



Food and Agriculture
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INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Integrated territorial and landscape approaches for **poverty reduction** and **sustainability**:

Innovation and challenges from country led implementation



ROME, 10-12 DECEMBER 2019 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

Countries are increasingly adopting Landscape and Territorial Development approaches in their national development and environmental strategies and policies. This shows a recognition of the interrelation of different sectors for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the need to adapt policies and investments to specific contexts, at a more local level.

Although similar in many fronts – social dialogue and negotiation, inclusive participation, and ecological integrity are seen as core components of both place-based approaches – they can often pursue different, sometimes conflicting, objectives, resulting in different policy processes, institutions and communities of practice. Territorial approaches tend to focus on socio-economic objectives and the revitalization of local economies for joint interests of economic stakeholders along key value-chains in the territory, while landscape approaches tend to prioritize bio-physical/ecological objectives and start from the environmental and natural resource dimensions, for integrating livelihood considerations. Both landscape and territorial development perspectives are strongly related and complementary when it comes to their implementation on the ground, and when innovatively integrated, offer a set of complementary tools that successfully address the complex problems posed by the Sustainable Development Agenda.

To share the experiences of countries implementing landscape and/or territorial development approaches, the International Workshop 'Integrated territorial and landscape approaches for poverty reduction and sustainability: Innovation and challenges from country led implementation' held in Rome from the 10th to the 12th of December 2019. This Workshop was an activity of the project 'Strengthening the implementation of territorial development and landscape approaches for sustainable rural development and poverty reduction,' funded by the Millennium Development Goals Fund (MDGF) and implemented by the Land and Water Division (CBL), with the support of the Social Policies and Institutions Division (ESP), the FAO's Strategic Programs for Sustainable Agriculture (SP2) and Rural Poverty Reduction (SP3). The project supported the participating countries (Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Lebanon and Moldova) in systematizing country-led case studies on implementing territorial and landscape approaches using a common methodology; these were presented during the international Workshop in Rome.



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Main findings

1. Strategic opportunity and need for increasing the synergies between landscape and territorial approaches

Integration is the basis for sustainable food and agriculture. Ending poverty and hunger, improving good governance and livelihoods, and ensuring healthy natural ecosystems cannot be achieved in isolation from each other. Adopting integrated approaches remains a strategic opportunity for countries to anchor development strategies in territorial/landscape/ecosystem assets and qualities. Over the years, traditional technical assistance and top down approaches provided unsatisfactory results to the complexity found in the rural areas in terms of household incomes, livelihood strategies, overlapping land uses and rights, unrecognized gender roles, etc. and more inclusive and systemic approaches were needed to respond to that complexity. It was highlighted that the interconnectedness of socio-economic development and natural resources management has become even more acute in the context of climate change impacts in rural communities and the intersectional nature of the SDGs. The United Nations Decades of Family Farming and Ecosystems Restoration may also serve as a catalytic opportunity to upscale these approaches.



Main findings

2. Centrality of multi-level coordination to achieve inclusivity and sustainability

Following the reflection above, multi-level coordination in applying integrated approaches becomes crucial for sustainable development. Landscape and territorial approaches require multilevel coordination and cooperation between national and subnational entities, and have to be aligned with strategies, objectives, priorities and resources. It also seems that the multi-level coordination may be more effective in an environment where a cross-sectoral dialogue and agreement is reached by different entities leading territorial and landscape strategies, policies and programs at national level. More reflection on strategies and institutional innovations to achieve such national agreement is required.

Major bottlenecks for implementing these approaches brought into the discussion were contexts of democratic deficit or absence of decentralization. Complementarily to multilevel and decentralization aspects, governance of integrated approaches requires the set-up of multi sectoral and multi-stakeholder mechanisms, as well as a long-term strategy and political will. Participants recognized that a sectoral perspective persists in political leadership and state bureaucracy and that a stronger coordination and linking public investment plans with the territories and landscapes is required. In order to assure this, the designation of an institutional actor leading entity with a legal mandate to coordinate actions and resources to implement and integrate holistic approaches was considered strategic.

For example, in Colombia, the Territorial Renewal Agency was created in 2015 as the responsible public body for the implementation of the Territorial Development Programs (PDETs) throughout the country - PDETs are planning instruments for the territories including financial long-term multi-sectoral

commitments, at the national level. The Agency goals are to 'coordinate the intervention of national and territorial entities in rural areas affected by the conflict prioritized by the National Government, through the execution of plans and projects for the territorial renewal of these areas'. Its functions include: leading the process of inter and intra sectoral coordination to develop the intervention strategy; implement participation spaces for the formulation of intervention plans and projects; and formulate and implement a general plan for territorial renewal.

