by people that are not yet suppliers to companies. This means that they will only enter supply chains when crops mature and that typical supplier management approaches will reach them only after deforestation has already occurred. Instead, proactive and collective engagement is needed.

Engaging and collaborating beyond their individual supply chains allow companies to:

- Deliver company supply chain commitments (i.e., People, Nature, Climate commitments) and regulatory requirements (e.g., due diligence requirements).
- Show leadership in contributing to global sustainability goals.
- Improve cost efficiency and lower supply risk.
- Secure supply by de-risking landscapes and support smallholders to avoid their exclusion from supply chains.
- Build collaboration and relationships.

There are a wide range of approaches that companies can take when looking to engage within and beyond supply chains. As shown in Figure 1, this can range from projects to sectoral or national approaches and could be targeted at one or multiple specific areas.

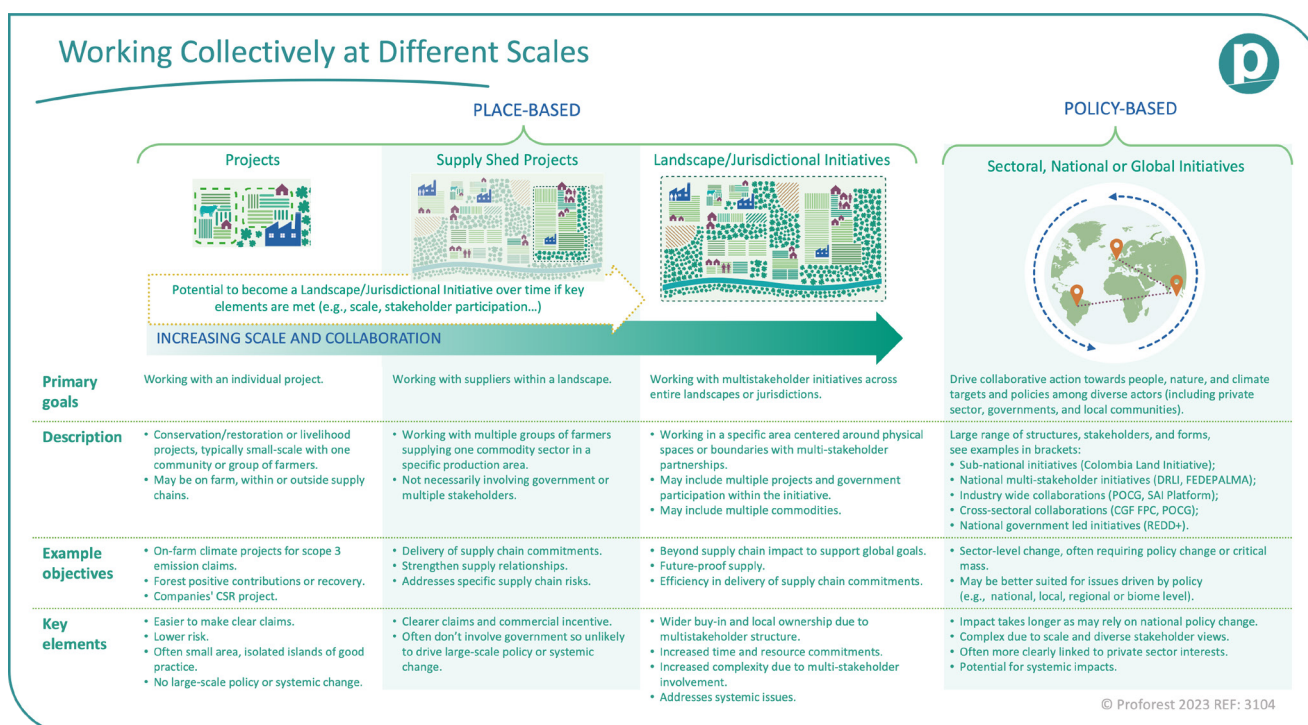


Figure 1: Typology of approaches for companies engaging within and beyond individual supply chains.

## Within supply chains

- Projects often occur within supply chains. This includes working with suppliers, or on farms, or beyond supply chains either disconnected from, or adjacent to sourcing areas. Projects typically occur on a smaller scale and involve one company. It is used to address a company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mission or to meet specific sustainability targets/ goals.
- Supply shed projects involve companies working with more than one of their own suppliers in a sourcing area. This method can bring scale and efficiency, compared to working with individual suppliers. However, they do not necessarily address systemic issues across the whole landscape if other producers supplying to different companies are not included. Supply shed projects could be a first step before scaling up to a landscape/jurisdictional initiative.

## Beyond supply chains

- Landscape and jurisdictional initiatives are multi-stakeholder initiatives covering an entire landscape, including multiple producers, land users and often commodities. They are large scale and have agreed goals aimed at tackling multiple systemic social and/or environmental issues. For example, resolving or avoiding land conflict requires the engagement of various stakeholders to ensure effective and equitable land allocation. Similarly, conserving water resources requires engagement with all water users in the landscape, many of whom will be outside any supply chain.
- Sectoral, national or global initiatives are most relevant when trying to address systemic issues beyond specific landscapes (for instance at a country level or across sectors). For example, ending forced labour requires specific regulation and enforcement to ensure human rights are adequately protected. Sectoral initiatives like the [Consumer Goods Forum's \(CGF\) Human Rights Coalition](#) have the potential to drive systemic change at a global scale. Such initiatives can be national or international, issue-focused or sector-focused. They are often more focused on driving policy change, so they do not always involve deployment of the same level of resources focused on implementation on the ground.

Many global initiatives not only recognise the efficiency of at-scale collaborative action in tackling the root causes of sustainability issues, but also push companies to engage and invest beyond individual supply chains in production landscapes. Some good examples include the [SBTN Landscape Engagement](#) target and the [Consumer Goods Forum's \(CGF\) Forest Positive Coalition](#) (FPC) ([Box 2](#) and [Box 3](#)).

### Box 2: The Science Based Targets Network (SBTN) Landscape Engagement target

Building on the momentum of the [Science Based Targets initiative](#) (SBTi), the [Science Based Targets Network](#) (SBTN) aims to provide companies with comprehensive science-based targets for nature. [The SBTN Land Hub](#) aims to develop and promote a methodology that will allow companies to set, track, and measure progress on quantifiable targets that are representative of the progress required in land systems to sustain nature and people.

