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POLICY REPORT

The True Cost of Governance in Integrated Landscape Approaches

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Max Yamauchi Levy and Bemmy Granados

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The True Cost of Governance in Integrated Landscape Approaches
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Foreword

Integrated landscape approaches, by design, embed multiple objectives pertaining to the sustainability and resilience of people-nature systems. They are expected to engage multiple stakeholders within and outside a site and ensure that the diversity of worldviews and priorities of different actors are acknowledged and deliberated upon, and that decisions on the use of resources and ecosystems are undertaken in an inclusive and participatory manner.

As we are well aware, this is not a new concept. Working landscapes and seascapes in such a systemic manner, mindful of ecological and social connectivity, has been practised across generations around the globe.

We are also aware that this old wisdom, of basing our decisions on an understanding of the interconnectedness of peoples and of people with nature, lost political favour during the age of specialized production and trade. Consequently, we now find ourselves in the midst of multiple, compounding crises arising from different drivers such as pollution, habitat loss and climate change among others, which are impacting biodiversity, ecosystem integrity and our capacity to buffer environmental and social shocks, and overall socio-ecological resilience.

The experiences of members of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative have shown that it is possible to stem and reverse this trend. This is also the case for numerous other locally led landscape initiatives and networks around the world. Their work highlights the crucial role of actors in sub-national contexts as “sentinels” that ensure we can still stave off adverse socio-ecological tipping points. However, they work under challenging conditions of limited support — institutional, political and financial — which together impact their capability to sustain their activities.

Addressing these challenges comes down to financing landscape governance systems — supporting a continuous set of activities that co-ordinate between different actors at the landscape or seascape level and ensuring that adequate funds are accessible through a blend of financing options.

I am pleased to note that this report precisely highlights this aspect. It offers a thorough analysis of the utility of integrated landscape approaches in achieving multiple policy objectives, the indispensability of landscape governance, financial requirements and possible options. The findings are drawn from actual empirical evidence provided by landscape actors, making it a representative analysis of on-the-ground perspectives. I was delighted to see the enormous support from organizations providing information and critical input to the study. As the report demonstrates, I am hopeful that this study, and the process it has set in motion, can bring together various partners in our joint pursuit towards a sustainable planet.



Dr. Tsunao Watanabe
Director
Secretariat of the
International Partnership for
the Satoyama Initiative

1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People was built on the conviction that landscape approaches shift governance in a way that unlocks lasting and meaningful change in a community. Integrated landscape approaches have been proven across six continents to reduce conflict, align investment and deliver outcomes that no single sector could achieve alone. They are, in every meaningful sense, the polysolution to the polycrisis.

However, while we ask landscapes to carry our most ambitious global commitments and systems change, we systematically fail to sustainably fund the engine that drives local transformation: governance. This is not a minor inefficiency. It is a structural failure. It has been, until now, largely invisible.

This report changes that. It represents the first systematic attempt to cost landscape governance infrastructure across a diversity of real-world contexts. The findings are both clarifying and humbling. 1000 Landscapes sees this report as a starting point for an important conversation around how we can meaningfully fund landscape governance and for long-term action. Our partnership will draw from it to further our work.

With it, we will continue the conversation and highlight the value of landscape governance. 1000 Landscapes hosts a monthly public webinar series, Polysolution to the Polycrisis, highlighting how landscape governance drives a polysolution to the polycrisis, where all are welcome to join. We will also grow the evidence base. More research on participatory action is needed to demonstrate how nested governance structures drive durable, sustainable outcomes, to strengthen the evidence base for governance costing. The 1000 Landscapes' Research Working Group is actively working to strengthen this evidence in applied ways that benefit landscapes and learning.

We will demonstrate the value of governance as a crucial tool for risk management, resilience strengthening and resource allocation decision-making in landscape finance. Regenerative agriculture, land restoration and value chain improvement financing all depend upon governance mechanisms to mitigate and reduce the risk of investments and to foster coordinated orchestration aligned with the ecosystem. The 1000 Landscapes' Finance Working Group is working with landscape partnerships to strengthen the linkages between finance and governance to grow investments.

And we will strengthen adaptable and scalable governance tools for landscapes partners and support organizations. 1000 Landscapes' Governance Capacity Working Group has developed and tested a suite of adaptable learning modules for partners working in landscapes. A robust governance programme of work is being developed based on the learning pathways of trusted landscape facilitators to ensure that landscape governance is a scalable and replicable solution.

A limitation of this research is that it does not fully account for the costs of advanced data and monitoring systems or the role of emerging nature technology and MRV platforms. How artificial intelligence and remote sensing tools will reshape the cost structure of landscape governance remains genuinely uncertain. They may reduce some transaction costs. However, they may also create pressure to bypass the very multi-stakeholder processes that give landscape decisions their legitimacy. The authors are right to flag this as a frontier question demanding urgent research, not premature assumptions. The 1000 Landscapes' Data and Technology Working Group will be working collaboratively to identify the best data sovereignty standards and technologies needed to support durable landscape transition and governance.

If any of these points are compelling to you, reach out to 1000 Landscapes. We are seeking partners to engage deeply on these issues. We are proud to have supported this research because it gives practitioners, policymakers and funders something they have long needed: actual cost evidence. Not advocacy, not aspiration — evidence. With this information we can demonstrate why governance is fundable, coachable and worth the investment. We can move to models that demonstrate the costs of fragmentation, duplicated effort, eroded trust, lost institutional memory and misaligned investment — all of which far exceed the modest sums required to fund coordination effectively.

1000 Landscapes is ready to help landscapes scale. The landscapes are ready. The governance frameworks are proven. The costs are now visible. What remains is the political will to fund what makes everything else possible.



Virginia Foster
Director
1000 Landscapes for
1 Billion People

Testimonials and Endorsements

This study represents a fundamental contribution toward raising awareness of just how crucial territorial governance is, especially when it adopts the Model Forest approach. Not only that, but it finally attempts to quantify its economic value as a long-term and strategic investment aimed at ensuring that high-level objectives are effectively implemented at the local level through the optimal interpretation that only local stakeholders are capable of providing.

This is all the more true when, as in the case of Model Forests, public and private entities are consistently involved together and, among the latter, entities whose objectives may be, at the very least, difficult to reconcile. Moreover, governance structures with a strong volunteer component enhance the contribution of local stakeholders toward the common good of the environment and the entire community.

A lesser-known aspect highlighted by this study is the risk — which is by no means infrequent — of a "corrupt course"; that is, chasing opportunities presented by various calls for proposals at the risk of deprioritizing the more urgent needs of the territory and/or communities.

Failing to find at least partial incentive solutions to support these organizations risks losing a veritable treasure trove of skills, motivation and projects — in short, "concrete actions" — that, thanks above all to volunteer efforts, have years and sometimes decades of work behind them, but could have many more in the near future.
Toni Ventre, Secretary of the Mediterranean Model Forest Network

This groundbreaking paper clearly explains why multi-stakeholder landscape governance platforms are so central to delivering holistic outcomes for people, nature and the economy, and how to strategically fund their critical functions for long-term impact.
Sara Scherr, EcoAgriculture Partners

Overall, I believe this paper represents an important contribution that will be valuable for policymakers, practitioners and funding organizations working on integrated landscape approaches.
Francisco García-Fernández, Fundación Juana de Vega

The long history of challenges and lessons learned within the Model Forests clearly demonstrates a vast communication gap between national government policies and the realities, needs and demands of communities living in close proximity to natural ecosystems and their resources — particularly in rural areas. Cross-sectoral territorial governance mechanisms, such as Model Forests — which focus on the sound management of natural resources and their sustainable integration into development processes — are essential for effectively translating institutional policies and global agreements into action on the ground, by empowering local leaders.

These systems align policies with local realities and maximize their positive local impact; they enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of conservation, restoration and sustainable production efforts, while also channeling conflicts and the diversity of viewpoints surrounding them. Yet, beyond the goodwill of the public and private stakeholders who must participate in these collaborative processes, effective governance coordination — which entails a cost — is essential.

Large-scale projects focused on restoration, fire control or addressing other forms of environmental degradation abound today; however, none can guarantee sustainability or effectiveness without a suitable territorial governance system, and the cost of such governance is rarely included in project budgets. This is why it is so important to continue raising awareness about the potential of cross-sectoral territorial governance, the associated costs and the importance of securing funding for it.
Roger Villalobos, Board of Latin America Model Forest Network

This report makes an important and timely contribution by recognizing that effective landscape governance requires dedicated and sustained investment. It provides a valuable foundation for improving how governments and funders understand, resource and strengthen the governance systems needed to support integrated landscape approaches. As landscape approaches continue to evolve globally, greater recognition of — and investment in — the institutions that sustain governance over time will be critical to translating policy ambition into lasting outcomes.
Peter Stronach, Landcare Tasmania

As the focal person of the Ulot Watershed Model Forest in the Philippines, I strongly endorse this timely and insightful paper. It provides a compelling case for recognizing landscape governance infrastructure as an essential investment rather than a project overhead. The paper accurately reflects the realities we experience in sustaining multi-stakeholder collaboration, strengthening local institutions and coordinating actions across sectors. Its practical recommendations on long-term governance financing resonate deeply with our work in the Ulot Watershed Model Forest, where continuous facilitation, partnership-building and community engagement are indispensable. This publication will be an invaluable resource for policymakers, donors and practitioners committed to achieving resilient and sustainable landscape governance.
Joefel R. Bercasio, Ulot Watershed Model Forest

This paper makes an important contribution by highlighting governance infrastructure as a critical investment for landscape resilience and sustainability. Too often, coordination, facilitation and stakeholder engagement are treated as secondary costs, despite being essential for long-term success. The paper provides practical guidance for policymakers, funders and practitioners seeking to strengthen integrated landscape approaches and achieve lasting socio-ecological outcomes.
Dambar Pun, Back to Nature

As organizations working directly with communities and landscapes, we see firsthand that effective governance is the foundation upon which successful restoration, conservation, and sustainable development efforts are built. This paper clearly demonstrates why governance infrastructure should be recognized and funded as a core component of landscape implementation rather than an administrative overhead. Its recommendations offer a valuable pathway for strengthening collaboration, resilience, and long-term impact across landscapes.
Samuel Pun, Back to Nature

This work seeks to contribute to the development and implementation of landscape-based approaches to sustainable management and development. Strengthening such collaborative approaches is considered one of the most effective ways to address today's complex global environmental and societal challenges through integrated and inclusive solutions.
Juan Pablo R. Garavito, PhD Candidate in Forest Sciences, Université Laval

Effective governance is one of the most important — and often least visible — foundations of successful landscape management. By shedding light on governance costs through the experiences of practitioners worldwide, this report addresses a critical gap in both research and practice. It provides valuable evidence to support more realistic policies and investments for sustainable landscape governance.
Emilio Díaz Varela, Institute for Global Health and Sustainable Development, iTERRA, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

This paper is a valuable addition to the conversation on landscape-scale approaches and ensuring long-term impact. The focus on integrated governance provides a critical recognition of the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration, inclusive decision-making processes and the barriers built through fragmented funding. We are glad to have this as a resource that complements our work on driving regenerative outcomes across ecological, social, economic and governance dimensions, and across farm and landscape scales.
Tara Shyam, Executive Director, Regen10

Glossary

The definitions below represent how key terms are used in this report. However, some of these concepts continue to evolve and may be understood differently across contexts and groups.

Adaptive management: An iterative approach to planning and implementation in which stakeholders use evidence, monitoring, learning and feedback to adjust strategies, activities and resource allocation over time. In landscape processes, adaptive management is central because ecological, social, political and economic conditions change, and trade-offs and implementation barriers often become clearer through practice.

Convening: The purposeful bringing together of relevant stakeholders, institutions and rights holders to initiate, sustain or deepen collective engagement in a landscape process. It includes identifying who needs to be involved and creating the appropriate entry points for collaborative action. It is often an initial step in establishing and strengthening the necessary relationships for landscape governance.

Facilitation: The intentional design and support of processes that enable diverse stakeholders to participate meaningfully, articulate interests, build trust, deliberate across differences and work towards shared objectives. In landscape processes, facilitation is not only about managing meetings; it includes helping actors understand interdependencies, structure dialogue, navigate conflict, support inclusion and maintain continuity across planning, coordination, implementation and follow-up. Effective facilitation is particularly important where landscape processes involve multiple institutions, knowledge systems, power asymmetries and competing land or resource interests.

Governance: The formal and informal rules, organizations, relationships and processes through which public, private, civil society, community and customary actors articulate interests, negotiate trade-offs, make and implement decisions and exercise accountability over time. In a landscape context, governance concerns how different actors coordinate across sectors and scales, how authority and legitimacy are recognized and how decisions about land, water, ecosystems, livelihoods and investment are made, contested and sustained. In some contexts, customary, Indigenous and community governance systems may also hold significant decision-making authority, rather than participating only within formal government-led processes.

Integrated landscape action and financing plan: An agreed framework that translates shared landscape objectives into prioritized actions, responsibilities, sequencing, resource needs, financing opportunities and monitoring arrangements. It helps move a landscape process from dialogue to implementation by clarifying what will be done, by whom, with what resources and how progress will be tracked and adapted over time.

Integrated landscape finance: The coordinated use of public, private, philanthropic, concessional, community and in-kind resources to support agreed social, ecological and economic priorities within a defined landscape or seascape. It is not a single instrument or funding source, but an approach to aligning different forms of funding and finance with shared spatial priorities, governance needs, implementation pathways and time horizons. It includes both recurring support for landscape governance infrastructure and variable finance for implementation investments, with the aim of improving synergies, reducing duplication, managing trade-offs and sustaining outcomes across natural, social, economic and institutional capital.

