

How Companies Can Make Claims About Contributions to Landscape Performance Outcomes

Questions & Answers

29th February 2024

These are questions asked by participants through the Q&A tool during the webinar. Several of the questions were answered live, as indicated here, and some in writing during the webinar by ISEAL and TFA representatives. The rest were responded to by ISEAL in writing.

Question	Answer
What is the claim exactly? Is this is a narrative claim in your sustainability report?	So depending on the type of claim you want to make, it could be appropriate to make a collective or proportional claim. Proportional claims are particularly relevant when you are looking to make a quantitative claim where it would be misleading to include collective performance outcomes individually. As such a collective claim might be the most appropriate for a narrative claim in your sustainability report.
Where does landscape engagement by a company fit in frameworks like TNFD, GRI and CSRD? What is your guidance regarding actions beyond immediate supply chain, how can they be reported within these frameworks?	How landscape engagement is captured does vary by framework, but many do have an option for reporting this or are looking to build this in e.g. can report specifically on landscapes work in CDP's Forests Questionnaire. SBTN is also structured to enable reporting against landscape investments.
In a jurisdictional land where various stakeholders are already working towards a shared goal, how can we accurately determine the proportional impact or contribution of each institution's financial investment, particularly when new projects with differing goals are introduced into the landscape?	The goals of new projects should align with the shared goals determined by the stakeholders in the landscape. How they account the contribution of new projects in achieving the goals will depend on the specific goal -- for restoration, might be easier because the hectareage is larger, but for others, the entity apportioning the claims (e.g. the multi-stakeholder platform in the landscape) will need to decide on how to do that.
Would the secretariat or coordinating body of a landscape initiative be considered impartial enough to oversee the making of claims by the companies (taking into consideration that those same companies are often part of the stakeholder coalition)	Sorry we ran out of time to answer this live but it's a good question and the answer could vary slightly depending on the landscape initiative set-up but generally, yes, the coordinating body or platform could be a good, neutral actor to oversee various claims making. A key premise is that a company should not be deciding on their own what they can claim

<p>Did you consider performance claim as a proportion of an individual's direct financing to the total collective action?</p> <p>And also having proportional reporting outcome being the reporting of the "part" and not the "whole?"</p>	<p>In proportioning, direct financing as well as in-kind support can be included as support that help in achieving the outcomes. There are various approaches to apportioning and definitely one of the easiest is to base it on the financing each actor provides. But it is important to look also at non-financial contributions or other factors influencing the outcomes. Ultimately, the collective should determine the basis for the apportioning.</p> <p>Proportional claim also needs to mention the whole, so the company making claim will need to note 'our contribution is the equivalent of 20ha out of the collective 100ha'</p>
<p>I'm also wondering what sort of metrics on nature and biodiversity impact (beyond area metrics for reducing deforestation) are used to report performance - perhaps we could have some examples from Ron and Joe from the projects their companies are involved in?</p>	<p>This question was answered live.</p>
<p>But what makes these efforts material is the collective claim because its larger and its ultimately cheaper or at less cost. I.e., you can claim benefits that offset your reputation and legal risk while leveraging others paying the costs ... a slippery slope. The worry is the focus of these efforts will be on the commitment and maybe the action and a focus on collective claimers with everyone waving their hands with regards to performance outcomes of the effort itself — this can be discounted by saying ... "outcomes can't be inferred or measured until way out into the future so let's not consider it."</p>	<p>Sorry if I'm not entirely getting your question but the idea of a collective claim as you say is to leverage collective investment to create greater impact, but any claim should talk clearly about your contribution and not create the impression you are wholly responsible. Before making a commitment claim you should have a collective action plan in place. But because it does take a while to achieve performance outcomes at landscape-scale then the position papers lay out how to talk credibly also about actions and investments.</p>
<p>May I ask whether and how companies will monitor safeguarding issues as part of the hecta-metric measurement of impact? Thanks</p>	<p>Companies' actions and goals should link and contribute to the wider shared goals in the landscape/jurisdiction. These shared goals should be determined in a collaborative process by all stakeholders -- all that benefit and can also be negatively impacted by land use. This works partially as safeguards for negative impacts</p>
<p>Do you perceive a potential risk if a company uses a collective contribution claim but perhaps makes only a very small investment towards the initiative (what if it's only \$1,000)? Is there some type of minimum bar or way to address this, without needing to move into the proportional space?</p>	<p>This is exactly the type of question we include in the guidance - there is no minimum investment or action needed to make a landscape performance claim. However, companies should be transparent about the scale of their investment or action and avoid making claims if their investment or action was not of a meaningful scale to contribute to the performance improvement. The landscape initiative or multistakeholder platform can also agree with participating companies what contribution level is sufficient to make a claim towards collective outcomes</p>

