

Cross-Sector Collaboration to Tackle Tropical Deforestation

*Diagnosing Backbone Support
in Jurisdictional Programs*

The Nature
Conservancy 



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Executive summary

Deforestation is often an adverse consequence of misaligned economic, environmental and socio-cultural systems; tackling it is tough. Complex feedback loops develop and powerfully lock-in the status quo. Additionally, although deforestation is a cross-sectoral problem, governments and private sector players tend to be organized by sector, with resource allocation and accountability managed accordingly. Over time these sectoral silos' create an entrenched view of the divided sectors that hampers attempts to address complex societal problems that are cross-sector in nature, such as health, food security or climate change – as well as attempts to address tropical deforestation.

Cross-sector collaboration is hard work. It requires certain conditions in order to be successful including a shared motivation and the capacity for joint actions. It is heavy on process and often requires its own governance setup. Backbone support – dedicated organizational capacity that takes some of the burden off collaborating actors – might well be part of the 'secret sauce' that makes collaborative efforts successful.

A jurisdictional program is a collaboration by a network of actors who associate themselves with an effort to achieve sustainability across a politically-defined area (usually a state or province). Yet, while jurisdictional programs have become a key modality for pursuing the goals of sustainable resource management, the concept of cross-sector collaboration is not always clearly and effectively integrated into their design. Improved understanding of the nature of cross-sector collaboration and the role of intermediaries in enabling it could enhance the effectiveness of jurisdictional programs and support communication.

At the core of this document is a set of **diagnostic questions** to help jurisdictional programs design and assess cross-sector collaboration and its backbone support. The questions are divided into six sections: initial conditions, outcomes, collaboration dynamics, structure of the collaboration, backbone support and accountabilities. Key themes in these sections include the following:

- **Initial conditions.** Windows of opportunity for cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs may open when actors realize that their unilateral efforts to tackle tropical deforestation often fail. Shared views of the deforestation problem and a basic level of mutual trust can then become the basis for joint work.
- **Outcomes.** Effective cross-sector collaboration is built on shared interest in addressing one or more overarching societal goals which different actors can agree on and which links to their self-interests. Although cross-sector collaboration is primarily a means of achieving specific societal goals, and not as an end in itself, the enhanced communication, improved trust and more balanced networks between landscape actors that are created through cross-sector collaboration are a fundamental aspect of improved resource governance. Backbone support could be built into the theories of change when planning jurisdictional programs since improvements in the relationships between actors as an indirect result of long term backbone support can impact land-use dynamics in positive ways.
- **Collaboration dynamics.** Jurisdictional programs typically involve a multi-stakeholder forum, shared vision and strategy, shared efforts to advance policy, joint initiatives to mobilize resources, management of conflicts relevant to the collaboration, and establishment of a monitoring system. All of these elements benefit from dedicated backbone support which needs to be flexible to adjust to the changing collaborative dynamics when initiatives evolve or experience external shocks.
- **Structure and governance.** A multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support often provide the basis for the structure and governance of cross-sector collaborations in jurisdictional programs. Governance arrangements may need to evolve as the power dynamics between collaborating actors and their ability to relinquish control change over time.



- **Backbone support.** Recruiting credible, independent, resilient and capable backbone support requires choosing the right institution (or possibly several institutions) with unassuming leaders who are willing to empower others, and then supplying it with the necessary resources to catalyze collaboration.
- **Accountabilities.** Actors involved in cross-sector collaboration needs to develop a shared evidence base to guide the collaboration, enable them to hold each other accountable, and to inform adaptive management. Collaborating partners are more likely to agree on an evidence base if they are involved in building it and if it remains relatively simple.

For developing the diagnostic questions, we analyzed the literature, evaluated case studies, and conducted a number of interviews. We looked at experiences from jurisdictional programs in tropical forests as well as large-scale collaborations in other sectors and geographies. During interviews, we did not find any model cases. Instead there was the prevailing impression of incomplete success in cross-sector collaboration. This finding should help to keep expectations in check, but should not be too discouraging. Cross-sector collaboration is in itself a potentially game-changing innovation that may pave the way towards transformative change. That this is difficult to achieve should not be surprising, but it reinforces the case for a further focus on collaboration as an enabler of progress in tackling tropical deforestation.

To some extent, development professionals are already doing this – modern thinking on development is full of collaborative approaches. Nonetheless, our interviewees differed significantly in the way they described the concepts, assumptions, and difficulties of collaboration. Some of the experts we spoke with put ‘capacity development’ at the core of their work, others the provision of ‘results-based funding,’ yet others ‘technical assistance.’ Only a few looked at themselves as ‘intermediaries catalyzing cross-sector collaboration.’

Looking at jurisdictional programs through the ‘lens of cross-sector collaboration’ might well enable development professionals to gain additional insights. Hopefully, this paper offers a starting point for those interested in taking a fresh and hopefully energizing look at their activities and their efforts towards tackling tropical deforestation.

Preamble

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a world-leading nongovernmental organization (NGO) that works to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. One of its key strategies for addressing tropical deforestation has been to support jurisdictional programs in Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico. Several other actors interested in sustainable development, conservation and better forest management have embarked on similar jurisdictional programs, using them in the context of REDD+, integrated landscape management, watershed management or others.

Cross-sector collaboration among landscape actors has often been considered key to addressing tropical deforestation. Collaboration is the basis of ‘integrated landscapes management’ described in the influential *Little Book on Sustainable Landscapes* (Denier et al. 2015). Even apparently sectoral initiatives like the Forest Stewardship Council and other roundtables are based on cross-sector collaboration. International actors such as TNC that are interested in better management of tropical forests and in reducing their loss, are keen to understand what institutional and procedural inputs can instigate this sort of cross-sector collaboration.

In the social sectors, considerable attention has been given to so-called ‘collective impact initiatives,’ as described in a seminal *Stanford Social Innovation Review* paper (Kania and Kramer 2011). Collective Impact is based on the idea that in complex socio-economic systems (such as those surrounding tropical deforestation), no single actor can achieve change in isolation. Instead, diverse actors need to work together across sector boundaries and at regional and local levels. A so-called ‘backbone organization’ is considered an essential ingredient of such change-enabling collaboration. This organization facilitates and supports collective impact by providing guidance regarding vision and strategy, aligning activities, shared measurement practices, building up public will, advancing policies and the mobilization of funding (Turner et al. 2012).

In coordinating actors across the landscape in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, São Félix do Xingu, Brazil, and the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, TNC has in fact already played a backbone role, as have organizations in other geographies. These engagements have not yet been articulated as backbone support, and there have been conceptual advances in other sectors that can strengthen these jurisdictional efforts. TNC has commissioned a study on backbone support for cross-sector collaboration to better conceptualize the organization’s current and future engagements in jurisdictional programs for reducing tropical deforestation and inform the broader practice of jurisdictional programs.

This paper is therefore written primarily from an international perspective. We aim to clarify how international actors can strengthen backbone support for cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs addressing tropical deforestation, and possibly acting as an intermediary. Although we believe that only those initiatives that local actors fully own can lead to systemic changes to land-use dynamics and alter deforestation trends, effective international support can be an important complement. Most of the collaborative initiatives we looked into were at least in part internationally funded programs, and most of our interview partners were international-development professionals rather than local stakeholders.

In its title but also throughout, our paper refers to initiatives that tackle tropical deforestation, because deforestation reduction has received much attention from the international development community over the last years. One of the fundamental challenges we observe, though, is that those in-country stakeholders that are the primary actors needed to actually reduce deforestation are often only interested in addressing deforestation when there are also explicit efforts toward the broader goals of local economic development and social benefits. Therefore, finding ways to design cross-sector collaboration in a way that transparently encompasses the broad goal of sustainable development of rural landscapes as well as enough focus on slowing or stopping tropical deforestation is a primary concern in aligning international and local actors.

In fact, while this paper is focused on jurisdictional programs tackling tropical deforestation, our analysis and conclusions

draw on a set of case studies and interviews concerning collaboration surrounding tropical land-use that have broader objectives and come from a number of different contexts. We have spoken with experts involved in programs for REDD+, biodiversity conservation, urban forestry, water resource management, broad-based mitigation, forest finance, and agricultural commodity production. Our interviewees work for a range of agencies active in international development efforts. We looked into collaborative initiatives at the local level, at the jurisdictional level, and at national and international levels.

The first part of the paper clarifies the ways that that cross-sector collaboration is a key to successfully addressing tropical deforestation. The second part then proposes a set of diagnostic questions that can be used to support self-assessment for cross-sector collaboration efforts, optimize ongoing work, or identify when there is scope for the launch of new collaborative initiatives. The paper concludes by reiterating the case for further focus on cross-sector collaboration to tackle tropical deforestation.

Part I: Cross-sector collaboration – an integral part of jurisdictional programs to tackle tropical deforestation

Complex social problems and sustainability transitions

Forests intersect the social, economic and cultural spheres, and integration across policy fields is therefore a necessary precondition for their successful conservation and sustainable management (Tikkanen, Glück, and Pajuoja 2002). Underlying deforestation drivers relate to social, economic, political, cultural and technological processes (Geist and Lambin 2002). Because of this, collaboration between actors from different sector is an essential element of governance systems that succeed in addressing deforestation. No single-actor arrangements are likely to be effective in addressing tropical deforestation, rather multi-actor governance arrangements may be better equipped to deal with the particular challenges that they present (Newell, Pattberg, and Schroeder 2012).

A sustainability transition towards conservation and the sustainable management of forests is difficult to achieve because it requires dislodging a web of interests and constraints pertaining to a large number of actors. Sustainability concerns most often target the preservation or enhancement of a public good, but do not directly or usually translate into economic gains for individual landscape actors. This creates the potential for free riding and prisoner's dilemmas where actors might not decide to cooperate, even if it appears that it is in their best interests to do so (Geels 2011). Only when actors from different sectors collaborate can existing land-use regimes move and innovation take scale. However it is worth noting that good collaborative dynamics may not, in themselves, be sufficient for achieving change.

To promote collaboration and provide a mix of incentives and pressures towards better use of natural resources, a lot of effort is currently being invested in jurisdictional programs for addressing tropical deforestation (Fishbein and Lee 2015). These programs have boundaries that are relevant to policy on the national or local level, and their underlying strategy requires a high level of governmental involvement (Fishbein and Lee 2015). These jurisdictional programs need to be carried out either at the national level or at one administrative step below the national level in order to have a globally significant impact. This is the scale of interest for this paper.

Cross-sector collaboration as an enabler of change

Collective action across sector boundaries, cross-sector collaboration, is increasingly assumed to be necessary for addressing many of society's most difficult challenges, including those of deforestation and forest conservation. During our literature research we found dozens of examples, especially in the North American social sectors, of initiatives that have brought together disparate stakeholders to achieve jointly what no organization could have achieved alone.

In the literature, the term 'cross-sector' is used in different ways. Where different domains of society (e.g. the civil, private and public sectors) are concerned, collaborations are sometimes referred to as 'multi-stakeholder,' whilst 'cross-sector' refers to collaboration between different themes of the economy (e.g. forestry, agriculture, energy, mining, etc.). We, however, do not make this distinction. For us 'cross-sector collaboration' covers collaboration between different parts of the economy and/or of society. We believe that these two areas are compatible and complementary and should be considered together.

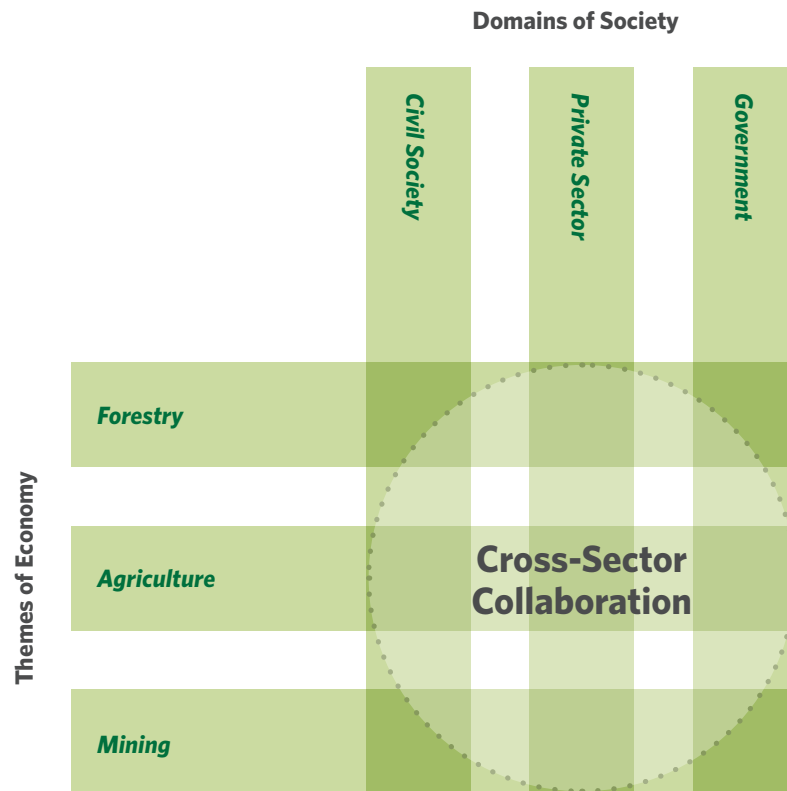


Figure: Schematic representation of cross-sector collaboration in-between themes of the economy and/or domains of society (own elaboration)

Bryson, Crosby and Middleton Stone defined cross-sector collaboration as “the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately” (Bryson, Crosby, and Middleton Stone 2006). They propose a general framework for understanding cross-sector collaboration (Figure below) that is also useful for others interested in cross-sector collaboration (FAO 2017).

