

## “Management of land- and seascapes: for people and nature”



**Summary and conclusions  
of an International Expert Workshop  
held 10-15 August 2014 on the Isle of Vilm, Germany**

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## **1 Overview**

Land- and seascape approaches to conservation have arisen, since the mid-1990s, mainly as a response to the challenges posed by climate change, habitat fragmentation and loss of essential ecosystem goods and services. The tremendous scale and complexity of human impacts on the ecological integrity on land and at sea transcends political and sectoral boundaries. Therefore, land- and seascape-scale management aims at holistic, systemic approaches, which integrate biodiversity concerns with social and economic values and development aspirations.

The seminar, jointly organized by BfN and GIZ, explored the multiple aspects of productive and sustainably managed landscapes with regards to conservation options for biological and related cultural diversity. This increasingly prominent topic in international cooperation included the so far poorly addressed “seascapes” and highlighted the interdependencies of terrestrial, coastal and marine areas.

35 experts from different fields of development cooperation gathered at the International Academy for Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm to discuss land- and seascape management approaches and tools with regard to potentials and challenges for biodiversity conservation in the light of strongly competing other land uses.

This paper summarises the seminar. Section 1 of this paper discusses the “landscape approach”, its rationale and current hype. Section 2 highlights key aspects learned from and for implementing land-and seascape approaches. Section 3 depicts observations on the role of development cooperation. For more detailed information, please see contact details at the end of this report.

## 2 Why landscapes? Why now?

To **biodiversity conservation** experts it has been clear since long that many ecological functions and species cannot be sustained within the narrow boundaries of protected areas. Approaches reaching beyond the legally established and mostly government-managed protected areas aim at maintaining and connecting habitats in the broader land- and seascape, enabling the continuation of ecological processes on a larger scale necessary for the provision of vital ecosystem services, while involving more stakeholders and recognising the rights of traditional and other resource users. “Biodiversity corridors” aim at providing for this connectivity, which is crucial also for the resilience of the socio-ecological systems in view of the multiple challenges ahead. Cross-sectoral collaboration and integrated management are indispensable. However, outside of the protected areas with their explicit mandate to conserve biodiversity, this aspiration is just one among many others, and often not well represented.

In **sustainable natural resource management** integrated approaches also have a long tradition. One example is the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), which replaced the fragmented, technology- and supply-biased view on water management, dominant until the 1980ies. Through ecological, sectoral and regulatory integration IWRM can have, as shown in the example from Niger, significant positive effects on food security and stability, income, ecology and living conditions. Another example is the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), an instrument that aims at enhancing the protection of coastal resources whilst increasing the efficiency of their uses.

At a **political level**, the landscape approach<sup>1</sup> as a response to the challenge of achieving food and water security while preserving ecosystem services on which they depend, has been strongly fostered by the World Bank. The call for „Landscapes Days“ by the Bank’s Vice President for Sustainable Development in 2012 prompted the launch of the „Global Landscapes Forum“ during the Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC) (replacing the Forest Day and the Agriculture Day) as a platform for positioning landscapes in the new international agreements (UNFCCC, SDGs). The WB-initiated BioCarbon Fund for Sustainable Forest Landscapes will deploy results-based finance to incentivize emission reductions at a landscape scale. The Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Dialogue is yet another initiative to promote integrated approaches to food production, biodiversity conservation and rural livelihoods at a landscape scale (“ecoagriculture”).

### ***What is a landscape?***

... an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Source: [European Landscape Convention](#), Council of Europe 2000.

Some newer discussions go beyond defining landscape as a physical space, and include the institutional dimensions.

The connectedness of terrestrial, coastal and marine areas is often not well represented, and most literature on “landscapes” does not mention “seascapes”.

### ***What is a landscapes approach?***

A landscapes approach entails viewing and managing multiple land uses in an integrated manner, considering both the natural environment and the human systems that depend on it.

