



Collaborating to Operationalize Landscape Approaches
for Nature, Development and Sustainability

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Reviewing the evidence on implementation and long-term impact of integrated landscape approaches

James Reed

Workshop on Measuring Impact of Integrated Systems Research

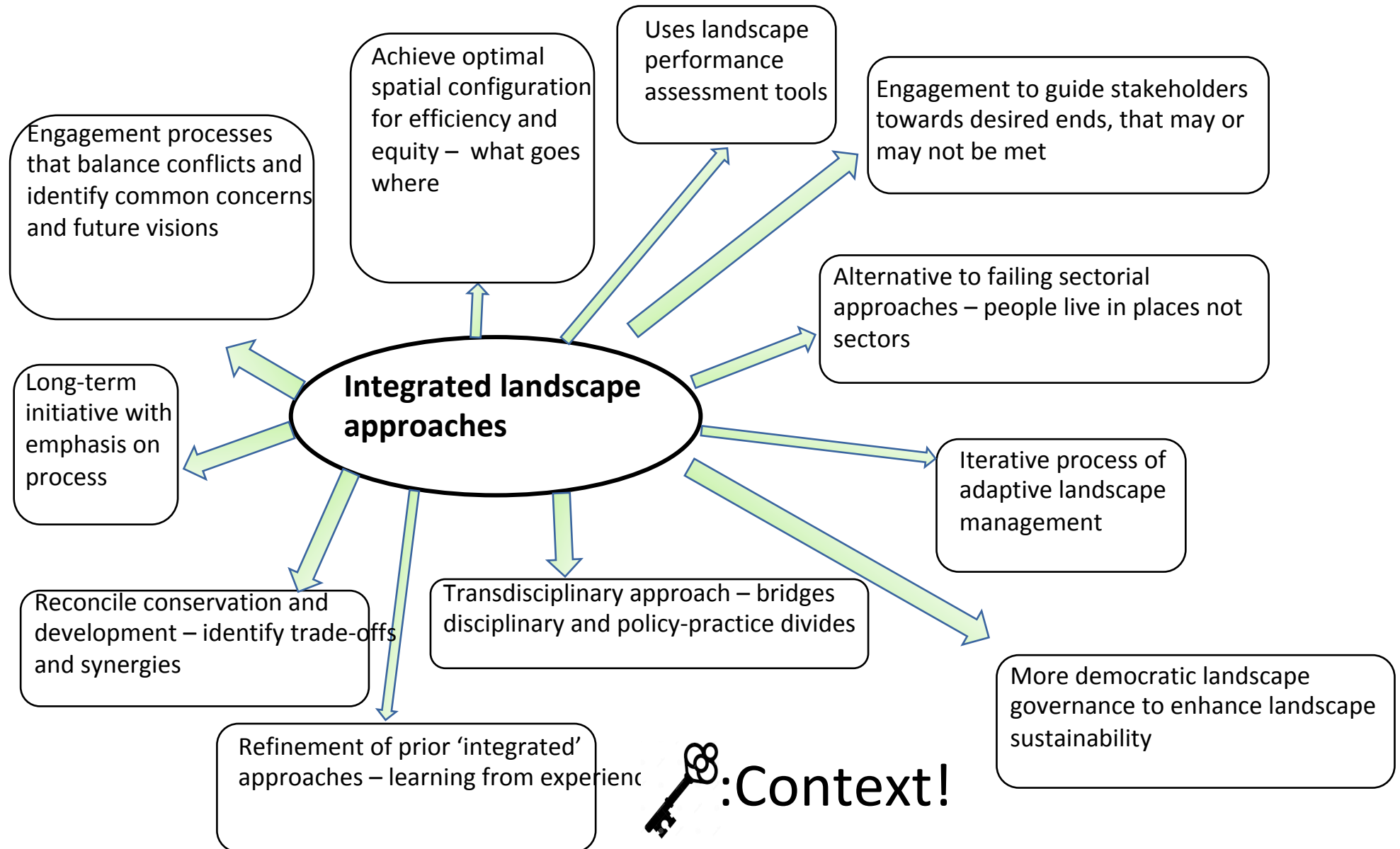
28th September 2021



Structure

- Describe integrated landscape approaches and their appeal
- Explain where they are applied and if they are effective in delivering long-term impact
- Consider why impact is hard to achieve or demonstrate
- Reflect on how integrated landscape approaches might be improved

ILAs – more easily characterized than defined?



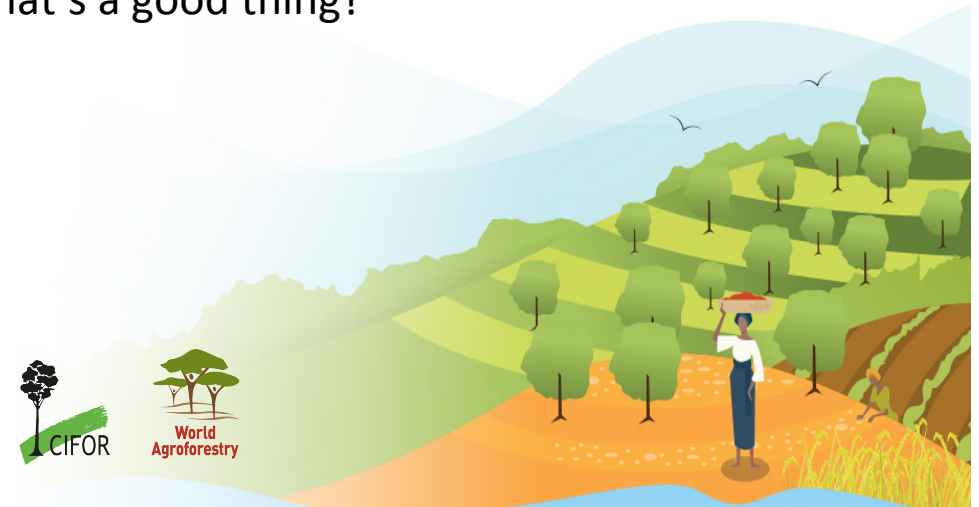
You say you want a definition?