[SBTN's Step 3 Land guidance \(Version 0.3\)](#) sets land targets to be used to operationalise and define a consistent path for companies that will align their commitments and actions with the requirements of the natural world. The third land target refers to collaborative engagement beyond supply chains in production landscapes and requires companies to engage in either:

- One landscape initiative that is equivalent to 10% coverage of the company's estimated land impact area footprint,
- Or two landscape initiatives, regardless of their size, in materially relevant landscapes.



### Box 3: The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) Forest Positive Coalition (FPC)

The [Consumer Goods Forum \(CGF\)'s Forest Positive Coalition \(FPC\) of Action](#) is led by 21 of the world's leading consumer goods retailers and manufacturers with a shared commitment of becoming forest positive businesses. It aims to leverage collective action and accelerate systemic efforts to remove deforestation, forest degradation and conversion from key commodity supply chains, while supporting sustainable forest management, conservation and restoration.

These large Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies have acknowledged:

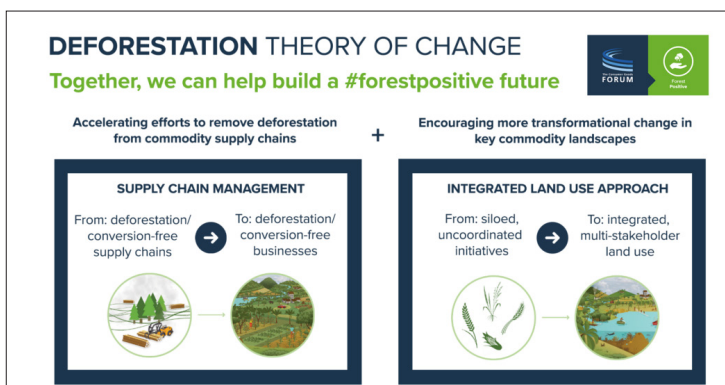
- That there is a limit to the progress that can be made by focusing only on individual supply chains.
- The crucial role of landscapes in addressing root causes of deforestation.
- That they have a role as leading companies to play their part in eliminating deforestation.

The Coalition's approach is based on a Theory of Change that builds on:

- Working with suppliers on deforestation-free businesses.
- Collaborating to support progress in production landscapes (beyond supply chains).

The CGF FPC has agreed on minimum investment in landscape initiatives by members and will use its aggregated production-based footprint, a neutral proxy to reflect the level of impact, leverage, and shared responsibility that the Coalition recognises, to articulate its landscape ambition. The CGF FPC companies will invest in landscape initiatives equivalent to their footprint.

To deliver its Landscape Ambition, the CGF FPC is taking a phased approach to report progress on its landscape engagements via the [Landscape Reporting Framework](#).



## 1.2 The importance of government action

Producer countries lead a wide range of different initiatives for tackling sustainability issues at scale in production landscapes. Producer country-led initiatives have the advantage of being led at the national level and involve the most relevant national and local stakeholders: landowners, users and managers. Several examples of nationally led initiatives are ongoing in the project countries (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Peru), see sections 2 and 3.

Under the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) programme framework, producer countries develop national action plans and can receive results-based payments for emission reductions when they reduce deforestation. For instance, the [Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme](#) (GCFRP) is the Ghanaian emission reductions programme specific to cocoa. It aims to significantly reduce emissions driven by deforestation and forest degradation, while improving smallholder farmers' livelihoods. It is co-led by the National REDD+ Secretariat of the Forestry Commission and Ghana's Cocoa Board and supported by cocoa trading companies and chocolate manufacturers. The San Pedro jurisdictional initiative in Côte d'Ivoire and the Asunafo-Asutifi jurisdictional initiative in Ghana are working under their respective national REDD+ programmes (see sections 3.1 and 3.2 for more information about these two initiatives).



Producer countries can also take the lead in developing systems such as commodity specific traceability systems and forest/deforestation monitoring systems at the country scale. For instance, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are developing systems to trace and certify cocoa, and to monitor cocoa-driven forest degradation and deforestation. Producer country forest monitoring systems can be more efficient than company-owned systems in monitoring and tackling deforestation because they cover the whole country and remaining forest areas, not just individual companies' supply farms. Additionally, they have a mandate to respond to deforestation on the ground, in contrast to companies being only responsible for deforestation cases that occur on-farm. See section for more on the development of the Ghanaian Cocoa Management System (CMS).

Public-private collaborations are also a key part of producer country-led actions to tackle deforestation. For instance, the most prominent sectoral initiative in the cocoa sector is the public-private [Cocoa & Forests Initiative](#) (CFI), facilitated by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) (company convening) and The Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH) (multi-stakeholder convening), which brings together 35 cocoa companies to collaborate with the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. CFI government and company signatories have all committed to action plans. The CFI also works in close collaboration with the Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire governments' REDD+ programmes, bringing companies to the table. Similar initiatives are being developed in other cocoa producing countries.

A good example of sectoral collaborations between producer and consumer countries is the [EU Sustainable Cocoa Initiative](#), which held a series of dialogues between EU delegations in several African cocoa-producing countries, the [European Forest Institute](#) (EFI), the [European Commission's Joint Research Centre](#) (JRC) and the [German Agency for International Cooperation](#) (GIZ) in 2020 and 2021. The European platforms on Sustainable Cocoa (ISCOs) as well as the [EU Road Map/Alliance on Sustainable Cocoa](#) are important multi-stakeholder formats in the cocoa sector. Several ISCOs were established and bring together cocoa sector stakeholders at European level, around sustainability commitments.

### 1.3 Collective action to meet legislation

In 2023, the EU brought into force the Regulation on Deforestation-free products. This requires operators who place commodities including cocoa, soy, palm oil, beef, coffee, rubber and wood on the EU market to be able to prove that the products do not originate from recently deforested land.

As it focuses on action within the supply chain, the EUDR does not encourage companies to collaborate in the short term. The EUDR risks slowing down the efforts of companies exporting/importing to the EU to engage beyond their supply chains by shifting their focus in the short term on ensuring EUDR compliance. Since the EUDR requires operators and non-SME traders to provide traceability data (geo-localisation) of all plots of land where the relevant commodities and products were produced, companies might redirect their efforts to clean their own supply chains by collecting traceability data to the first mile and identifying past and current deforestation on farms.

As a result, companies have less short-term interest to invest in collaborative initiatives aiming to collectively address deforestation and improve farmers' and community livelihoods beyond their supply chains. In that sense, the EUDR could have unintended negative impacts on people, nature and climate in production landscapes. This is especially true for smallholder-produced commodities such as cocoa as permanent exclusion of non-compliant producers will have direct negative impacts on the livelihoods of farmers.