Creation of specific agencies or coordination bodies with mandate to implement integrated approaches or creation of coordination mechanisms at the highest level (presidency) were identified as enabling practices to ensure coordination and integration. Creation of local integrated coordination mechanisms were also mentioned. These best practices should be further systematized. Furthermore, the design of specific instruments allowing planning in sectoral institutions to feed on territorial and landscape strategies and programmes should be encouraged and institutional innovation also plays a key role in this aspect.

Box 1. Holistic planning in Colombia

In Colombia, the 2016 Peace Agreement marked a new start for the country's rural development agenda. Territorial Developments Plans (PDETs) are strategic tools for promoting territorial development, through a planning structure for a 15-year period, accounting for 30% of the country's geographic area (including protected and vulnerable areas) and benefitting 3 million people.

Since July 2017, the Territory Renewal Agency (ART) has been conducting participatory meetings in municipal territorial subdivisions known as 'veredas' in the PDET sub-regions, materializing the Government's goal of guiding rural development and investments in public goods through participatory processes. Producers Associations were successfully formed involving traditionally conflicted ethnic groups and groups that had no effective cooperation relationships, and were integrated into a second-level organization based on the identification of common interests.

Based on these plans and consultations, ART and FAO Colombia invested nearly 4 million USD to reach 5 000 families in Caldono, a municipality in great need of economic reactivation and structural transformation. The two main axes of intervention were: (1) strengthening 7 producers organizations using FAO's Measuring Rural Entrepreneurship instrument, and (2) the implementation of 10 comprehensive productive businesses (technical, commercial, social and environmental) around the coffee, fique, blackberries and sugar cane value chains, household's main income sources in the municipality. Businesses were provided with technical assistance, entrepreneurship capacity building, and access to local markets and investments in basic infrastructure was facilitated.

To ensure the continuation of this long-term process even when local leaders change in 2020, ART developed an Institutional Territorial Strengthening Strategy to facilitate coordination with new leaders and to support the Territorial Development Plans (2020–2023). In addition, thanks to this strategy, resources to finance PDET's activities for the coming years must be coordinated with territorial governments, the private sector and international cooperation.

Box 2. Political will and business as usual in the Dominican Republic

Despite the challenges to effectively implementing a territorial approach, the state has made it clear that it seeks to adopt such a strategy. In this sense, the Constitution and the National Strategy for Development Law both include a territorial approach, along with a number of other laws that encourage improved activities at a territorial level. The main actor involved in coordinating a territorial approach is the Ministry of the Economy, Planning, and Development, but, as described in an interview with the Dominican Federation of Municipalities, the agency lacks the tools, support, and political power to fulfill its role. Therefore, most public action continues to be implemented sectoral, with activities that occur at a territorial level without integrating the multisector, multidimensional strategies of space-based approaches.

This is in part attributable to the fact that the laws promoting the adoption of a territorial strategy do not specify concrete entry points for action, hampering also the development of effective interventions. The Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Development has confirmed that multisector activity is lacking as sectoral agencies continue their work independently of others, such as agriculture working independently of environmental.

Likewise, in relation to landscapes, the DR has adopted a strategy to strengthen action for conservation with a focus on stakeholder collaboration. In the context of combatting land degradation under the UN Convention for the Fight Against Desertification and Drought (UNCCD), a Technical inter-institutional group, and a National Service of Land Conservation, involving different sectors as environment, agriculture, water, social development and planning, focus mainly on conservation, extension services, and financing. Nevertheless, the concept of a broader integrated local development that considers social as well as environmental concerns was lacking. Combined, the constitutional will of the Dominican Republic to adopt a Territorial approach and the multisectoral angle of the landscape approach currently implemented provide a strategic opportunity for promoting better cohesion at local and national level.



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Main findings

3. Multi-stakeholder participation and power imbalances

Both, territorial and landscape approaches, also strive to build multi-stakeholder participation throughout the whole process, from the diagnostics, to the elaboration of plans, the implementation and evaluation. Participants assessed that there are very few articulation spaces to promote integrated territorial and landscape interventions and policies. The issue of needing to address power asymmetries resulting from unequal access to resources and information was considered key for a sustainable and equitable implementation of these approaches; tools and further depth on the topic is still needed. Policy-makers should consider the influence of social groups in policy making, and therefore, focus on the creation of spaces for building consensus on the use of resources and application of policies and programmes. In this sense, co-conception and co-implementation of territorial and landscape initiatives are new concepts that need to be taken into account to assure legitimate strategies with local actors. An issue that may require further reflection is the design of multi-stakeholder participation, which would enable stronger integration of the approaches (eg. Development agencies + environmental agencies + farmers and community associations + development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) + environmental NGOs + private sector). Projects of natural resource-based community development such as the Shouf Biosphere Reserve (SBR) in Lebanon showed that involving local communities through legitimate decentralized institutional arrangements can help reverse Ecosystem degradation. One of the main success of the SBR was the construction of partnerships and cooperation with NGOs, environmental activists, service sector businesses, and agricultural cooperatives with a local community support, especially municipalities, mayors, and local decision-maker.