Source: [Global Landscapes Forum](#)

The [planetary boundaries concept](#) (by Stockholm Resilience Center) with its aspiration of defining a “safe operating space for humanity”, and based on it the so-called [“Oxfam-doughnut”](#) which adds the social boundaries and takes into account the just and fair distribution of goods and services, shows the

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<sup>1</sup> Seascapes have so far been rather neglected in these discussions. However, the [CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020](#) has a new focus on marine ecosystems and the German Government has responded accordingly.

interconnectedness of human livelihoods and the state of nature. Thus, thinking in dimensions of “land- and seascapes” provides a socio-ecological systems’ framework for “safe and just” development.

In practise, different approaches are labelled “landscape”, most of them embodying at least part of the principles of the ecosystem approach<sup>2</sup>. The evolution of integrated conservation and development projects and ecosystem approaches toward landscape approaches has been incremental. However, while the ecological aspects of landscapes have been discussed for some time, guidance on the human and institutional issues has been weak.

Thus, a group of scientists around CIFOR elaborated the “10 principles” (see box) and presented them to the CBD SBSTTA in 2011 ([CBD SBSTTA](#)). The authors state: “The principles are targeted at those seeking development and conservation outcomes in multiple-stakeholder contexts. Although some principles may not apply to some situations, and the full set may not be sufficient, these principles have broad support as guides to best practice.” ([Sayer, J et al 2013](#)).

The discussion in the seminar showed that many of the principles are already being used in development cooperation and partner institutions. Other principles seem to be missing, e.g. leadership and institutional/ economic sustainability. The approach was acknowledged as ambitious in its complexity. However, participants felt that, given the current challenges to biodiversity as well as local livelihoods, there was no way around “thinking big”. The 10 principles of the landscape approach are not a concept that can be applied from A to Z. They rather provide guidance for a negotiation process on resource use at landscape scale. They thus suit any multi-stakeholder approach at this scale, and they do not automatically lead to enhanced biodiversity conservation given their primary focus on sustainable resource use. Participants felt that there was need to develop “biodiversity safeguards” or other means to strengthen the biodiversity interests in the negotiation processes. The role of communication, information, decision principles, economics and safeguards in achieving better outcomes for biodiversity conservation was particularly discussed.

***The 10 principles of the landscape approach***

- (1) Continual learning and adaptive management
- (2) Common concern entry point
- (3) Multiple scales
- (4) Multifunctionality
- (5) Multiple stakeholders
- (6) Negotiated and transparent change logic
- (7) Clarification of rights and responsibilities
- (8) Participatory and user-friendly monitoring
- (9) Resilience
- (10) Strengthened stakeholder capacity

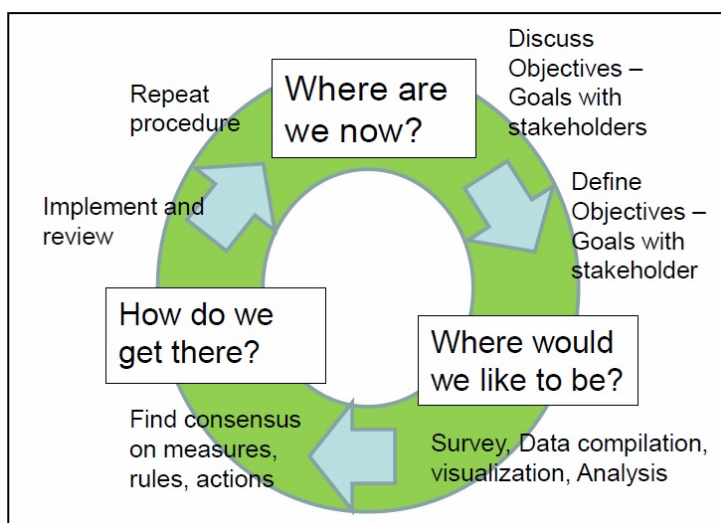
*Source : [Sayer, J et al \(2013\)](#): Ten principles for a landscape approach to reconciling agriculture, conservation, and other competing land uses.*

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<sup>2</sup> Within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the [ecosystem approach](#) (EA) is the main framework for implementation. The EA provides a holistic environmental management strategy, which aims at the integrated governance of land, water and living resources, promotes the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and strives for an equitable sharing of its benefits.