The possible forms that collaboration can take, and what makes it work well, is a topic that has been widely written about, and several frameworks for collaborative efforts have been proposed (Box). For our purposes, we need a flexible framework that can be applied in diverse circumstances, including those surrounding tropical land-use dynamics.

Several frameworks for collaborative efforts

The Bridgespan Group put the concept of a field (and field building) at the center of their investigation into efforts towards collaborative systems-change in California's education sector. A field is *"a community of organizations and individuals: working together towards a common goal, and using a set of common approaches to achieving that goal"* (The Bridgespan Group 2009).

The Leadership Learning Community is interested in networks, which they observe in a wide range of social contexts: *"a network is a set of relationships that are characterized by both strong and weak ties. Strong ties are characterized by high levels of trust, reciprocity, and sense of community, whereas weak ties cross boundaries and are a source of new ideas, information, and resources"* (Meehan and Reinelt 2012)

The idea of 'constellations' of collaboration was developed by people working in the public health sector in Canada: *"small, self-organizing teams that [...] thread into an overall partnership, which is held together with a framework that shares leadership between the partners"* (Surman and Surman 2008).

A seminal Stanford Social Innovation Review paper in 2011 first proposed the concept of collective impact initiatives (Kania and Kramer 2011). It was authored by several staff of FSG, a consulting firm that had been looking at high-school education in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. According to this research, collective impact initiatives are: *"the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem."* Such collective impact initiatives are expected to be more successful in galvanizing social change than other forms of collaboration, in part because they use intermediaries that bring together partners and facilitate communication, providing backbone support.

For this paper on cross-sector collaboration in the land sector and its backbone support, we are using the framework developed by Bryson, Crosby and Middleton Stone for guidance (Figure). It refers to five components of success for initiatives engaging in cross-sector collaborations. This framework is the basis for the set of diagnostic questions that is laid out in the second part of this paper.



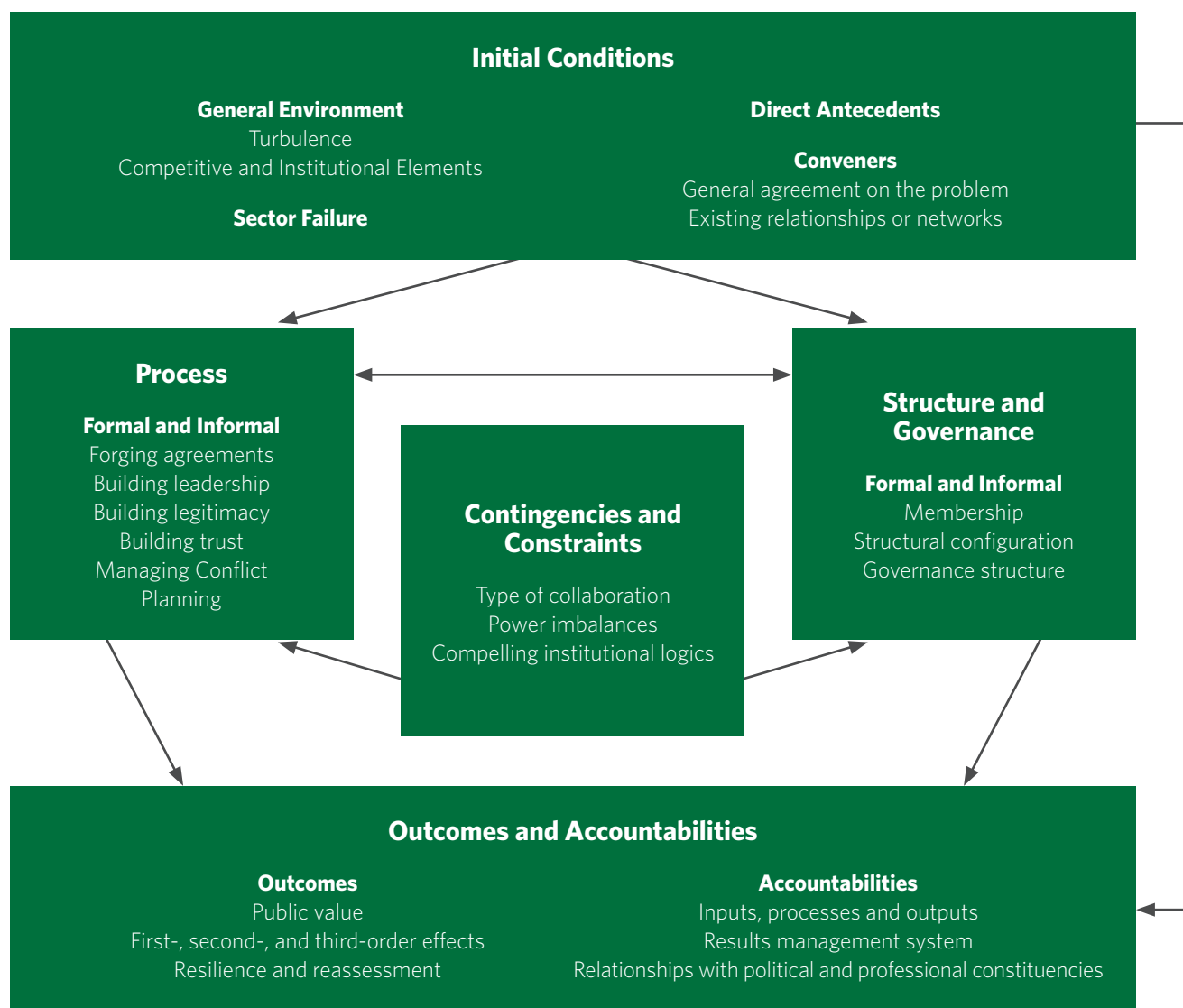


Figure: Framework for understanding cross-sector collaboration (Bryson, Crosby, and Middleton Stone 2006)

A common form of collective action in the land sector happens at the scale of landscapes and is often referred to as integrated landscape management, or undertaking a landscape approach. According to the Little Sustainable Landscapes Book (Denier et al. 2015), a joint product between several leading non-profit organizations, such integrated landscape management is a “way of managing the landscape that involves collaboration among multiple stakeholders, with the purpose of achieving sustainable landscapes. The governance structure, size and scope, and number and types of stakeholders involved (e.g. private sector, civil society, government) can vary. The level of cooperation also varies, from information sharing and consultation, to more formal models with shared decision-making and joint implementation” (Denier et al. 2015). Such thinking around integrated landscape management reflects the work of several organizations in the sector including the work on public-private-civic partnerships by IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative (Heiner et al. 2017).

The Little Sustainable Landscapes Book (Denier et al. 2015) lays out five elements of integrated landscape management that closely match the description of collective impact initiatives described above. These are: a) a multi-stakeholder forum that ensures continuous communication; b) a shared understanding of the landscape, its challenges and opportunities, reflecting a common agenda; c) collaborative planning of agreed actions to enable mutually reinforcing activities; d) shared monitoring for adaptive management and accountability; and e) effective implementation.

Despite their focus on the land sector, none of these frameworks squarely focuses on the topic of interest in our report: cross-sector collaboration in the land-use sector and at the scale of jurisdictional programs. Although the term is sometimes used in a different way, we understand jurisdictional programs to be significantly more complex than landscape approaches. For example, most REDD+ programs are drawn up for countries or for jurisdictions that are just one step below the national level. On this larger scale, a multitude of drivers and actors are relevant that can be closely involved in policy-making processes. The next sections look into what might be different about cross-sector collaboration for jurisdictional land use programs.

Jurisdictional programs addressing tropical deforestation as a particular case of cross-sector collaboration

Much of the theory explained in the previous sections to do with complex societal problems, cross-sector collaboration, and collective impact was developed based on experiences in North American social sectors such as health and education. We believe that this thinking may also be useful for conceptualizing collaboration in jurisdictional programs tackling tropical deforestation.

To leverage this conceptual work surrounding cross-sector collaboration, we need to seriously consider how the context of deforestation at the jurisdictional scale of tropical developing countries might be different from the context of the North American social sectors, in which the concepts surrounding collective impact were developed. Jurisdictional programs are collaborations among a network of actors who voluntarily associate themselves with an effort to achieve sustainability across a politically-defined unit of area (usually a state or province) over a defined period of time.

Based on our interviews, we consider the following aspects of the tropical deforestation context to be important factors that may affect collaboration in such jurisdictional programs:

- Weak governance context
- Capacity constraints of major actors
- Special importance of external funding
- Difficult scale involving policy makers

Tropical landscapes often have an especially weak overall governance context. Some of the countries with highest deforestation rates are also those with lowest governance indicators, to the point where lack of effective governance is often considered a key underlying deforestation driver (Kissinger, Herold, and De Sy 2012). A weak governance context might create a lack of trust between actors making agreement between them especially hard to reach. Intermediaries may therefore be essential to facilitate dialogue.

Related to this, actors in tropical landscapes in the public, civic and private sectors face capacity constraints that are often more severe than in North America's social sector. Because of such limitations, cross-sector collaboration may require more input from external actors, both for enabling collaboration and for funding actor activities. Notably, local organizations with the capabilities required for providing backbone support may not exist in many places, so extensive capacity development would be necessary before support for collaborative efforts could be undertaken.

Jurisdictional programs for tackling tropical deforestation often have substantial external funding. This can be helpful. FAO observes that *“coordination across sectors and even sub-sectors, particularly in government agencies, has been the exception rather than the norm, so that it has often been left to external organizations to advocate for greater cross-sectoral policy and program coordination”* (FAO 2017). It can also be challenging if international actors promote collaboration that does not have genuine buy-in of local actors. When it comes to tackling tropical deforestation, these external organizations are often international entities or their proxies.

We observe that the dynamic among stakeholders of land use in tropical forest landscapes is often determined by scale, varying if the interaction takes place at the level of villages, districts or regencies, federal states or provinces or at the national or even global level. Some of the push for international coordination comes from actors working at a global level, such as NGOs and international organizations, internationally operating donors, etc. At this global level the issues requiring coordination may often be seen with a considerable degree of abstraction making it easier for actors to reach an agreement (FAO 2017).

On the other extreme of the spectrum, on the level of villages, individual projects or even at the level of landscapes, actors will tend to be more connected and the range of interests is usually narrower (FAO 2017). The reality on the ground is often already cross-sectoral in nature (Figure) when forest managers regularly interact with partners in the public, private and civil sectors, as well as partners from agriculture, forestry and the environment, to name just a few. Reflecting this situation, the literature on governance of natural resource use refers to collective action to improve sustainable management of forest resources (Ostrom 2000).

Development efforts aiming to achieve transformative change across societal systems surrounding land use and deforestation need to have an impact at the level of large administrative units or entire countries. It has been observed that on this scale collaboration is hardest to achieve because actors are more isolated from each other (FAO 2017). In the first place this is because addressing tropical deforestation at the level of jurisdictions needs to involve government institutions, private sector and civil society actors that are not only ‘policy takers,’ but also ‘policy makers’ – actors with entrenched interests for whom achieving compromise is especially hard. The larger scale is also likely to exacerbate the complexities surrounding land-use drivers and to have effects on livelihoods, markets, policies and governance alike (Kissinger, Herold, and De Sy 2012).

Since achieving cross-sector collaboration at the scale of jurisdictional programs is especially hard, bringing a multitude of actors together requires competent intermediaries. Their role is the topic of the next section.

Backbone support for cross-sector collaboration

One of the key purposes in writing this paper is to understand the institutional enablers of cross-sector collaboration – the intermediaries or ‘backbone organizations.’ The importance of intermediaries for galvanizing collaboration is soon apparent. The role of these intermediaries has been described in investigations of the collaborative systems-change efforts of disparate stakeholders according to how they contribute to field building (Figure).



Figure: Several types of intermediaries for collaborative efforts (modified from Hussein, Plummer, and Breen 2018)



Certain intermediaries focus on supporting already relatively coherent fields such as those that advocate for sustainable forest management, or promote rural livelihoods. Where fields are fragmented, as is often the case for those aiming to tackle tropical deforestation, support for cross-sector collaboration may need to take a different form. 'Backbone organizations' are the intermediaries that facilitate cross-sector collaboration in these sorts of especially challenging situations.

Although there are different kinds of intermediaries, the term 'backbone' is heavily used by those who frame their work as collective impact: "*the backbone is the support infrastructure for a collective impact initiative*" (FSG, n.d.). According to this idea, backbone support consists of six common activities that enable collective impact (support multi-stakeholder forum, guide vision and strategy, advance policy, mobilize resources, moderate and manage conflict related to the collaboration, and establish a shared monitoring and evaluation system). Although we also use the term 'backbone' in this paper, we do not mean to imply that our thinking on cross-sector collaboration matches the concept of collective impact initiatives exactly. We are interested in understanding institutional enablers of cross-sector collaboration and the roles that intermediaries can play in the specific context of jurisdictional programs.

Intermediaries are not universally presented as a key to integrated landscape management despite their resonance with the ideas around collective impact initiatives. The Little Sustainable Landscapes Book (Denier et al. 2015) includes a recommendation to "*recognize and strengthen local and institutional platforms for meeting, sharing, consulting, acting and monitoring in landscapes,*" which arguably sums up what backbone support consists of, but there is little detail provided on intermediaries. Instead, multi-stakeholder forums are expected to directly take on a strong leadership role.