However, collaborative initiatives in production landscapes can support the efforts of companies to implement EUDR compliance by:

- Bringing efficiency in delivering the EUDR (e.g., by helping to operationalise national commodity traceability and forest monitoring systems, see section 2.1 for more examples), as well as other wider claims that companies can make (see [Box 2](#) and [Box 3](#)).
- Driving and encouraging collaborative initiatives between producer countries and consumer countries (e.g., the [EU Sustainable Cocoa Initiative](#), the European platforms on Sustainable Cocoa (ISCOs) as well as the [EU Road Map/Alliance on Sustainable Cocoa](#) which are important multi-stakeholder formats in the cocoa sector) and to set systems and frameworks that would allow commodity trading to continue while ensuring continued and increased investment in longer-term programmes that have positive impacts in production landscapes for people, nature and climate.

## 2. Supporting action at national level: three examples

Companies can tackle deforestation in production landscapes in many different ways. To tackle deforestation effectively when engaging in producer countries, companies should align their actions with and support the initiatives led by the producer countries. This is crucial for the sustainability of any form of engagement in producer countries. This reinforces the need for producer-consumer partnerships that identify specific local and national solutions, based on existing mechanisms, that meet downstream regulatory and company requirements, as well as producer country needs.

The three examples below illustrate how companies can align their actions to tackle deforestation with producer country-led systems, plans and policies. It illustrates how actions from companies and producer countries can complement each other in general and bring efficiency to the fight against deforestation.

### 2.1 The Ghana Cocoa Management System

In 2022, the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) completed the development of the Cocoa Management System (CMS), a system that captures information related to cocoa farms and farmers, including geo-localisation data (farm shapefiles). The CMS aims to be a holistic system promoting financial inclusion, implementing emerging crop insurance and an input credit system. The development of the CMS is part of actions to achieve the objectives of the Ghana Cocoa Sector Development Strategy II and commitments under the CFI Joint Framework for Action.

One of the key tools embedded in the CMS is the Ghana Cocoa Traceability System (GCTS) that will track all Ghanaian cocoa beans to the farm on which they are produced. Combined with productivity data and yield output calculation, the GCTS aims at detecting sourcing from protected areas. It is currently not operational and must be piloted at district level before effective rollout at national level.

A multi-stakeholder process was established so that relevant stakeholders can make the necessary inputs into the system's development. Notably, the cocoa companies participated through the CFI cocoa traceability working group, in which Proforest also participated. The involvement of the cocoa companies in such processes is key as the system needs to be aligned with companies' needs and be interoperable with companies' existing systems.

Indeed, at present, every cocoa trading company has its own traceability system. Hence, the CMS is a great opportunity for the companies to increase the efficiency and reduce the cost of cocoa traceability data collection. Moreover, farmers would go through only one registration process and traceability system, the information from which could be cascaded downstream to customers, which would lighten the burden of existing multiple systems.

The GCTS will be complemented with a national forest and deforestation monitoring system. As the system will be deployed at national scale, it will not only cover the company-supplying farm areas, and consequently it will include the remaining forest areas leading to a great opportunity for mitigating and preventing deforestation effectively.

Overall, the CMS will enhance cocoa production sustainability and will help EUDR and African Regional Standard 1000 (ARS 1000) implementation for the cocoa sector in Ghana.

### 2.2 The Peruvian Cocoa and Chocolate National Plan

In 2020, when Proforest started implementing its PLP programme in Peru, the Cocoa and Chocolate National Plan was being finalised, but it needed to be complemented with implementation and investment roadmaps. A collaborative multi-stakeholder process was implemented and a multi-stakeholder working group was established. The process and the group were coordinated by the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation, and included national bodies<sup>1</sup>, companies, and NGOs. One objective of this multi-stakeholder process was to identify priority actions that were aligned with the national plan, as well as funding and responsibilities for the first years of implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> Plan implementation involves the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, the Ministry of Production, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation.

The companies and their sectoral initiatives played a key role in the process. The National Association of Cocoa Producers (APPCacao), the organisation for the promotion of Peruvian cocoa (APROCHOC) and the cocoa exporter companies' association (ADEX) were involved in:

- Identification of the issues associated with cocoa production and sourcing in Peru. The definition of the national plan's objectives and strategy to address the issues identified.
- The promotion of a safe space for dialogue that was created for the private sector.
- The sharing of technical information to support the plan design and implementation.

## 2.3 The Peruvian National Palm Oil Policy

The Peruvian government took a leading role in driving sustainable production not only in the cocoa sector, but also in the palm sector. For that purpose, the Peruvian National Instrument to promote sustainable palm oil is being developed. Similar to the process used to make the Peruvian Cocoa and Chocolate National Plan, the government formed a multi-stakeholder working group to develop the national palm policy. The process was coordinated by the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation, and nine organisations from the public sector, private sector and NGOs took part in the working group.

The purpose of this collaborative initiative was to collect relevant information on the national palm oil sector and to set palm oil production targets. This initiative was a great step forward to open dialogue and to build a collective approach to palm oil at the national scale. In this process, Proforest's role was to prepare a first draft of the policy, which has been reviewed by the working group during a formal meeting chaired by the Vice-Minister of Agriculture.

Companies were represented by the national board of palm oil producers ([JUNPALMA](#)), the largest Peruvian producer and exporter of palm oil, was actively involved. Their role was to provide inputs on the policy and information for informing its development. As per the Cocoa and Chocolate National Plan, the private sector representatives involved in the working group played a key role in promoting the participation of their peers in this safe space for dialogue.

## 2.4 Lessons learned in supporting action at national level

By being involved in the development of national initiatives, systems and policies, Proforest captured lessons to support action at national level ([Box 4](#)).