### 3 Lessons learnt from and for planning and implementing land- and seascape approaches

The seminar was oriented by a general **planning cycle** (see box). As a common thread, the case of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBR) offered insights from nearly 40 years of integrated conservation management, while the cases from Brazil, Namibia and the Philippines, showcasing processes led by different objectives, supported lively discussions on opportunities as well as challenges of organising a planning and management process for a whole landscape or marine and coastal areas.



The following paragraphs highlight insights from the presentations and discussions.

#### Where are we now?

##### Starting points

Land- and seascape approaches, “**thinking broad**”, can start from different angles:

- The **need to protect biodiversity values**, as in the Great Barrier Reef as well as the Central Corridor of the Amazonas (Brazil) (and possibly also other sector-specific needs)
- The need to organise spatial planning in a way that **different uses are coordinated** instead of overlapping interests and user conflicts. The case of the Integrated Regional Land Use Planning of Namibia as well as the Comprehensive Land Use Planning (including the Integrated Coastal Zone Management) in the Philippines and the presentation on the German system gave impressive examples of how such a fine-tuned Integrated Spatial Planning system can look like.

Biodiversity concerns play different roles – they can either be the starting point for a land- or seascape approach or they can form one part amongst others. Sustainable natural resource management however, has provided important arguments in all these examples.

#### Where would we like to be?

##### Defining vision, scope and scale

In the GBR case a legislative act determined an initial vision, scope and scale. The cases from partner countries showed that identifying the common concern is a first working step that needed the support from development partners. Interestingly, the discussions distilled very similar **factors influencing a successful start** of a land-/seascape approach for all cases:

- Dedicated leadership to create momentum and inspire the process – possibly best if backed by clear institutional mandates
- Political support: approach fits into the partner’s strategic plans, long-term commitment available – for processes started from the biodiversity side: find allies
- Guiding principles for the process agreed among key stakeholders



- Public interest and awareness to push for action
- Necessary information available to inform the process and create awareness
- A suitable set-up should be as large as necessary to cover the core ecological, social and economic processes and as small as possible to have an effective institutional structure – amendments should be possible during the process.

For systemic changes two important recommendations on the process are

- “Be pragmatic” - i.e. as there might be no immediate benefits, promote an “easy start” with “quick wins”.
- Realise that acceptance and priorities will change over time – and thus adaptive management will be one key factor for a successful land/sea-scape initiative (see principle 1).

Having the “right” **information** was seen as a key success factor – so the question is: how much do we actually need to know to get started? The answer is: not everything – start with what you have and allow for growing and adapting according to the knowledge and the needs.

In the beginning, some basic information is required on the ecological, social and economic situation. While it became clear that information as such may be useful for raising awareness, for planning, the information needs to be processed through **strategic decision-making** (for different support tools for this step see box).

One example from the GBR on collecting and processing information concerns the definition of priority areas: An interdisciplinary scientific process produced information on biodiversity values which informed a draft zoning plan. In a public stakeholder participation process different interest groups commented on the draft plan and provided additional socio-economic information (e.g. fishing grounds). By applying guiding principles and a clear hierarchy of objectives the final zoning plan was established: zonation by objective (use) not by activity.

Questions of **stakeholder participation** were discussed at the different stages of the process. Presentations and discussions reiterated that initial information should not only cover ecological aspects, but also social and institutional aspects. The example from the Amazonas Corridor showed that the main challenge was not ecological connectivity but connectivity of institutions that needed to be dealt with. It was thus recommended to engage in stakeholder mappings to find out who has which interests and relationships. When it comes to **decision making in a multi-stakeholder setting**, a pragmatic piece of advice came from Jon Day “Don’t expect to keep all stakeholders happy – in fact we thought we got it about right because everyone was a bit unhappy.” (for more useful lessons learnt on communication see paragraph below.)

**Decision support tools presented in the seminar**

[SEA](#) (Strategic Environmental Assessment): A process tool that aims to ensure that environmental and possibly other sustainability aspects are considered effectively in policy, plan and programme making.