Elsewhere, IDH's guidance on public-private-civic partnerships (Heiner et al. 2017), which uses the concept of integrated landscape management, carves out a role for 'landscape conveners.' These develop "*multi-stakeholder initiatives with strong private sector engagement and effective governance systems that promote sustainable land and water management not only at farm but also at landscape scale.*" Together with input from other actors (partnership members, the IDH, knowledge partners and outreach partners), these landscape conveners carry out backbone support activities, where this support is split across several actors.

Synthesis of the rationale for cross-sector collaboration in tackling tropical deforestation

Tackling the deforestation problem is tough. Deforestation is an adverse consequence of misaligned economic, environmental and socio-cultural systems. Complex feedback loops develop and powerfully lock-in the status quo. Although there is no magic bullet, bringing together the diverse actors from different relevant sectors may at least do justice to the systemic nature of the problem.

For forest managers the reality on the ground may appear to already be cross-sector in nature. They may regularly need to interact and collaborate with partners from the public, private and civil sectors, who work in agriculture, forestry and environment, to name just a few. At the institutional, administrative and policy level, however, governments and private sector players tend to be organized administratively by sector, with resource allocated and accountability managed accordingly. Over time such sectoral 'silos' create an entrenched view of the divided sectors that hampers attempts to address complex societal problems that are cross-sector in nature, such as health, food security or climate change - as well as attempts to address tropical deforestation.

Cross-sector collaboration, when successful, overcomes some of these boundaries and unlocks synergies between actors. Because of this, policy approaches from the environmental sector, such as the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2018) and the Paris Agreement with its Nationally Determined Contributions, have recently emphasized the importance of cross-sector collaboration.¹ Time and again it has been shown in scientific studies that collective action has the potential to improve the sustainable use of resources, including in forest management.

Cross-sector collaboration is hard work, however. It needs a narrow set of circumstances to be successful including a shared motivation and the capacity for joint actions. It is heavy on process and requires its own governance setup. Backbone support that takes some of the burden off collaborating actors might well be part of the ‘secret sauce’ that makes collaborative efforts successful.

Expectations are high, but doubts about cross-sector collaboration are also entrenched. In a recent publication, FAO observed that *“In many countries there persists a view that identifying interconnectedness between different sectors related to food and agriculture, and working in a cross-sectoral way is simply too difficult to carry out”* (FAO 2017). In face of such reservations and to make sure that we are guided by a solid, fact-based analysis of the merits of cross-sector collaboration, rather than by wishful thinking, the second part of this document sets out a set of diagnostic questions for assessing cross-sector collaboration and its backbone support in specific cases.

Part II: Diagnosing cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs

Given the information in the preceding sections on cross-sector collaboration and the particular context of tropical deforestation, how could cross-sector collaboration take shape as part of jurisdictional programs to address tropical deforestation? And what role could intermediaries play in providing backbone support?

The following sections set out a set of diagnostic questions with five components that can be used to assess cross-sector collaboration within jurisdictional programs for addressing tropical deforestation. The components are: (1) Initial conditions; (2) Outcomes; (3) Collaboration dynamics; (4) Structure and governance; (5) Backbone support; and (6) Accountabilities. This tool is based on the framework already introduced (see Figure above). As has already been observed, its components for collaboration dynamics and for structure and governance are closely related to backbone support.

¹ In an indirectly related piece of work, we examined 25% of all NDCs and found that: 73% of all NDCs mention that a multi-sector body (such as an inter-ministerial commission, a council or a cross-sector ministry or department) is responsible for the development and coordination of climate policy; 51% of all NDCs state explicitly the need for integrating climate change issues into sector policies and strategies; and approximately 13.5% of all NDCs highlight challenges related to lack of cross-sector coordination, fragmentation or capacity constraints to integrate climate policy on sector levels.

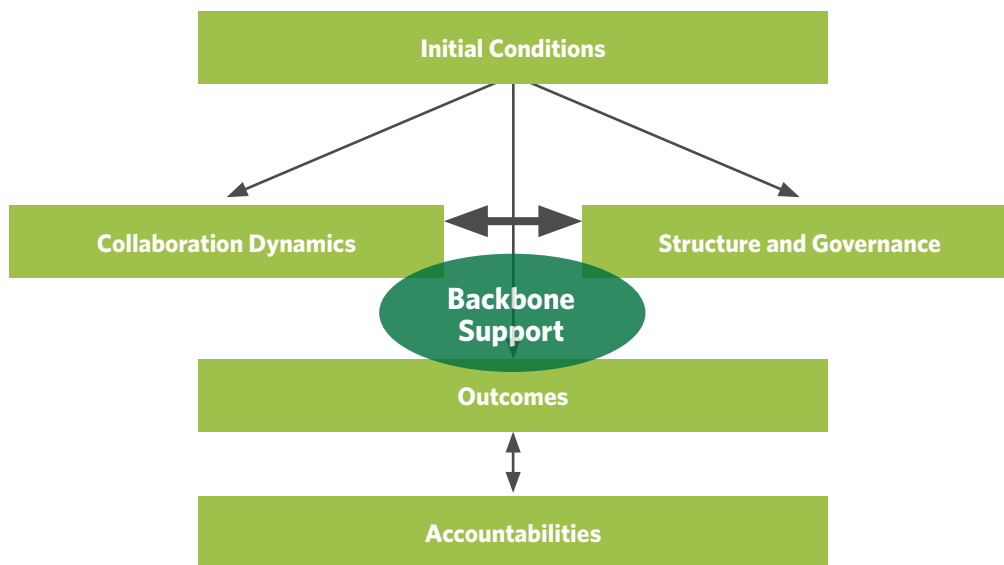


Figure: Structure of the set of diagnostic questions to assess cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs for addressing tropical deforestation and its backbone support

The set of diagnostic questions for use in interviews with actors from cross-sector collaborations and their supporting intermediaries has been developed so that it can also be used for self-assessment in collaboration efforts.

When developing the diagnostic question set, we analyzed the relevant literature (summarized in the previous section), and case studies (listed in the annex) and conducted a number of interviews (listed in the acknowledgements) mostly related to the case studies. In the following discussion of the components of the set of diagnostic questions, the results of those interviews therefore serve to illustrate many of the points we make. The interviews were mostly guided by earlier versions of the set of diagnostic questions (a questionnaire is included in the annex).

1. Initial conditions: Windows of opportunity for cross-sector collaboration

The initial conditions need to be conducive before a collaborative effort can be undertaken. Actors must be in agreement that deforestation is to some degree a cross-sector problem, and they also need a minimum level of mutual trust as a basis for joint work, in addition to the necessary backbone support.

1.1 Diagnostic question: Do actors perceive deforestation as a cross-sector problem and to what extent do they agree on its causes and solutions?

Cross-sector collaboration for addressing tropical deforestation can only be successful where actors from different sectors perceive land-use dynamics as a problem. Beyond this point, a shared perception of the deforestation problem should also include a shared view of the causes and the possible solutions to that problem. These could develop over the course a successful collaboration (Figure).

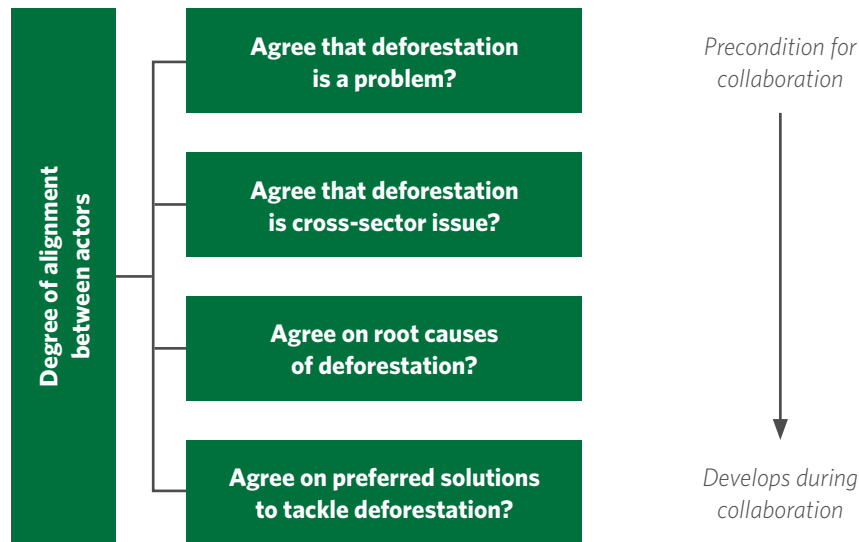


Figure: Degree of alignment between (potentially collaborating) actors' views on the deforestation problem (own elaboration)

Even when actors agree in principle that deforestation needs to be addressed, they may not see the need for collaboration with other sectors or institutions. There may be a temptation to take action that is isolated within the sector or institution, oblivious to what happens outside this 'silo.'

Secondly, even when actors agree in perceiving deforestation as a problem that is cross-sector in nature, this does not mean that they will necessarily share a common understanding of its root causes. For example the studies of deforestation drivers in a REDD+ context also serve to instill a degree of systems thinking among actors that should make the need for a cross-sector effort more obvious.

Thirdly, even where actors have developed a shared understanding of the root causes of deforestation, finding common ground across sector boundaries on viable solutions to the problem can still be painful, because opposing interests may prevail. For example, one of our interviewees reported how REDD+ processes typically include steps for institutional context analysis and stakeholder mapping to uncover the political economy surrounding deforestation. To develop a shared view on the interests and constraints of land-use actors can take collaborating actors months and even years to accomplish.

1.2 Diagnostic question: What (unsuccessful) efforts have individual actors undertaken in the past to address the deforestation problem?

Where past isolated efforts have failed, the insight is more likely to grow that a single actor or sector cannot address a given problem alone and hence cross-sector collaboration is not only desirable but necessary.

In an idealized way, 'failing into collaboration' might develop something like this (Bryson, Crosby, and Middleton Stone 2006):

- The point of departure might be the expectation that the private sector (agribusinesses, forest companies, food industries, etc.) will use forests and lands without losing sight of the need to retain a sufficient resource base for future generations and with attention to the continued provision of ecosystem services.

- Only where the private sector fails, is there a role for civil society to engage in advocacy, or for governments to take steps towards fixing the problem.
- Where governments and civil society also fail and deforestation continues, international actors, whether international NGOs or other governments, may step in to protect forests.
- (Clearly, even such cross-sector collaboration covering private sector, government and civil society, with support by international actors could still be insufficient to guarantee better resource management, indicating a public failure.)

1.3 Diagnostic question: Has a window of opportunity for a new collaborative initiative appeared?

Where actors perceive deforestation as problematic and there is interest in setting up a new jurisdictional program it is worth asking why such cross-sector collaboration is not already happening. Identifying the potential for cross-sector collaboration requires understanding where and how windows of opportunity can open to allow innovative actor relationships. The cases we analyzed included situations where there was a shift in incentives to actors, new intermediaries joined, or there was simply mounting pressure.

A turbulent environment may offer opportunities for change in the land-use regime. Where the political, socio-cultural and economic systems are changing, windows of opportunity may open up for cross-sector collaboration. Our interviewees pointed to one of the basic premises for REDD+ programs which promise lavish results-based payments to tropical forest countries. This additional incentive for land-use actors equates to a fundamental shift in the land-use regime, creating the opportunity for jurisdictional programs.

Even where shifts in the exogenous environment are not obvious it is possible that the pressure on actors mounting over time becomes unbearable, creating the need to engage in collaboration or else to exit the situation, where possible (Kahane 2012). Where the deforestation problem grows increasingly unbearable for land-use actors, and where their unilateral attempts to address it have failed (see previous Subsection on past efforts), the opportunity for a new jurisdictional program that could bring change might open up. Although this situation is discussed in the literature surrounding transformative scenario planning (Kahane 2012), we did not actually encounter it in our interviews.

Several of our cases also show the advent of an intermediary as the factor that instigated the cross-sector collaboration. For example, IDH's engagement in Liberia's production, protection, inclusion arrangements for palm oil outgrowing is seen as essential for cross-sector collaboration, and so is GIZ's support through the International Water Stewardship Program in Zambia.

Even where the window of opportunity is not yet open, external engagement can create collaborative activities. Donor-funded projects often engage with actors from different sectors, especially those who participate directly in relevant activities. Where self-interest does not clearly extend beyond participation in the donor funding, however, these collaborative efforts are likely to evaporate once support is withdrawn.

1.4 Diagnostic question: To what extent do actors have a basic level of mutual trust?

Even the most complete transparency over conflicting interests and constraints does not mean that common ground can be found, but an appreciation of the other side's point of view can still help build trust. One of our interviewees reported a case of conflicting viewpoints concerning a large-scale conservation program where an unexpected budget freeze forced the government to renege on an earlier pledge to match donor funding. Although the earlier commitments were not met, keeping partners informed meant that trust was maintained in the relationship and funding commitments could be deferred.

Pre-existing networks or relationships are seen as important enablers of collaboration. Where mutual trust in each other's openness to regular communication is not given, bringing together actors from different sectors may be especially challenging. Conversely, where actors already work together in some capacity (e.g. participate in the same supply chains, adhere to the same political parties, or even maintain social relationships) cross-sector collaboration may be easier to bring about.

1.5 Concluding on the potential for successful cross-sector collaboration

Windows of opportunity for cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs may open as a last resort when actors realize that their unilateral efforts to tackle tropical deforestation often fail. Shared views of the deforestation problem and a basic level of mutual trust can then become the basis for joint work.