I**ntegrated landscape management (ILM):** The practical application of landscape approaches through coordinated planning, governance, implementation and learning across sectors, stakeholders and land or sea uses within a defined socio-ecological system. It seeks to manage synergies and trade-offs among ecological, social and economic objectives through participatory and adaptive processes.

Investment orchestration: The specialized function of aligning, structuring and sequencing multiple sources of capital and their associated instruments across a landscape towards a shared objective. It supports the translation of shared priorities into coherent investment pathways by matching financing sources to functions, managing dependencies and risk profiles, coordinating public, private, philanthropic and concessional actors and ensuring that investments contribute to agreed ecological, social, economic and governance outcomes. This function goes beyond resource mobilization by actively shaping how capital is deployed, combined and adapted over time.

Landscape approaches: The term covers integrated landscape, territorial, bioregional and related place-based approaches that work across sectors, stakeholders and land or sea uses within a defined socio-ecological system. They aim to reduce adverse trade-offs among stakeholders, economic activities and ecological outcomes, while improving beneficial synergies across environmental, social and economic objectives. In practice, they are used to support coherent action across issues such as biodiversity, climate, land restoration, water, livelihoods, food systems, resilience and broader development priorities. They are context-specific, participatory and iterative rather than linear or one-off planning exercises.

Landscape approaches implementation cycle: A landscape approach is typically implemented through an iterative cycle rather than a fixed sequence. In this report, the cycle comprises six broad steps: identifying the landscape or territorial context and relevant actors; convening stakeholders and establishing a shared understanding of the landscape and shared objectives; conducting participatory spatial and contextual

analysis; co-creating an integrated action and financing plan; building governance and resource mobilization capacity for implementation; and monitoring, learning and adapting over time. In practice, these steps often overlap and are revisited as conditions, relationships and evidence change.

Landscape governance: System of formal and informal institutions, processes and capacities through which actors in a defined landscape, seascape, territory or bioregion coordinate across sectors and interests, negotiate trade-offs and make decisions related to land and sea use, resource access, management and equity. These arrangements may operate across multiple governance and administrative levels and include formal government as well as customary, Indigenous and community governance systems.

Landscape governance infrastructure: The recurring operational capacity required to support coordinated action within a defined territory over time, with an intentional focus on managing social and ecological, or natural, capital. It includes the functions through which actors coordinate across sectors and interests, negotiate trade-offs, support representative participation, undertake shared planning and spatial prioritization, align resources and sustain monitoring, learning and continuity.

Landscape implementation investments: Resources used to deliver agreed landscape-level interventions, such as restoration, watershed management, infrastructure, livelihood activities, productive assets, service delivery, processing facilities or other actions identified through the landscape process. Unlike recurring governance and coordination costs, implementation investments are usually tied to specific activities, assets, outputs or projects.

Landscape maturity: The degree to which a landscape initiative has developed the core conditions needed to function effectively and durably over time. It does not imply a single end-state or a strictly linear pathway. Rather, how far an initiative has progressed in establishing an appropriate scale, an operational multi-stakeholder governance platform or process, collective goals and actions and collective monitoring, together with the capacities and relationships needed to sustain these over time. A mature initiative is generally able to coordinate actors, manage trade-offs, maintain continuity, mobilize support, adapt based on evidence and learning and coordinate financial flows.

Landscape scope and boundary: The initial and evolving delineation of the geographic, ecological, institutional and social scope of a landscape process. It may be based on watersheds, ecosystems, administrative jurisdictions, production systems, cultural territories, markets, infrastructure or shared risks. In practice, the boundary is often provisional at the outset and refined through stakeholder engagement, evidence and governance needs.

Landscape/seascape: A dynamic, multifunctional socio-ecological mosaic of ecosystems, land or sea uses and human activities, shaped over time by ecological, historical, economic and sociocultural processes. It is characterized by multiple stakeholders, diverse human–nature interactions and the coexistence of different uses, values, risks, synergies and trade-offs within the same spatial system. In practice, it is a scale at which coordinated management is needed because ecological processes, livelihoods, infrastructure and institutions interact directly.

Multi-stakeholder platform/landscape partnership: A structured process or body through which public, private, civil society, community, customary and technical actors coordinate around shared landscape objectives. It provides a space for dialogue, negotiation, joint planning, decision support, resource alignment, conflict management, monitoring and adaptive learning. Such platforms may be formal or informal, but their effectiveness depends on legitimacy, representation, continuity, facilitation and the ability to influence action.

Rights-based landscape governance: This governance combines rights-based approaches with landscape governance to intentionally address power, responsibility, and accountability in the design and implementation of decision-making processes within a landscape. In this regard, decision-making spaces, processes and institutions become platforms where rights holders and stakeholders come together to discuss, recognize and act on matters pertaining to procedural and substantive rights to achieve more equitable outcomes.

Executive Summary

This policy report examines integrated landscape, bioregional and territorial approaches (collectively referred to as landscape approaches[1]) with a specific focus on the recurring governance functions and coordination required to support policy–action convergence. These approaches are increasingly expected to contribute to climate adaptation, biodiversity, land restoration, water security, food systems, livelihoods, the bioeconomy, sustainable economic development and more, while the policy and financing architecture surrounding them remains largely project- and sector-based (Scherr et al. 2026). Many of the most significant synergies, trade-offs, risks and implementation barriers are concentrated in territories where ecosystems, land use, infrastructure, local economies and community well-being interact directly. Yet the financing architecture surrounding these approaches remains largely project-based, sector-based and short-cycled, while coordinated territorial delivery depends on recurring operational capacities that sustain participation, shared planning, spatial prioritization, coordination, monitoring, learning and evaluation and continuity over time (OECD 2020).

In this report, *landscape governance* refers to the processes and institutional capacities through which actors in a defined territory and bioregion build and manage social and ecological capital, coordinate across sectors and interests, negotiate trade-offs, support spatial prioritization and sustain collective decision-making over time. *Landscape governance infrastructure* refers to the recurring operational capacity required to perform these functions consistently. A full glossary of terms is provided below.

Drawing on questionnaire responses received from 30 representatives of landscape initiatives with experience in landscape governance, the report examines the costs of multi-stakeholder landscape governance, including activities related to coordination and planning, the drivers of cost variation and the implications for policymakers and funders. The analysis distinguishes recurring governance costs from variable implementation investments and considers the implications of this distinction for funding and financing design.

Multi-stakeholder landscape partnerships, which have steadily emerged as a cornerstone of landscape initiatives, capture the hybrid reality of landscape governance. In most cases, these partnerships are more than just a collection of actors working together under a shared vision; they can be made up of representatives from customary and Indigenous governance systems, formal government (local, sub-national and national), farmer and producer networks with their own governance systems, and other relevant stakeholders. Hence, they act as a critical component of governance infrastructure, serving as networks that connect multiple governance systems, sharing and extending accountability beyond centralized control.

Landscape governance approaches seek to ensure that diverse worldviews, priorities and practices are acknowledged, deliberated on and included in the decision-making framing, allowing more contextually relevant and acceptable mechanisms to manage and sustain a territory or geographical area. Integrated landscape governance systems therefore need to co-ordinate beyond jurisdictional and political boundaries. This requires skillful deliberations and sustaining the trust, interest and motivation needed for complex interactions among actors working towards shared resilient socio-ecological outcomes.

The findings indicate that governance costs are real, recurring and variable in predictable ways, yet are frequently under-recognized, underfunded or absorbed through unpaid labour, institutional goodwill and fragmented project support. The analysis also points to the need for funding and financing instruments better suited to supporting shared governance functions over time and, where relevant, more advanced investment coordination and orchestration. Governance funding should also adequately consider rights-based governance approaches, power dynamics and multi-level coordination, including the legitimacy and accessibility of Indigenous, customary and community governance systems that are often insufficiently recognized in formal funding and financing arrangements, particularly where these arrangements influence access to incentives or benefit-sharing mechanisms.

The absence of integrated finance–governance infrastructure creates a persistent delivery gap. Practitioners from networks of integrated approaches reported that governance functions for the collective management of landscapes and territories (regardless of ownership) are often fragmented across projects, unevenly funded or only partially sustained through absorbed staff time, ad hoc institutional contributions and goodwill rather than dedicated resources. These gaps create conditions that undermine progress: when project cycles end, participation, trust and coordination decline across individual and community scales, and crucial institutional memory, evidence and data are often lost. Public and private investments that should reinforce one another instead proceed in parallel or at cross-purposes. These challenges

1 This paper uses the terms landscape and landscape approach as a catch-all equally relevant to seascapes, bioregional, territorial and other terms commonly used to describe interconnected socio-ecological land and water systems.

also reflect the limits of single-sector approaches in landscapes where climate, water, biodiversity, infrastructure, livelihoods and local services are tightly interdependent.

Locally led approaches need the capability to navigate across institutions at various scales, from local to international, to secure nested support systems (Minderhoud 2026). How these systems operate depends on the distribution of authority, resources and institutional capacity across governance levels. Where governance capacity is weak, systemic risks are harder to manage and climate shocks can generate wider disruption and avoidable economic losses, particularly as they relate to crucial infrastructure needs (FAO and WASAG 2023; FAO 2017; IFAD and NDC Partnership 2023; Maskrey et al. 2023). In this context, integrated landscape approaches risk losing their effectiveness when operating solely on project timelines rather than as mechanisms for coordinated, continuous territorial delivery.

Strong governance includes the necessary support for inclusive decision-making and collaboration among different stakeholders, enabling better coordination between various sectors and action agendas across the landscape towards sustainability, leading to better socio-ecological resilience (GIZ 2021). This is directly relevant to policymakers and funders seeking to support place-based action. The growing emphasis on integrated and locally led land-use planning, urban-rural linkages, biodiversity implementation, resilience and delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) all point to the need for effectively functioning, nested governance at the landscape scale, while also responding to external incentives and shocks. As landscape approaches are expected to support convergence across sectors and policy agendas, the operational basis required to sustain them needs to be recognized, strengthened and funded.

Based on this analysis, six priority actions are proposed for policymakers, funders and practitioners:

1. Recognize governance infrastructure within national and subnational implementation frameworks for biodiversity, climate, adaptation, land and related delivery agendas.

2. Include costed governance and coordination functions in investment design rather than treating them as residual overheads or informal expectations.

3. Expand multi-year and programmatic resourcing modalities better suited to territorial coordination, institutional continuity and adaptive management.

4. Strengthen support for multi-stakeholder governance platforms and facilitation capacities that enable inclusive coordination across public institutions, community and customary systems, civil society and private actors.

5. Treat governance and coordination functions as eligible components of thematic and Rio Convention-related funding windows alongside implementation finance.

6. Strengthen the applied evidence base through pilot landscapes, comparative costing exercises and knowledge-sharing platforms that improve budgeting practice and funding design.

A further opportunity is to build on national financing and resource mobilization processes, including the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) and funding windows related to the Rio Conventions, to recognize landscape governance and coordination functions as eligible and necessary components of implementation.

Landscape governance infrastructure should be treated as a recurring operating requirement for integrated landscape approaches. Without it, participation, coordination, evidence systems and institutional continuity weaken across project cycles, reducing the coherence and effectiveness of broader investments in people, nature and socio-ecological resilience.

The report first provides an overview of landscape governance infrastructure in Section 1, drawing on existing knowledge and experience from the previously mentioned broader landscape practitioner network. Section 2 highlights the need for effective governance infrastructure to support policy convergence, on-the-ground delivery and long-term resilience of landscape initiatives. Section 3 presents the findings from practitioners, followed by implications for policy and financing architecture in Section 4. Section 5 proposes priority actions to support funding for landscape governance, and Section 6 concludes with a call to action.

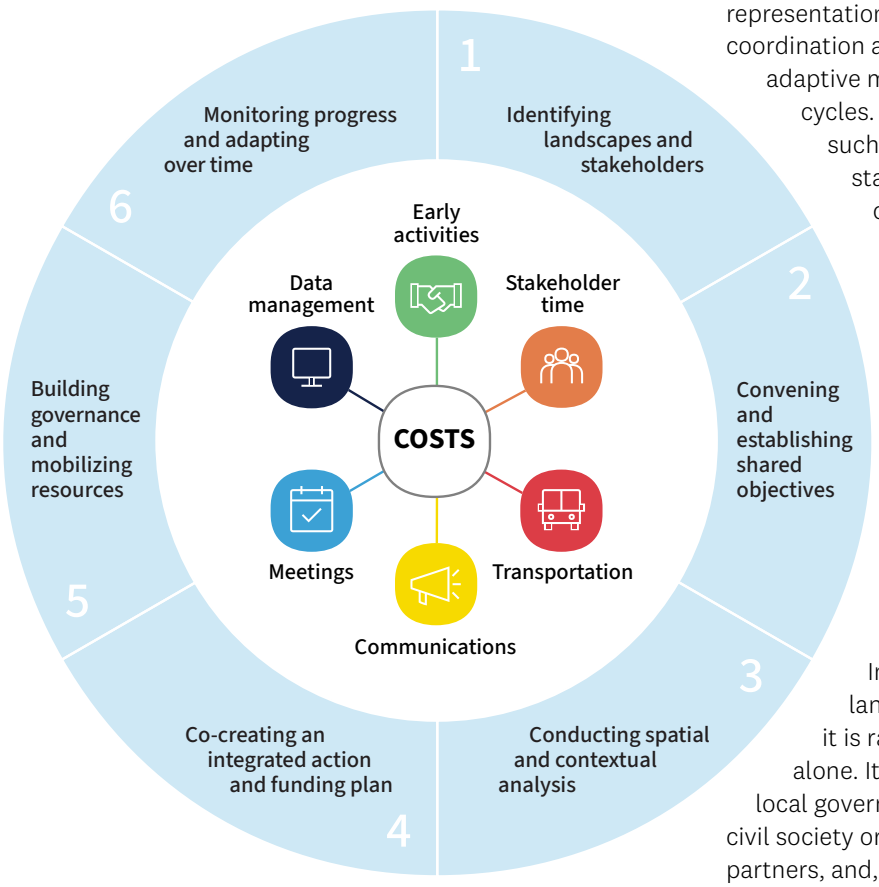
The study was coordinated by researchers at the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) and the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) Secretariat, Persimmon Co-Lab, EcoAgriculture Partners and the 1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People Initiative. It also draws on the experience and learnings of landscape practitioner networks, including IPSI; the Asian, Latin and Mediterranean Model Forest Networks; 1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People; Common Ground and the Kenya Landscape Actors Platform.