[MARISCO](#) (Adaptive Management of Vulnerability and RiSk at COnservation sites): A process tool that promotes an ecosystem-based risk management approach with a focus on climate change, but implications beyond. The method is derived from the [Conservation Measures Partnership’s](#) Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation.

[MIRADI](#): an adaptive management software for conservation programs that allows practitioners to design, manage, monitor, and learn from their projects to more effectively meet their conservation goals. This software is based on the open standards methodology (developed in 2002, updated in 2013 by TNC, WWF, CI and others) to bring together the efforts of various big NGOs and coordinate their methodologies.

## How do we get there? Securing effective action

During the seminar we discussed three key aspects for securing effective action.

### Monitoring

Monitoring is a crucial prerequisite for adaptive management as well as raising political and public awareness. Monitoring systems can cover different ecological and socio-economic aspects. While data is often collected from official sources, other sources such as indigenous groups (as in the “Eyes and Ears Incident Programme” in the GBR) or local people from the Protected Area (as in Brazil) can provide additional information, which is an additional opportunity for community engagement. Challenges are: long-term monitoring needs vs. short-term interests, accessibility of information, integration of ecological and other information, and interpretation for subsequent decision making.

#### **Governance powers**

The ability to influence decisions depends on

- Planning and regulatory powers
- Revenue-generating powers
- Spending powers
- The Power to convene others and develop agreements
- The power of knowledge and know-how
- The power of enforcement

Source: *Borrini-Feyerabend, G., N. Dudley, T. Jaeger, B. Lassen, N. Pathak Broome, A. Phillips and T. Sandwith (2013). Governance of Protected Areas: From understanding to action. IUCN & GIZ. Gland*

### Governance

Governance structures and processes, the distribution of governance powers (see box) differ from case to case. In all cases we observed the need for a strong actor initiating the process (e.g. a development project, a state law) on the one hand, as well as the need for participation of all relevant stakeholders on the other hand. It became clear that the establishment of institutional connectivity with clear mandates and the decentralization of power is a negotiation process, and requires ongoing attention in a living institutional landscape.

### Communication

Communication in multi-stakeholder settings follows **4 phases**. How can advisors contribute?

- (1) Exploration and consultation: clarify the idea
- (2) Building the stakeholder dialogue: clarify goals, help design the future, discuss roles
- (3) Ensure the smooth running: support prototyping, ensure transparency, establish feedback mechanism
- (4) Sustain the dialogue: build institutions

**General hints for stakeholder participation** from the GBR case as well as the BR South-East Ruegen:

- Be strategic on whom to involve.
- Get in touch with the key players – meet them on their ground.

#### **The “Leitbild”-Process in the Biosphere Reserve South-East Ruegen**

Biosphere Reserves are model regions, established by countries and recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. They seek to reconcile conservation of biological and cultural diversity and economic and social development through partnerships between people and nature – and are thus prototypes of a land-/seascape approach.

During the excursion the head of the BR South-East Rügen explained about the interesting process of bringing all stakeholders together in the Leitbild (guiding document) development process.

The Leitbild-document can be downloaded [here](#) (German)

- Invite public engagement as much as suitable to the overall purpose of the process, and be prepared to deal with the consequences. It may turn out very resource intensive – make sure political leaders are aware of this matter.
- Most stakeholders first need to understand that there was a problem before accepting that a solution is required.
- Tailor the key messages for different target audiences, be aware that people may have been misinformed in first place.

#### 4 Concluding observations

The seminar showed that land-/seascape approaches have the potential to promote biodiversity conservation beyond protected areas. However, competing land uses and interests such as economic development or food security have high priority in political discussions and agendas. Biodiversity conservation thus needs dedicated actors and clear process rules that ensure that biodiversity conservation plays a significant role in the priorities of the approach. This corresponds to the overall challenge that land-/seascape approaches are resource intensive with regard to time and finances. The responsible institutions, like the Ministries for Environment, are often not sufficiently capacitated to engage in cross-sectoral activities and keep up quality in their core areas in the same time.