The potential for successful cross-sector collaboration depends on past attempts to rein in deforestation. The actors' views of the deforestation problem, its causes and solution, as well as the existing relationships between actors are all relevant issues. Lasting improvements to the dynamic between actors are more likely to occur where the collaborative effort is a response to a need perceived by the collaborating actors themselves, and where a window of opportunity in the systemic environment of tropical deforestation dynamics has opened up, directly linking the individuals' and organizations' self-interest with the common good.

Unfortunately, there is little confidence that even favorable conditions will translate into any definite diagnosis of likely success. The authors of the paper from which we borrowed our analytical framework (see Figure above) attested (more recently) that "*Theory, empirical research, and practice all reveal that because cross-sector collaborations are so complex and dynamic and operate in such diverse contexts, it is unlikely that research-based recipes can be produced*" (Bryson, Crosby, and Middleton Stone 2015). The conducive factors listed above (basic agreement on the nature of a problem and the need for a cross-sector response, pre-existing networks, etc.) are not to be understood as sufficient preconditions for success.

Facilitating an understanding of problems and their causes that is shared between actors, enhancing their understanding of conflicting interest and consequently building trust – these count among the objectives of backbone support. Where such support is already available, and where there are actors willing to take on such a role in supporting collaboration among actors, backbone support may be an important success factor for cross-sector collaboration.

2. Outcomes: Goals and theory of change for the collaboration

Cross-sector collaborations aims to achieve an overarching societal goal, which different actors can agree on, and which links to their self-interests. For example, jurisdictional REDD+ programs aim to mitigate climate change through reduced deforestation, while simultaneously guaranteeing agricultural production and the continued provision of ecosystem services. Cross-sector collaboration is crucial to achieving the societal goal as an enabler offering entry points for structuring development programs and their theories of change.

2.1 Diagnostic question: In what ways is the larger societal goal compatible with actors' self-interest?

Actors collaborate to achieve significant goals of relevance to society that are sufficiently abstract and encompassing that multiple objectives can be linked to them. For example, reducing tropical deforestation (the topic of this report) is a prominent interest of international actors with an environmental agenda. Although to stop forest conversion is essentially a negative proposition,

the goal of tackling deforestation can be restated as a positive goal in the context of rural economic and social development. This more positive proposition might appeal to local and international actors working on integrated rural development, which also helps reduce forest loss.

Even as a positive goal in broader rural development efforts, however, responsible resource use does not offer obvious user benefits because sustainability is a collective good. There are two consequences of this. Firstly, since the narrow self-interest of most land-use actors does not lead them to tackle deforestation, public authorities and civil society organizations are still crucial to addressing the deforestation problem (Geels 2011). This is why it is essential for jurisdictional programs for tackling tropical deforestation to involve policy makers. And, secondly, actors' self-interest needs to be linked to the larger societal goals of integrated rural development and reduction of deforestation. Where the case for engagement is less than crystal clear to actors and may be largely supported by a precarious agreement over high-level goals, cross-sector collaborations will remain fragile, because they are "mixed-motive" situation[s], in which participants reserve the right of 'exit' to protect their other, un-shared objectives" (Crosby and Bryson 2005).

For example, among international REDD+ experts, there is often talk about the need for land-use actors to make tough choices, e.g. ceasing profitable land-use conversion in favor of conservation (Neeff, Göhler, and Ascui 2014). This does not contradict the views in the literature that partnerships of 'mutual gain' can support lasting collaboration (Bryson, Crosby, and Middleton Stone 2006). But it means that actors engage into collaborative efforts only as a last resort when they have run out of options for tackling unbearable problems by themselves (Kahane 2012). In this situation actors may see their 'tough choices' as supporting their self-interests.

2.2 *Diagnostic question: How can cross-sector collaboration change the relationship between collaborating actors?*

Although one might perceive cross-sector collaboration only as a means of achieving its societal goals and not as an end in itself, many of our interviewees saw fundamental value in the enhanced communication, improved trust and more balanced networks between landscape actors that cross-sector collaboration brings about. One of our interviewees stated that "you just have to look at partner dynamics and how they improved, that tells you a lot, even if deforestation possibly continues." We believe that such perceived intrinsic value in improved partner relations is part of improved resource governance. Regardless of whether a specific development initiative leverages it for addressing tropical deforestation, it will have laid the ground work for future progress.

However, it is difficult to achieve sustainably improved partner relations, and the closeness of actors may fluctuate depending on the context and collaborative phase (see section on structure and governance). The collaboration may grow closer over time as its dynamics evolve and the collaborative initiative continues successfully. To begin with, no deeper engagement than only a fairly limited exchange of information is to be expected. In the long term, however, actors may develop a deeper trust, get used to resolving conflicts and see the benefits of surrendering their autonomy and taking on the burden of coordination (Figure).

From early stages with isolated action to advanced stages of successful cross-sector collaboration



Trust? Resource competition? Conflicts? Surrendering autonomy? Coordination burden?

Figure: Spectrum of increasingly close collaboration (own elaboration)

When the collaboration unfolds, communication between actors may improve as they begin to have a mutual appreciation of each other's drivers and constraints. In this case, a degree of improved networks, trust levels and entry points for communication could remain even after direct support for the cross-sector collaboration is no longer provided, withdrawing the immediate occasion for gatherings and coordination. For example, the three-year development process for the Portland-Vancouver Regional Urban Forestry Strategy repeatedly brought municipality representatives from the region together to jointly focus on urban forestry and tree cover. After the external funding ended, an improved appreciation of the topic remained, and enabled spin-off initiatives on a smaller scale. "After grant money came down in level of importance and visibility, what carries on, though, are the networks that you created."

2.3 Diagnostic question: How do the interim results of the cross-sector collaboration lead towards the larger societal goal?

Development agencies often frame their ambitious goals in terms of transformative change (see Part I) such as upgrades to governance and markets or the cultural, regulatory and/or political systems that drive land use. They use theories of change as roadmaps, which connect the investment undertaken with the larger goals to be achieved, in this case with reducing deforestation.

These efforts for strategic planning of development interventions have received a fair share of criticism. It has been pointed out that accurate planning requires being able to predict the often turbulent environment of jurisdictional programs for addressing deforestation. The best strategies are often emergent and could not possibly be drawn up ahead of time. Attempts to formalize these sorts of emergent solutions to turbulent realities in a theory of change have been unhelpful (Mintzberg 1994).

Despite these doubts, theories of change remain the tool of choice not only for most cross-sector collaborations that rely on donor funding, but also for understanding collective impact initiatives in developed countries across all sectors (Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact 2018). According to these theories, change comes about through effects at three levels:

- First order effects are the direct result of sponsored activities (e.g. technical capacity development for staff at cooperating partners, publications, conferences, etc.)

- Second order effects occur when first order effects are taken up as outcome (e.g. changes to policy frameworks, improved capacities, partner agreements, improved communication among collaborating partners, etc.)
- Third order effects are sustained systemic changes and their long-term impact (e.g. improved livelihoods, adjusted deforestation trends, etc.)

In these theories of change, backbone support can be considered as an output of jurisdictional programs to tackle tropical deforestation. Improved relationships between actors are its expected outcome. Sustaining such improved collaboration even beyond the availability of international funding is a precondition of impact (Figure).

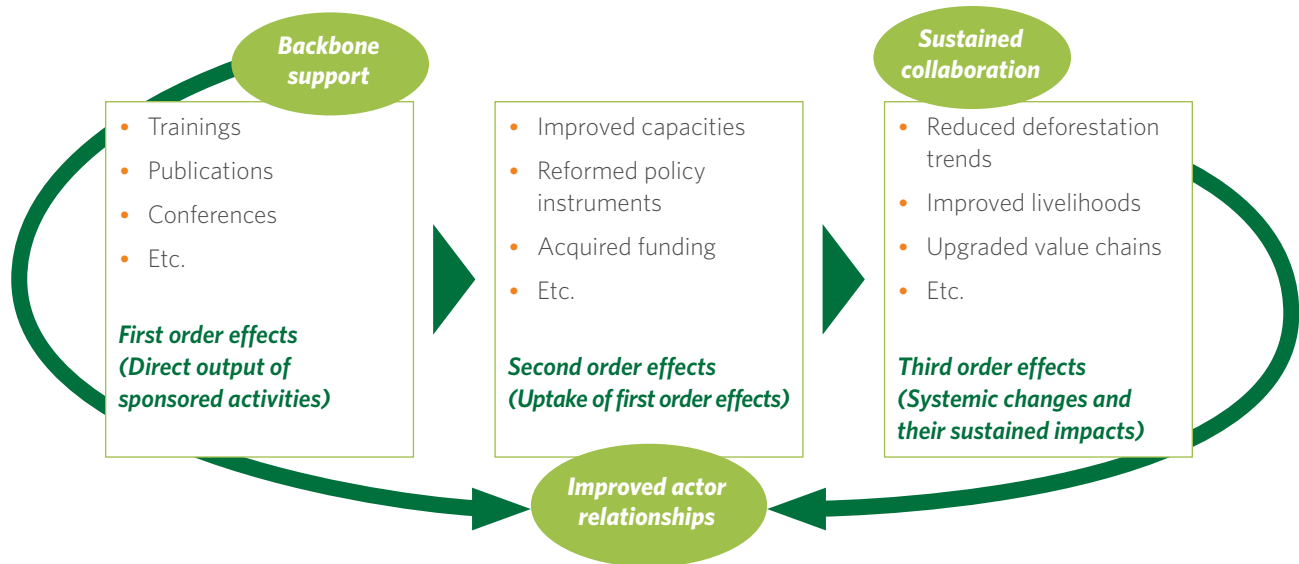


Figure: Cross-sector collaboration at three levels of effects in theories of change (own elaboration)

When discussing the specific initiatives they are engaged in, our interviewees did not usually claim that the cross-sector collaborations had achieved the larger societal goals that they were purportedly set up to accomplish in any verifiable way. Such third order effects are hard to track, because they happen over the long term as an indirect consequence of the actions that have been taken, making it difficult to observe them directly. Because of this, a recent evaluation of 25 collective impact initiatives around the world found more verifiable information on first and second order effects, even among initiatives that are widely considered successful (Spark Policy Institute and ORS Impact 2018).

A focus on the balance of interests in a cross-sector collaboration offers lessons on how to achieve larger societal goals that can be built into theories of change. Speaking about the experience of the 2011 NEXUS conference on *The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus – Solutions for the Green Economy*, one of our interviewees emphasized how “successful initiatives need to be built from the core interest of actual decision makers as a starting point; otherwise, donor funding is at risk to create parallel structures to actual decision making,” and thus, a collaborative regime must very directly link individuals’ and organizations’ self-interest with the common good.

2.4 Building collaborative dynamics and backbone support into theories of change

Backbone support could be built into the theories of change when planning jurisdictional programs since improvements in the relationships between actors as an indirect result of long term backbone support may impact land-use dynamics. Although cross-sector collaboration is sometimes seen only as a means of achieving specific societal goals, and not as an end in itself, the enhanced communication, improved trust and more balanced networks between landscape actors that are created through cross-sector collaboration are a fundamental aspect of improved resource governance.

As a patent success factor in addressing tropical deforestation, collaborative dynamics could be built into the theories of change that are used to structure development initiatives, including jurisdictional programs for addressing tropical deforestation. Outputs could be devised to cover the key aspects of backbone support (laid out in the section on collaborative dynamics). More outcomes could relate to the agreements between collaborating partners (see the section on structure and governance). Donor exit strategies should take into account that sustained collaboration may be a precondition for achieving long-term impacts.

Although theories of change might be appealing and convincing, linking reduced deforestation directly to progress in cross-sector collaboration or its backbone support could be difficult. It is only over in the long term that improved actor relationships can translate into third-order effects on larger societal goals and, when that happens, measuring it will be problematic. By the same token, even where systemic changes to land-use systems are obvious, it requires making significant assumptions to attribute that reduced deforestation to cross-sector collaboration, let alone to the backbone support it received. Hence, neither success nor failure in deforestation reduction should be attributed to such backbone support since improved relationships between actors may only impact land-use dynamics indirectly and over the long term.

Looking beyond the narrowly defined objectives of deforestation reduction, backbone support could contribute to easier communication, improved trust and more balanced networks between landscape actors. Where there are lasting improvements to such conditions for collaboration between sectors, progress towards larger societal goals through other initiatives might be easier.

3. Collaboration dynamics: How actors work together and use backbone support

A multi-stakeholder forum is at the center of the cross-sector collaboration that brings actors together in jurisdictional programs. The forum tackles the issues that make up collaboration: strategy development, policy advancement, resource mobilization etc.

To be effective, collaboration requires backbone support. There are as many roles for capable intermediaries as there are issues that make up collaboration (Table).

Table: Aspects of cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs and potential backbone support activities (modified from FSG, n.d.)