### Box 4: Lessons for supporting action at national level

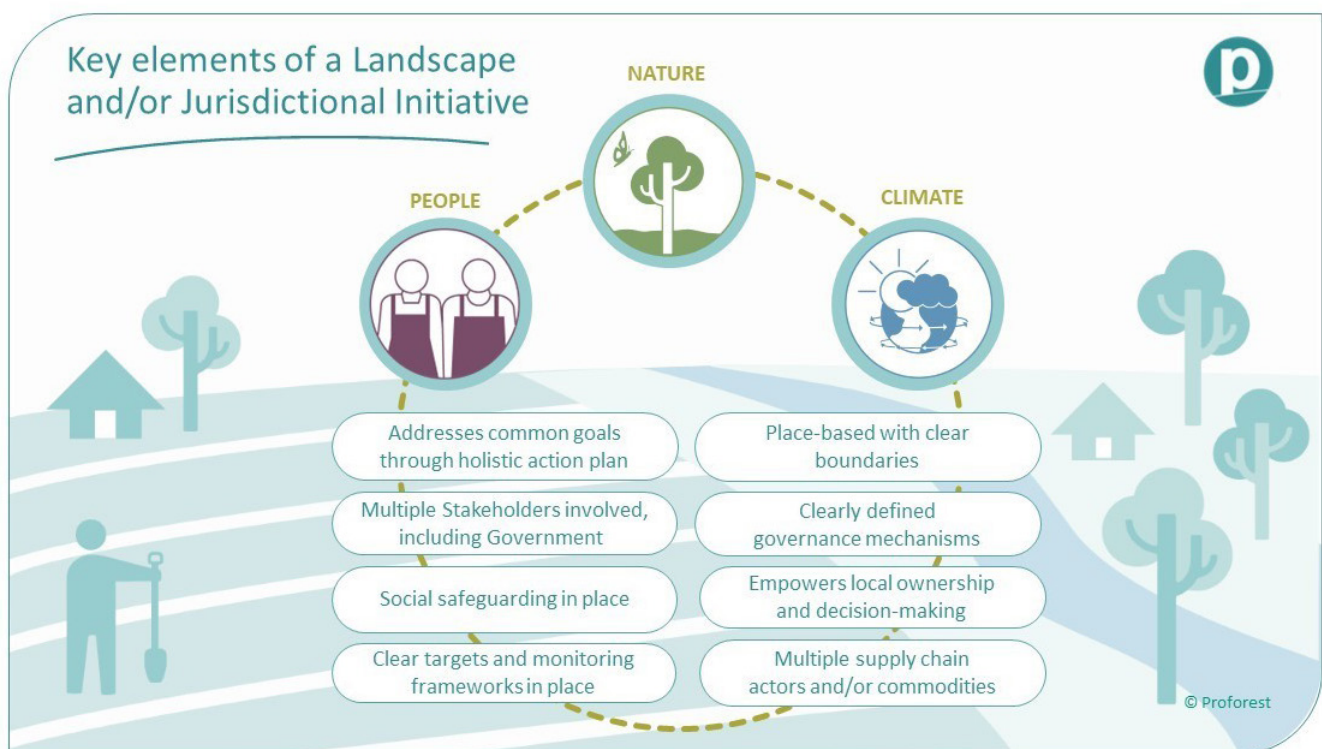
- The development of national systems, plans and policies associated with the sustainability of commodity production should be done in a participatory way, including producers, supply chain companies, local communities, local authorities and CSOs. A safe space for dialogue should be created for all stakeholders involved, ensuring gradual trust-building.
- To encourage engagement of all stakeholders, processes should be transparent and robust. That means that objectives and methodologies should be clear and agreed upon. Also, there should be a reliable process for collecting and considering stakeholders' inputs in the final product.
- There should be openness about incentives and requirements associated with the policy being developed.
- Overall, a concrete roadmap should be set up and proper funding sources for implementation should be identified.
- A role should be given to the companies and/or their industry representatives to participate in such processes to ensure that they can valuably contribute to the identification of issues and setting of adequate and efficient measures.
- Adequacy between the development of national systems (e.g., commodity specific traceability system) and company needs should be considered to ensure effective collective use of the systems. In addition, technical aspects such as interoperability of systems should be considered from the start.

### 3. Supporting action at landscape level: two examples

Alignment between company actions and country-led initiatives can be achieved in the implementation of landscape and jurisdictional approaches. Indeed, these approaches take the form of collaborative multi-stakeholder initiatives and involve a wide range of actors, and amongst them, local and national authorities, as well as companies sourcing from these landscapes.

Such initiatives are usually very much aligned with existing national processes and frameworks such as REDD+ national strategies or forest-related national strategies. Engaging in such initiatives provides a trusted and secure environment for companies to future-proof their supply chain and sourcing areas, as well as delivering on their sustainability commitments and regulatory requirements.

Landscape and jurisdictional initiatives take time to establish but have the advantage of being able to tackle deforestation and protect forest beyond the companies' individual supply chains. That means that they cover the remaining forests, which in most cases are outside of companies' supply chains. In that sense, such approaches bring a lot of efficiency to deforestation monitoring and mitigation. There is also now a growing investment by the private sector into landscape initiatives which could strengthen their effectiveness in the years ahead.



**Figure 2:** Key elements of a landscape/jurisdictional initiative

Companies benefit from landscape and jurisdictional initiatives as they:

- Support companies in managing medium to long-term risks, building supply-chain security for key commodities.
- Allow collaborative and proactive interventions (e.g., forest protection) that can mitigate sustainability risks (e.g., deforestation, systemic human rights issues) before they enter company supply chains.
- Increase knowledge sharing and build relationships with key actors beyond current suppliers.

## 3.1 The Asunafo-Asutifi jurisdictional initiative in Ghana

In Ghana, Proforest's Production Landscape Programme (PLP) has built on the [Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme](#) (GCFRP), in coordination with the Ghana Forestry Commission, to consolidate and build on the Asunafo-Asutifi jurisdictional initiative by delivering capacity building and collective management planning in one of the six Ghana Forestry Commission's Hotspot Intervention Areas (HIAs). Any action is embedded in the jurisdictional REDD+ programme.<sup>2</sup>

Asunafo-Asutifi is an important production landscape in Ghana where about 10% of national cocoa production takes place. Through the partnership of eight cocoa and chocolate companies (Cargill, Ecom, Lindt & Sprüngli, Mars, Mondelēz, Olam, Sucden and Touton) under the Cocoa and Forests Initiative (CFI) (companies convening), WCF is facilitating private sector participation in the Asunafo-Asutifi jurisdictional initiative. This multistakeholder initiative provides the opportunity for collective action amongst key actors including the private sector, government institutions, civil society organisations, communities and farmer groups, and local traditional authority. It has the common goal to reduce deforestation, promote climate-smart cocoa production and improve livelihood conditions of farmers.