Why needed?

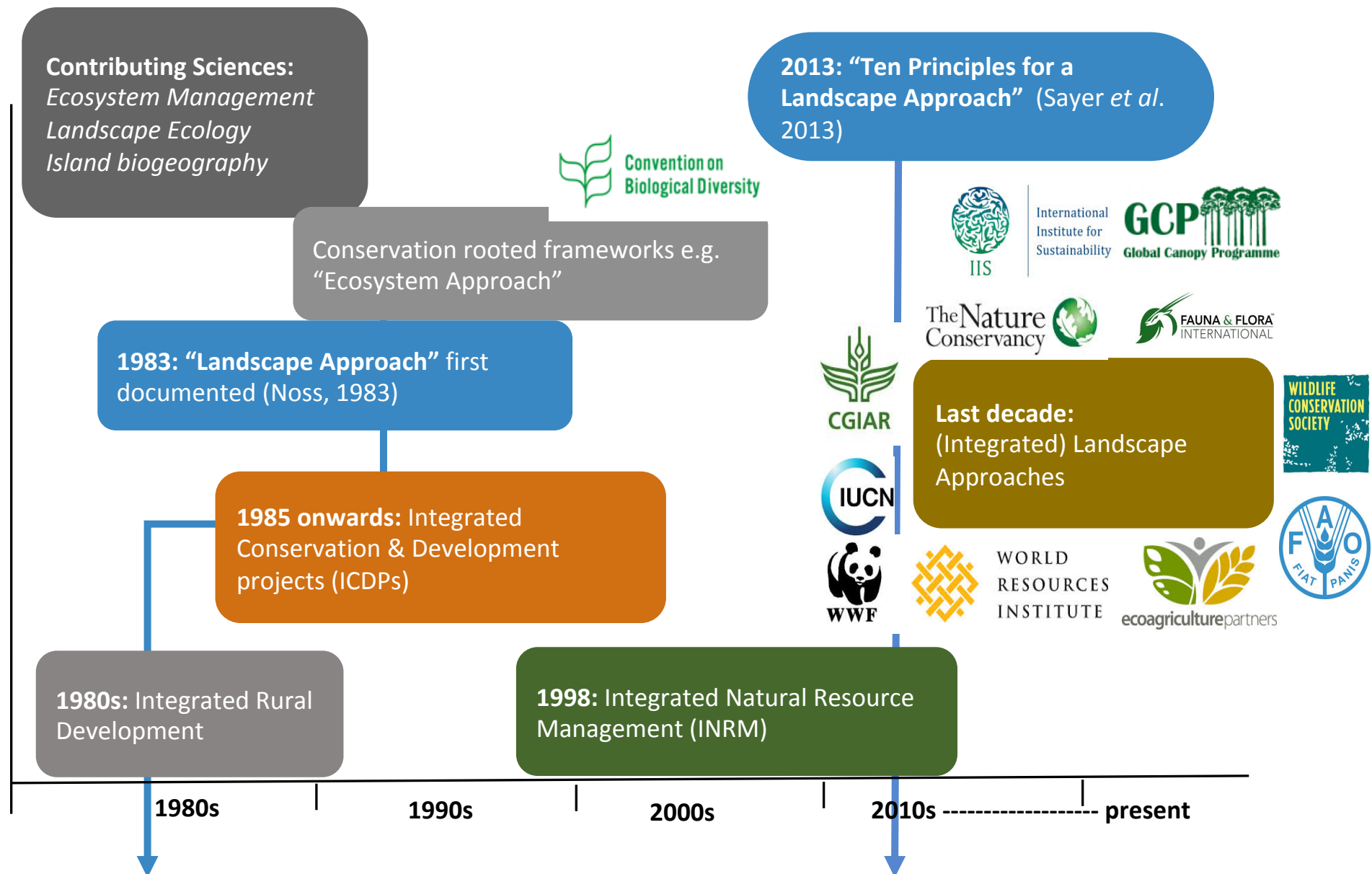
- A lack of definition implies a lack of basic norms and rules to follow (Mansourian, 2018; Chazdon *et al.*, 2020)
- Can lead to conceptually weak and poorly designed implementation efforts (Carmenta *et al.*, 2020)
- Inhibits ability to provide clear guidance to policy or private sector
- Makes the effectiveness of ILAs difficult to evaluate and compare

Why not?

- Landscape: an area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of nature and/or human factors
- But landscapes are highly contextualized and fuzzy concepts, not planning units, and are ‘seen in the eye of the beholder’
- What is integrated and what approach is taken must vary
- As such, ILAs defy simple definitions, but maybe that’s a good thing?