Aspects of cross-sector collaboration	Potential activities of backbone support
Multi-stakeholder forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing the multi-stakeholder forum and its mandate • Identifying and convening key actors • Facilitating ongoing communication between the collaborating actors, actively addressing any power imbalances • Feeding high-quality data into the dialogue
Strategy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out research into the problems surrounding land-use dynamics • Facilitating a dialogue for developing a common vision statement or strategic document • Serving as an assuming thought leader for the initiative • Support planning process • Facilitating information sharing and dialogue on planning of actors • Updating the shared vision and activity plans as the context develops and the strategy unfolds
Policy advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating, jointly with national partners, for a policy agenda that is informed by the cross-sector collaboration • Identifying and engaging the right actors that can support policy advancement • Making expertise available to the policy-making process, including by providing a strong evidence base on how sector policies impact deforestation trends
Resource mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising for the cross-sector collaboration itself • Fundraising for partner activities supporting the ultimate objectives of the collaboration • Project cycle management for external funding
Conflict management between collaborating actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing the constraints that actors are under and continue to identify those areas where there is momentum • Improving the transparency of the most painful parts of in cross-sector collaboration • Providing the collaboration with an evidence base
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and building measurement systems • Providing technical assistance to build capacity for actors to handle data

Collaborative initiatives evolve as they mature or suffer external shocks. Some of the aspects listed here that potentially make up cross-sector collaboration are not typically to be found in incipient collaborative efforts. For example, joint planning and pooling of resources would only be appropriate in advanced collaborative initiatives, if ever. In addition, initiatives may suffer external shocks, requiring a scaling-back of collaboration. Senior staff may leave, donor support may dry up, and the political macro-context may change. For example, one of our interviewees discussed the case where major REDD+ donors were taken aback by the operational decision taken in an African forest country to issue logging concessions in spite of a moratorium on new industrial logging titles. Further allocation of REDD+ funding was put on hold around the same time and negotiations surrounding results-based payments have not advanced since.

The backbone support that is provided to collaborative initiatives within jurisdictional programs for tackling deforestation will need to evolve together with the initiatives themselves. As the initiative matures or suffers external shocks, its scope may grow or shrink, creating the need to expand or scale back backbone support.

3.1 Diagnostic question: What is the role of a multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support?

A multi-stakeholder forum is a pivotal feature of cross-sector collaboration because it brings actors together for strategy development, policy advancement, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation. Depending on the phase of a collaboration, the core functions of backbone support include contributing to the design of a multi-stakeholder forum, choosing actors from within the land-use and other sectors, bringing them together and facilitating their interactions.

Careful design of the forum, its institutional embedding, mandate and participation are crucial. In some cases it may be possible to use an existing multi-stakeholder forum; in other cases a new forum is needed. In terms of the mandate, in a subsequent section on structure and governance we will argue that most multi-stakeholder forums largely provide information exchange, while more advanced collaborative initiatives also sometimes devolve decision making power to the forum. In jurisdictional programs, the multi-stakeholder forums are usually connected to a government entity that also acts as chair. This entity needs to be well chosen as it will set the tone for the cross-sector collaboration. For those collaborations that are in a strategy development phase, backbone support will involve contributing to the design of the multi-stakeholder forum and its mandate.

A dialogue, as well as broader collaboration, can only be effective if it involves the right actors and if they can be brought together regularly. The design of the multi-stakeholder forum will therefore also include picking the right actors. Rather than having ‘everybody in the room,’ the dialogue facilitator, needs to make an effort to identify those actors that are relevant to the deforestation problem and that are willing to engage with it, and each other.

Collaborating partners meet during the sessions of the multi-stakeholder forum, as well as for preparation and follow up, and also communicate in many informal ways also alongside the forum itself. Backbone support involves facilitating this dialogue. By running meetings purposefully, intermediaries can address any power imbalances and ensure the dialogue is fact-based.

Where there are power imbalances between actors, there is a risk that less powerful actors will take the backseat in the cross-sector collaboration and let the more powerful actors dominate the dialogue. Facilitating dialogue therefore requires actively addressing any power imbalances and giving attention to the less powerful actors to enable their engagement in dialogue with more powerful actors.

Dialogue between diverse actors needs to be independent of the specific policy agenda of individual partners. Using data as an entry point to dialogue may be a way to balance the need for an unbiased thought process with the need to tackle the often politically charged issues surrounding the deforestation problem. An intermediary focused on the evidence base may be seen as an honest broker, and backbone support therefore involves feeding high-quality data into the dialogue between collaborating actors.

3.2 Diagnostic question: How do you develop a vision and use it for planning?

A degree of initial agreement on the deforestation problem is in most cases a precondition for collaboration (see the previous section on initial conditions). However, using this agreement to build a shared vision for change, and a plan for implementation, will be an immensely challenging task since it requires collaborating actors to deal with strong constraints and motivating factors.

To share a vision for collaboration actors must agree on the root causes of deforestation. To work jointly to implement that vision requires a shared view on the preferred solutions. During the initial phase of a new cross-sector collaboration (see the section on structure and governance), actors work together to develop a shared strategy through focused discussions and fact-based analysis. One of our interviewees pointed out that at an early stage REDD+ processes typically include a thorough analysis of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation to help create this sort of shared understanding of the root causes of deforestation. Where it is successful, this joint analysis will lead to the development of a view on the options for addressing deforestation. Backbone support involves carrying out research into the problems surrounding land-use dynamics or supporting actors in this effort.

When developing a vision or strategy for cross-sector collaboration, actors engage in dialogue about the problems of land-use dynamics that can lead to the development of a common vision statement or strategic document. The 'right' vision for change clearly needs to be acceptable to multiple actors. Backbone support includes facilitating fact-based discussion among collaborating actors. Finding a vision that can be shared by diverse actors requires a special kind of unassuming leadership that is oriented towards advancing the process. The dialogue facilitator must be flexible to adjust to different viewpoints and must have a willingness to operate from behind the scenes (see the following section on backbone support).

For the vision or strategy of a jurisdictional program tackling deforestation to be cross-sector it needs to reflect the separate visions and activities of its collaborating actors. At the outset, a shared vision might have to be reduced to the lowest common denominator that is acceptable to all collaborating partners, although it could become more ambitious over time as the relationships between collaborating actors develop. The above section on goals and theory of change in cross-sector collaboration describes how actors can be motivated by overarching societal goals, but that agreements often remain precarious and participants often reserve the right of exit.

Therefore, analyzing and understanding the relevant interests and constraints on collaborating actors is crucially important for the design of jurisdictional programs and their collaborative dynamics. For instance, a recent publication discussing the Berau Forest Carbon Program (Sills et al. 2014) highlighted how partner engagement was hampered by conflicting perceptions of fairness over who is included in REDD+ programs, and who is not. It reports cases where community members believed their forest access was unfairly restricted since those restrictions did not apply to timber concessionaires. Owners of timber concessions on the other hand reported community encroachment on their concession for the purposes of clearing and subsistence agriculture. Backbone support involves working to enhance the transparency of actors' motivations and constraints, and to mitigate conflict (see the following subsection on conflict management).

A shared vision or strategy can be used as the basis for partners taking material steps towards achieving the goals of the cross-sector collaboration. Most of the initiatives we interviewed were externally funded and their planning focuses on the spending of program funds (see the above section on goals and theories of change). Intermediaries can support such planning processes, especially when they also administer external funding.

One of our interviewees reported a case where a government action plan brought together several ministries to jointly tackle an environmental issue. Their ability for joint planning was, however, extremely limited since the ministerial budget lines for policy implementation were rigid, with little flexibility for negotiating shared strategies once sector strategies are agreed. In that specific case, the inability of ministries to reorient their priorities and embark on joint action relegated cross-sector collaboration to ineffectual information sharing.

The above section on goals and theory of change in collaborations points out that planning processes, whether for cross-sector collaboration or otherwise, have received a fair share of criticism. A traditional approach to 'deliberate planning' aims for a careful articulation of goals and activities ahead of time, but the turbulent nature of the environment in which jurisdictional programs for addressing tropical deforestation are drawn-up can quickly invalidate these plans. This means that the best strategies are often emergent (Mintzberg 1994). An adaptive approach for 'emergent planning' means giving careful attention to the stakeholder dialogue about goals and activities that evolves over time. It requires adaptive backbone support so that the strategy and any related activity plan can be frequently updated.

3.3 *Diagnostic question: How does the collaboration mainstream deforestation concerns in sector policies?*

For jurisdictional programs to tackle tropical deforestation, advancing policy needs to be a core focus of cross-sector collaboration because actors' self-interest cannot always be expected to guarantee responsible use of natural resources (see section above on goals and theory of change for the collaboration). The jurisdictional programs we are interested in could bring about systemic change when they create policy instruments for the land sector and beyond that are informed by the considerations of the cross-sector collaboration for addressing deforestation.

Policies aimed at deforestation reduction would be short-sighted if they only included policy measures narrowly targeting forest protection. Deforestation is closely related to issues from adjacent policy areas, such as forestry, agriculture, development cooperation, economy, energy, environment, trade and others. The success of policies for tackling deforestation depends on how well these are mainstreamed into sector policies.

Deforestation concerns are mainstreamed when sector policies take on board aspects conducive to reducing deforestation or when they launch policy measures to attain deforestation reduction and other leading sector objectives together. Achieving policy coherence between diverse sectors can be immensely difficult requiring honest discussions about potential trade-offs. One of our interviewees pointed out that "*mainstreaming [sustainability goals] is not done with placing buzzwords in the [sector] policy documents – however, this is the current practice by the government.*" To mainstream deforestation concerns into sector policies, backbone support can make expertise available to the policy-making process, including by providing a strong evidence base on how sector policies impact deforestation trends (Tosun and Lang, 2017).

In addition to sector policies (forestry, agriculture, energy, etc.), policies at several administrative levels are potentially relevant for jurisdictional programs tackling tropical deforestation (jurisdictional level, national level, local level). Next to government policies that aim to set the framework for private sector activities, the policies of private-sector players themselves can also take on board concerns related to deforestation that emerge from the cross-sector collaboration.

To advance policy through a jurisdictional program tackling tropical deforestation, these diverse actors need to be part of the cross-sector collaboration from the beginning. Backbone support will need to include a focus on identifying and engaging the right actors that can support policy advancement.

Whether to engage important actors from different sectors or to induce their action, a considerable degree of advocacy might be needed to advance policy. Intermediaries may have limited legitimacy in advocating the importance of deforestation concerns, especially when they are international actors. It will then be all the more important for national partners, who have something at stake, to take on an advocacy role. One interviewee from an international NGO reported how “*it was a turning point for the whole program when it wasn't only us anymore, but the communities began approaching [the government leader] and tell him, this [program] is great.*” Intermediaries need to carefully work with national partners to advocate for a policy agenda that is informed by the cross-sector collaboration.

3.4 Diagnostic question: To what extent is there joint fundraising for the collaboration itself and for the activities of its partners designed to achieve its objectives?

The resources needed to support collaborations are relatively modest, but supporting action by the collaborating partners to achieve their objectives may require more substantial funding (see the section on backbone support). Efforts to mobilize funds may begin with a focus on international donors, but should also consider relevant domestic resources, and may even involve pooling the resources of the collaborating actors themselves.

For example, one of our interviewees discussed the case of the Itawa Springs Protection Project, which brought together, among other actors, local communities whose activities compromised water quality from a local spring, and Zambian Breweries, a large beverage producer. The collaboration was initially set up by GIZ which also brought international funding to the collaboration. Zambian Breweries was dependent on the fresh water from the spring for its production, and with a successful collaboration in place to safeguard the spring water quality, the brewery felt confident in making a major investment into its production facilities (to the tune of USD 100 million). The brewery has also co-funded the activities of the partnership with an amount close to USD 1 million.

Backbone support can include fundraising to run the cross-sector collaboration itself. But more significantly, funds need to be mobilized to fund the activities of the collaborating partners, i.e. to achieve any changes towards the better manage natural resources. Where funds for these partner activities are required, backbone support may also be needed for administering the funds and for project cycle management.

3.5 Diagnostic question: How can conflicts be managed?

Because the interests and perceptions of the actors may differ widely, there is significant scope for conflict and consequently a need for conflict management. This is especially true at the scale of jurisdictional programs where relevant actors may be involved in the creation of national and international policy. If the desired transformative change actually takes place then progress towards the common good, in this case forest protection, might mean that there are losers as well as winners.

In an effort to avoid conflict, most often collaborating actors focus on what is least contentious. As a result, progress may be uneven. Areas where there is already mutual agreement advance (e.g. data collection) while more contentious areas stall (e.g. additional regulation or removal of subsidies). Progress is sporadic and may alternate with setbacks (Figure). Competent backbone support will recognize the constraints that actors are under and continue to identify those areas where there is momentum and therefore room for progress.