So, how can development cooperation assist biodiversity conservation through land-/seascape approaches? The following ideas have been developed by the participants and give insight into the concluding discussions of the seminar. The three levels mentioned below are to be seen as interlinked.

##### Policy level

Recommendation for policy advisors:

- Further support the basic necessary frame conditions, such as good governance, functioning sectoral institutions, legislative frameworks etc.
- Strategically strengthen biodiversity concerns through distinct conservation as well as mainstreaming activities.
- Act as a broker in the process of defining vision, scope and scale.
- Be aware of the additional resources required to build up cross-sectoral institutional structures. Besides the initial budget, specific budgets are necessary for outreach, communication and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

##### Organisational level

Recommendations for project design:

- Be realistic in the project scope (activities) within the three-year-frame of most development projects.
- Reconsider how to support the long-lasting processes of designing and implementing a functioning land-and seascape management system beyond the three-year-frame.
- Assess opportunities for working beyond the “SSZ” (sector safety zone) of the environment institutions, and engaging with partner organizations with a powerful mandate in spatial planning, i.e. Ministry of Planning.



#### Recommendations for project implementation:

- Support cross-sectoral cooperation between partner organization and other relevant state and non-state players.
- Apply tools that allow for strategically supporting biodiversity conservation (see box above).
- Gather proof of the usefulness of the integrated management approach.
- Acknowledge risks and uncertainties, and communicate these proactively.
- Promote cross-sectoral backstopping in GIZ and partner organizations.
- Communicate biodiversity benefits actively
- Identify allies for biodiversity concerns

#### Individual level

##### Recommendations for capacity development for advisors

- Individual development / training of soft skills (patience, psychological and cultural aspects of communication, self-reflection, courage to leave the SSZ)
- Tools for process design
- Know-how for cross-sectoral backstopping
- Technical skills (GIS)

##### Recommendations for capacity development for partner institutions

- Promote tools that strengthen biodiversity concerns, e.g. building biodiversity concerns into cost-benefits-analysis
- Enhance individual and institutional capacities via trainings

## 5 Annex

### Organizers and facilitators:

Gisela Stolpe and Ralf Grunewald (BfN); Thora Amend (Conservation&Development); Barbara Fröde-Thierfelder (ECO Consult); Barbara Lang (GIZ).

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### Case givers/ experts:

Jon Day, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (Australia); Maria Olatz Cases Vega, Biocorridor Central Amazonia (Brazil); Christoph Mujetenga, Ulrich Scheffler and Tanja Pickardt, Integrated Regional Land Use Planning (Namibia); Terence Paul Dacles, Comprehensive Land-use Planning (Philippines)

### Experts (tools):

Rodrigo Villate River (MARISCO); Sonia Gautreau (MIRADI); Jan Kleine Büning (Monitoring); Minu Hemmati (Multi-Stakeholder Communication)

### Excursion team and experts:

Hans-Dieter Knapp and Ralf Grunewald, BfN; Cathrin Münster, Director of the BR South-East Ruegen; Walter Lonskowski, Chairman of the Farmers Union Ruegen.

### Programme

Sun 10	Mon 11	Tue 12	Wed 13	Thur 14	Fri 15
Arrival	Setting the scene - Definitions - The Landscape approach and principles - Different approaches (IWRM, German spatial planning system)	Vision, scope and scale - Developing a shared vision - Defining scope and scale	Mid-week reflection: Biodiversity concerns in landscape approaches	Lessons from field trip	Strategic communication in action Reflections
	Entry points for land-/ sea-scape approaches to resource mgmt. - Participant's own starting points - Setting, motivation for starting the process - Case examples	Decision support tools - Tools for analyzing, mapping, prioritising - Using information in planning/ decision making processes	Field trip to the biosphere reserve South-East Ruegen bridging "planning" and "securing effective action" - Introduction and preparation at Vilm - Field trip	Securing effective action - Monitoring - Governance structures and processes - Strategic communication in multi-stakeholder settings Training session	Evaluation Closure
Introduction and getting to know each other Dinner at 18:30 Gathering at 19:30					Departure
Opening and closure	Focus on "planning"	Focus on "securing effective action"			