Multi-stakeholder involvement and the empowerment of women and young people, were identified as issues not sufficiently discussed across the sessions, that would need stronger attention in future discussions.

Box 4- A watershed vision to increase coordination

To implement the Municipal Development Plan (MDP 2011–2025), the municipality of Ixchiguán, Guatemala, used micro-watershed planning as to reflect the interactions between the different sectors and actors (ministries, social actors, cooperation aid workers) coordinated by various development councils within the watershed. Multisectoral actions were proposed on a micro-scale (by plot or communal area) and the sum total of all of these actions achieved a greater impact on the scale of the watershed.

The National Forest Institute's Incentive Program is backing this initiative with an estimated annual budget of USD 39 000 for the municipality, which is not enough for the financial sustainability of this action. The anticipated benefits of this initiative include:

- improved water availability and quality in each micro-watershed – for irrigation and for human and animal consumption – (the general perception is that this has been largely achieved);
- reduction in expenses and risks of diseases associated with water consumption
- firewood availability, decreasing pressure on the forests (which has improved); and
- strengthening the municipal government and local organizations (a land-use planning office has been opened, institutional coordination has been reinforced and training activities have been conducted).

Although there are mechanisms for power balancing in the application of this approach, in practice, departmental decision-making processes are highly politicized, favouring groups that have greater political weight. Furthermore, changes in the government often produce discontinuity in the actions that adversely affect their effectiveness. Finally, the Ixchiguán case study shows that territorial and landscape approaches interact, as planning involves taking water into account as a resource and the sustainability of this resource, along with the sustainability of other natural resources (land, forest) on which the population is highly dependent for their livelihoods.



Recommendations to advance with these findings

4. Continued dialogue on how to improve the synergies between landscape and territorial approaches is needed

Further clarity is needed on how to improve the synergies between both approaches, through better coordination and/or integration in policies and projects. Participants agreed that both approaches are complementary in spite of initial different entry-points and that they should be further integrated. Although there has much reflection on the challenges and lessons learnt in specific territorial or landscape experiences, there is still a need to further develop knowledge related to how to better integrate socio-economic development and natural resources management and address the issues that lead to fragmentation (such as sectoral coordination, lack of appropriated incentives, etc). The planned expert's consultation could further reflect on these areas.

Therefore, participants expressed the need for the development and dissemination of tools and methodologies, and asked FAO for facilitating more global dialogue and knowledge sharing spaces in this field. However, some conceptual discussion took place, with some participants sharing the view that territories are part of a broader landscape concept and other participants understanding landscapes approach being more focused on natural resources and therefore part of a broader territorial perspective. It should be noted that in some local experiences it seems that key elements

of both concepts were naturally integrated in a flexible way, perhaps indicating an evolving new integrated conceptual framework bringing together people-centered and eco-centered starting points. It was also highlighted that cross-sectoral coordination at local level is facilitated by the proximity and existing joint work between many stakeholders. On the other hand, it seems that the differences between the approaches tend to become more visible or relevant at higher levels of coordination or policymaking. Deepening such conceptual debate is required.

Box 5- Country perspectives

In Guatemala, the low level of inter-sectoral policy cooperation and the lack of analysis regarding complementarity between the two approaches, leads to competition between different policies and sectors at local level due to limited available resources. For example, in Ixchiguán the limited budget of the municipality, but also the lack of buy-in from the communities and internal competition with other projects was identified as one of the main obstacles in the implementation of the micro-watershed planning. This dynamic further undermines the already limited levels of empowerment of local associations and territorial organizations.

The Dominican Republic case studies and interviews with relevant stakeholders highlighted persistent sectoral action and a lack of coordinated activity. In an interview with the Ministry of Economics, Planning, and Development, the representative highlights that the push for a territorial approach was mainly a national initiative supported by the Interamerican Development Bank, or the President's Initiative that operates on a territorial level such as 'Visititas Sorpresas.' This also demonstrates a lack of efforts to adopt a coordinated approach, as the two are not seen as complimentary. The challenges in adopting a territorial approach and diverging from traditional sectoral approaches reveals that better articulation of the objectives of a territorial approach is necessary.