1. Understanding Landscape Governance Infrastructure

1.1 A Working Definition

Landscape governance infrastructure can be understood as the recurring operational capacity required to support coordinated action within a defined territory over time, with an intentional focus on managing social and ecological, or natural, capital. It includes the functions through which actors coordinate across sectors and interests in an inclusive manner, negotiate trade-offs, support representative participation, undertake shared planning and spatial prioritization, align resources and sustain monitoring, learning and evaluation and continuity. This framing distinguishes recurring governance functions from one-off implementation activities and from generic administrative overheads, making governance infrastructure a substantive component of implementation.

Figure 1. Recurring costs for landscape governance and coordination within the integrated landscape management framework



Existing landscape-oriented guidance and assessment frameworks reflect similar definitions of landscape governance infrastructure and its functions, although the terminology and framing vary. The Landscape Practitioners Network, convened by ISEAL Alliance, developed the *Core Criteria for Mature Landscape Initiatives*, which describe landscape initiatives in terms of aligning stakeholders around collective goals, actions and investment. The LandScale framework similarly treats governance as one of four core pillars of landscape sustainability performance (ISEAL 2024; LandScale 2021). The International Model Forest Network also emphasizes both partnership and governance as foundational principles, recognizing the importance of inclusive, voluntary stakeholder engagement and transparent, participatory and accountable decision-making processes across the landscape (International Model Forest Network 2008). The Regen10 Outcomes Framework takes a systems perspective and includes governance as one of 12 interconnected dimensions, encompassing formal and informal institutions, rules and decision-making processes across farm and landscape scales (Regen10 2026).

In operational terms, these functions include stakeholder engagement, convening and facilitation, participation and representation, shared planning and spatial prioritization, coordination and resource alignment, monitoring and adaptive management and continuity across project cycles. In budgetary terms, they correspond to items such as coordination staff, facilitation support, stakeholder participation, mobility and meetings, communications, participatory planning and analysis, technical inputs, data and information systems, monitoring and learning support and continuity functions that are often omitted when governance is treated as a secondary or residual category. Recognizing these functions as fundable components of implementation helps shift them from implicit expectations to explicit design considerations (see Figure 1).

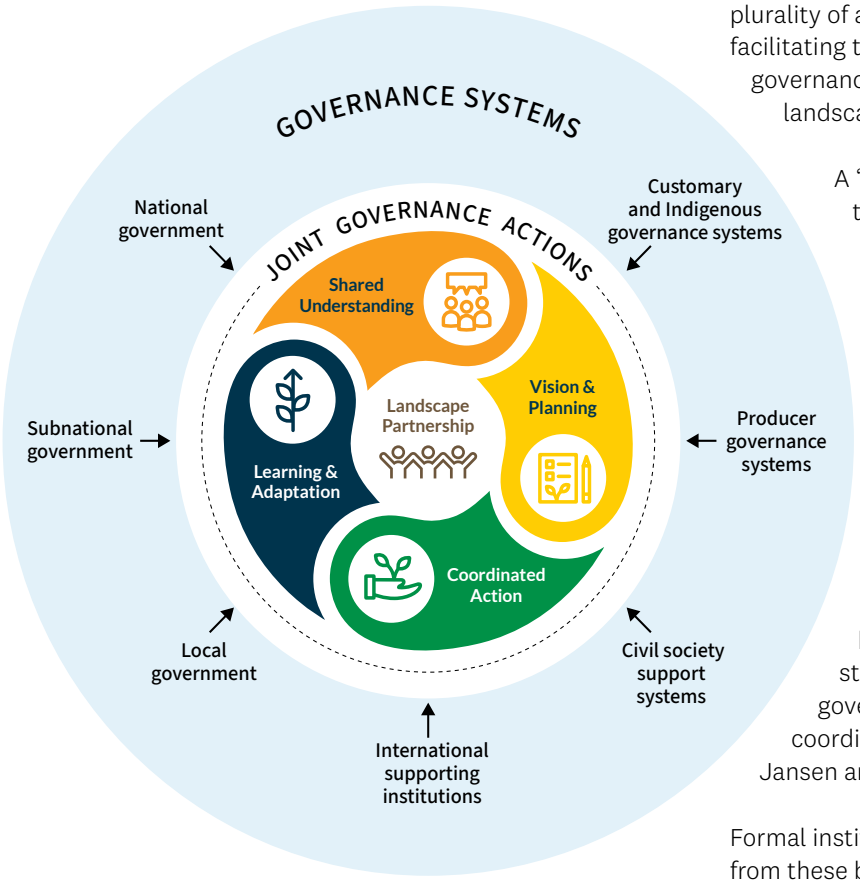
1.2 The Hybrid Institutional Reality of Landscape Governance

In most contexts, the operational basis for landscape governance is hybrid, meaning that it is rarely carried out by a single institution acting alone. It is generally distributed across public agencies, local governments, community and customary institutions, civil society organizations, producer groups, technical partners, and, in many contexts, Indigenous Peoples and

local communities (IPLCs). Governance infrastructure is often inherited from pre-existing territorial institutions and built on to address current issues.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) decision adopting the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework explicitly refers to participation at all levels of government and to the contributions of women, youth, IPLCs, civil society organizations, the private and financial sectors and stakeholders from other sectors in implementation. These institutional relationships are not always settled. Mandates, decision-making authority, resources and access to information may be actively negotiated across central and local governments, sectoral institutions, customary systems and other actors. Governance functions may therefore require navigating tensions across institutions and governance levels, rather than only bridging different mandates and sources of legitimacy (UNU-IAS and IGES 2023). In practice, these functions often depend on bridging institutions with different mandates, incentives and sources of legitimacy rather than relying on a single formal structure (Convention on Biological Diversity 2022).

Figure 2. The hybrid reality of governance systems within landscape approaches visualized



Recognizing these functions as fundable does not mean that all governance activities require new institutions or additional funding beyond existing mandates. Some functions may appropriately be delivered by public agencies, community and customary institutions, civil society organizations or other actors through their established roles. This requires the explicit assignment of responsibilities, assessment of institutional capacity and realistic provision for staff time, participation, data, travel and operating costs needed to perform them. This helps avoid both unfunded expectations and double funding of functions already covered by institutional budgets.

Landscape governance involves navigating this hybrid institutional reality through institutional bricolage — the creative piecing together of rules, norms and traditions from various organizational forms to create new ones — and adapting governance to be context-specific. This should be done in a manner that facilitates participation of actors, their respective values, interests and worldviews while working with distinct governance approaches. Working across this plurality of actors, perspectives and governance systems, and facilitating the process of shaping and adapting the landscape governance infrastructure, is a core purpose of integrated landscape approaches (Cleaver 2012; Van Oosten 2013).

A 'commons' perspective is also relevant in this context. Ostrom's work on common-pool resource management drew attention to how shared resources can be governed through a polycentric approach based on collectively developed rules, monitoring arrangements and user associations, rather than only through governance structures provided by state hierarchy or market exchange. In landscape settings, that perspective is pertinent where ecological functions, resource flows and public goods extend across administrative, tenure and sectoral boundaries. It does not displace the role of formal public institutions or tenure rights but broadens the frame through which collective stewardship, shared rules and representative governance can be understood within landscape-scale coordination (Ostrom 1990; Nobel Prize Outreach 2009; Jansen and Kalas, 2024).

Formal institutions rarely function effectively in isolation from these broader governance structures. Systems and

processes such as trusted facilitation can help bridge different mandates, authorities and sources of legitimacy. Multi-stakeholder landscape partnerships, which have steadily emerged as a cornerstone of landscape initiatives, capture the hybrid reality of landscape governance. In most cases, these partnerships are more than a collection of actors working together under a shared vision: they often also serve as an umbrella for bringing together multiple governance systems (Scherr et al. 2022). These partnerships can be made up of representatives from customary and Indigenous governance systems, formal government (local, sub-national and national), farmer and producer networks with their own governance systems, civil society and related organized groups, including women and youth (see Figure 2).

In this regard, multi-stakeholder landscape partnerships act as a critical component of governance infrastructure, connecting multiple governance systems through a network that can share and extend accountability beyond centralized control and ensure that landscape governance is fit for context. This is reflected in some of the different forms and trajectories documented by Scherr et al. (2025) and Schoneveld et al. (2024).

1.3 Coordinated Governance Funding vs. Implementation Funding

A useful distinction can be made between the recurring funding required to sustain multi-stakeholder governance and the funding and finance required to implement landscape-level priorities and investments. The two are connected but they are not interchangeable. The first supports the capacity to coordinate actions over time across institutions, sectors and stakeholder groups and involves several iterative steps (Table 1). The second supports specific priority interventions within that coordinated framework. Much of the current funding gap arises because governance functions are often assumed to be covered indirectly by implementation funding, despite having different temporal, institutional and operational requirements.

This distinction matters because recurring governance functions tend to remain necessary across changing project portfolios and implementation cycles, even where site-level interventions evolve over time. The distinction between these resourcing needs should be made explicit in the design of funding and financing instruments (Power and Seefeld 2024).

Properly designed landscape governance supports continuity and the maintenance of institutional memory (Rodriguez and Fleischman 2018). This includes the practical tasks of maintaining records and relationships, ensuring follow-through and supporting staff continuity and longer-term coordination capacity.

These elements are particularly crucial as enabling conditions for other investment orchestration functions, such as place-based portfolio development and resource deployment, which are key areas for effective landscape and other place-based approaches (Hofstetter 2020).

1.4 Translating Governance Functions into Budget Lines

Governance infrastructure is often most visible in process

Table 1. Recurring funding to sustain governance and coordination functions

Funding function	What it supports	Examples	Funding implication
Recurring governance infrastructure (enabling)	The institutional capacity to coordinate, decide, learn and adapt across a landscape over time	Facilitation, convening, participation support, secretariat, data systems, monitoring, communication and trust-building	Requires predictable, multi-year, flexible operating support
Variable implementation investments	The execution of projects and investments that meet agreed landscape-level priorities	Restoration, watershed management, grey-green infrastructure, livelihood activities, productive assets and processing facilities	Can be financed through project funding, public budgets, private investment and blended finance instruments such as private capital
Advanced investment orchestration	The additional capacity to align, sequence and mobilize capital across the landscape	Capital mapping, pipeline development, co-financing design, financial structuring, risk management, public-private alignment	Requires specialist technical capacity beyond minimum viable governance

terms, but decisions on eligibility and support are generally taken through budgets, funding instruments and operating cost categories (see Table 2). Where governance remains unnamed and therefore invisible within these categories, coordination and continuity are more likely to depend on fragmented project allocations or unpaid contributions. Where these functions are explicitly recognized, funding can be structured more consistently around the recurring capacities required for coordinated territorial action, including staffing, participation support, planning, information systems, learning and operational continuity (see Figure 2). Translating governance functions into defined budget categories is therefore central to this research to make these costs visible and eligible for funding.

In current landscape initiatives, many governance platforms and functions are sustained mainly through significant unpaid labour, knowledge and monitoring provided by communities, local leaders, institutions and partner organizations. This creates several problems: meaningful participation and effective coordination require funding because time, travel, translation and opportunity costs determine whether engagement can be substantive, representative and sustained (Nichols 2021). Volunteer effort and in-kind contributions should be explicitly recognized, but they cannot serve as a sustainable long-term funding model for landscape-scale coordination. Practitioners engaged in this process consistently link ongoing challenges, vulnerability and unmet needs to this reliance on unsupported labour and the lack of structural support for these core functions.

Chronic underfunding of governance, leadership and coordination capacity limits the ability to sustain engagement, generate robust evidence and deliver consistent results. Without adequate and predictable support, it is unrealistic to expect integrated landscape approaches to achieve the scale, quality and impact they are increasingly expected to deliver.

In parallel, growing attention is being given to linking governance functions more directly to coordinated investment through the emerging concept of investment orchestration. This introduces an additional functional layer focused on designing place-based, adaptive funding and financing approaches that account more explicitly for multi-capital returns — the generation of value across financial, social, environmental and other forms of capital — and spatial interdependencies across landscapes.

In practice, this means creating the institutional architecture needed not only to coordinate actors but also to structure, sequence and deploy capital more strategically over time (Hofstetter et al. 2025).

Table 2. Examples of landscape governance budget lines and costs

Budget line to support functions	Examples of costs
Staffing and coordination	Coordinators, convenors, platform managers, secretariat support and, where relevant, financial, legal or accounting support
Facilitation and inclusive participation support	Facilitation costs, inclusion measures, stakeholder stipends, travel, accessibility, translation and meeting support
Technical and planning requirements	Participatory analysis, spatial planning, technical expertise and data and information systems
Monitoring, evaluation and learning	Dashboards, monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting support, knowledge exchange and peer learning
Trust-building and legitimacy-building functions	Bilaterals, workshops, field visits, communication products and community engagement efforts
Physical operations and transport	Communications materials, vehicles, coordination infrastructure, shared workspaces and logistics

1.5 How Landscape Initiative Maturity May Influence Governance Costs

As landscape initiatives progress and mature, they generally strengthen the core functions needed to operate effectively and maintain their durability over time (Carmenta et al. 2020). Four core criteria commonly recognized as indicators for landscape initiative maturity include (ISEAL 2024; LandScale 2021; UNU-IAS and IGES 2023):

1. Operating at an appropriate scale
2. Having a strong, operational multi-stakeholder governance platform or process
3. Establishing collective long-term goals and plans for achieving those goals
4. Conducting collective monitoring to assess and report progress towards goals

More mature initiatives are generally better positioned to coordinate actors, manage trade-offs, maintain continuity, mobilize support and adapt based on evidence and learning (Siangulube et al. 2023). Beyond these key benefits, they also often have greater access to new opportunities that are not always afforded to less established initiatives. Stakeholders such as supply chain companies, governments, private investors and philanthropic organizations are more inclined to participate in and support mature initiatives (Kozar et al. 2014; Ros-Tonen et al. 2018). Likewise, by establishing appropriate safeguards, mature landscape initiatives can mitigate power imbalances and exploitation, which can raise confidence among local actors wary of external stakeholders (Kusters et al. 2020).