The evolution of integrated landscape approaches



Why so popular?

**Integrated
landscape
approaches
might aim to**

**Inspire transformational
change**

Enhance resilience

Improve governance

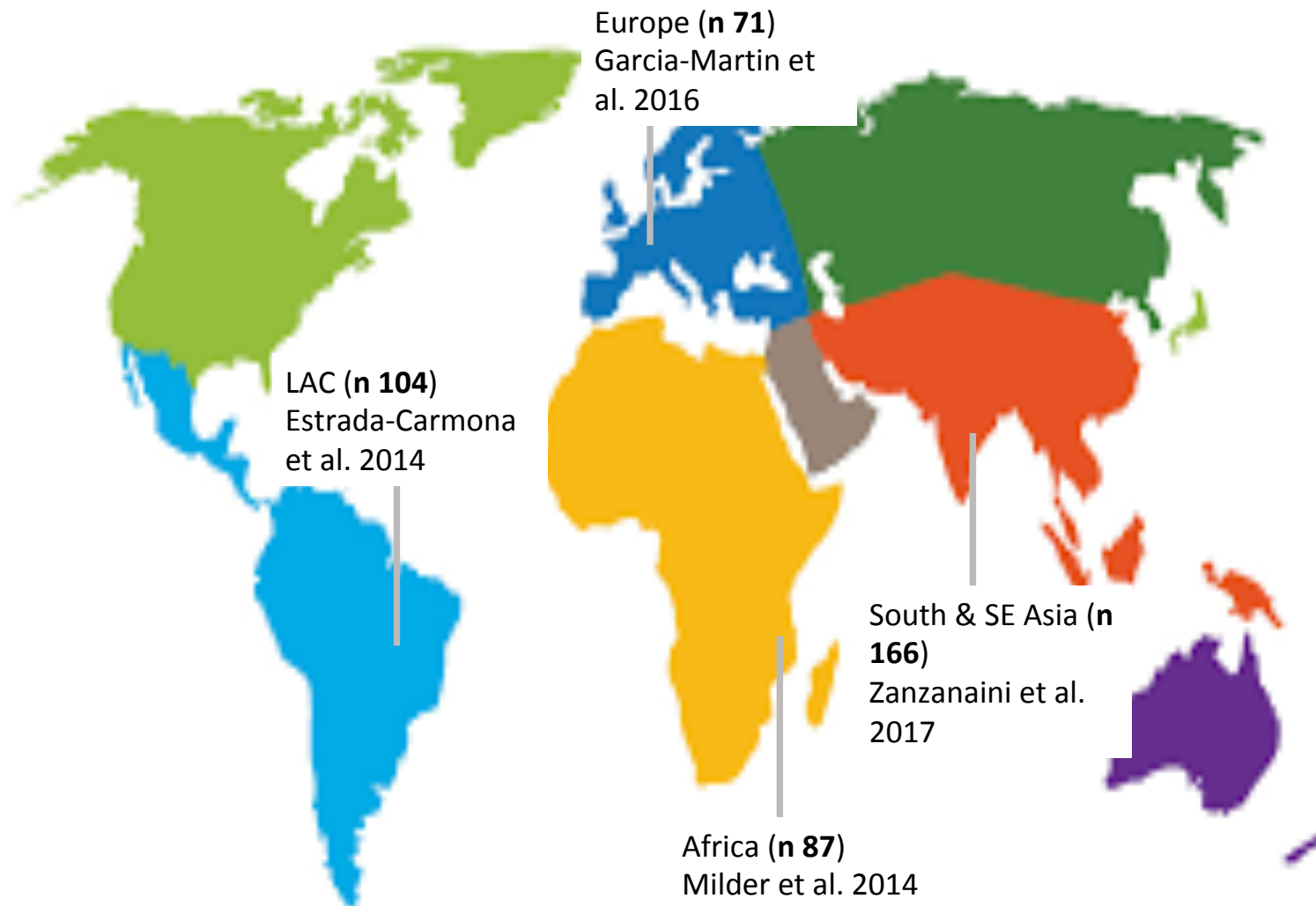
Conserve biodiversity

Restore ecosystems

Mitigate climate change

Alleviate poverty

Where are integrated landscape approaches being implemented?