Through a multi-stakeholder process involving the private sector, and funding from the Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme (FGMC – UK government) and the International Climate Initiative (IKI), a landscape Management and Investment Plan has been prepared and validated by all stakeholders to guide implementation of actions to achieve the objectives of the jurisdictional initiative. The plan aligns with the CFI Joint Framework for Action<sup>3</sup> aimed at reducing emissions driven by the expansion of cocoa farms into forested areas. Based on the Management and Investment Plan, companies are encouraged to take action in four priority areas.<sup>4</sup>

The process for establishing the landscape governance structure was led by Forestry Commission and based on the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) concept. The landscape governance structure has been established to support the implementation of the Management and Investment Plan's actions.

The PLP funded by IKI in the Asunafo-Asutifi landscape enabled, through a multi-stakeholder process<sup>5</sup>, the elaboration and implementation of a [comprehensive capacity building and awareness raising plan](#). The first implementation phase aimed at creating awareness about the jurisdictional initiative to solicit national support; and to build capacity of the landscape governance structure to enable it function and support implementation of actions on the ground.

## 3.2 The San Pedro jurisdictional initiative in Côte d'Ivoire

A new jurisdictional initiative was established in the San Pedro region of Côte d'Ivoire. In this cocoa, palm and rubber production landscape, a multi-stakeholder process was initiated and includes supply chain companies and their sectoral organisations (cocoa, palm and rubber), national entities, local authorities, local communities, NGOs and CSOs.

From the start, companies were engaged in the process, which encompassed selecting the landscape, undertaking the baseline assessment and developing the Management and Investment Plan. At each step of the process, multi-stakeholder consultations were organised through the regional platform where companies could share their interests and concerns, in the same way as the other stakeholders.

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<sup>2</sup> Watch [this video](#) for a summary of the Asunafo Asutifi Landscape Programme.

<sup>3</sup> The thematic issues from the CFI Joint Framework for Action are forest protection and restoration; sustainable production and farmers' livelihoods; community engagement and social inclusion.

<sup>4</sup> Priority areas are the ones where there is the greatest opportunity and necessity for collective action regarding forest restoration; agroforestry (through cocoa rehabilitation); community livelihoods enhancements; and improved governance and awareness creation.

<sup>5</sup> Implementation of the first phase was led by Proforest and Forestry Commission with support from key actors including WCF, NDF, Tropenbos International and local government agencies. Funding was provided by IKI and the World Bank

The San Pedro jurisdictional initiative is aligned with the companies' commitments and priorities, with CFI national and company specific action plans, as well as regional/national processes and initiatives such as:

- The regional land use planning scheme
- The national REDD+ strategy
- The national forest rehabilitation policy
- The Forestry Code (2019) and the environment code
- African Regional Standard 1000 (ARS1000)

In July 2023, the [sustainable landscape Management and Investment Plan was validated](#) by all the stakeholders involved, including companies and local/national authorities. A letter of intent for the implementation of the plan has been signed by the stakeholders. In addition, Proforest is facilitating discussions with every company to define how they can provide support for the plan's implementation.

The landscape governance for the implementation of the San Pedro sustainable Management and Investment Plan will mostly rely on the regional platform, which will consist of the permanent secretariat, the steering committee, and the technical committee. The creation of a subgroup under the technical committee and comprised of companies only is being considered, so that a precompetitive space for industry dialogue and alignment is available.

### 3.3 Lessons learned in supporting action at landscape level

By being involved in the set up and implementation of landscape/jurisdictional initiatives, Proforest captured lessons to support action at landscape level ([Box 5](#)).

#### **Box 5: Lessons for implementing robust and sustainable landscape/jurisdictional initiatives.**





- Landscape/jurisdictional initiatives should build on existing national and subnational processes and frameworks (e.g., national REDD+ strategies, regional land use plans...) to ensure efficient implementation and local buy-in.
- Building trust and confidence is a crucial and long-term process. Trust should be built gradually, starting with the trust of all stakeholders in the initiative's neutral facilitator. These are some of the bases for creating an enabling environment (see section 4).
- Establishing a landscape/jurisdictional initiative with robust mechanisms and processes is a long process that takes at least 5 years.
- The continuity of funds is essential to sustain stakeholder interest in such long-term processes.
- There should be a documented commitment (e.g., letter of intent) to support the initiative from all key stakeholders involved.

## 4. Building trust and partnerships

By engaging with various landscape/jurisdictional initiatives and in many other forms of collaboration, Proforest can attest to the importance of partnerships and collaboration for achieving the best results, as well as the importance of creating a strong enabling environment for effective implementation of the initiatives. This enabling environment takes the form of engaged stakeholders and an ability to act pre-competitively to work together at the global, sectoral or landscape scale.

### 4.1 Trust and partnership at a global or sectoral level

Building trust and partnership at global or sectoral level is key to any systemic transformation. Many sectoral or global initiatives exist and have the potential to drive systemic change at both levels ([Box 6](#)). These initiatives are the result of effective long-term trust and partnership building.

<p><b>Box 6: Examples of global and regional collaborative initiatives (non-exhaustive)</b></p> <p><a href="#">The Consumer Goods Forum Forest Positive Coalition</a> (CGF FPC) is a global cross-sectoral pre-competitive collaborative initiative. It drives collective, transformative change in order to remove deforestation, forest conversion and degradation from several key commodity supply chains. It includes 21 global retailers and manufacturers and has identified Landscape Initiatives as one of four key pillars of its sustainable sourcing efforts. (See <a href="#">Box 3</a> for more info.)</p>	
<p>The <a href="#">Responsible Labour Initiative</a> (RLI) from the Responsible Business Alliance (RBA) is a global collaborative initiative that is cross-sectoral and issue-specific. It is a multi-industry, multi-stakeholder initiative focused on ensuring that the rights of workers vulnerable to forced labour in global supply chains are consistently respected and promoted.</p>	
<p>The <a href="#">Palm Oil Collaboration Group</a> (POCG) is a global sector-specific collaborative initiative. It brings together companies from every stage of the palm oil supply chain to accelerate the effective implementation of No Deforestation, No Peat Expansion, No Exploitation (NDPE) commitments. The Group aims to bring companies together to address human rights issues on the ground and support smallholder production, whilst protecting forests in landscapes that can go beyond concessions; through concrete proactive interventions.</p>	
<p>The <a href="#">Africa Sustainable Commodities Initiative</a> (ASCI) is a multi-national collaborative initiative of 10 countries in West and Central Africa, which is now cross-sectoral having developed from the original sector-specific Africa Palm Oil Initiative (APOI). It is a multi-stakeholder platform inclusive of national and local government, private sector, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples and local communities.</p>	

Safe spaces for dialogues can also be opened informally at global and sectoral level, especially when specific elements such as new regulations will impact the sector as a whole for instance, in the case of the EUDR.