This suggests that the ability of a landscape initiative to mature and better leverage new opportunities may be directly linked to governance funding. If a landscape initiative strives to advance its core functions, greater and often increasing costs are likely to be incurred. A lack of funding can hinder an initiative's ability to mature, which in turn may reduce opportunities for the landscape to achieve its goals. In this regard, funding can be considered a core feature and an enabling and catalyzing condition necessary for landscape maturity.

1.6 How Landscape Initiative Objectives May Influence Governance Costs

Landscape initiatives operate differently given their diversity in governance contexts, approaches and objectives, which influence how they navigate and contribute to existing governance systems. Factors that influence landscape objectives include landscape size and scale, sector or focus, the types of actors and stakeholders engaged by the initiative, existing institutional arrangements and the need to strengthen governance infrastructure through both collaborative processes as well as legal structures. While there are commonalities across landscape governance systems, the diversity of objectives influences how systems are designed; this determines funding needs, resulting in cost variation across landscape initiatives, specifically regarding governance infrastructure costs. In turn, governance costs may influence how an initiative prioritizes its objectives by weighing what is necessary against what is feasible.

Determining the appropriate scale of operation is always a critical question for landscape initiatives from inception. Initiatives often determine landscape boundaries based on their desired impact. To be successful, governance must be considered hand in hand with the landscape scale, given the implications for the operationalization of actions and subsequent costs. An initiative that strives to operate across a larger landscape may be burdened by higher governance costs due to the need to manage a greater number of stakeholders, establish broader communication and knowledge-sharing systems and the possibility of relying on additional technical expertise. At the same time, strategically leveraging technical expertise and knowledge systems may help reduce costs, but relies on collaboration and requires investment in partnerships and the capacity development of organizations involved.

The sectoral or thematic focus of a landscape initiative's objectives also influences the design of governance. By definition, landscape initiatives pursue multiple objectives and operate across sectors to varying degrees. A key challenge is therefore determining how best to build governance infrastructure around multiple objectives while leveraging synergies and avoiding trade-offs. For example, the governance costs of an initiative focused on protected area management may be more centred on the establishment and enforcement of rules in comparison to an initiative with a stronger focus on livelihood development, which may require building connections with businesses and the private sector.

The same principle applies to emerging territorial agendas. Implementing the social bioeconomy may place greater emphasis on representative participation, resource-use negotiation, institutional coordination, benefit-sharing arrangements, accountability and monitoring of ecological and social outcomes. Coordinating grey-green infrastructure may require stronger spatial and technical analysis, alignment across infrastructure and environmental institutions, safeguards, financing coordination and continuity across implementation, operation and maintenance. These are not universal requirements to every landscape process but examples of how the objectives and investments involved can shape the mix and depth of governance functions required.

Objectives are also heavily influenced by the actors and stakeholders participating in the governance system. All landscape initiatives include multiple stakeholders with different interests, expertise, connections and levels of power. Landscape governance systems with a greater diversity of stakeholders will likely need to invest more in systems, processes and functions that establish transparency and familiarity among actors to create a stronger sense of shared objectives. Where power asymmetries are significant, additional attention may also be needed to embed equity and accountability in process design, facilitation, monitoring, and learning. In these situations, facilitated dialogues and dispute management may require more attention (Scherr et al. 2025).

Finally, depending on the functions and roles conducted by the landscape initiative, additional institutional arrangements and legal structures may be needed. Maintaining these institutions and structures entails additional administrative costs, which may increase as the initiative manages larger or more diverse funding sources. This carries incremental staffing implications that often scale non-linearly and can become vastly more complex when working across public and private funding sources and financial instruments. The possible need for additional institutional arrangements and legal structures strongly depends on how compliance and accountability are addressed within the socio-economic and cultural context of the landscape and can also inform the strategic design of cost-sharing mechanisms (Schoneveld et al. 2024). For example, corporate actors might require stringent accountability mechanisms for their sourcing and product claims, while producers require secure tenure rights.

Finding synergies in how investments are directed towards enhancing transparency and accountability in landscape administration can serve multiple objectives. Collaborative approaches to monitoring and assurance at scale are already being tested by corporate actors through jurisdictional approaches, but they are not always informed by the needs of local stakeholders nor connected to locally embedded institutional arrangements.

2. Why Funding Effective Governance Infrastructure Matters

2.1 Policy Convergence and the Subnational Delivery Context

Integrated landscape approaches are receiving greater attention because many of the interactions shaping development outcomes are concentrated at the subnational level, where land use, water, biodiversity, infrastructure, livelihoods and local economies intersect in practice. This is reflected across several international policy frameworks. The 2030 Agenda presents the SDGs as "integrated and indivisible" (Thaxton et al. 2015; United Nations 2015). The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework emphasizes participatory, integrated and biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, as well as conservation and management that is integrated into wider landscapes and seascapes (Convention on Biological Diversity 2022).

The UNFCCC National Adaptation Plan process is framed around the integration of adaptation into relevant policies, programmes and planning processes across sectors and levels (UNFCCC 2012). UNCCD guidance on integrated land-use planning, together with the UNCCD–UN-Habitat primer on urban-rural linkages and land, similarly points toward territorial planning and coordination as part of implementation across interconnected land and development challenges (UNCCD/Science-Policy Interface 2022; UNCCD 2023; TP4D 2023; UNCCD and UN-Habitat 2024).

A related shift is also visible in emerging discourses linking economic dependency to ecology. The Dasgupta Review positions economies and livelihoods as embedded within nature rather than external to it (Dasgupta 2021). Beyond GDP and post-growth perspectives draw attention to biophysical limits, Earth systems risks and dimensions of progress that are not adequately captured by aggregate economic output alone (Stockholm Resilience Centre 2023). At the landscape, territorial and bioregional scales, this creates opportunities to define and apply locally relevant measures of economic success that reflect ecosystem condition, resilience, livelihoods, equity and well-being (United Nations 2026). Doing so requires governance capacity to agree on priorities and indicators, maintain relevant data, assess trade-offs and connect these measures to planning, budgeting and investment decisions over time (Dixson-Declève et al. 2022).

The bioeconomy and grey-green infrastructure illustrate different dimensions of this territorial implementation challenge and investment decision-making. Translating the



Photo: EcoAgriculture Partners



Photo: EcoAgriculture Partners

G20 High-Level Principles on Bioeconomy into practice requires context-specific decisions on biological resource use, economic opportunities, rights, inclusion, ecological sustainability and equitable benefit sharing (G20 2024).

Grey-green infrastructure requires engineered assets, ecosystem restoration and nature-based functions to be considered together across connected spatial systems, including their impacts on and dependencies on natural and social capital, related risks and long-term management requirements (Capitals Coalition et al. 2025). Both therefore place demands on the broader coordination architecture described in Section 1, although their specific institutional, participatory, technical and investment requirements differ.

However, public policy, investment and institutional mandates remain largely organized through separate systems within policy levels and sectoral siloes. At the same time, there is increasing recognition of locally led approaches as essential for addressing interconnected climate, biodiversity and development challenges in response to local needs at the landscape scale. In practice, delivery depends on whether actors are enabled to coordinate across these systems, negotiate trade-offs and sustain decisions, investments and coordination over time (Breuer et al. 2023). Specifically, locally led approaches which aim to devolve decision-making to appropriate levels require nested support systems at the regional, national and international levels to deliver (Minderhoud 2026). Effective delivery also depends on whether actors can identify where action is most needed, sequence interventions across a territory and align investment with spatial priorities rather than isolated project or sectoral objectives. When appropriately supported and resourced, landscape governance becomes the practical basis for integrated delivery.

This is also why landscape approaches are gaining prominence in wider policy convergence agendas. Climate, biodiversity, land restoration, food systems, water security, social inclusion and well-being cannot be advanced through isolated sectoral interventions alone (UNFSS 2022). At the landscape and territorial levels, the failure of single-sector approaches often manifests not only in weaker coordination and support but also in greater exposure to systemic risks, climate-related shocks, social conflicts, ecosystem degradation and inefficient delivery of infrastructure and local services (Ros-Tonen et al. 2026).

The language of policy integration has progressed, but recognition of, capacity for and funding for the governance infrastructure needed to sustain it have not. As a result, place-based governance platforms are expected to coordinate complex processes with little or no dedicated operating support, despite their central role in implementation. This creates not only a budgeting gap but also an instrument gap, since the convergence agenda increasingly requires funding cross-sectoral, organizational and orchestration mechanisms, as well as the capacity to support shared territorial functions rather than only discrete sectoral projects (Wee and Ramolobe 2025). Funding these functions should therefore be understood as an investment in resilience and in avoided costs by helping reduce losses associated with fragmented delivery.

The result is a mismatch between the policy ambition for integrated delivery and the governance infrastructure and funding architecture available to support the recurring cross-sectoral functions needed to make that integration operational at the landscape level.

2.2 The Delivery Gap in Current Sustainable Development Funding and Financial Practices

Implementation across climate, biodiversity, land restoration, water security, food systems, livelihoods and related SDGs priorities is often poorly aligned because sector-specific projects operate in parallel. Coordinated delivery depends on recurring functions that support representative participation, shared planning, spatial prioritization, sequencing of activities, resource alignment, conflict management, monitoring, learning and evaluation over time. Where these functions and capacities are weak or discontinuous, convergence agendas are harder to translate into implementation and the capacity to manage trade-offs and cumulative risks across a territory is reduced.

Governance infrastructure provides part of the operational basis through which integrated delivery is carried out over time by supporting continuity, coordination and the management of fragmentation across institutions and investment streams, with the aim of embedding these functions in locally owned institutional arrangements and capacities.

Current policy and funding environments are often misaligned with these needs. Policy and funding systems remain largely sector-based, project-based and short-term, while many of the functions required for coordinated territorial action are recurring, cross-cutting and long-term. Where these functions remain weakly recognized, they can be fragmented across projects, funded inadequately or unevenly or maintained through volunteer effort and institutional goodwill. As projects end, coordination capacity can contract, stakeholder participation can decline and relationships, records, evidence and data systems can be lost. This increases repeated start-up costs, weakens follow-through and makes duplication, gaps and unmanaged trade-offs more likely. The resulting delivery gap reduces the effectiveness of investments in wider implementation and limits the ability of integrated landscape approaches to serve as credible mechanisms for sustained subnational delivery across interconnected policy agendas (TP4D 2023).

2.3 Governance Infrastructure as Part of Resilience and Implementation Capacity

Beyond coordination, the significance of governance infrastructure extends to implementation efficiency and, more importantly, to resilience. Governance infrastructure can strengthen the capacity of people within landscapes to sustain adaptive, coordinated responses under conditions of increasing ecological and economic stress. In territorially interconnected systems, weak governance functions can lower resilience and make it harder to respond coherently to climate and social risks over time.

Governance infrastructure supports greater coherence within a landscape, contributing to stronger shared outcomes across stakeholders. Funding landscape governance infrastructure is an investment in three key interconnected elements that underpin the resilience and implementation capacity of landscape initiatives (Kusters et al. 2020; Tropenbos International and EcoAgriculture Partners 2017).

1. **Inclusive decision-making.** Inclusive decision-making processes ensure the fair and equitable participation of all actors with a stake in the landscape. These processes must be transparent, and participation must be genuine and meaningful to incentivize equitable and robust engagement among diverse actors. Accountability mechanisms should be embedded in decision-making processes so that decision-makers can be held responsible.

2. **A culture of collaboration.** Advancing a culture of collaboration in the landscape can foster a sense of community, belonging and trust across actors with diverse values, beliefs and objectives. This is fundamental to effective information-sharing and the open exchange of ideas necessary to develop genuinely shared visions and strategies. It also enables actors to address disputes and disruptions across social networks and mitigates performative actions that would otherwise undermine honest dialogue.

3. **Coordination across sectors, levels and actors.** Coordination across sectors, levels and actors within a landscape is fundamental to leveraging synergies and avoiding trade-offs and duplications across different efforts. Coordination is inherently broad and expansive by necessity. Coordination mechanisms must be designed and planned to ensure that landscape initiatives can advance their goals intentionally and with purpose, rather than reactively or on an ad hoc basis. This requires both horizontal decision-making processes (coordination across sectors and jurisdictions) and vertical decision-making processes (coordination across hierarchies such as different levels of government). Finding ways to bridge gaps and connect actors across different systems and processes is fundamental to landscape governance coordination (Gutierrez et al. 2025). Mechanisms are also needed to connect landscape initiatives with national and

international processes and to support fair and equitable relationships between customary and formal governance systems.

While landscape governance is an established and recognized practice, knowledge and experience have not been widely shared through more concrete framings. This gap is pertinent within government policy and administrative practice, as well as in the programming and funding priorities set by donors and multilateral development banks in international development cooperation (official development assistance - ODA). This can be attributed largely to the complexity and diversity of landscape governance systems, which are inherently amorphous and resistant to formalization, as well as the long time horizons they must operate under. It may also be due in part to a lack of dedicated funding for landscape governance infrastructure, given that many funders are not open to supporting complex systems operating on long-term timelines.