Obstacles and outcomes



Limited engagement of private sector



Lack of funding



Weak or unsupportive policy frameworks



Long time horizon to demonstrate effectiveness



Entry point/motivation – conservation/NRM



Successful outcomes identified across all four domains

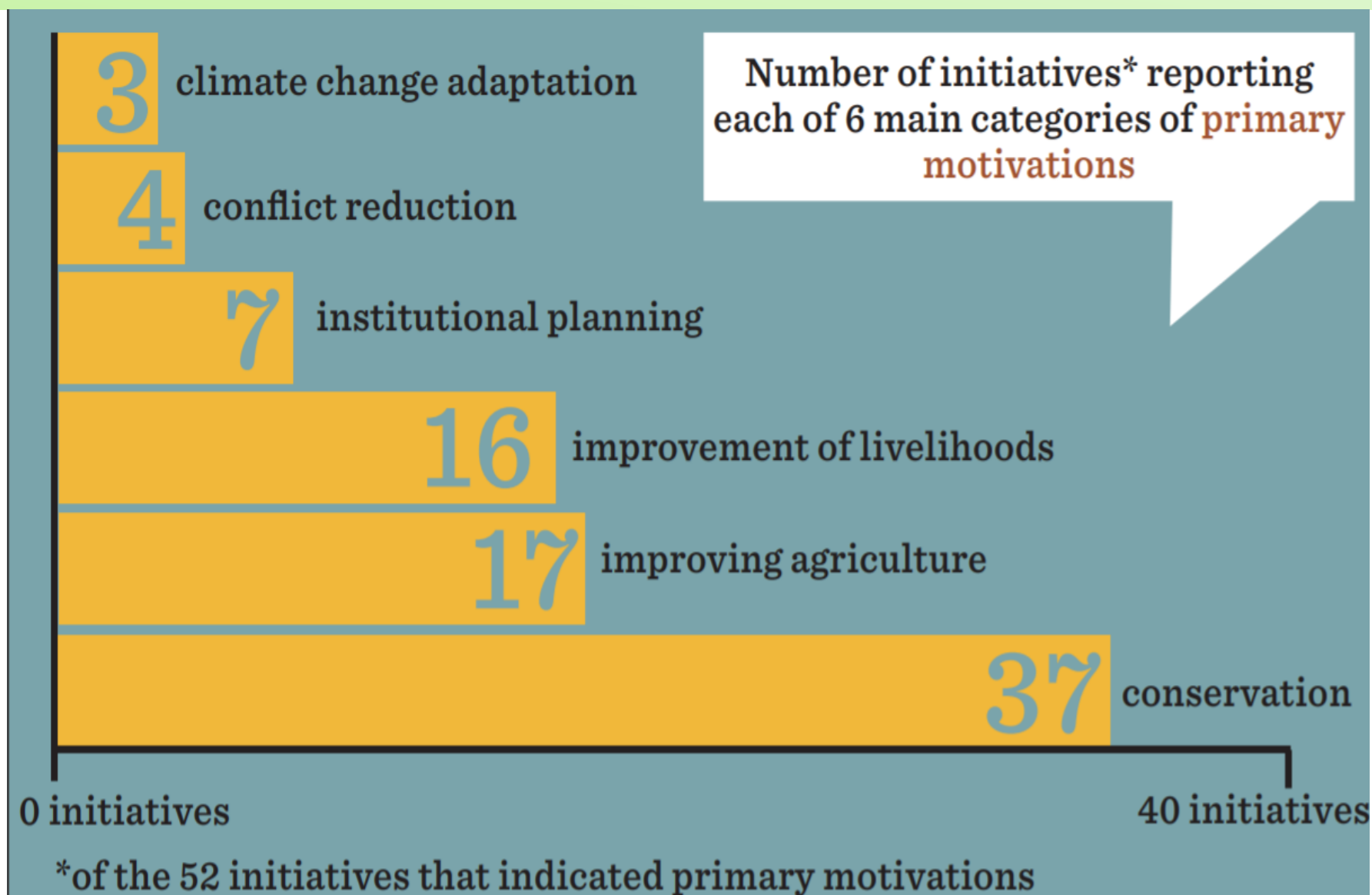


Institutional planning consistently best performing