<p>What about payment for ecosystem services? Wouldn't this be the ultimate goal for Landscape performance outcomes?</p>	<p>It depends on the shared goals determined by stakeholders in the landscape. Company's actions are contributing towards these shared goals. In some cases, payments for ecosystem services may be an efficient long-term way to channel funds to the landscape.</p>
<p>Does it make sense that a company makes a claim of contribution to the sustainability of a Landscape in Usa while at the same time it remains not interested in other landscapes where the company sources as well? What is lack there?</p>	<p>Our assumption is the companies will invest in their sourcing regions, and will prioritise where to invest based on their own sustainability commitments. Companies will determine where to invest based on a range of factors including importance of the region for current or future sourcing, level of risk, the existence of fundable projects, the maturity of the landscape initiative, etc. It is clear that a company sourcing from many landscapes will have to choose where to invest.</p>
<p>It seems it makes more and more sense for companies to make claims about their impact at the landscape scale. What about the benefits of making claims for the landscape itself. What do these benefits look like? Does it help companies making claims in internal budget discussions to bring more investments for landscape efforts? Is it expected that other companies bring investments to these landscapes or jurisdictions?</p>	<p>This question was answered live.</p>
<p>What support can development partners (government, public funders) provide to support collective action in the landscape?</p>	<p>Development partners often help in establishing the multi-stakeholder processes at the landscape and jurisdictional scale to develop the shared vision and goals, followed by action plan for the different stakeholders to contribute to.</p> <p>When there are already multi-stakeholder vision and shared goals, development partners can align the actions to fill any gaps in the action plan (ie do the things that other initiatives haven't done).</p>
<p>I wonder how communicating companies' impacts should be used to generate more support for landscape initiatives? Do companies monitor the impact of communications from their work toward the support for landscape management?</p>	<p>Definitely, one of the ideas of communicating about landscape-scale impact and company contribution is to show that it is possible to collaborate to achieve impact at scale. There are also platforms that try to link companies to landscape initiatives, like WWF Forest Forward Program and NbS origination Platform, SourceUp, and LandScale</p> <p>I am not sure whether companies monitor the impact of their comms related to landscape management specifically.</p>

<p>In terms of the apportionment, are producers involved as stakeholders in determining apportionment, or is it more the funders dividing up according to % financial contribution? (OK maybe Akiva just spoke to this. :D) Also, how long do these kinds of claims stand? Just e.g. 1 year? Or can claims accrue over multiple years, e.g. if x hectares of forest were restored, is that only a claim one time?</p>	<p>The stakeholders involved in apportioning should be anyone who has an interest, so producers should definitely be involved. Ideally, if there is a landscape initiative or multi-stakeholder platform in place, that forum can be used to discuss apportioning.</p> <p>The question of when and for how long claims can be made is very tricky, particularly as outcomes may result in years after investments are made. We include some guidance on this in our third position but it is more art than science, e.g. estimating which activities led to specific outcomes and then apportioning between those involved in those activities</p>
<p>Are the impact indicators measured and achieved over a period of time crucial for substantiating corporate contributions?</p>	<p>It depends on what claims the companies want to make. While of course it's valuable to measure impact indicators, they're particularly key if companies need to make individual claims about their contributions to the performance outcomes.</p>
<p>Who is the certifier or third party verifier of these initiatives? What is the role of ISEAL code compliant members who have commodities in a given landscape?</p>	<p>The extent or rigour of verification needed will depend on the end use and type of claim. Claims about actions can often be verified by local communities (has this taken place). Verification of performance claims is partly about assessing the quality and reliability of the performance data so the process is slightly different than from ISEAL members' certification models. But certainly ISEAL members have the certification body infrastructure to be well-placed to support this.</p>
<p>Thanks for a great webinar. Very important work. I liked your framework for companies roles and responsibilities in (collective) monitoring. Perhaps in the near future it would be interesting to have another webinar focused on (landscape-level, collective) learning? and especially how companies and other stakeholders can engage in collective dialogue and sensemaking, in view of improving alignment and the effectiveness of collective action. I gave it some thinking last year as I was writing this blog: https://www.undp.org/facs/blog/how-do-we-target-deforestation-complex-settings. Would love to exchange and learn with/from others engaging with this question. And happy to contribute to any further bilateral and/or group discussions on this topic :)</p>	<p>Great suggestion and highly complementary</p>
<p>Change/improvement in landscape questions take time. I wonder how companies (and development partners) contribute to maintain the long term engagements by different stakeholders for landscape improvement. Thanks</p>	<p>This is true, there needs to be a sufficient value proposition over time for each stakeholder to stay engaged. I don't think there's a single solution here. A few ideas include the importance of embedding any work and partnership in local government as they will have the strongest long-term interest and benefit from maintaining the improvements. Ultimately, local governments need to own these initiatives, even as the continue to be supported by companies.</p>