In January 2022, Proforest, with the support of the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA) and IDH, delivered three virtual multi-stakeholder dialogues about EUDR implementation for the cocoa sector. The [Operational Guidance for Cocoa Producers and Importers on the EUDR](#), which was still a draft at that time, produced under the IKI grant, provided the basis for stakeholder engagement. The dialogues were not only to provide feedback on the guidance, but also to open a safe and precompetitive space for multi-stakeholder dialogues around concerns and opportunities for collaboration related to EUDR implementation. The guidance provided a structure for discussion around the ways in which multinational companies' and producer countries' respective systems can align to help deliver on deforestation due diligence regulation requirements.

The dialogues brought together producer countries' government bodies, CSOs, cocoa producers and supply chain companies, as well as their industry representatives. It was the first time that cocoa stakeholders had an opportunity to talk about deforestation due diligence, and especially EUDR, at this level of operational detail.

## 4.2 Trust and partnerships at landscape level

Building trust and partnerships is a key aspect of creating an enabling environment for a landscape/jurisdictional initiative. This will be a slightly different process if the companies get involved in an existing initiative, or if the company is part of setting up a new initiative. It is key for companies, wherever possible, to build engagement with existing initiatives so that existing local leadership is recognised, resources are pooled, and collaboration fostered. For instance, engaging in existing initiatives that are locally owned, use proven models and where local government is already engaged will be more sustainable, effective and faster in terms of results.

In the case of setting up a new initiative, other ongoing initiatives in the landscape should be mapped to identify gaps and opportunities for action, as well as alignment and opportunities for partnership. Initiatives work at different scales, ranging from programmes across a whole national sector to initiatives within a landscape or jurisdiction, or there may be projects that operate across the supply shed involving collaboration between companies, government and/or civil society. At this point, it is important for the companies to identify the locally and nationally led initiatives to align with. For example, if the priority issue to be addressed as part of the new landscape initiative to establish is deforestation, national-level initiatives might include a national REDD+ programme or a commodity development programme with a focus on reducing forest loss. Similarly, where the issue is human rights related, national-level sectoral initiatives may be important and might be implemented in the identified landscape.

In addition, one key success factor for effective trust and partnership building is to understand local stakeholders' motivations and decision-making. It is important to recognise that the perspectives, motivations and expectations of each stakeholder group involved in an initiative may differ from the company perspective. Hence, it is important to frame the initiative's outcomes in ways that align with these local priorities. If initiatives do not contribute to these goals, they are unlikely to succeed. For example, while a company's main objective may be to deliver its commitment to reducing deforestation, a locally-based initiative may be primarily concerned with improving livelihoods, in addition to – or as a means towards – reducing deforestation. The drive to deliver on global priorities such as reducing deforestation will have little resonance at local level if initiatives do not create positive outcomes for local communities and governments. Communities may be more motivated by issues such as improved livelihoods, better markets, access to resources or greater security of land rights. Meanwhile, local governments need to address local priorities including economic opportunities, protection of human rights, and provision of key services and environmental security.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to understand the level of decision-making (e.g., national, subnational, local level decisions made by community leaders, heads of households, individual farmers...) in which key decisions are made that determine environmental and social outcomes of commodity production. Also, the motivations, capacity and goals of the stakeholders involved in these decision-making processes should be understood. It is crucial to bring in women's voices (e.g., through women's rights groups or local women's representatives) to the decision-making processes as change in the behaviour of local actors will only be sustained if it is locally owned by both women and men.

In addition, it is important to understand how existing governance works and what the expectations are for private sector involvement in the initiative. Transparent governance is increasingly being recognised as a key issue in the development and management of landscape initiatives. Landscape initiatives are in different stages of development in different places, and governance structures may be clearly defined, or emerging and evolving with time. Some initiatives will already have clear governance processes and it is important to identify how companies fit into these processes and work within that role. For example, nationally led programmes such as REDD+ processes often have clearly defined (and sometimes complex) processes for private sector engagement. Furthermore, initiatives may be led locally, sub-nationally or even nationally, with a corresponding variety of types and levels of governance. Where governance is unclear, it is key for companies to work proactively and carefully to build trust with a range of other

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<sup>6</sup> For more details, refer to the [Theory of Change](#) developed by ISEAL, TFA, WWF and Proforest to showcase the potential role of each stakeholder as well as the required actions, dependencies and its impacts.



actors in the landscape. In many places, there may be historical tensions between companies, NGOs, communities and local government. Understanding and acknowledging these, while also building personal and professional relationships and improving communication, is a critical part of the engagement process.

Finally, companies should be clear in advance about the scale of available resources to invest in a landscape, the scope and level of engagement envisaged (e.g., from leading the initiative to limited or minimal engagement), and the timeframe. They should be credible, robust, and transparent in taking responsibility and contributing resources that are commensurate with the scale of their buying.<sup>7</sup>

As part of its PLP funded by IKI, Proforest has put together an online course on the [Proforest Academy](#) e-learning platform that offers an [introduction to the process of engaging in landscape initiatives](#). It is designed principally for downstream companies and can be used to support sustainability and procurement experts, to engage other stakeholders across businesses, as well as partner organisations. Notably, it summarises why and when downstream companies can benefit from engaging in landscape initiatives and illustrates the overall process for starting engagement in Landscape/Jurisdictional initiatives.



**Box 7:** 'Downstream company engagement in landscapes': online course on the Proforest Academy

### 4.3 The example of a multi-stakeholder partnership in San Pedro

As part of the establishment of the San Pedro jurisdictional initiative in Côte d'Ivoire presented in section 3.2, substantial efforts were made to build multi-stakeholder partnership and trust. To do so, key steps were followed:

- 1. Map stakeholders and initiatives:** identification of the various national and subnational initiatives underway in the region and the stakeholders driving them.
- 2. Mobilise and raise awareness:** Mobilisation and awareness-raising of the identified stakeholders to gather their concerns, needs and priorities. It included local, regional and national authorities, technical operators, private sector, civil society and local communities.
- 3. Create a coalition of technical and financial partners:** Several organisations have formed a coalition to pool resources and facilitate the establishment of the initiative, namely the San Pedro Regional Council, Proforest, WCF, Impactum<sup>7</sup> and GIZ<sup>8</sup>.
- 4. Create a multi-stakeholder platform:** A multi-stakeholder platform was created and formalised by a Prefectural Decree<sup>9</sup> to facilitate coordination and decision-making between stakeholders and promote transparency and accountability. The platform governance is made up of a Steering Committee chaired by regional and subregional authorities; a Permanent Secretariat run by the San Pedro Regional Council's planning department; and a Technical Committee composed of working groups led by the various technical structures, civil society and private sector organisations. The creation of a working group under the technical committee and comprised of companies only is being considered, so that a precompetitive space for industry dialogue and alignment would be available.
- 5. Build a shared vision:** A series of multi-stakeholder workshops and consultations was run. Open and inclusive dialogue was established to gather stakeholders' perceptions, concerns, and aspirations for the future. Environmental, social, and economic issues were identified, as well as pathways for the initiative to address them. These discussions enabled a shared vision for the initiative to be developed including sustainable development objectives, key challenges and priority actions to be implemented, as well as mechanisms for implementation.
- 6. Collaboratively implement the shared vision:** Once the foundations for effective partnership and trust were established, a landscape baseline assessment was undertaken and the sustainable landscape management and investment plan was developed, in line with the Regional Spatial Planning Scheme (SRADT) and the Strategic Development Plan for the Region (PSD).

<sup>7</sup> Through its Taï Landscape Programme (TLP)

<sup>8</sup> Through the Green Innovation Centre (CIV)

<sup>9</sup> Prefectural Decree Order No. 13 RSP/DSP/PSP/SG1 of 5 May 2022 on the creation, remit, composition and operation of the Regional Platform Dialogue Sur la Foret in the San Pedro Region.

## 4.4 Lessons learned in building trust and partnerships

By being involved in multistakeholder initiatives, Proforest captured lessons for building multistakeholder partnership in landscape/jurisdictional initiatives and at sectoral level ([Box 8](#)).

### **Box 8: Lessons for building multistakeholder partnership in landscape/ jurisdictional initiatives and at sectoral level.**

#### **Lessons learned in building multistakeholder partnership in landscape/ jurisdictional initiatives.**

- Neutral facilitation is key to build trust gradually and to create a safe space for dialogue where any stakeholder can contribute.
- Transparent communication and awareness-raising are essential to get stakeholders on board and elaborate a common agenda/vision.
- Including all stakeholders from the outset encourages collective ownership of the action plan.
- Involvement of all stakeholders is crucial to ensuring a truly shared vision.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities prevent misunderstandings and potential conflicts.
- The shared vision should reflect long-term aspirations for the landscape.
- Long-term commitment is encouraged to ensure that the collaboration lasts.
- Use of visioning workshops encourages creativity and co-creation.

#### **Lessons learned in opening spaces for multistakeholder dialogues at the sectoral level.**

- Active participation in multistakeholder dialogues can be fostered by focusing on a new topic about which there is still a lot of uncertainty and lack of operational guidance.
- Sectoral dialogues should allow for concrete, operational and tailored discussions with experts from different organisation types.
- Efforts should be made to bring stakeholders from producing and consuming countries to the table so that they can share their respective concerns and consider opportunities for further collaboration.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

This paper highlights the need for collective action beyond supply chains to tackle deforestation at scale, and more widely to drive positive impacts for people, nature and climate at scale. It promotes multi-stakeholder and multilevel collaboration to have transformational impact on reducing deforestation.

Moreover, it fosters the need for dialogues between supply chain companies and producer countries. To align private sector action with nationally led initiatives, such processes are crucial to effectively mitigate and address deforestation in the long term. There should be a strong focus on identifying local and national solutions, based on existing mechanisms, that meet downstream regulatory and company requirements, as well as producer country needs. This is what producer-consumer partnerships entail.

The enabling environment is critical to the effectiveness of any form of collaboration and to maximise the positive impacts that could arise from it. To build this environment, the processes in place should be participatory and follow principles of transparency, inclusivity and equity. Combined with neutral facilitation as well as robust and reliable mechanisms, all of these will enable trust to be built gradually and to reinforce collaboration over time. In addition, any collaboration process, whether at national scale or landscape scale, takes time and should be envisaged in the long term. A long-term perspective is critical when it comes to the funding of the initiative. Finally, for stakeholders to engage in the long term, appropriate incentives should be put in place.

Given the upcoming regulations from consuming countries that might shift companies' focus to supply chain cleaning mechanisms, companies should still engage beyond their supply chains as this is the most efficient way to de-risk production landscapes and secure supply in the long term. Also, these collaborative initiatives can help meet regulation requirements.

Finally, below are recommendations for supply chain companies to support actions towards addressing deforestation at different levels.