Knowledge gaps constrain the development and advancement of landscape governance systems, practices and approaches, which in turn restrains the flow of funding towards governance. This creates a cycle in which a lack of knowledge and evidence restricts funding for governance, and a lack of funding restricts the development of knowledge and evidence needed to support landscape governance systems. Knowledge development needs to go hand-in-hand with dedicated funding in order to advance learnings on landscape governance, which can in turn improve landscape governance performance (Mickel 2026).

3. Methodology: Learning from Practitioners

3.1 Drawing on Practitioner Experiences

The report explores components related to landscape governance and the financial support needed to sustain it effectively, focusing on the different needs, challenges and coping strategies encountered by actors implementing landscape approaches in various contexts. To do so, a questionnaire (see Annex 1) was distributed to landscape initiatives across the networks of IPSI, the 1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People Initiative and the International Model Forest Network. It posed questions related to the size and types of landscape activities, existing governance systems, operationalization and elements of their landscape governance system, financial sources and their sufficiency for these activities and the consequences of inadequate funding.

The questionnaire was iteratively co-designed with practitioners to identify important questions and ensure key nuances were included. Thirty responses were received from different regions (as detailed in Figure 3) and analyzed to capture themes and insights related to the costs of landscape governance. These findings were complemented by a critical analysis of relevant literature and reflections from the authors' implementation experiences, triangulating mainstream and local evidence to deliver clear findings and suggestions for diverse decision-makers. Finally, the report was reviewed by experts and practitioners working in the field of integrated approaches, including survey respondents. Further details on the approach are provided in Annex 2.

This section presents key findings from the analysis. Table 3 summarises basic characteristics of the surveyed landscape initiatives.

3.2 Indicative Cost Ranges

Practitioner-reported evidence indicates that governance costs are recurring, identifiable and frequently underfunded, if not invisible. Based on the survey responses, common operating requirements emerged across three broad indicative cost ranges (*estimated costs):

- **US$ 10,000-50,000** per year* for relatively **small, compact contexts (20–200 km²)** with basic coordination functions
- **US$ 50,000-130,000** per year* for **medium-sized landscapes (200-500 km²)** requiring regular facilitation, participation support, coordination and basic monitoring.
- **US$ 130,000-500,000** per year* for **larger, more contested, remote, complex or transboundary contexts (> 500 km2)** with stronger staffing capacity, safeguards and information needs.

These ranges should not be interpreted as universal benchmarks, as costs vary significantly according to currency values and labour costs. However, they do establish an important point for policymakers and funders interested in integrated delivery. They also highlight that governance costs remain modest relative to the broader territorial and sectoral investments they help align and sustain across ecosystems, livelihoods, services and infrastructure.

The costs associated with fragmented delivery may be substantial, including delays, duplication, unmanaged trade-

Figure 3. Map of surveyed landscapes represented regionally



offs, loss of continuity and wider social, ecological and economic losses. This is especially the case in contexts facing growing climate and social risks that require stronger mitigation, adaptation and resilience strategies.

3.3 Drivers of Cost Variation

The practitioner findings reinforce several of the factors identified in Section 1 as influencing governance requirements and costs, while also highlighting additional considerations emerging from implementation experience.

Governance costs across landscapes vary in predictable and expected ways: cost variation is shaped by factors such as scale and geographic dispersion, stakeholder diversity, land-use complexity, conflict and contestation, accessibility, legitimacy and participation requirements and, in particular, the maturity of the governance process (de Haas and Westerink 2026).

In general, costs rise as coordination needs intensify, stakeholder processes become more demanding and operating conditions become more complex. Figure 4 presents questionnaire findings on gaps in fixed and variable costs across different landscape types.

Governance costs and performance are also influenced by longer-term conditions, including trust, social capital, historical governance arrangements and collective learning. These factors determine the effort required to build legitimacy, coordinate actors and sustain participation, and help explain why landscapes with otherwise similar characteristics may have different governance costs and performance.
Costs also increase where governance arrangements require stronger data, monitoring and evidence systems. This is particularly so where actors are expected to support spatial targeting, track change across multiple land uses and stakeholder groups, inform decision-making and enable adaptive management over time. As governance processes become more systematized, establishing and maintaining these functions can become a significant cost driver (Roux et al. 2025).

A further layer of cost arises when governance platforms evolve beyond coordinating actors to designing, aligning and mobilizing significant financial resources. This can include developing and implementing place-based funding and financing approaches, structuring instruments and coordinating the efforts needed to connect priorities, projects and capital across a territory. In practice, this investment orchestration function remains limited across many integrated initiatives because it is substantially more resource-intensive than core governance functions and is often not captured in existing practitioner-reported cost ranges (Atuhaire and Kyokusiima 2023).

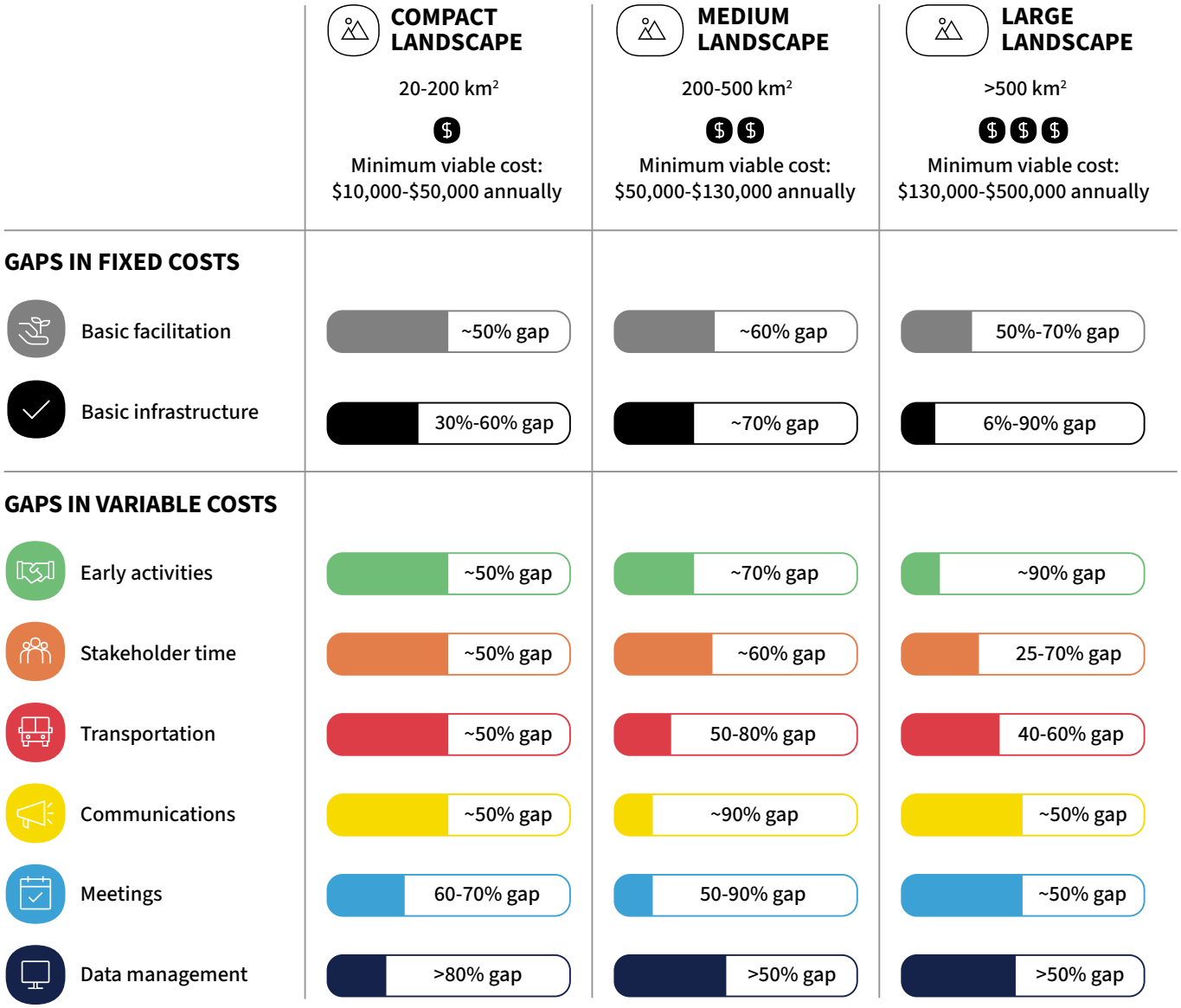
Table 3. Basic characteristics and governance findings of surveyed landscape initiatives

Categories	Features *% of participants*
Ecosystems	• Wide-ranging, including mountain, forest, grassland, riverine and coastal ecosystems
Land and sea uses	• Diverse, ranging from protected areas and production sites (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, pastoral) to human settlements • Mostly subsistence-based uses (50%) with only mild diversification across emerging sectors
Governance systems	• Approximately 50% have basic governance architecture, and around 30% have established multi-stakeholder platforms • Approximately 70% have legal structures that allow certainty in managing funds and stakeholder engagements • Less than 50% have adequate resources to fully engage diverse stakeholders
Accessibility to markets	• Mostly limited access to markets and urban centers (>70%)
Main threats to territories	• External drivers primarily arising from consumption pressures (e.g. deforestation and land-use conflicts) and natural factors (e.g. climate change-related impacts)
Factors that impede effective governance	• Unequal treatment of different stakeholder groups and priorities • Lack of long-term funding sources to meet different facilitation activities (building trust, communicating, consensus building between different actors, etc.) • Inadequate staff to support fundraising • Inadequate funds to update maps and manage data • Inadequate funds for necessary functions (including travel, transportation, etc) • Political uncertainty and lack of political will • Shifting donor priorities • Duplication of efforts by different facilitating bodies • Demographic changes and outmigration
Factors that have enabled sustaining activities	• Creation of social capital and trust • Participatory and inclusive planning • Close coordination with local authorities and institutions • Secure land tenure • Long-term agreements with authorities • Investing in training, monitoring, evaluation and learning activities • In-kind community investments (including effort, time, human resources and skills) • Embedding governance in existing mainstream structures -Motivated champions • Engaging the private sector • Strategic partnerships with influential actors across the decision-making chain that create a network of relationships and alliances (e.g. alliances with universities to manage data) • Establishing conflict management programmes • Diversified funding or economic options that take pressure off ecological functions (e.g. guided tours, ecotourism, educational camps, etc.) • Sustained communication channels with stakeholder groups, including the use of accessible technologies for this purpose
Fallouts from inadequate financing	• Erosion of trust and rise in conflicts between stakeholders • Loss of compiled data of closed projects, or inability to access updated datasets for planning, review and implementation • Lack of cross-sectoral alignment; inability to drive convergence on decisions aligned with sustainability and resilience • Adverse impacts to continuity of initiatives and long-term planning

Yet it is increasingly important where governance processes are expected to support implementation at scale. Where this extends to grey-green infrastructure portfolios, additional capacity may be needed for integrated spatial and technical analysis, coordination across infrastructure and environmental institutions, safeguards, financing design and long-term management arrangements (Howard et al. 2024). Importantly, the practitioner-reported ranges appear to reflect minimum viable governance functions and do not fully capture the additional costs associated with advanced data and evidence systems or with territorial-scale investment coordination, instrument design, and capital mobilization. These additional functions are of specific interest for companies that seek to comply with sustainability requirements.

From the analysis and practitioner feedback, clear cost drivers in governance can be identified. There is an important caveat to these: before considering the quantitative data presented in this report for local adaptation, local labour costs, purchasing power parity and currency conversions should be carefully examined. Even when costs are normalized, the required funding will depend on what the governance process is expected to do, the conditions under which it operates and

Figure 4. Minimal funding requirements and gaps in landscape governance and implementation costs in US$



the degree of continuity, legitimacy and technical support needed for it to function effectively. Key cost drivers include:

1. **Maturity of governance process:** Emerging platforms face different costs than more mature systems, which carry ongoing staffing, monitoring and continuity requirements.
2. **Resource management and investment orchestration:** Where platforms are expected to align resources, develop funding pathways or connect priorities with capital, specialist capacity is required beyond core governance functions.
3. **Scale and geographic dispersion:** Larger and more dispersed territories generate higher coordination and transaction costs.
4. **Complexity of land uses and actor systems:** More multifunctional landscapes require stronger facilitation, analysis and coordination across sectors, actors and institutions.
5. **Objectives and scope of ambition:** Broader and more interdependent objectives increase coordination, alignment, sequencing and monitoring requirements.
6. **Conflict, contestation and safeguards:** More contested settings — often those that are also multifunctional — require more facilitation, mediation, conflict resolution, legitimacy-building and related monitoring.
7. **Accessibility and logistics:** Remote or difficult-to-access areas raise mobility and convening costs.
8. **Legitimacy and representation:** More inclusive processes require explicit support for participation and interface-building across institutions, communities and especially vulnerable groups.
9. **Data and evidence requirements:** Stronger spatial targeting, monitoring, learning and adaptive management increase technical and information-system costs.
10. **Outcome- and performance-based data systems:** Demonstrating results requires baselines and Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems across climate, biodiversity or land-use results, raising technical and recurrent costs.

3.4 Commonly Underfunded Governance Functions

Practitioner evidence suggests that underfunding of governance infrastructure is uneven across functions. Certain functions are more likely to be omitted, absorbed informally or funded only when linked to a specific project output. These tend to be the functions that enable continuity, participation, coordination and learning across the landscape but are difficult to attribute to a discrete activity or investment.