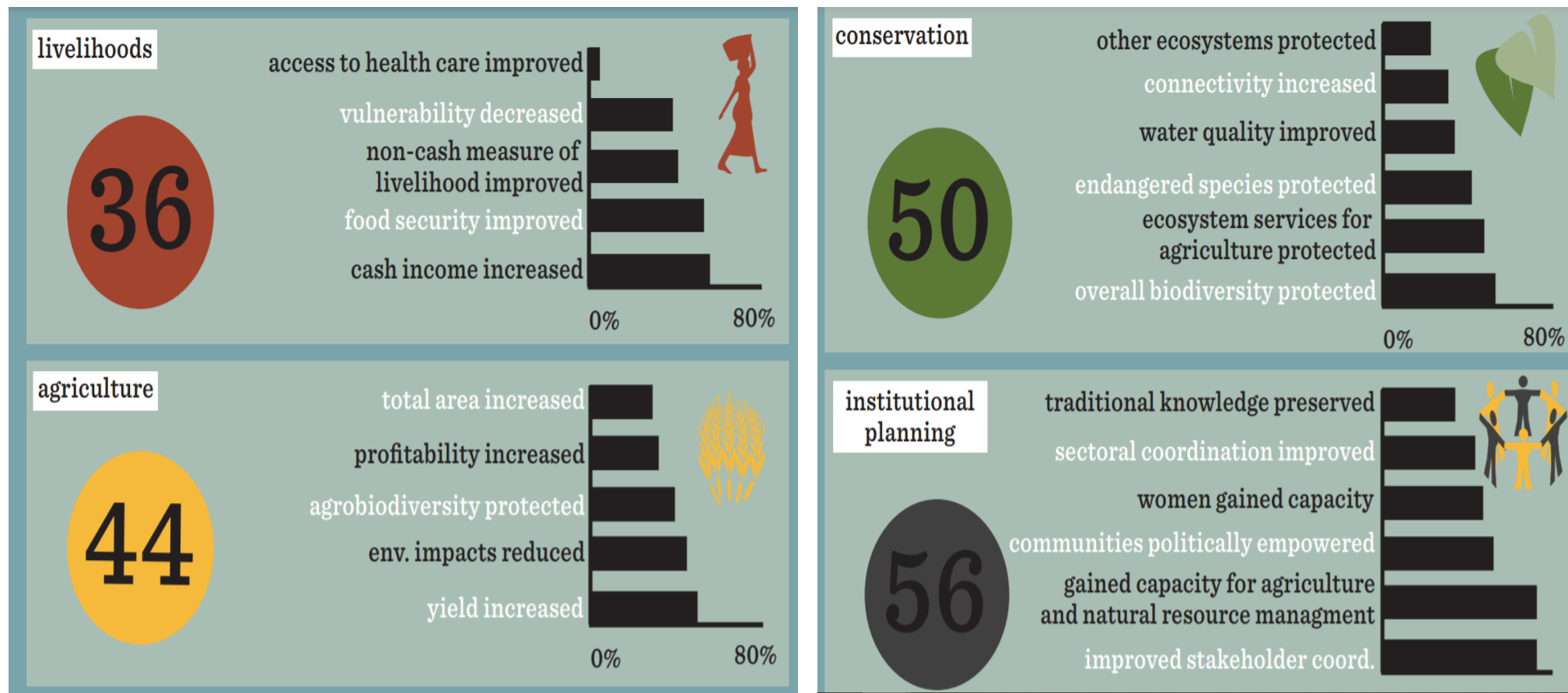


Livelihoods and agriculture domains consistently worst performing

Insights from Africa



Evidence of impact?



63% of initiatives reported positive outcomes across all four domains (Milder *et al.* 2014)

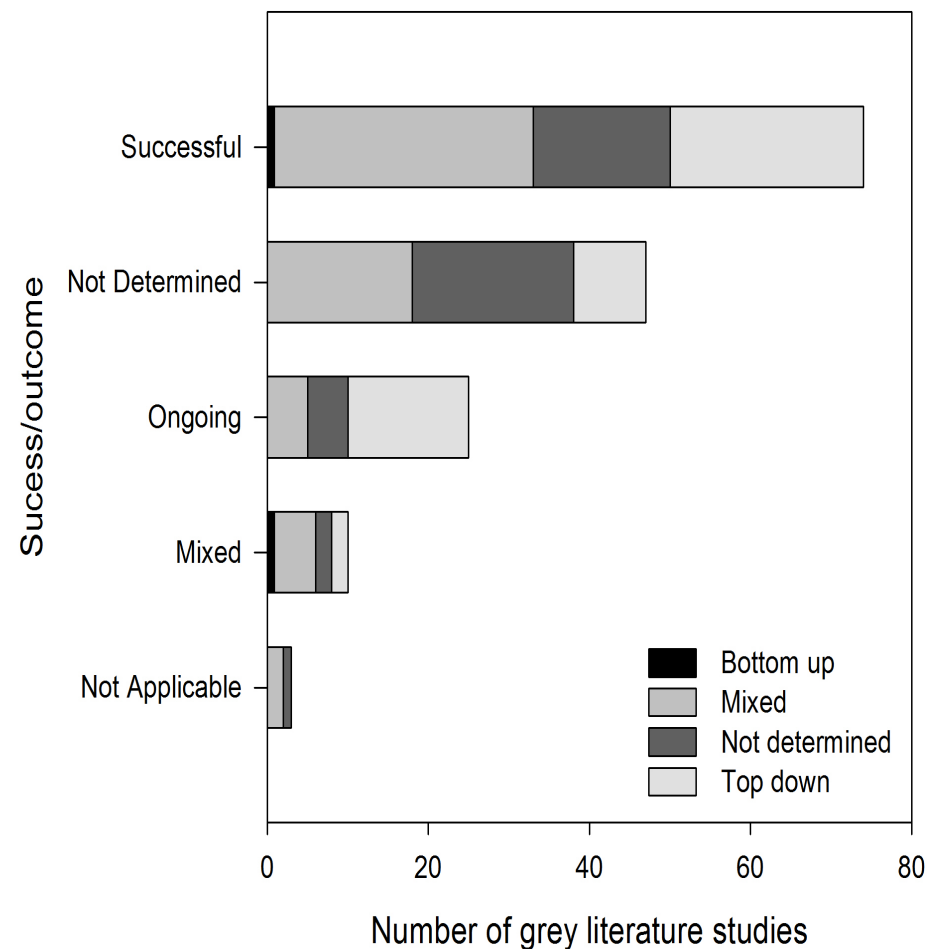
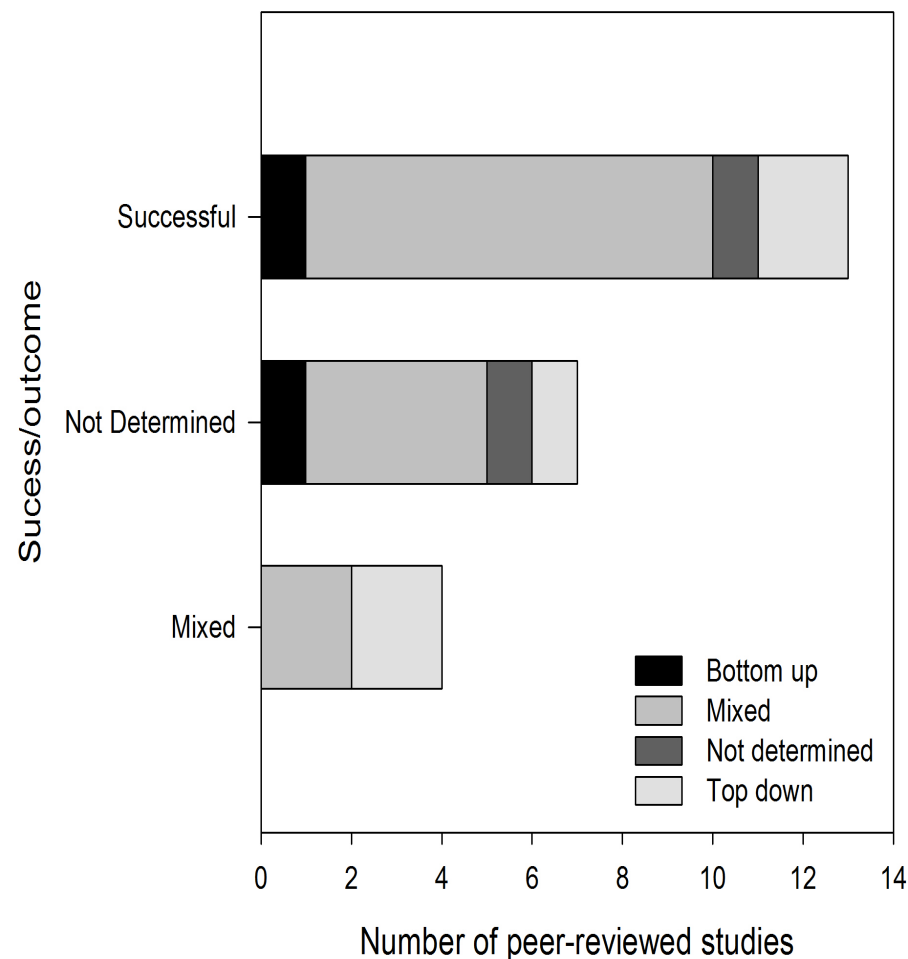
Further reflection....