Progress

Setbacks

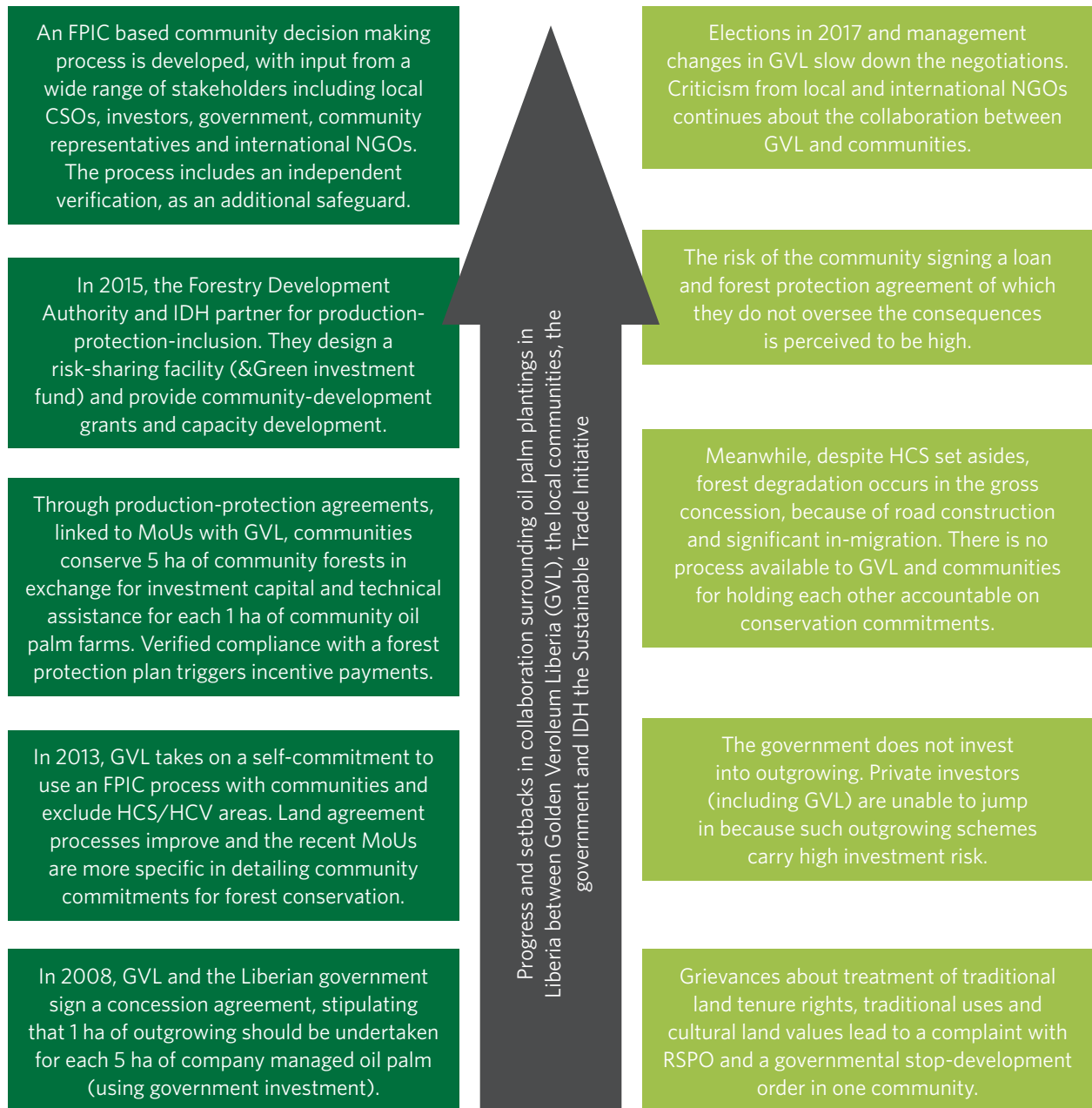


Figure: Sporadic progress and setbacks in cross-sector collaboration surrounding production-protection agreements in Liberia's oil palm sector (based on information from Rothschild et al. 2017)

To achieve any significant change, a good understanding of the actors' limited wiggle room can help maintain realistic expectations of what is achievable, and is a good place to start mediation towards finding mutually agreeable solutions. One of our interviewees described how one country's needs assessment process for REDD+ strategies development routinely included an institutional context analysis that not only profiled important stakeholders of land use and its dynamics, but crucially identified the potential for conflicts between actors. Backbone support includes efforts to improve the transparency of the most painful parts in cross-sector collaboration.

A good evidence base is key in those (arguably rare) cases where there is sufficient external pressure for contentious policy decisions to be taken even though important actors are set to be losers. Backbone support involves providing the collaboration with an evidence base. One of our interviewees described how an evidence-base was fundamental for the process of partner engagement for the 2030 Water Resources Group. A 2009 report on 'Charting our Water Future' (2030 Water Resources Group 2009) laid out the need for action in the water sector not only in terms of societal goals, but in terms of business risk, especially for agriculture production. This stirred up interest from a wide range of potentially affected actors. In 2011, the World Economic Forum, the International Finance Cooperation and other actors instituted the 2030 Water Resources Group, which has since facilitated collective action on water on the country level between governments, the private sector and civil society.

3.6 Diagnostic question: How does backbone support strengthen monitoring?

Data can help engage partners. It should inform adaptive decision making and be the basis for partners holding each other accountable, potentially avoiding and defusing conflicts where they occur (see the following section on accountabilities).

A shared monitoring and evaluation system is at the center of several collaborative processes, backbone support to performance monitoring and providing an evidence-base to the collaborative thought process will therefore be a key support activity for cross-sector collaboration. Backbone support may directly include collecting, analyzing and interpreting data for collaborating actors.

Alternatively, as the following section on accountabilities points out, backbone support for building up an evidence base can involve encouragement of a collaborative data collection and management process, furthering participation from the start. Backbone support will then focus on technical assistance and capacity building with actors to handle data.

3.7 Concluding on the need for backbone support

Facilitating collaboration is hard work and requires dedicated support. Backbone support needs to be flexible to adjust to the changing collaborative dynamics when initiatives mature or suffer external shocks. Backbone support will usually be required to support a multi-stakeholder forum, to guide vision and strategy, to advance policy, to mobilize resources, to manage conflict related to the collaboration, and to establish a monitoring system.

Backbone support may begin with basic operational aspects to do with dialogue (e.g. setting agendas, tabling a discussion, assigning a work group), but will also include a much wider range of tasks. The aspects of collaboration needing backbone support may be as diverse as the activities that constitute collaboration:

- Dialogue facilitation
- Strategy development
- Policy advancement
- Resource mobilization
- Conflict resolution
- Monitoring

As jurisdictional programs develop, backbone support needs to be flexible to adjust to the “ebbs and flows of collaboration in these initiatives” as one of our interviewees put it. Ideally collaborative dynamics and backbone support will both grow as initiatives mature. However, external shocks to the collaboration may require that support to be expanded or scaled back.

4. Structure and governance: A multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support

The structure of a collaboration requires considerable thought. The setup of a multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support will reflect and determine collaborative dynamics and needs to take into account both the balance of power between collaborating actors and their degree of commitment. The relation of actors to each other, the governance structure and its formalization will evolve as initiatives mature.

4.1 Diagnostic question: How advanced is the jurisdictional program and its collaboration?

The tone of collaborative initiatives will evolve together with their collaborative activities, the governance structure and backbone support. Our interviews lead us to propose at least three phases of the cross-sector collaboration where changes in collaborative dynamics can be observed (Figure).



Figure: Three phases of cross-sector collaboration observed during interviews (own elaboration)

External changes may create a need and an opportunity for cross-sector collaboration, but a strategy needs to be developed first. Partners will contribute on an ad-hoc basis to strategy development, depending on their interest. Where this process proceeds well, an initial agreement can be drawn up that reflects the collaborative strategy. For example, in response to political priorities at the US national level, the Regional Urban Forestry Strategy Project included a three-year strategy development process for the Portland-Vancouver region (Driscoll and Ries 2015). That development process was facilitated by a grant-funded intermediary, the Intertwine Alliance, and had only ad-hoc participation from partners. Nonetheless, the strategy it developed has become important guidance for municipalities in the region.

Once the strategy is in place, an initial agreement regulates participation. It typically requires information sharing among partners. Data collection becomes important to provide an evidence base for the collaboration, and also to build trust. For example, the Berau Forest Carbon Program invested two years into strategy development, before the provincial and then the national government officially declared a district-level REDD+ demonstration activity and released a ministerial decree for its regulation.

After this initial agreement, collateral and more formal contracts may be required for some types of partner activities. These need to be negotiated separately from the initial agreement in order to regulate joint planning and funds transfers – in other words to align partner activities with the strategy. For example, Democratic Republic of the Congo's Mai Ndombe Emission Reductions Program includes benefit sharing arrangements with actors that implement mitigation actions. These are drawn up in accordance with the initial agreement as represented by the emission reduction program document. The benefit sharing agreements regulate partner commitments and funds transfers accordingly.

4.2 *Diagnostic question: What is the balance of power between collaborating actors and to what degree are they able to relinquish control to the collaboration?*

The power dynamics between actors are very influential on the collaboration. There may be one actor more powerful than the others that collects input from other actors for its decision making. For example, governmental planning processes often include consultation with stakeholders. On the other end of the spectrum, there may be many actors involved, without any one more powerful actor obviously dominating. Where a small number of powerful actors are engaged in the collaboration, and where the stakes are high, actors' ability to relinquish control to the collaboration may often be very limited.

In governmental decision making, the governmental entities will usually be keen to retain a firm grip on the process. More often than not, it will be useful to undertake reliable, transparent and fact-based consultative processes to support the decision making that the government ultimately undertakes. For example, the consultative processes leading up to Bangladesh's Country Investment Plan on Environment, Forestry and Climate Change involved consultations with government ministries and agencies as well as actors from the private sector, civil society, NGOs, academia, the local community and development partners. It is estimated that over 2000 people participated in the consultation process that took place in Dhaka and other parts of the country in 2015-2016. Still, ultimate decision making on the design of the country investment plan rested firmly with the government.

Strategy development processes sometimes draw on a broad base of stakeholders without any one actor obviously dominating the procedure. For example, the 2011 NEXUS conference on 'The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus – Solutions for the Green Economy' brought together more than 500 participants for a topical discussion about sustainability concepts. The influence of individual participants over discussions was of necessity limited.

Collaborative partnership between a number of powerful actors may in principle seem to offer great opportunities for system-level change to land-use systems. However, influential actors are usually bound by many constraints and interests, and their collaborative efforts are especially prone to conflict. Because of this, it is difficult to bring on board powerful actors other than on an ad-hoc basis.

There can be cases of overt power struggle, especially where a small number of powerful actors are competing over resources. One of our interviewees discussed the case of a developing country where a coordinating ministry received the mandate to administer REDD+ funding, with the result that the government branch in charge of forest management felt unfairly left out. A year-long series of conflicts ensued, including several occasions where collaboration was suspended altogether, and there were times when the government branch in charge of forest management attempted indirectly to undermine the national REDD+ program.



In the context of donor funded programs, relinquishing control to joint decision making by a committee can be acceptable but is not necessarily recommended. Compromise in joint decision making may be more likely because, for temporary and externally funded projects, the stakes may be comparatively low. (The perceptions of such donor-funded programs can vary, with donors seeing 'their' programs as working towards system-level change, while national stakeholders simply see yet another project with a limited timeframe, budget and scope.)

In some cases, looser collaboration may improve results because of more flexibility. One of our interviewees pointed out how relaxing the mandates of multi-stakeholder forums can enable broader exchange. Program governance that requires partners to take decisions jointly may restrict the scope of discussion to those things that can actually be decided, largely consisting of matters related to project operations. Overly stringent decision making may reduce the program to a donor-funded initiative, for which such structures may be acceptable.

Despite all caveats, there are cases where strong lead organizations may be willing to surrender a degree of control in order to engage with prospective partners. The hundreds of millions of dollars in international contributions to the Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program were channeled through an independent mechanism, the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO). Funding the operation of protected areas is a core responsibility of the Brazilian government; therefore, using existing governmental channels to fund the operation would have been the most obvious way to organize financial support. However, the Brazilian government decided to allay donor concerns about such on-budget arrangements and to relinquish control over large amounts of funding to an independent mechanism. This decision removed an important barrier for donor engagement.

4.3 *Diagnostic question: What is the basic setup of a multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support?*

A multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support make up the central features of successful collaborations. The mandate of the forum will be crucial. Most multi-stakeholder forums largely provide information exchange. But more advanced collaborative initiatives also sometimes devolve decision making power to the forum, e.g. to oversee the spending of project funds.

Provision of backbone support will ease the collaboration dynamic. Although the intermediary may not be a powerful stakeholder of the cross-sector collaboration, its efforts for brokering agreement, facilitating dialogue, empowering weaker actors and resolving conflicts may alter the tone of the collaborating actors.

During our interviews we found considerable variation in the specific arrangements that were set up and we made two general observations (Box). First, in all cases, we found that the arrangements reflected the balance of power between the collaborating actors as well as their levels of commitment and accountability. Second and related to this, during our interviews we did not find cases of power sharing that would extend beyond the project level. This observation is significant because some of the rhetoric surrounding jurisdictional programs, especially for REDD+, would suggest close collaboration between actors.

Governance arrangements for cross-sector collaboration from case studies

A lead actor shares information and collects input on its decision making from other collaborating actors, while intermediaries provide technical support.

The Brazilian Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program has the Ministry of the Environment with its Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation firmly in the lead. These designate and manage protected areas, which are the objectives of the initiative. The government shares information with, and collects input on its decision making from, a multi-stakeholder program committee. A transition fund committee that includes the donors as well as the government decides how to allocate international funding in support of governmental efforts. Several intermediaries, including the WWF, facilitate dialogue and provide technical support.

Intermediaries facilitate a number of collaborating actors to develop a strategy together, while external donors provide varying degrees of oversight.

DRC's National REDD+ Fund is overseen by a cross-sector Steering Committee in which the most representatives of the relevant ministries participate together with representatives of civil society, the private sector and international partners, with the Ministry of Finance acting as chair. This arrangement has been recognized in a Letter of Intent with the Central African Forest Initiative that has capitalized the National REDD+ Fund. Backbone support is provided by an Executive Secretariat.

A committee regularly meets to share information about the activities of various collaborating actors.

Mexico's climate change law stipulates that a Multisector Climate Change Commission should be established under the leadership of the Ministry of the Environment. The aim of the commission is to foster coordination and mainstreaming of climate change within 14 sectors involved in Mexican climate policy and to formulate new climate change policies.

