

# The Little Sustainable Landscapes Book

Achieving sustainable  
development through  
integrated landscape  
management



## COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Collaborative planning serves to lay out the roadmap for implementing integrated landscape management. It is a way for participants in the multi-stakeholder platform (see page 63) to agree on how best to work together to address problems and their root causes. This involves agreement on a common vision, objectives, results, responsibilities, and clear indicators of progress towards agreed objectives.

Collaborative planning involves discussions and negotiations on how to align activities and coordinate or integrate collaborative actions within existing mandates. The key is for stakeholders to be open to exploring new ways of achieving their desired outcomes, which differ from business-as-usual. For example, once there is a shared understanding of landscape dynamics (see page 74), stakeholders can search for solutions that provide multiple benefits. These may include setting up agroforestry tree crop systems within watershed protection areas, as the crop system can also protect the watershed; or co-locating programmes of water quality improvement and local fisheries development, instead of siting them in distinct parts of the landscape where water quality improvements have minimal economic benefits, or where fisheries are suffering low productivity because of poor water quality (see page 82).

Once options for action have been identified, stakeholders need to evaluate the pros and cons and consider ways to improve their design for broad buy-in. If sufficient financial and technical resources are available, it can be useful to use scenario or simple modelling or mapping tools to project the impacts and costs of alternative solutions (see page 83).

Additionally, stakeholders need to determine the type of agreement they are working towards. Options range from high-level, aspirational goals (e.g. a framework agreement) to more specific operational agreements, (e.g. draft regulation, spatial planning reforms, or voluntary corporate commitments) (see page 61). The level of detail within a plan and the number of agreements reached varies depending on the objectives and context of the landscape management initiative. For example, the Kailash Sacred Landscape management process led to the development of several agreements, including a regional cooperation framework, a regional conservation and development strategy, and a regional environmental monitoring strategic plan (see pages 32-33). Plans should be phased, and evolve over time, as the needs of stakeholders evolve.

Challenges to reaching a collaborative plan include ensuring that all stakeholder groups agree with the goals and objectives and on the choice of implementation options and prioritisation. Skilled facilitators are important to secure stakeholder buy-in to the process. Striking the right balance between taking concerns into account and coming up with something feasible and manageable is challenging. Although synergies may have been identified, trade-offs are sometimes unavoidable, and part of the plan may involve those benefitting from an action to compensate those who are harmed by it.

## CASE STUDY COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR A CLIMATE-SMART TERRITORY IN THE PEÑAS BLANCAS HYDROLOGICAL RESERVE, NICARAGUA

The Peñas Blancas hydrological reserve lies in north-central Nicaragua, within the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve. It provides key ecosystem services such as water for human consumption and hydroelectricity, food, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration. Despite the reserve's importance, its management plan is outdated and has been poorly implemented due to conflicts among national and local institutions, including the municipalities of El Tuma-La Dalia, El Cua and Rancho Grande. There is a lack of political will for negotiation and collaboration among stakeholders. Inadequate regulation negatively affects the local population, creating uncertainty that discourages investment and enables the development of illegal and conflicting land uses, deforestation and expansion of agriculture within the reserve.

However, since 2015 close to 70 actors, including representatives of the three local municipalities, have agreed to work together to update the reserve's management plan and establish collaborative mechanisms that facilitate its implementation, such as the Grupo impulsor para la gestión territorial en Peñas Blancas. Two factors have triggered these actions: the legal mandate to update the plan every five years, and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE)'s Mesoamerican Agroenvironmental Programme (MAP) to develop climate-smart territories. MAP has strengthened the capacity of local actors to understand the relationship between climate change, ecosystem services and human welfare, and facilitated the creation of a regional platform where local actors come together to reach agreement. The stakeholder mapping that CATIE carried out in 2014 at the landscape level identified key partners and their capacity-building needs. It has been key to stimulating this process by providing the necessary information to strengthen territorial/local capacities, especially regarding conflict resolution.

With a first draft expected in December 2015, the plan will seek to improve the reserve's management and ensure the continuous provision of ecosystem services as a way to increase the climate resilience of

rural villagers and farmers and to improve their livelihoods and their environment. The new plan will target actors who operate at different geographical scales in a systemic way. For example, it will promote climate-smart agriculture, such as sustainable forestry and agro-silvopastoral systems, which will not only improve productivity but also bring mitigation and adaptation benefits, such as the provision of ecosystem services. It will also include economic incentives, such as payment for ecosystem services. At the same time, it will strengthen forestry and agro-silvopastoral producer organisations and associated value chains in order to open market opportunities. It will propose the creation of a governance body made up of key governmental and non-governmental actors to manage the reserve.

A key challenge going ahead is to continue building capacity among all the actors involved, and to develop participatory mechanisms to ensure that the plan is validated by both regional actors and local/national authorities, thus creating an enabling environment that allows the management plan to be updated, approved and implemented in a collaborative way.

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*CATIE's Mesoamerican Agroenvironmental Programme (MAP) operates in eight municipalities of Nicaragua, including those where the Peñas Blancas reserve is located. MAP fosters the climate-smart territories approach, which works with multiple actors at different geographical scales to increase the resilience of small landholders and conserve ecosystem services. It fosters agricultural innovations under climate change stressors through the use of farmer field schools. MAP also works at the landscape level to strengthen territorial stakeholder platforms and governments.*