The most commonly underfunded functions include core coordination and secretariat roles, meaningful participation support, facilitation and trust-building, monitoring and adaptive management, data and information systems, and communication and continuity costs that fall between project cycles. These are not peripheral activities; they are the practical operating functions through which a landscape platform convenes actors, supports representative engagement, maintains follow-through, manages information and adapts to changing conditions.

Coordination and secretariat functions are particularly important because they provide the day-to-day capacity needed to keep landscape processes operational. This includes maintaining contact with stakeholders, preparing meetings, documenting decisions, following up on commitments, managing basic administration, supporting reporting and linking the platform to public institutions, technical partners and funders. Where these functions are weak, landscape processes often rely too heavily on individual champions or short-term project staff, making continuity vulnerable to personnel or funding changes.

One of the most straightforward and impactful investments that can be made in landscape governance is strong, long-term facilitation. Facilitation, whether formal or informal, is inherent to every landscape initiative, and funding it as a fixed cost pays dividends across landscape governance infrastructure by sustaining connections between functions and actors. Facilitators bring their own values, biases, motivations and interests, but put themselves in the service of the initiative's shared goals and can safeguard principles such as inclusion, transparency and accountability within participatory and decision-making processes. They can also actively raise and resolve issues related to power dynamics, collaboration and conflict management to ensure governance processes operate smoothly.

Meaningful participation is also frequently underfunded. Participation requires more than inviting stakeholders to meetings. It often requires travel, translation, accessibility

measures, facilitation, preparation time, community-level engagement and, in some contexts, compensation for time and opportunity costs. Without adequate support, participation can become uneven and extractive, favouring actors with the resources, time and institutional capacity to remain engaged while disadvantaging vulnerable groups like women, Indigenous Peoples and youth. This can weaken representativeness and undermine the legitimacy of decisions made through the platform.

Monitoring, learning and adaptive management are also often treated as project-level requirements rather than as shared and continuous landscape functions. Yet integrated landscape approaches depend on the ability to track change, interpret evidence, assess whether actions reinforce or contradict one another and adjust priorities over time. Monitoring and learning serve internal-oriented purposes to adapt practices or strategies, but also serve externally by providing audiences with transparency, accountability and evidence, through which a landscape initiative can contribute to specific policy agendas or mobilize funding and investments. These functions require data systems, reporting capacity, learning processes and the ability to maintain evidence beyond individual project cycles.

Data and information systems represent a further underfunded area that requires significant support and technical expertise. Many platforms require maps, baselines, monitoring tools, data repositories, shared indicators and mechanisms for making information accessible to different actors. These systems are especially important where landscape approaches are expected to support spatial prioritization, investment alignment, safeguards, accountability or adaptive management. However, data functions are often funded only during project design or evaluation phases, rather than maintained as part of the platform's operating infrastructure.

Trust-building, communication and legitimacy-building functions are similarly difficult to fund through conventional project budgets, even though they are central to effective governance. These include bilateral engagement, multi-actor exchanges, field visits, community feedback mechanisms, accessible communication products, conflict management and the less visible relational work needed to sustain collaboration across institutions and stakeholder groups. These costs are often seen as soft or discretionary, but in practice they determine whether coordination is credible, whether decisions can be acted upon and ultimately the motivation and willingness of different stakeholders to participate, collaborate and sustain collective action over time.

Finally, continuity costs are among the least visible but most important underfunded areas. These include maintaining records, institutional memory, relationships, staffing, platform legitimacy and follow-through between project and political cycles. Without these functions, each new project or donor engagement risks restarting processes, duplicating consultations, losing accumulated knowledge or weakening trust among stakeholders who have already invested time in the platform.

3.5 Hidden Contributions and the Masking of Real Governance Costs



Photo: EcoAgriculture Partners

Many landscape platforms continue to function because their real costs are partially hidden. Practitioner evidence shows that the sustainability-aligned activities of many landscape platforms receive inadequate incentives and fiscal support, because they do not fit mainstream notions of product standardization or profitability (Subramanian and Varghese 2025). The resulting gaps are filled by communities, local leaders, customary institutions, civil society organizations, technical partners and

individual practitioners, who often contribute unpaid labour, local knowledge, monitoring, translation, convening support, conflict management and time. These contributions are substantial, but they are rarely costed, reported or recognized as part of the platform's operating requirements.

Platforms established solely for project implementation work differently. In those cases, coordination is often funded through a project budget for a fixed period, and the platform may lack the independent operating basis needed to continue once the project ends. Long-term platforms differ in that they often survive because actors continue to contribute effort beyond what is formally resourced. As a result, this can create the impression that the costs of landscape governance are lower than they actually are.

These in-kind contributions and institutional goodwill can be valuable, and in many cases they reflect strong ownership and commitment. However, they should not be treated as a substitute for dedicated governance funding. When unpaid labour and informal contributions become the default operating model, the platform becomes more fragile: it depends on the continued availability of individuals and institutions that may already be resource-constrained, exposed to changing mandates or carrying responsibilities beyond their formal role.

The masking of real governance costs has several consequences:

1. **Underestimation of the actual operating costs** of landscape governance
2. **Inaccurate picture of financial viability**, where platforms appear less costly to sustain than they are
3. **Shifting of costs onto communities, local organizations and practitioners**, who are least able to absorb them
4. **Poorly aligned funding instruments**, as funders and policymakers lack a clear picture of the actual requirements of coordinated territorial delivery

Volunteered and unrecognized contributions can therefore increase the fragility and reduce the effectiveness of these platforms and should not be treated as a durable funding model.

3.6 Current Funding Patterns and Their Limitations

Current funding patterns for landscape governance remain fragmented and poorly aligned with the recurring nature of governance infrastructure. Governance functions are commonly supported through a mix of public resources, donor projects, foundation grants, NGO budgets, institutional contributions, private-sector support and informal or in-kind contributions. While this diversity can provide flexibility and resilience, it also creates uncertainty, uneven coverage and high transaction costs.

Governance costs are often embedded within project overheads, facilitation lines, staff time or implementation budgets rather than treated as a distinct funding category. This makes it difficult to assess whether a platform has sufficient operating capacity. It also means that coordination, participation, data management and adaptive learning may depend on whether they can be accommodated under projects with different primary objectives.

Short-cycle project funding is particularly poorly matched to recurring governance needs. Landscape platforms require continuity of relationships, decision-making processes, institutional memory and adaptive management. These functions do not stop when a project ends. In fact, they are often most important between project cycles, when priorities need to be maintained, lessons carried forward, new actors engaged and emerging opportunities aligned.

The mismatch is both temporal and sectoral. Many landscape outcomes depend on long-term change in land use, institutional behaviour, livelihoods, ecological conditions, market incentives and public investment. However, governance funding is frequently provided through short implementation windows, which are sector-specific, require annual work plans or are activity-based grants. This creates pressure to demonstrate immediate outputs, even when the governance functions required to sustain long-term outcomes across land uses are cumulative and relational.

Landscape practitioners frequently report that many of these governance infrastructure functions are either excluded from eligible activity lists in development and conservation funding programmes or are among the first budget items reduced or removed during project approval processes, in order to prioritize direct implementation activities. This tendency is also reflected in the criteria and indicators of success commonly used by donors, which often emphasize tangible and easily measurable outputs, such as hectares conserved or restored, funding mobilized, or the number of people reached through capacity-development or livelihood initiatives. While these outcomes are important, they can inadvertently undervalue the governance, coordination, participation and learning functions that enable collective action and help sustain landscape processes and impacts over time (Dudley et al. 2021).

3.7 Responding to Evolving Landscape Maturity and Complexity Over Time

Governance infrastructure does not have a fixed level of operating need. Funding requirements change as landscape platforms emerge, mature, expand, encounter shocks and take on more complex coordination roles. Funding arrangements therefore need to account for how governance functions and associated costs evolve over time:

- **In early-stage landscapes**, funding needs may be concentrated around convening, stakeholder mapping, context analysis, monitoring baselines, trust-building, basic facilitation, shared problem definition and initial planning. These functions are essential to establish the legitimacy and relational basis for future coordination. Underfunding at this stage can lead to weak participation, unclear objectives and limited ownership, affecting the quality of later implementation.

- **In more established landscapes**, operating requirements often shift towards maintaining the platform, supporting inclusive decision-making processes, coordinating implementation, managing information, monitoring progress and adapting priorities. These functions require more stable staffing, clearer institutional arrangements, stronger communication systems and more systematic follow-through. Costs may be more predictable and recurring, but may also be even higher if early-stage governance was underfunded.

- **In more mature or complex landscapes**, governance platforms may be expected to support a broader set of functions, including spatial prioritization, safeguards, conflict management, investment alignment, co-financing, public-private coordination and engagement with national or international policy processes. At this stage, minimum viable governance may no longer be sufficient. Additional capacity may be required for technical analysis, financial structuring, data systems, legal support, institutional coordination and investment orchestration. Costs may also be higher if governance funding was insufficient in earlier stages.

Greater maturity does not necessarily reduce governance costs. A mature platform may operate more efficiently because relationships, rules and processes are clearer. However, it may also take on more complex responsibilities as it becomes a credible mechanism for implementation, investment alignment and policy convergence. Funders should therefore avoid assuming that mature platforms require less support. In many cases, they require more predictable and strategic funding because they become better positioned to absorb, align and coordinate larger implementation investments.

Landscape complexity also affects time horizons. In more contested, remote, multifunctional or institutionally fragmented landscapes, trust-building and coordination require longer periods of support. Where customary, community, public and private governance systems overlap, legitimate engagement cannot be compressed into short project windows without weakening representation and accountability. Similarly, where landscapes face climate shocks, political change or market volatility, governance platforms require sufficient flexibility and continuity to adapt.

3.8 Consequences of Underfunding Operating Functions

Underfunding governance infrastructure affects the basic ability of landscape platforms to function as continuous coordination mechanisms. When coordination, facilitation, participation support, data systems and monitoring are not resourced predictably, platforms become dependent on short-term projects, individual champions or ad hoc institutional support. This weakens the operating basis through which decisions are followed up, relationships are maintained, evidence is used and actors remain aligned across the landscape.

One immediate consequence is discontinuity. When project cycles end, staff change or institutional priorities shift, decisions may not be tracked, records may not be maintained and relationships may need to be rebuilt. This can result in the loss of institutional memory and repeated start-up costs as new projects or partners reconstruct information, relationships and priorities. Over time, this weakens the platform's ability to act as a stable reference point for coordinated landscape action.

Discontinuity also affects the quality of evidence and decision-making. Landscape platforms require credible, accessible and regularly updated information to understand where pressures are concentrated, which actors and land uses are affected, where interventions should be prioritized and whether activities are producing intended outcomes. When knowledge — maps, baselines, monitoring systems — and learning processes are not maintained, decision-making becomes more dependent on partial or outdated information, individual knowledge or project-specific evidence. This limits the ability to compare options, manage trade-offs, sequence activities and adapt implementation as conditions change.

These weaknesses also affect participation, trust and legitimacy. Stakeholders are less likely to remain engaged when processes are irregular, poorly facilitated or unable to demonstrate how evidence and stakeholder inputs inform decisions. This is particularly important for communities, Indigenous Peoples, local organizations and other actors whose participation carries time, travel and opportunity costs. Repeated requests for engagement without adequate support or visible follow-through can narrow participation and reduce trust in the platform as a credible space for collective action. Once eroded, trust may require considerable time and sustained engagement to rebuild, making it difficult to restore participation, legitimacy and stakeholder confidence in future initiatives.

As continuity, evidence and participation weaken, coordination becomes more fragile. Public, private, donor and community investments are more likely to proceed in parallel, duplicate efforts, leave gaps or create trade-offs that could have been anticipated through stronger shared analysis and spatial prioritization. This reduces the value of implementation finance by limiting the ability of individual projects to reinforce one another across the landscape.

The same pattern weakens adaptive management. Landscapes worldwide are shaped by ecological pressures, climate shocks, market changes, political shifts and social conflict. Underfunded platforms have less capacity to respond to these dynamics and adapt implementation while protecting shared objectives.

Landscape approaches are often judged on their delivery performance without exploring whether the operating functions needed to deliver have been funded. If platforms are expected to support policy convergence, investment alignment and adaptive implementation without dedicated governance infrastructure, their ability to perform those roles will remain constrained. This has direct implications for funding architecture, instrument design and eligibility, which are considered in the following section.

4. Implications for Policy and Financing Architecture

The findings presented in this report have several implications for the design of policy, funding architecture and financial instruments supporting integrated landscape approaches. These implications concern the recognition of governance infrastructure as a legitimate funding category, institutional fit and the enabling conditions required for effective landscape governance.

4.1 Governance Infrastructure as a Funding Category

Governance infrastructure should be explicitly recognized within implementation frameworks and programme design. Where implementation increasingly depends on integrated spatial planning, urban-rural linkages, biodiversity-inclusive land-use decisions and adaptation across sectors and levels, the recurring capacities that support these functions sit more naturally within implementation architecture than within residual overhead categories or fragmented across multiple activities and budget lines (Power et al. 2022). This is relevant to implementation strategies linked to National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), land degradation neutrality and broader SDG delivery at the subnational scale.

Funding architecture should also assess governance infrastructure through an opportunity-cost lens. The relevant comparison is not only the annual cost of coordination, facilitation, participation, monitoring and continuity, but also the larger value of public, donor, private, community, climate, resilience and implementation investments that depend on these functions to be coherent and effective. Where governance infrastructure is underfunded, larger investments are more likely to proceed through fragmented planning, duplicated engagement, weak sequencing, unmanaged trade-offs and limited adaptive management. Governance infrastructure should be treated as an enabling investment that protects the performance of wider landscape investment portfolios (Power and Seefeld 2024).

At the project level, this can mean designing activities and interventions so they do not operate outside or in parallel to existing landscape visions, spatial priorities and shared action plans. Projects can be structured to actively reinforce ongoing governance processes, helping practitioners and funders align project delivery with longer-term governance infrastructure needs while avoiding fragmented support disconnected from the systems required to sustain outcomes at the landscape scale.