In addition to the basic structure, the details of collaborative arrangements can matter hugely. For example, the partner commitments in Brazil's Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program function according to the premise that 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.' Partner commitments are contingent on each other. Donors are not bound by their funding commitments unless all the other donors also deliver on their commitments. A blanket agreement like this dramatically reduces barriers to engagement stemming from unwillingness to make the first move and leverages the willingness of partners to contribute jointly with their peers.

4.4 Diagnostic question: How is the collaboration formalized?

Agreements formalizing the governance setup of the collaboration can be ad hoc or more formal, depending on its objectives. For example, development initiatives regularly count on ad hoc multi-stakeholder forums. These are often fluid with stakeholders joining discussion and activities based on specific interests and without formal commitments. Clearly, loose arrangements are more useful for information exchange than for decision making.

Partnerships can also include significant commitments and there are therefore many different ways to formalize them. For example, partnerships involving joint planning and information exchange where government agencies interact with each other, with other sectors or with civil society organizations, are often laid down through joint declarations of intent. Such bona-fide commitments become legally binding when governments translate them into regulation.

Where funds transfer takes place, contracts need to be drawn up. Jurisdictional REDD+ programs often use implementation contracts to regulate partner commitments and also to specify benefit sharing arrangements. Similarly, donors often enter into contractual agreements before agreeing to fund an initiative.

Formalizing cross-sector initiatives can take years as initiatives mature from strategy development, through strategy implementation and alignment of partner activities. For example, Brazil's Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program is based on a 1998 presidential pledge to triple Amazonia's protected areas. Four years later a presidential decree set out the program's structure and objectives and only then could work on the program begin in earnest. On its webpage, the WWF speaks of a "2-year planning process involving hundreds of experts, including biologists, anthropologists, economists and representatives of indigenous communities among others." Only after the presidential decree when the design was clear could negotiation of the collateral agreements that regulate contributions from technical and financial partners begin.

4.5 Proposing a structure commensurate with collaborative dynamics

A multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support provide structure to cross-sector collaborations in jurisdictional programs. Governance arrangements may need to evolve as the power dynamics between collaborating actors and their ability to relinquish control change over time.

A multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support are the most basic elements of the governance structure for cross-sector collaboration and can be formalized in different ways. This structure should reflect the balance of power among collaborating actors and their degree of commitment. The tone for the cross-sector collaboration should develop as the initiatives mature. Although relinquishing control to the collaboration can be a very sensitive issue, there are instances where even powerful actors engage fully in collaborative efforts.

What collaborative governance structure makes sense and how it should be formalized depends on the particular collaborative activities to be carried out and the collaboration's maturity. Different governance arrangements are needed for joint strategy development processes between cross-sector actors, consultation processes on governmental decision making and implementation of donor-funded programs because the ability of different actors to relinquish control over their decision making will vary.

The degree to which actors are able to relinquish control over their decision making will often limit the scope of collaborative initiatives, especially where stakes are high. Governmental decisions, of particular interest to jurisdictional programs tackling tropical deforestation, are not usually the consequence of shared decision making, although collaboration with stakeholders is common. But the ability for joint decision making varies. For example, governments will usually keep control over decision making, while donor-funded programs are more open to a joint decision making process.

Almost regardless of the context, backbone support is an integral part of the governance setup. Several of our interviewees saw backbone support and the leadership it provides as indispensable because primary actors are often unable to take on the job of impartially facilitating communication. The following section looks into the organizations providing such backbone support in more detail.

5. Backbone support

Intermediaries facilitate cross-sector collaboration and provide leadership in several ways. Their ability to provide support depends on the kind of organization they are, and on its access to resources.

5.1 **Diagnostic question: How is the leadership style of the organization providing support to the cross-sector collaboration?**

In order for collaborations to be successful, they need backbone support involving leadership of various sorts. The key importance of effective leadership for bringing together different stakeholder groups is frequently highlighted in the literature, especially by those working on collective impact initiatives (Turner et al. 2012). Similarly, the authors of the paper from which we took our assessment framework mention several kinds of leadership that can encourage collaboration:

- Powerful ‘sponsors’ often have formal authority and access to resources. They can draw attention to the deforestation problem and provide legitimacy for the formation of a cross-sector collaboration.
- ‘Conveners,’ or boundary spanning leaders, have credibility in several fields relevant to the initiative and are able to bring the right people on board.
- ‘Facilitators’ rely heavily on process skills and give direct support to interactions between collaborating partners.
- ‘Champions’ rely more heavily on informal authority to engage partners, assisting with the day-to-day of cross-sector collaboration.

Our interviews indicate that leadership is also a success factor for jurisdictional programs in the land use sector. Effective backbone leaders require both a strong vision for change, the flexibility to adjust to different points of view and a willingness to operate from behind the scenes while placing other actors in the driver’s seat (Box).

Quotes from our interviews on leadership styles as part of backbone support in jurisdictional programs for addressing tropical deforestation

“Given the ... distinct differences among audiences ..., no ‘single message’ will resonate across the board. Messaging must therefore ... be specifically targeted to each audience individually, appealing to the social and political context in which they operate.”

“...it’s the typical NGO thing, we do most of the leg work for the national partner, but our representative steps out of the room when the press comes in to take photos.”

“Every intermediary has their own interest with their own institutional goals, and this really restricts their ability to lead the process.”

“He’s got to be diplomatic, keep an oversight and maintain a work plan, persistent, able to explain things clearly, and needs to have quite a strategic perspective and see the bigger picture.”

“Being the face for this is really challenging, you’ve got to hold your partners to account who could be very occupied or lazy.”

“Helping people shine is really important, for example through documentaries and events.”

5.2 Diagnostic question: What kind of organization provides backbone support?

New or existing non-profits, governments or international actors can provide necessary leadership through backbone support. Entrusting different kinds of organizations with the backbone role may create different collaborative dynamics (Table).

Table: 2 Advantages and disadvantages of different kinds of organizations providing backbone support in jurisdictional programs for addressing deforestation (modified from Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer 2012)

Description	Pros	Cons
Newly created or existing local / national non-profit coordinates cross-sector collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility and strong expertise on issues • Existing infrastructure in place if properly resourced • Perceived neutrality as facilitator and convener 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of focus and capability if poorly funded
International non-profit coordinates cross-sector collaboration, often also as funder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to secure start-up funding and leverage resources • Can leverage international experience and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of credibility if cross-sector collaboration seen as externally driven • Potential lack of independence
Government , at local or state level, drives cross-sector collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to national policy processes facilitating eventual uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow progress in bureaucracy • Volatility in public priorities • Strong policy agenda
Multiple organizations share responsibility for cross-sector collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility from broad participation • Access to broad expertise • Ownership by multiple partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination challenges, leading to potential inefficiency

Credibility derives from a strong ownership of the issue at hand. Stakeholders will have this ownership and so do local or national non-profit organizations. International actors will often be well advised to partner with local entities that have something at stake, because cross-sector collaboration cannot be seen to impose solutions from the outside. During our interviews with representatives of international non-profits collaboration with local non-profits clearly emerged as the preferred way of achieving this. Alternatively, international non-profits can also work through project management units that are attached to government entities.

Where the facilitation of dialogue is perceived as unbiased, collaborating actors may be willing to be led. Newly created entities in particular may be seen as neutral brokers of dialogue, unless their funding suggests otherwise. Governments and international actors can be perceived to be biased by a strong agenda.

Governmental actors not only have a strong political agenda, they are also responsive to any change in the political context. International actors and those national or local entities that are funded by them may be more resilient to changes in the political landscape.

Where several organizations aim to be intermediaries for collaborative efforts, coordination can be challenging, adding another dimension to collaborative dynamics. A recent Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) publication discusses the Berau Forest Carbon Program and highlights that “*coordination among the various REDD+ proponents..., each taking different approaches and offering their own interventions, has presented another challenge [because] ineffective coordination can affect communities' perceptions of the interventions. During our visit in 2013, key informant interviews suggested that people in one village were concerned because programs were introduced by three different proponents.*” (Sills et al. 2014)

However, capacity constraints will often determine which organizations can and cannot provide backbone support. Existing organizations have structures they can leverage, while newly created entities require investment and need to build up expertise on the issues. Funding for cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs addressing tropical deforestation usually comes from international sources, meaning that an investment in expertise is possible.

Getting a collaborative process underway requires a special skill set and understanding of the situation. In the case of the Itawa Springs Protection Project a private sector player was not able to instigate a collaboration with local communities without third party help, despite a significant business need. In that instance, Zambian Breweries were concerned about the water supply for their brewery, which local communities were compromising, e.g., by introducing waste into the river. However, the brewery was unable to effectively collaborate with local water users and managers to protect the springs until the internationally funded GIZ took on the role of broker, facilitating collaboration between the brewery and the local communities.

5.3 Diagnostic question: What levels of funding are needed for establishing collaboration and supporting the partners' activities to achieve their objectives?

Funding for jurisdictional programs to address tropical deforestation is made up of external support and funds contributed by the collaborating actors themselves. Ample funding is available from international donors. Most of our interviews were with representatives of different kinds of jurisdictional REDD+ programs and so funding largely came from international sources. This is especially true for the operational and programmatic funds that are required for supporting collaboration. In addition to this funding for implementing partner activities for reducing deforestation may need to be leveraged from domestic sources, including the private sector.

The funds required may be large, but the sums needed for the operational and programmatic requirements of backbone support are often on a much smaller scale than those required for partner activities to achieve their objectives. (Figure).

Partner activities to address tropical deforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives to partners (including results-based payments) • Up to the USD 100,000,000s per year
Programmatic activities to develop cross-sector collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs for capacity development, strategy development, monitoring, benefit sharing schemes, etc. • Several USD 100,000s to USD 1,000,000s per year
Operational overheads of intermediaries providing backbone support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff costs and overheads of intermediaries facilitating collaboration • Several USD 10,000s to USD 100,000s per year

Figure: Orders of magnitude of the resources required for stimulating cross-sector collaboration (based on interviews)

Operational funding will cover staff costs and overheads for the intermediaries providing backbone support, as well as costs for partner meetings and other direct communication. The lowest cost level we found during our interviews was about USD 50,000 over three years for a small office with three part-time staff, who mostly worked to support stakeholder engagement. But when a team of national and international staff is set up in developing countries to run donor projects, costs will be much higher, and could easily get into several USD 100,000s per year.

Clearly, programmatic activities require more funding, whether for capacity development or for pilot activities. Capacity development includes the inputs required to give structure to a jurisdictional program for addressing tropical deforestation. For example, REDD+ ‘readiness’ programs with the UN-REDD Program or the FCPF Readiness Fund often have budgets around USD 3-5 million over several years, or around USD 5-8 million. These programs not only maintain a coordinating secretariat, but include programmatic activities: strategy development, the development of forest monitoring and reporting systems, definition of benefit sharing arrangements and so on. These are all meant to lay the ground for a particular kind of cross-sector collaboration when the REDD+ strategy is implemented. If piloting of innovative approaches is included, considerably more funds are needed.

The costs of partner activities to achieve the aim of cross-sector collaboration could be on an entirely different order of magnitude. Several of our interviews were about jurisdictional programs for addressing tropical deforestation. For these funding requirements can be as high as several USD 100,000,000s. The exact requirements depend on the specific circumstances.

5.4 Designing backbone support

Recruiting credible, independent, resilient and capable backbone support requires choosing the right institution (or possibly several institutions) with unassuming leaders who are willing to empower others, and then supplying it with the necessary resources to catalyze collaboration.

Recruiting support that is credible, independent, resilient and capable often require several kinds of organizations to team up. National, often newly created, actors may take a leading role, while well-established national actors give them a strong mandate, and international actors address capacity gaps, otherwise staying in the background.

Some kinds of capacities cannot easily be bought, and not just any entity can be set up to provide backbone support. An unassuming backbone leadership style that empowers collaborating actors is potentially an important ingredient of the ‘secret sauce’ that makes cross-sector collaboration succeed or fail. This will depend on the personnel in senior positions, on their personal charisma and capability.

The resource needs of jurisdictional programs tackling tropical deforestation are considerable. It would be a mistake to plan on funding only the cross-sector collaboration effort itself, which is not so resource intensive, without also funding the much more resource intensive collaborating partner activities required to achieve the collaboration’s objectives. Conversely, funding isolated actions by individual partners without also investing in a means of cross-sector collaboration would be a missed opportunity since it could reduce effectiveness and potentially lead to initiatives that are working at cross-purposes.

6. Accountabilities: Data underpinning cross-sector collaboration

The evidence base is a tool that otherwise powerless intermediaries can use to influence collaborating actors.

Our interviewees agree with the literature that having high-quality data is a key factor for promoting actor engagement. It can support actors in holding each other accountable, and it can inform adaptive management. It also became clear that data needs to be accepted by actors to be used for cross-sector collaboration.

6.1 Diagnostic question: What evidence base is available for engaging actors in the cross-sector collaboration?

The right evidence base can support actors’ engagement in collaboration by providing a pain-gain statement that compels actors to join the collaboration either because of what is to be won by participating, or because of what is to be lost by abstaining.

One of our interviewees spoke about the evidence base underlying fundraising efforts for REDD+ programs in Democratic Republic of Congo. A well-tailored analysis of rural poverty and its links to deforestation in rural landscapes boiled down an immensely complex situation to two key indicators: annual farming area required per family and annual income per family. It then built an investment case that was compelling because of its simplicity, “*these hugely long data tables, no one looks at them.*” The analysis became the basis for additional financing in the country from the World Bank’s Forest Investment Program through a USD 30 million grant supported by the Central African Forest Initiative.