- the initiatives are self-reported and may be limited by the knowledge or the quality of data available to the respondent.....may reflect the intentional or unintentional bias of each respondent.... the respondent may have had a personal interest or stake in portraying the initiative in a positive (or negative) light (Milder *et al.* 2014)
- concerned that such initiatives were overly optimistic in the outcomes they were reporting
- landscape initiatives are successful in establishing new partnerships and engaging a diversity of stakeholders, they are limited in on-the-ground outcomes and the degree to which they can affect systemic change (Hart, 2017)

Where are integrated landscape approaches being implemented?



Evidence of impact?



Enhanced soil and water conservation, income and crop production were the most frequently cited impacts (Reed *et al.* 2017)

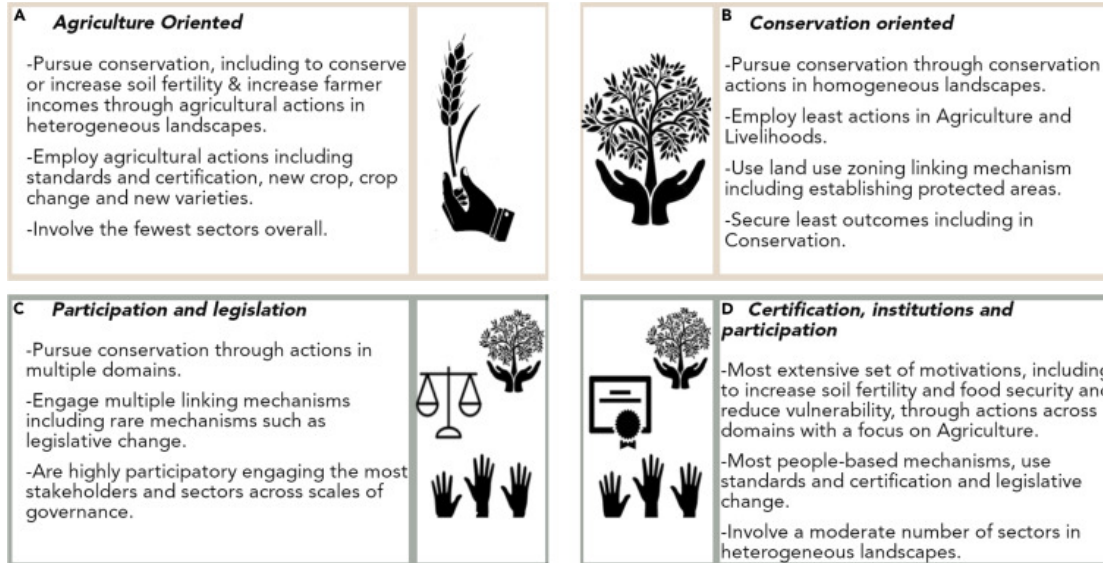
Evidence of impact?