4.2 Governance Costs in Funding Architecture and Instrument Design

A further implication concerns the alignment of funding modalities with recurring governance needs. Project-based and short-cycled funding can support discrete interventions, but recurring coordination, representative participation, monitoring, adaptive management and continuity across multiple institutions and stakeholder groups are less easily

accommodated within these structures. Different mechanisms may therefore be appropriate for different governance functions, as illustrated in Table 4.

The distinction between governance funding and implementation funding discussed in Section 1.3 is particularly relevant to instrument design. Shared governance and coordination functions may require different instruments, conditions or time horizons. Where both are treated as a single undifferentiated funding need, recurrent operational capacities are more likely to remain weakly supported. Funding architecture must match the modality to function, in addition to the scale of resources required.

Instrument design should first account for governance functions already assigned and funded through existing institutional mandates and where additional capacity or operating resources are required. Explicit budgeting, therefore, does not mean paying institutions twice for the same responsibilities. Rather, it means identifying the institutions accountable for shared governance functions, assessing whether they have the capacity and resources to perform them consistently and addressing any gaps.

Conservation Trust Funds provide one established example of how governance and management capacity can be incorporated into a wider financing arrangement. They can provide dedicated institutional and fiduciary structures through which endowment, sinking, revolving or debt-for-nature swap resources are managed, while sustaining staffing, coordination, monitoring, grant management and accountability across funding cycles (Conservation Finance Alliance 2020). While not directly transferable to every landscape, they demonstrate that recurring governance functions can be explicitly designed and funded rather than left dependent on short-term projects or informal contributions.

More broadly, financial mechanisms routinely provide for the management, due diligence, monitoring, reporting and coordination capacity required to deploy capital effectively. Landscape finance requires similar recognition that recurring governance and investment-orchestration functions are part of effective delivery rather than an optional addition. This does not imply a standard percentage fee, but it does require these functions and costs to be made visible within the wider financing structure.

Table 4. Financing mechanisms and relevant governance functions

Mechanism type *Examples are non-exhaustive*	**Relevant governance functions**
Multi-year programme grants	Support continuity, facilitation and adaptive management
Pooled public funding	Align public agencies around shared territorial functions
Trust funds or landscape funds, including those capitalized through debt-for-nature swaps	Provide dedicated governance and fiduciary structures and sustain recurring coordination, monitoring and implementation support across funding cycles
Blended structures	Combine concessional, public, philanthropic funding and private finance around agreed priorities
Co-financing platforms	Coordinate parallel funders and reduce duplication
Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) arrangements	Support infrastructure or service delivery where commitments, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and establish safeguards for public purpose, accountability and legitimacy
Processes linked to BIOFIN and Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF)	Provide entry points for integrating governance costs into national financing strategies

4.3 Institutional Fit in the Design of Funding and Financial Instruments

Funding and financing mechanisms need to be appropriate to the institutional contexts in which landscape governance operates. This means placing greater attention on funding approaches that can support shared governance functions over time. Consistent with the BIOFIN approach, their selection and design should be grounded in the existing policy, institutional and economic conditions, including the mandates, capacities, incentives and relationships of the actors responsible for implementation (UNDP 2024).

This consideration is also relevant to emerging bioeconomy funding and financing arrangements. Instruments designed around commercially viable products, technologies or value chains may not automatically recognize the governance functions required to manage resource access, cumulative ecological pressures, customary rights, local knowledge and equitable benefit sharing. Aligning bioeconomy finance with landscape governance requires intentional institutional arrangements that connect economic opportunities with territorial priorities, ecological safeguards, legitimate decision-making processes and locally appropriate accountability mechanisms.

This carries a clear implication for the design and functionality of funding arrangements. Funding vehicles are not neutral containers. Trusts, funds, partnership vehicles and blended structures carry assumptions about governance, reporting, accountability, performance and acceptable forms of value. Where these assumptions are not adapted to the current formal and informal institutional and governance context, funding arrangements may not respond well to the hybrid, place-based and long-cycle realities of landscape governance. Funding may formally support a platform while weakening the legitimacy, representative basis, autonomy or relational capacity required for landscape-scale coordination. The central consideration is therefore not only whether governance is funded, but whether the funding instruments and mandates are structured in ways that support existing institutional legitimacy, stakeholder needs and multi-stakeholder coordination (Shames et al. 2023).

4.4 Enabling Conditions for Effective Governance Funding

Additional funding alone will not improve landscape-scale governance unless funding and financing arrangements are structured to protect legitimacy and strengthen the functions and needs they are intended to support. Place-based governance is often carried out through hybrid systems in which public institutions, local governments, community and customary structures, civil society, producer organizations and, in many contexts, Indigenous governance systems all play different and complementary roles. Therefore, landscape-scale governance funding needs to support trusted facilitation and representative engagement across these interfaces and relevant institutions, rather than assuming that formal or government structures alone are sufficient.

These implications extend beyond programmes labelled as landscape platforms, governance or initiatives. They are relevant wherever biodiversity, climate resilience, restoration, water security, food systems, livelihoods and local service delivery are expected to converge within the same territory. In that sense, governance infrastructure is part of the enabling architecture for coordinated subnational implementation across multiple SDG-related agendas. This implies that the funding question for policymakers and funders is not limited to deciding on support for specific landscape programmes, but more broadly to how subnational delivery systems are designed and sustained where interdependence across temporal, sectoral and spatial scales is already recognized in policy but remains less fully reflected in funding practice (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs 2023). Practical guidance may be found in an outcomes-based framework which aligns diverse stakeholder interests and interrelated

Table 5. Governance infrastructure as a proportionate enabling investment

Landscape context	Indicative annual governance infrastructure cost	Illustrative annual landscape implementation investment (public and private)	Landscape governance cost as a share of implementation investment
Small or compact landscape, 20–200 sq. km	US$ 10,000–50,000	US$ 20 million	0.05–0.25%
Medium landscape, 200–500 sq. km	US$ 50,000–130,000	US$ 20 million	0.25–0.65%
Large, remote, contested or transboundary landscape, >500 sq. km	US$ 130,000–500,000	US$ 20 million	0.65–2.50%

dimensions such as governance, finance, and ecology around a common understanding and ambition for long-term transition outcomes.

Fundamentally, effective landscape governance must be understood as a long-term process, of at least 20 years, that cannot be supported through short-term, project-based funding alone. It requires sustained and adaptive financing that can support governance functions over time and maintain continuity across project cycles, institutional change and shifting implementation demands.

Funding also needs to match the actual functions being supported. Participation should be resourced explicitly, including the time, travel, translation, accessibility and representative engagement costs that determine whether participation is meaningful. Data, monitoring and learning functions should be funded proportionately to the role the platform is expected to play. Where a landscape platform is expected to support spatial prioritization, adaptive management, investment alignment or accountability, it requires more than periodic reporting. It needs credible and accessible information that helps actors understand pressures, compare options, set goals, manage trade-offs, track progress and adjust implementation; particularly if related to carbon- or biodiversity-linked payments and investment alignment.

This is also important where governance arrangements underpin funding mechanisms, outcome-based payments or other incentive structures, as these systems need clear rules and evidence to ensure that benefits are transparently allocated, equitably shared and aligned with the rights, roles and contributions of different actors in the landscape. Effective governance funding also depends on clear operating arrangements, including agreed roles, decision pathways, accountability mechanisms and follow-up responsibilities across institutions and sectors. Without these, funding may increase activity without improving coordination or the quality of implementation. Clear operating arrangements help ensure that facilitation, participation, evidence generation and coordination translate into decisions that can be acted upon and reviewed over time (Buck et al. 2017). Annex 3 provides practical guidance for considering how funding might be better structured around landscape governance infrastructure.

Table 6. Actions to strengthen recognition of landscape governance funding

Actor	Actions
Intergovernmental organizations and convening bodies	Recognize and budget for landscape governance infrastructure within international frameworks and make explicit calls to direct funding towards it.
National level policymakers	Recognize and budget for landscape governance infrastructure within national implementation frameworks, including implementation strategies for NBSAPs, NDCs, NAPs, land degradation neutrality plans and national or subnational bioeconomy strategies.
Subnational and local governments	Incorporate landscape governance infrastructure into territorial development plans, sector programmes and annual budgets. Use local revenues, national transfers and co-financing arrangements, as relevant.
Landscape initiatives and practitioners	Adequately consider governance infrastructure costs to the same degree as implementation costs and actively advocate for increased funding.
Landscape support institutions (e.g. NGOs and civil society)	Support landscape initiatives and practitioners in accurately costing and budgeting for governance functions, and advocate for enhanced governance infrastructure funding among different funding groups.

What should be assessed is not simply whether a platform exists, but whether it is functioning and, if not, how to strengthen it. Useful indicators include continuity and breadth of participation, follow-through on decisions, the handling of disputes, evidence of reduced duplication, alignment of investments and evidence that shared information is being used in decision-making, financial instruments and adaptation. Across all of these conditions, data and shared analysis remain important because governance is not only about dialogue but also about supporting decisions and investments with information that makes trade-offs visible, spatial priorities explicit and the sequencing of activities, financing and transitions at the landscape level more governable (Hannant et al. 2022).

5. Priority Actions to Support Funding for Landscape Governance

The priority actions below focus on how policymakers, funders and practitioners can better recognize, resource and strengthen landscape governance infrastructure. In applying these actions, decision-makers should consider the recurring cost of governance functions in relation to the larger landscape implementation investments these functions help align, protect and sustain. This provides a practical way to assess governance infrastructure as a proportionate enabling investment for more coherent, resilient and effective landscape action.

Using an illustrative annual landscape implementation investment envelope of US$ 20 million, the indicative governance cost ranges identified in this report would represent only a small share of the wider landscape-scale investment volume they are intended to support.

These figures are illustrative only. They are intended to show that recurring governance infrastructure represents a relatively small share of the annual landscape implementation investments it helps coordinate, including public subsidies, direct public spending and private investment in infrastructure, conservation, agriculture and related activities. At the same time, this governance capacity can play an important role in improving policy and implementation coherence, continuity, resilience and the effectiveness of investment. The appropriate level of governance funding will depend on landscape size, maturity, institutional complexity, participation requirements, data needs and whether the governance platform is expected to support more advanced investment orchestration.

5.1 Mobilize Funding for Landscape Governance through Policy and Practice

Recognition of landscape governance can be enhanced through improved enabling conditions as well as through improved local capacity and advocacy. Table 6 outlines the different types of actions policymakers and practitioners can take to increase funding levels for landscape governance infrastructure. Policymakers at the international and national levels have valuable roles to play in signalling the importance of funding landscape governance infrastructure. They can raise awareness and provide guidance to different types of actors at multiple levels. Landscape initiatives and support organizations can strengthen the evidence and costing needed to clearly communicate these requirements.

5.2 Enhance Funding and Financing Modalities for Landscape Governance Infrastructure

Institutions responsible for funding and financial instruments can better recognize the importance of resourcing landscape governance infrastructure in addition to funding interconnected implementation activities. Landscape initiatives operate on long-term time horizons, and resourcing modalities need to be aligned with those horizons to maintain coordination, institutional continuity, adaptive management and locally-led governance over time. This includes identifying and investing in the relevant non-governmental institutions that provide the long-term capabilities needed to support and sustain landscape governance, rather than relying only on project-based coordination arrangements.

Better funding for multi-stakeholder governance platforms and making the enabling support conditions needed for effective governance visible can fundamentally alter the sustainability and performance of landscape initiatives and partnerships. Rio Convention-related facilities and related thematic funding institutions can be major promoters of funding for landscape governance infrastructure: their ability to signal the importance of funding landscape governance can help raise the confidence of other funders such as national governments and philanthropic entities.

5.3 Strengthen Professional and Institutional Capacity for Landscape Governance

Landscape governance infrastructure depends on skilled professionals and local institutions that can support multi-actor processes over time. This includes capabilities in facilitation, mediation, territorial coordination, adaptive management, partnership development, systemic and

transition finance, conflict-sensitive engagement and translating landscape priorities into fundable actions. These capacities are often under-supported, particularly where governance processes require impartial coordination across communities, government, civil society, private sector actors and funders.

Governments, funders and landscape support institutions can strengthen these capabilities through professional development, peer learning, technical assistance and institutional support tailored for landscape governance practitioners. Recognizing landscape governance as a specialized professional function can improve the quality, continuity and effectiveness of landscape initiatives, while strengthening the long-term capabilities required to sustain community-led and locally grounded governance.

5.4 Building the Evidence Base through Further Research

Further research and analysis are needed to strengthen the applied evidence base on the true cost of governance for ILAs. The survey conducted for this report can continue to be built upon and refined to study more landscapes in greater depth. More intensive analysis could be conducted across different pilot landscapes to better understand landscape governance funding and its implications. Comparative costing exercises across different landscape initiatives are likely to reveal further trends and patterns across different scales, stages of maturity and institutional contexts that could help inform new funding modalities.

Cross-landscape learning exchanges could be organized for practitioners to share experiences and raise capacities related to better budgeting, mobilizing funding and sustaining landscape governance infrastructure. Further applied research and investigation could refine indicative minimum viable governance funding levels for different types of landscape initiatives. These reference points and standards for initiatives to operate from could help guide the development of different funding mechanisms and instruments while accounting for differences in scale, complexity, maturity and institutional context.

Practical tools and outputs could include an adaptive landscape governance and finance toolkit that brings together institutional diagnostics, governance maturity assessment, functional costing, funding and instrument fit analysis, and guidance on accountability, safeguards and benefit sharing. A costing and budgeting calculator could form part of this wider toolkit, helping landscape initiatives, policymakers and funders assess and understand their governance funding requirements while accounting for complexities and nuances embedded within the diversity of landscape governance systems.