6.2 Diagnostic question: What data are used for operational decision making and for focusing collaborative efforts?

Data can also inform the operational decision making needed for the adaptive management of collaborative efforts. The basic principle of results-based management means steering activities according to their performance.

Some initiatives have made this concept the basis of their efforts. For example, the Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change importantly includes monitoring the results of investments. A strict focus on the results achieved means that budget allocation can take on board the performance of past investments. In the case of Mexico’s Climate Change Action Plan, the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change was entrusted with the responsibility to carry out research, analysis and evaluation of climate policy, and to begin implementation and advancement of inter-sector climate policy using scientific information and knowledge.

6.3 *Diagnostic question: What data can collaborating actors use to hold each other to account?*

Data is equally important for collaborative efforts that are already underway. Transparency concerning actor activities helps build trust because it makes it possible for actors to hold each other to account. For example, the WWF devised a method for the Rapid Assessment and prioritization of Protected Area Management (RAPAM), essentially a management effectiveness index, which Brazil's Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program decided to use as a basis for funds allocation. RAPAM scores are used to determine the kind and quantity of support that different areas qualify for. The scores also provide information on how much is provided to individual areas, and can thus be used for holding the government to account on its commitments.

One particular kind of accountability is towards the donors of jurisdictional program addressing tropical deforestation. Donors often require that a sophisticated monitoring and evaluation framework is maintained with indicators along the results chains. Monitoring progress along complex results chains can lead to an increase in complexity, creating an unwieldy and opaque mix of indicators and assumptions. It was concern around this sort of unreliable theory of change that gave rise to results-based funding in the forest sector, i.e. REDD+ programs, which have led to investments in national forest monitoring systems that can make developing countries and international REDD+ donors accountable to each other.

However, these sorts of national forest monitoring systems are not usually designed to inform other collaborative processes by, for instance, providing accountability between actors about their contributions to reducing deforestation, about partner engagement or the operational steering of REDD+ programs. Rather, they are geared towards broadly describing average forest area trends, which are used for attracting results-based payments from international donors. To be relevant to collaborative efforts between (sub-) national stakeholders, national forest monitoring systems also need to produce information at a more granular scale, or to reflect drivers of land-use trends or partner activities more directly.

6.4 *Diagnostic question: How are collaborating partners involved in defining, managing and analyzing data?*

It will boost buy-in from collaborating partners when they collect and manage data together. Where decision making with any significant implications is on the table, collaborating partners need to understand and own the datasets that will become the basis for holding each other accountable or for decision making. For example, the global effort to address dangerous climate change relies on countries tracking their progress against nationally determined contributions using their national GHG inventories. The datasets that well-resourced NGOs and international research institutes collect on global mitigation efforts, although arguably of more consistent technical quality, play a secondary role when countries negotiate their mitigation commitments.

Data management can be used strategically by intermediaries wishing to promote jurisdictional programs for addressing deforestation. This is because data is at the heart of many collaborative processes. Also, giving advice to collaborating partners that is consistently evidence-based can help the intermediary build legitimacy and mean that they are to some extent perceived as independent from any specific policy agenda. It is because of this that the collective impact initiatives in the North American social sectors that inspired much of our analysis emphasize data management as an aspect of backbone support (Kania and Kramer 2011).

6.5 **Leveraging the evidence base to facilitate collaboration**

Cross-sector collaboration needs an evidence base to engage partners, to enable partners to hold each other accountable and to inform adaptive management. Collaborating partners are more likely to agree on an evidence base if they are involved in building it and if it remains relatively simple.

The evidence base needs to convince collaborating partners and our interviews indicate that data needs to be simple, robust and relevant to their activities. The above examples of the 2030 Water Resources Group, the DRC's REDD+ program and Brazil's Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program all have in common that the evidence base was immediately convincing to stakeholders because of its simplicity. On the other hand, the national forest monitoring systems that many countries are developing in a REDD+ context are not usually built to be relevant to activities on the ground, and largely reflect broad-based averages. Monitoring of results chains for donor-funded programs is often beset by complexity, and therefore is not convincingly robust. Building an evidence base to support cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs may require putting together bespoke datasets for this purpose.

Providing backbone support for building up an evidence base can involve encouragement of a collaborative data collection and management process, furthering participation from the start. On the other hand, having all aspects of data management run by a single actor (even if an intermediary) could create reservations about the data. Intermediaries might therefore consider providing technical support to collaborating partners rather than collecting data on their behalf.

For intermediaries, data management is an especially strategic aspect of backbone support. Feeding high quality data into collaborative processes gives the intermediary a voice in partner engagement, strategy definition, conflict resolution, resource allocation and operational decision making.



Part III: The case for further focus on cross-sector collaboration to tackle tropical deforestation

Collaboration between sectors is often seen as the key to tackling complex societal problems, and The Nature Conservancy for whom we developed this paper is no exception in that they put collaborative approaches at the core of what it takes to support the sustainable development of tropical landscapes. Those interested in tackling tropical deforestation should include a focus on collaboration in their toolbox for drawing up and running jurisdictional programs.

Although collaboration is almost universally seen as a necessary ingredient, there is no recipe for success of the multi-stakeholder forums that this paper is most concerned with. Setting up intermediaries to provide backbone support stimulating collaboration is one of the ways that international actors choose to engage in collaborations. While we have not been able to identify conclusive pathways to success, we offer a set of conclusions to those who are interested in backbone support for jurisdictional programs:

- Windows of opportunity for cross-sector collaboration in jurisdictional programs may open as a last resort when actors realize that their unilateral efforts to tackle tropical deforestation often fail. Shared views of the deforestation problem and a basic level of mutual trust can then become the basis for joint work.
- Backbone support could be built into the theories of change when planning jurisdictional programs since improvements in the relationships between actors as an indirect result of long term backbone support may impact land-use dynamics. Although cross-sector collaboration is sometimes seen only as a means of achieving specific societal goals, and not as an end in itself, the enhanced communication, improved trust and more balanced networks between landscape actors that are created through cross-sector collaboration are a fundamental aspect of improved resource governance.
- Facilitating collaboration is hard work and requires dedicated support. Backbone support needs to be flexible to adjust to the changing collaborative dynamics when initiatives mature or suffer external shocks. Backbone support will usually be required to support a multi-stakeholder forum, to guide vision and strategy, to advance policy, to mobilize resources, to manage conflict related to the collaboration, and to establish a monitoring system.
- A multi-stakeholder forum and its backbone support provide structure to cross-sector collaborations in jurisdictional programs. Governance arrangements may need to evolve as the power dynamics between collaborating actors and their ability to relinquish control change over time.
- Recruiting credible, independent, resilient and capable backbone support requires choosing the right institution (or possibly several institutions) with unassuming leaders who are willing to empower others, and then supplying it with the necessary resources to catalyze collaboration.
- Cross-sector collaboration needs an evidence base to engage partners, to enable partners to hold each other accountable, and to inform adaptive management. Collaborating partners are more likely to agree on an evidence base if they are involved in building it and if it remains relatively simple.

For international actors engaging in jurisdictional programs, there is a fine line separating supportive collaboration to enable systemic change from the creation of a temporary collaboration for spending project monies that will evaporate once external funding is withdrawn. Donor engagement is useful and often necessary for funding intermediaries and thus for stimulating cross-sector collaboration, but creating artificial collaboration is pointless at best and harmful at worst. When considering engagement, international actors need to carefully judge how firmly the initiatives are

embedded in the local context and how organic the collaborative dynamics are that they aim to support.

In interviews, we did not find any model cases. Instead there was the prevailing impression of incomplete success in cross-sector collaboration. This should help to keep expectations in check, but should not be too discouraging. Cross-sector collaboration is in itself a potentially game-changing innovation that may pave the way towards transformative change. That this is difficult to achieve should not be surprising, but it reinforces the case for a further focus on collaboration as an enabler of progress in tackling tropical deforestation.

To some extent, development professionals are already doing this – modern thinking on development is full of collaborative approaches. Nonetheless, our interviewees did not always show complete familiarity with the basic concepts of collaboration, with the vocabulary, or with the common assumptions and difficulties. Some of the experts we spoke with put ‘capacity development’ at the core of their work, others the provision of ‘results-based funding,’ yet others ‘technical assistance.’ Only few looked at themselves as ‘intermediaries catalyzing collaboration.’ This leads us to conclude that those designing and running jurisdictional programs tackling tropical deforestation not always sufficiently appreciate the crucial importance of cross-sector collaboration.

We therefore suggest that looking at jurisdictional programs through the ‘lens of cross-sector collaboration’ might well reveal collaborative dynamics in a new light and enable development professionals to gain additional insights. Hopefully, this paper offers a starting point for those interested in taking a fresh and hopefully energizing look at their activities and their efforts towards tackling tropical deforestation.



Annex

Literature

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Case studies mentioned in the text

The following case studies are mentioned in the text. Collection of information on these case studies drew on a combination of publicly accessible information and interviews.

Name	Location	Scale	Time frame	Objective of program	Multi-stakeholder forum	Backbone support	Collaborating actors
Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program	Brazilian Amazonia	Several states	Since 2002	Increase area protected in Amazonia and improve management	Program committee and transition fund committee	WWF and others	Ministry of the Environment (including the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation), donors, national and international NGOs, private sector
Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change	Bangladesh	National	2016-2021	Sustainable development through provision of ecosystem services	National Environment Committee	FAO, Policy Support and Investment Monitoring Unit	Several dozens of ministries and agencies
Berau Forest Carbon Program	Berau district, East Kalimantan, Indonesia	District	2009-2015	Mitigate climate change through a holistic development program	Berau Forest Carbon Program steering committee	TNC and others	Government (district and other levels), private sector (mining, palm oil, forestry), communities, NGOs
National REDD+ Fund and Forest Investment Program	Democratic Republic of Congo	National	Since 2012	Mitigate climate change through reducing deforestation and forest degradation while promoting rural development	National REDD+ Fund Steering Committee	WWF, FONAREDD Executive Secretariat	Ministry of Finance and sector ministries
Itawa Springs Protection Project	Ndola, Zambia	Municipal	Since 2012	Protect a water source under threat from pollution and unsustainable land use	Multi-stakeholder forum	GIZ, handing over to Secretariat of the multi-stakeholder forum	Several public-sector organizations, Zambian Breweries, the local water utility, elected community representatives, GIZ
Mai Ndombe Carbon Fund Program	Democratic Republic of Congo	National	Since 2012	Mitigate climate change through reducing deforestation and forest degradation while promoting rural development	National REDD+ Fund Steering Committee	WWF, FONAREDD Executive Secretariat	Ministry of Finance and sector ministries
Mexico Climate Change Action Plan	Mexico	National	Since 2012	Implementation of Mexico's climate policy		GIZ, Denmark	14 ministries on national levels, as well as federal states and municipalities
Production-protection-inclusion arrangements	Liberia	220.000 ha palm oil concession covering two counties/provinces	Since 2016	Support to oil palm outgrowing, developing local communities while protecting forests		IDH the Sustainable Trade Initiative	Golden Veroleum Liberia, local communities, Forest Development Authority, Ministry of Agriculture
Regional Urban Forestry Strategy Project	Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Region	A metropolitan area involving two states	2012-2015	Develop a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional strategy for advancing urban forestry	Portland-Vancouver Regional Urban Forestry Strategy Partnership	The Intertwine Alliance	Government (state and local), regional and local non-profits, industry
Water-Energy-Food Nexus and the Bonn2011 Nexus Conference	Not applicable	Global	2011	Promote a novel vision on water and the green economy	Conference on 'The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus - Solutions for the Green Economy'	Several international development actors	Broad stakeholder groups

Questionnaire used in interviews

Profile.

What is the cross-sector collaboration called and where is it localized?

What is the scale and time-frame of the cross-sector collaboration?

What is the objective of the cross-sector collaboration?

Who are the actors that collaborate?

Initial conditions.

1. What (unsuccessful) efforts have individual actors undertaken in the past to address the deforestation problem?
2. At the start of the initiative, to which extent do actors perceive a problem related to land-use dynamics that involves several sectors?
3. To which extent do actors have a basis for joint work with aligned perceptions of the causes of the deforestation problem, a basic level of mutual trust and the necessary support?

Process and collaboration dynamics.

4. How does the cross-sector collaboration cover the following tasks?
 - a. Support the multi-stakeholder forum
 - b. Guide vision and strategy
 - c. Advance policy
 - d. Mobilize resources
 - e. Avoid and manage conflict among collaborating actors
 - f. Establish a shared monitoring and evaluation system

Structure and governance.

5. What is the basic governance arrangement among collaborating actors?
6. What is the mandate of the multi-stakeholder forum?
7. Is there an intermediary available to facilitate collaboration among actors?
8. How is the agreement among collaborating actors formalized?
9. What kind of organization provides support to the cross-sector collaboration?
10. What funding is available for supporting collaboration, as well as for partner activities to achieve its objectives?
11. How is the leadership style of the organization providing support to the cross-sector collaboration?

Outcomes.

12. What is the ultimate societal goal that the collaboration aims to achieve?
13. What interim results are there to be expected from the cross-sector collaboration towards achieving the ultimate societal goal?
14. How is the cross-sector collaboration expected to change the relationship between collaborating actors?

Accountabilities.

15. What levels of results are covered by indicators and datasets to track success in collaboration?
16. How do the collaborating partners share the definition of indicators and datasets, data collection and data analysis?
17. To which extent are data basis for focusing collaborative efforts and for collaborating actors to hold each other accountable?



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