	Peer reviewed articles	Grey literature (web screening)	Grey literature (document screening)	Totals
Case studies	24	97	53	174
Countries	16	52	42	61
Success	13	46	20	79
Reliable data	6	8	1	15



“The current evidence base is lacking in the necessary precision to adequately assess the effectiveness in practice” (Reed *et al.* 2017)

But integration underscores performance



One Earth

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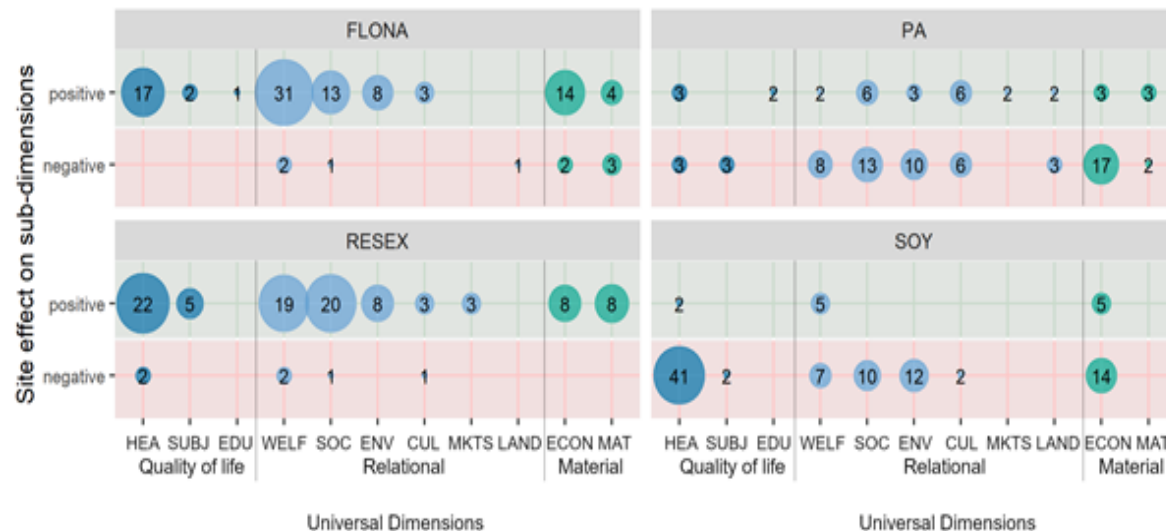
Article

Characterizing and Evaluating Integrated Landscape Initiatives

Rachel Carmenta^{1,10}, David A. Coomes², Fabrice A.J. DeClerck³, Abigail K. Hart⁴, Celia A. Harvey⁵, Jeff Milder^{6,7}, James Reed^{1,8}, Bhaskar Vira¹, Natalia Estrada-Carmona^{3,9}

(Carmenta *et al.* 2020)

(Carmenta *et al.* Forthcoming)



Further evidence from recent case studies



Article

Application of Landscape Approach Principles Motivates Forest Fringe Farmers to Reforest Ghana's Degraded Reserves

Emmanuel O. Acheampong^{1,*}, Jeffrey Sayer², Colin Macgregor¹ and Sean Sloan¹

“Effective implementation of several small-scale reforestation projects using the landscape approach could together lead to a forest transition, more trees in agricultural systems and better protection of residual natural forests while improving farmers’ livelihoods, all combining to achieve the SDGs”

(Acheampong *et al.* 2020)

PARKS VOL 26.1 MAY 2020

IMPLEMENTING A LANDSCAPE APPROACH IN THE AGORO-AGU REGION OF UGANDA

James Omoding^{1*}, Gretchen Walters^{2*}, Salete Carvalho¹, Marina Cracco², C.D. Langoya³, K. Gaster Kiyingi⁴, Chetan Kumar¹, Florian Reinhard¹, Edward Ssenyonjo⁵, Leo Twinomuhangi⁵

“....opportunities observed throughout the application of the landscape approach principles include mainstreaming agreed actions into strategies and plans, increased resident capacity, conflict resolution, definition and clarity on mandates, roles and responsibilities, higher landscape connectivity and opportunities for policy influence”

(Omoding *et al.* 2020)



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Generating impact from ILAs



- What gets measured, gets managed (Drucker?, Stiglitz, 2010)
- However, performance monitoring tools are often not very useful in answering how or why values change
- Meanwhile, traditional impact assessment is challenging as appropriate counterfactuals are lacking (Chervier *et al.* 2020)

An obsession with numbers

- One of the principal errors of the West is the obsession to count everything....and create summaries of the social dynamics at play and transform them into some kind of gauge that reflects a promising evolution of these dynamics. Quantification can be useful for predicting, managing, and anticipating the path but this mathematical reduction of reality risks transforming imperfect measurements and reference points into the ultimate aims of the social adventure.
- Indicators specifically linked to living conditions alone don't really say anything about life itself – the quality of one's social relationships, their intensity, their fecundity, social distance, the nature of cultural, relational, spiritual life, and so forth – everything that makes up existence (Sarr, 2016)

Not everything in life can be measured

- Not everything that matters can be measured, not everything that we can measure, matters (Ridgway, 1956)
- What is really cared about might often be very difficult to measure
- Raising a child, performing a good deed, demonstrating good judgement, humility, empathy, love.....
- Similarly, ILAs need to better capture social values and perceptions, address power asymmetries, support community action, evaluate governance performance, and assess trade-offs