### Recommendations for companies to support action at global and sectoral levels:

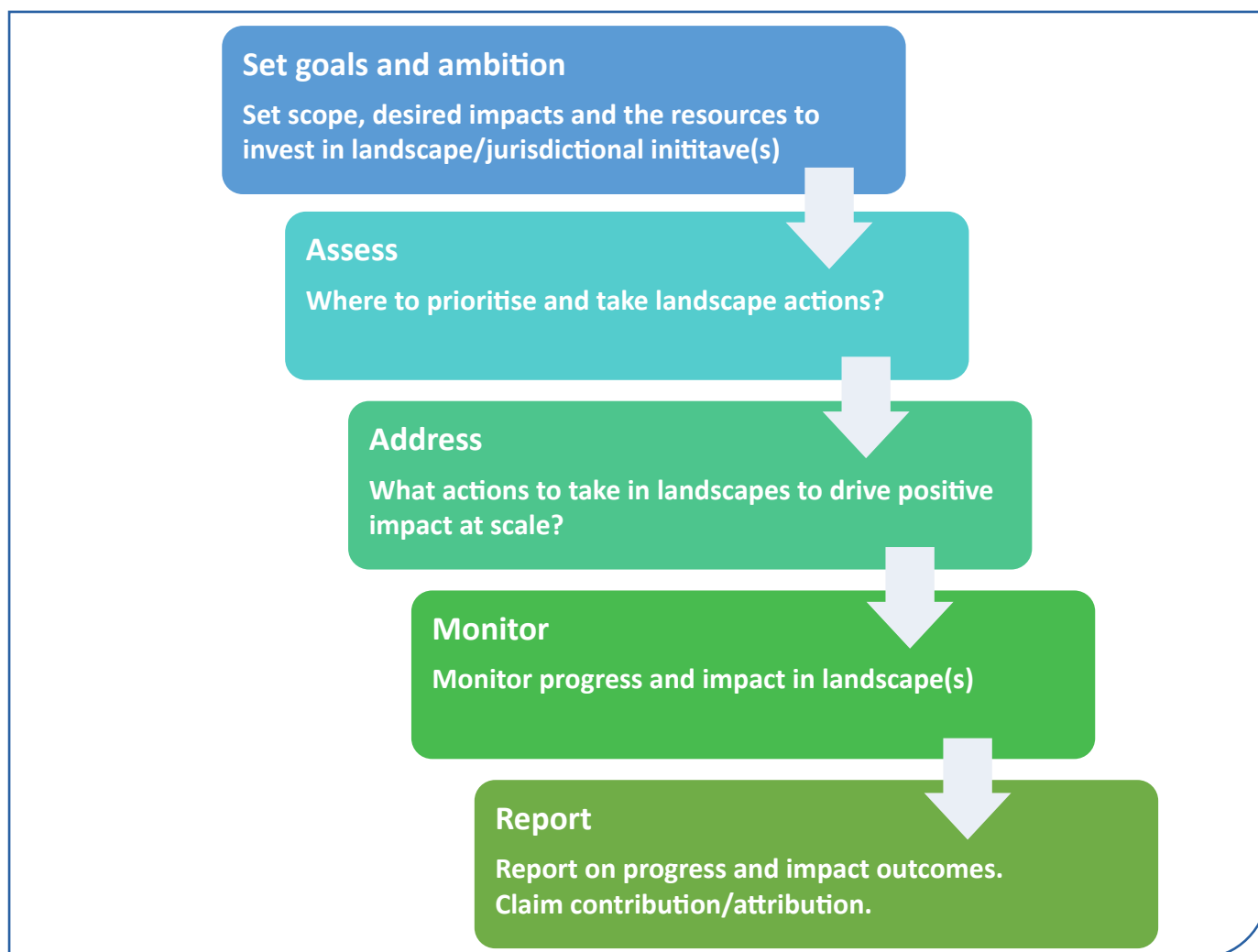
- Companies should engage in sectoral and global collaboration spaces that identify ways for the sector to address deforestation.
- Precompetitive collaboration should be fostered so that resources are pulled together, and duplication of effort is avoided.
- Companies should encourage participation of their peers in global and sectoral collaboration spaces.

### Recommendations for companies to support action at national level:

- To tackle deforestation effectively and sustainably when engaging in producer countries, companies should align their actions with and support the initiatives led by producer countries, building on local and national solutions and mechanisms.
- Since national systems linked to commodity traceability and forest monitoring (e.g., Ghana Cocoa Management System) are opportunities for tackling deforestation effectively, meeting upcoming regulations and avoiding duplication of efforts, companies should support their development. They should engage in associated multi-stakeholder processes to ensure that the systems will meet their needs. See the Ghana Cocoa Management System example in section 2.1.
- Companies should engage in the development of national commodity-specific plans and policies as they define concrete action plans to address sustainability issues collaboratively, including deforestation. See the Peruvian Cocoa and Chocolate National Plan example in section 2.2.

## Recommendations for companies to support action at landscape level:

- Before engaging in any landscape or jurisdictional initiative, companies should consider that multi-stakeholder processes with robust mechanisms and processes take time to establish.
- As much as possible, companies should build engagement on existing landscape/jurisdictional initiatives. In the case where a new initiative is set up, efforts should be made to align with existing initiatives.
- In the landscape/jurisdictional initiative design phase, focus should be on understanding and recognising local stakeholders' motivations, perspectives and expectations so the initiative gets local buy-in.
- Understanding decision-making processes is a crucial element that will influence the success of the landscape/jurisdictional initiative (how decisions are made, who has the authority and mandate to make and implement decisions).
- When engaging in a landscape/jurisdictional initiative, it is key for the private sector to understand governance and expectations for company involvement. All companies involved should clarify resource availability and scope of engagement, which will likely be different for every company.
- Effort should be made to proactively support emerging processes and pre-competitive collaboration, as well as building trust with all stakeholders.
- Companies should follow a process to engage in landscape/jurisdictional initiatives that is summarised in Figure 3 and explained further in the online course '[Downstream company engagement in landscapes](#)' on Proforest Academy.



**Figure 3:** Process for companies to take action in landscapes (through landscape/jurisdictional initiatives).

# Additional reading

The [Jurisdictional Approaches Resource Hub](#), managed by TFA, provides various resources to help companies explore and take action in landscapes and jurisdictions to achieve sustainability at scale.

## Online course

- Downstream company engagement in landscapes (Proforest Academy, 2023): [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#).

## Concept/Thinking:

- [Theory of Change: How Jurisdictional Approaches Work \(ISEAL, WWF, TFA, Proforest, July 2021\)](#)
- [“Commodity First” Approach to Identifying Landscapes for Private Sector Engagement \(TFA, April 2019\)](#)

## Guidance for Companies

- [Landscape Scale Action for Forests, People and Sustainable Production: A Practical Guide for Companies \(TFA, WWF, Proforest, Sept. 2020\)](#)
- [Making Credible Jurisdictional Claims: ISEAL Good Practice Guide \(ISEAL, Oct. 2020\)](#)
- [Engaging with Landscape Initiatives: A Practical Guide for Supply Chain Companies \(Proforest, Oct. 2020\)](#)

## Company Resources

- [Palm Oil Forest Footprint: Aceh Province Analysis \(Nestlé, Nov. 2020\)](#)
- [Walmart Sustainability Hub: Scaling Regional Forest Conservation through Place-based Approaches Frameworks and Platforms](#)
- [LandScale Assessment Framework: Version 0.2 \(LandScale, Oct. 2020\)](#)
- [SourceUp: A New Supply Chain Sustainability Solution by IDH and Partners](#)
- [Green Jurisdictions Database \(EII\)](#)
- [RSPO Jurisdictional Approach Piloting Framework \(RSPO, July 2021\)](#)

# References

- Consumer Goods Forum’s (CGF) Forest Positive Coalition (FPC) <https://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/environmental-sustainability/forest-positive/>
- [Operational Guidance for Cocoa Producers and Importers on the EUDR](#) (Proforest)
- [Landscape Reporting Framework](#) (CGF, TFA, Proforest)
- [Respecting Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Landscape Initiatives A Guide for Practitioners on Minimum Safeguards and Evolving Best Practices \(Proforest and Landesa\)SBTN’s Step 3 Land guidance \(Version 0.3\)](#)

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