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Recommendations to advance with these findings

5. Moving from projects to policies

Participants agreed on the need to move from programs or projects to national policies, especially in relation with the landscape approach, which in many occasions emerges from concrete project interventions, not always finding appropriate institutional or legal frameworks for out scaling/ mainstreaming at country level to be sustainable over time.



Recommendations to advance with these findings

6. Coordination of development financing

Territories often depend from central government with regards to budget, impeding the effective budgetary autonomy of the territories, and their ability to integrate social and environmental investments, as some presented case studies showed. Resource mobilization and an increased collaboration with international agencies will be critical to achieve more sustainable results. Three main types of strategies were identified for the implementation of landscape and territorial approaches:

- a) Effective decentralization (adequate policies for re-organizing the distribution of resources at different administrative-territorial levels, like in Guatemala);. Indeed, sub-regions lead the implementation of development plans, in alignment with the Departmental Sub-commissions, for example the Departmental Agrarian Commission (CAD), which is part of the Departmental Development Council. This council is presided by the Governor of the region, and it is formed by all the mayors of the different municipalities of the said region.
- b) Provision of special funds for regional or local development, directed to targeted geographic areas (like the case of the Southwest Alliance in Dominican Republic) based on poverty, marginalization, as well as economic opportunities including from the environmental sector;
- c) Territorialization of national public investments (like in the case of the PDETs implemented in 170 municipalities of Colombia for which a fiscal plan for 15 years has been designed but is depending on the political will of the next three national governments to implement it).

d) The Departmental Government of Alta Verapaz is politically led by the Governor, and the Departmental Sub-commissions are responsible for the technical execution, especially the Departmental Agrarian Sub-commission (CAD), that is part of the Departmental Development Council (COCODE). CAD is composed by the Land Fond, the Registre for Cadastral Information (RIC) the Secretary for Land Issues (SAA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food. The Departmental Government has a Unit that deals with Departmental Conflicts, which counts with a technical team, an IT team and different technical programs on conflict resolution and knowledge sharing.

More reflection is required on how such strategies contribute effectively to develop holistic approaches through a better coordination and or integration of funds that were originally designed to specifically finance either landscape or territorial initiatives or projects.





Recommendations to advance with these findings

7. Private sector involvement

There has been weak involvement of the private sector in most of the initiatives, which brings the question on how integrated approaches should also take their involvement more effectively. This becomes crucial given the ability of private investment dynamics to develop (or harm sometimes) landscapes and territories. Greater reflection on this lack of involvement is required. Important to distinguish the different private sector groups, and enable dialogues that avoid further asymmetry of power within the different actors.

Dominican Republic: National government, with the main push for territorial action remaining between the Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development, cooperates with JICA, FAO and the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development. Although decentralization laws exist, there has been limited to no involvement of the private sector, with a notable exception of cooperation between the National Government and International Agencies through the Land and Water Management Programme of the Ozama-Isabella River Basin Commission through the 'El Fondo Agua Santo Domingo'. Nevertheless, the majority of partners were government or NGO stakeholders, with little involvement of local communities.



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Recommendations to advance with these findings

8. Areas for further discussion and action:

Integrated Landscape and Territorial approaches should also take into consideration that:

- Countries and territories often lack necessary monitoring systems to plan, design and evaluate actions at landscape and or territorial scale; there is also a deficit of data collection at local level, that can support decision making, as well as coordination of actions, of the multiple sectors;
- Rural-urban linkages (market linkages, migration) need a bigger attention in territorial / landscape integrated approaches; often not addressed in diagnostics and design of both approaches;
- Land governance and land tenure security were considered to be at the core of landscape and territorial policies, but often not addressed enough or even avoided due to its political complexity. Moving forward, this would need to be resolved in innovative ways and with the participation of multiple stakeholders.
- Despite the high number of policies and planning instruments, there is sometimes an absence of effective decentralization processes; while progress has been made in de-concentration processes, these are still very vertical (top-down); finding ways to empower the local populations, through both capacity development and access to resources and decision making is fundamental for moving these agendas forward and obtain results.
- In relation to the previous point, although there are several capacities in the territories, it is necessary to strengthen those related to planning, formulation of investment projects, awareness on the potential of territorial and landscape integrated approaches, implementation of the plans developed at landscape/territorial level and resource mobilization. There is also a need to link landscape plans to territorial development processes.
- Finally, the issue of discontinuity of actions (and actors) – both developmental and environmental – was often mentioned during the systematization process and during the workshop, raising questions on how to address the dismantling of relevant policies due to political changes at national and territories level.



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