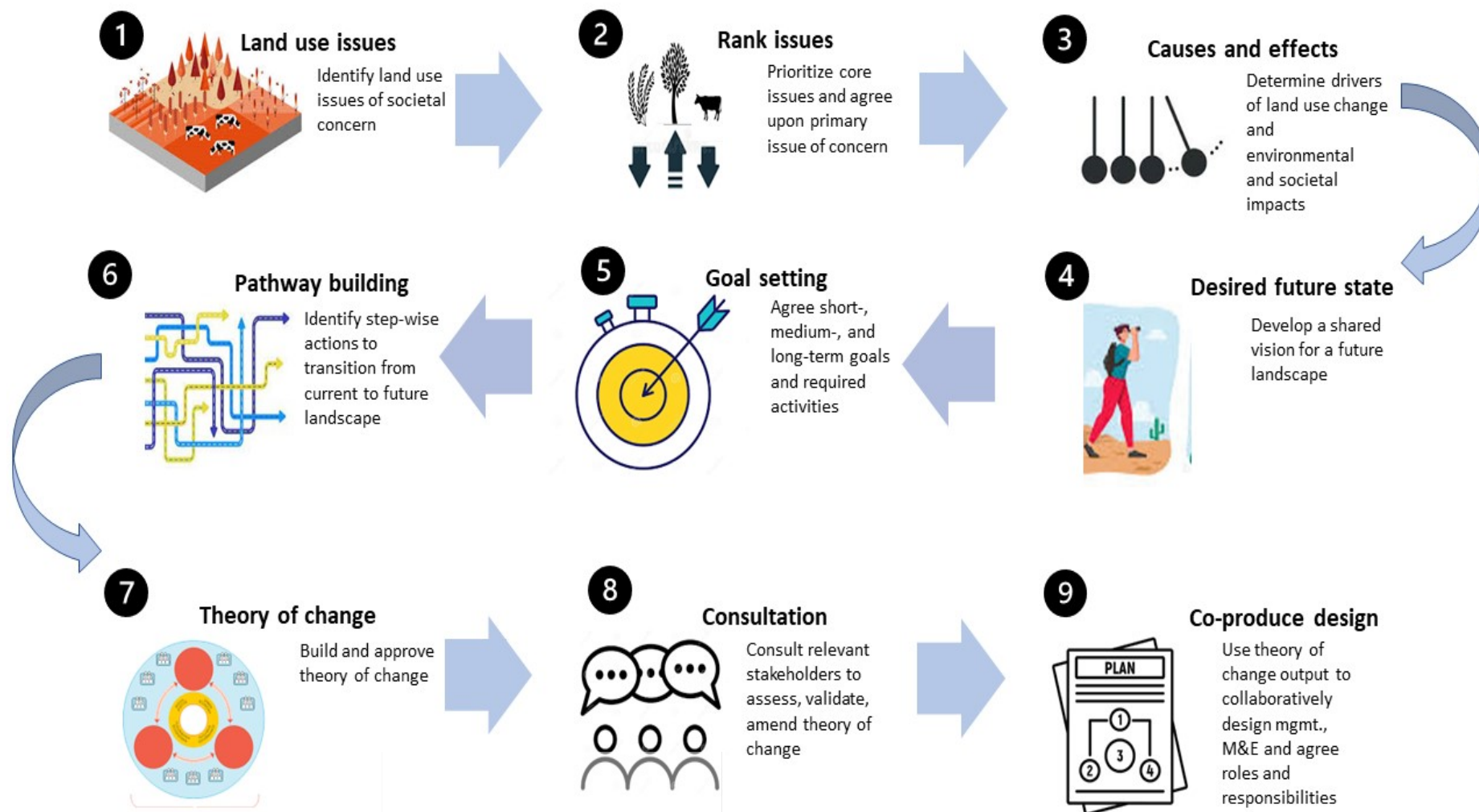
Bending the curve.....

- Do we try bend ILAs to fit the typical donor driven project narrative and ensure that we deliver tightly packaged outcomes within tightly bound timeframes?
- Or do we try to bend the structures that currently govern integrated conservation and development initiatives (and their evaluation) and demand more holistic and dynamic (evaluation) methods that better match the realities to which these initiatives are typically applied?

Building the evaluation toolkit

- Perceptions as evidence (Bennett, 2016)
- Multi-dimensional well-being indicators (Carmenta *et al.* forthcoming)
- Governance evaluation (Kusters *et al.* 2018)
- Multi-criteria mapping (Uni of Sussex)
- Remote sensing, GIS, drones
- Theory-based evaluation (Belcher *et al.* 2020; Chervier *et al.* 2020)

Using theory of change in ILAs



Final takeaways

- To better engage with the realities of complex tropical landscapes, landscape approaches need to be long-term and transdisciplinary in nature
- Moving away from the dichotomous language of success and failure, and rather adopting a systems approach that prioritizes process and adaptation to determine enabling conditions and lessons learned, will likely be more constructive to the long-term sustainability of integrated landscape approaches
- Research that measures the things that count as well as counting what can be measured is fundamental to building the evidence base and helping understand under what conditions ILAs are workable and who benefits

COLANDS

Collaborating to Operationalize Landscape Approaches
for Nature, Development and Sustainability

This project is working with CIFOR, the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) and other partners to conduct innovative research related to landscapes, including forestry and other productive processes; as well as the essential work of engaging multiple stakeholders

Thank you

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