6. The Way Forward for Landscape Governance Infrastructure

This report emerged from a shared need identified by governments, practitioners and landscape support organizations for a more structured understanding of the costs of landscape governance. Its development drew on networks and communities of practice, including the IPSI, 1000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People Initiative, Regional Model Forest Networks in Asia Latin America and the Mediterranean, CGIAR Multifunctional Landscapes Programme, Kenya Landscapes Action Platform, Common Ground Initiative and Promise of the Commons Initiative. It also builds on discussions advanced through broader multi-stakeholder initiatives and action platforms, including Ambition Loop, their facilitated Riyadh Action Agenda, and Regen10. Across these communities, networks, initiatives and convening processes, similar questions are being raised about what effective landscape governance requires and how it can be initiated and sustained in different contexts.

This research provides a novel contribution by formally costing landscape governance infrastructure across a diversity of landscape initiatives and analyzing the implications of funding levels for governance performance. This represents an actionable contribution for leaders and practitioners, as well as a knowledge contribution to the growing field of integrated landscape approaches and multifunctional landscapes.

This report is also an invitation to governments, funders, practitioners and support organizations to build on this initial inquiry and move toward a more deliberate approach to funding landscape governance infrastructure. This can help ensure that integrated landscape approaches do not continue to depend primarily on goodwill, unpaid efforts and misaligned short-term projects, but are supported as durable foundations for coordinated action, socio-ecological resilience and the long-term stewardship of landscapes and the relationship between people and nature.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Concept Note and Questionnaire Sent to Landscape Practitioners

Note: The materials reproduced in this annex were shared with landscape practitioners as part of the research process. They have been lightly copyedited to align with the editorial style of this publication, without substantive changes to their content. The Questionnaire was sent in October 2025.

Costing of Implementing Landscape and Territorial Approaches in Various Socio-Ecological System Contexts

This costing effort is informed and supported by several global networks with a rich body of work contributing to the practice, learning and guidance that have advanced the implementation of integrated landscape, seascape and territorial approaches. Notably, these initially include the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) and the 1000 Landscapes for One Billion People initiative.

This work also builds on the guidance developed for the Parties under the UNCBD on integrated landscape approaches and finance, and for the UNCCD on a primer including LAs as a key tool for Parties to manage urban-rural linkages. Additionally, tools such as the Core Criteria for Mature Landscape Initiatives, developed by CDP through the ISEAL Alliance and LandScale, have also been consulted. The goal is to establish a clearer picture of governance costs, essential to boost practical consideration, and long-term funding commitments for these enabling structures that underpin sustainable territorial development for biodiversity, climate and land degradation.

With this intent in mind, we invite any other networks or institutions that would like to be a part of this effort to join us and co-develop this exercise together.

Context: Landscape and Territorial Approaches and Importance

Landscape and territorial approaches (LAs) (which include seascapes, territories and bioregions) and similar conceptualizations acknowledge the reciprocal and interdependent interactions between people and nature in a socio-ecological system. The unit of planning is a landscape or seascape, which is a socio-ecological system influenced by distinct ecological, historical, economic and sociocultural processes and interactions spatially and temporally.

A landscape approach, and closely related territorial and bioregional approaches, is defined as a collaborative effort in specific places, beyond the scale of individual use areas (e.g., farm plots), that is cross-sectoral and involves multiple partners to foster thriving communities, land and natural resources (1000L IPSI, TP4D, EcoAg, IMFN, WWF, CIFOR-ICRAF, CDP and more). Landscape approaches use integrated measures to reduce adverse trade-offs between the stakeholders, their economic activities and ecological outcomes and optimize multi-functional and beneficial synergies. Additionally, landscape approaches cut across multiple development and socioeconomic objectives (addressing water availability, poverty reduction, integrated land-use planning, addressing supply-shed risks, promoting sustainable enterprise and gender responsive economic opportunities, food and health security, disaster risk preparedness and more) broadly, ensuring socio-ecological resilience. It cuts across the climate-nature nexus and multiple linked environmental and economic objectives, and is increasingly being adopted as a pragmatic approach to address multiple interrelated challenges towards sustainability.

This, however, requires an understanding of the interrelationships between different activities, components and actors in a landscape or seascape. It also requires putting in place outcomes-based management practices, coherent policy processes, spatial land-use planning, expanded socioeconomic and ecosystem assessments and governance bodies that allow deliberations and participation across different stakeholders, sectors and interests. This is not usual in conventional planning processes and would require investing in participatory and facilitated multi-sector and institutional situational or context analysis, awareness raising, reciprocal mainstreaming and capacity development of relevant stakeholders, in addition to utilizing and increasing capacity related to a diverse set of technical expertise and pertinent ecosystem, economic and financial capabilities that are facilitated across stakeholders and co-designed to address socio-ecological needs.

A central barrier to embarking upon and sustaining landscape approaches lies in the chronic underfunding and invisibility of the social infrastructure that enables coherence, coordination and alignment across diverse territorial actors. These long-term participatory processes, commonly manifested as multi-stakeholder governance platforms (i.e., landscape partnerships or initiatives), are fundamental to creating the space in which different actors can come together to understand their interdependencies, reduce trade-offs, build synergies and align actions and investments to support coherence over time.

Through this costing exercise, we aim to begin documenting the crucial roles of these governing bodies, including coordination, facilitation, planning, resource alignment, financial management and their associated costs. While these LAs will inevitably vary by scale, complexity, and maturity of the landscape, generating initial cost data aligned to the steps of an LA is a first step toward informing policies and decision-making, funding mechanisms and recurrent instruments that treat landscape governance as essential social infrastructure for sustainable territorial and spatial development.

Why Cost the Implementation of LAs

Implementing landscape approaches requires investing in different components. These components range from understanding institutional structures to activities and resilience.

Governments, planners, funders, investors and collaborating partners are interested in having a reasonable estimate of the extent of resources required to implement an LA to inform institutional and collaborative decision-making. **This exercise aims to capture estimations of practitioners' costs across one implementation cycle in an LA, as well as the core costs required to sustain robust collaborative processes over time.** Defined as an iterative, non-linear and context-driven process, an implementation cycle is abstracted as six process steps:

1. Identifying landscape/seascape or territorial context and relevant actors
2. Convening and establishing shared objectives
3. Conducting participatory spatial and contextual analysis
4. Co-creating an integrated action and funding plan at the adequate scale
5. Bbuilding governance and resource mobilization capacity for implementation
6. Monitoring progress and adapting over time

Each step is rooted in principles of equity, participation, and sustainability (UNU-IAS and IGES 2023). Through this costing exercise, the crucial roles these diverse governance bodies play can be better understood and documented. They act as multi-stakeholder platforms, encompassing coordination, facilitation, planning, resource alignment and (in some cases) financial management, and the associated costs for each stage or phase.

Invitation to Collaborate

To estimate the costs of implementing LA, we developed a questionnaire to capture different costs across the implementation cycle.

We request that partners and colleagues engaged in landscape approaches provide cost estimates based on your experience. Your inputs will guide the development of estimates that are more representative of real-world contexts, allowing a more robust estimation of costs, returns, challenges and gaps in implementing such integrated landscape approaches.
This joint exercise will be a first step towards building a collaboratively endorsed evidence base and tool to help governments, funders, private sector donors, landscape initiatives and partnerships better understand and support the foundational process-based dimensions of integrated landscape and territorial approaches. We would like to jointly promote the results and guidance we develop from this activity in various policy and practitioner forums, including in technical meetings of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), practitioner partnership meetings, such as for instance the IPSI Global Assembly, 1000L partner meetings, World Conservation Congress and any other fora relevant to practitioner networks. Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

Access the questionnaire here.

Annex 2: Approach to Drawing on Practitioner Experiences

Utilizing a multi-partner approach, the project was conducted in several phases. First, the project team developed a concept note outlining the purpose and objectives of this work. The team then collaboratively developed a draft survey protocol to gather information from landscape partnerships and initiatives on the costs of sustaining integrated landscape and territorial approaches in social-ecological systems. The draft survey tool was shared with landscape experts and networks for feedback and input to strengthen the protocol tool. After analyzing and incorporating feedback from respondents, the survey protocol was finalized and shared with landscape partnerships and networks in the fall of 2025. In the first quarter of 2026, the project team analyzed the survey data, which informed the development of a briefing note and this report. Further details on the data collection process, including the treatment of participant data, are provided below.

Concept Note Development and Data Collection

At the outset of the collaboration, the project team developed a concept note that provided the context, impetus and invitation for partners and colleagues to collaborate on the landscape governance costing effort (Annex 2). The project team then developed a draft survey tool, which was shared with landscape experts and partners across networks for input and feedback in the later summer to early fall of 2025. Over a period of several months, the project team received input from partners and refined the survey tool accordingly.

In the fall of 2025, the survey tool was finalized and given guidance in two formats: 1) a Microsoft Word document and 2) Google Form Survey (see questions in Annex 1). The purposes of the survey were to better understand the experiences and knowledge of landscape initiatives and networks in relation to:

- the real costs of landscape and territorial governance infrastructure and coordination required for integrated approaches;
- promising cases, practices and gaps in multi-sectoral governance across socio-ecological context; and
- build the evidence base for collective advocacy and co-design efforts to improve policies, funding mechanisms and technical support for implementing landscape approaches

Providing the survey in multiple formats allowed participants to complete it in the way that worked best for them and for any potential partners they might seek input from. Participants had the remainder of the calendar year to complete the survey. All data submitted through the questionnaires were kept secure, private and confidential and used only for the purpose of directly supporting the development of a shared evidence base.

Annex 3: Practitioner Guidance

The tables below are intended to guide landscape practitioners and supporting institutions explore how funding might be better structured around landscape governance infrastructure. Each table focuses on a key landscape governance criterion — coordination across sectors, levels and actors; inclusive decision-making and culture of collaboration — and associated indicators, before posing guiding questions, example budget considerations and relevant funding instruments.

While the primary audience for this guidance is practitioners, it is also relevant to funders considering how the design of financial mechanisms and funding instruments can better reflect the needs of effective landscape governance infrastructure.

The guidance is intended as an initial resource to begin a discussion, with the hope that it will raise key questions and catalyze further ideas. The authors and collaborators of this report intend to build on these materials to further support practitioners seeking to improve funding for landscape governance systems.

Key landscape governance criteria	Indicators	Guiding questions	Example budget considerations	Relevant funding instruments to consider
Coordination across sectors, levels and actors	Integrated landscape planning	• To what extent has integrated landscape planning taken place? • Is there a shared plan that outlines collaborative activities? • How might funding be directed to better support integrated landscape planning?	• Organize facilitated workshops with participation expenses covered to conduct planning • Dedicated funding for technical expertise in landscape planning	Pooled national and sub-national public funding sources can be leveraged to coordinate actions and priorities across actors and sectors. International mechanisms such as the Biodiversity Finance Initiative and Integrated National Finance Framework (BIOFIN) can be used to integrate governance costs into national financing strategies.
	Horizontal coordination	• To what extent do government agencies and jurisdictions work together across sectors to understand, coordinate and harmonize their work? • How might funding be directed to better support this type of coordination?	• Dedicated funding for full-time multidisciplinary government and non-governmental actors responsible for coordinating and liaising across sectors	
	Vertical coordination	• To what extent do government agencies coordinate their decisions from the local up to the national level? • How might funding be directed to better support this type of coordination?	• Dedicated funding for full-time government and non-governmental representatives responsible for coordinating and liaising among landscape actors	
	Connectivity to national and international institutions	• To what extent are stakeholders aligned with international decisions and frameworks (e.g., international markets, national commitments and international agreements)? • How might funding be directed to better support alignment of local actions with national and international goals?	• Fund participation in national and international conferences to build connections with new actors and opportunities • Host workshops and events that engage national and international actors to explore opportunities for engagement	
	Coordination of customary and formal governance	• To what extent do decision makers from customary and formal governance systems coordinate their decisions and actions? • How might funding be directed to better support coordinated actions between customary and formal governance systems	• Dedicate funding for actors tasked with coordinating and liaising between customary and formal governance systems • Organize and host workshops and dialogues between customary and formal governance systems	

Key landscape governance criteria	Indicators	Guiding questions	Example budget considerations	Relevant funding instruments to consider
Inclusive decision-making	Transparency	• To what extent do stakeholders know how decisions are made in the landscape? • How might funding be directed to support greater transparency around decision-making processes?	• Facilitated dialogues to set and agree on governance rules and processes • Establishment of knowledge-sharing and communication channels	A combination of multi-year program grants, trust funds or landscape funds, and blended structures coordinated through co-financing platforms can be used for regular facilitation and participation support, as well as for communication and monitoring infrastructure.
	Participation	• Who currently participates in decision-making processes? • Who is underrepresented in these processes? • How might funding be directed to better support the participation of underrepresented groups?	• Inclusive outreach to a diversity of actors to mobilize participation • Dedicated funding to underrepresented groups for travel expenses and staff time to incentivize participation	
	Equity	• To what extent are people who are most affected by decision-making processes able to influence these processes? • How might funding be better directed to empower equitable participation in decision-making processes?	• Dedicated funding for marginalized and underrepresented groups to actively participate and hold roles in decision-making • Facilitated dialogues to explore and resolve long-standing tensions and conflicts related to disparities in decision-making and rights to resource access and use	
	Accountability	• How are decision makers fulfilling their responsibilities? • How might funding be better directed to ensure decision makers are held accountable?	• Dedicated funding for independent monitoring of powerful actors, such as government and private sector actors	

Key landscape governance criteria	Indicators	Guiding questions	Example budget considerations	Relevant funding instruments to consider
Culture of collaboration	Sense of community	• To what extent do actors in the landscape have a genuine shared vision that they are committed to achieving through collaborative activities? • How might funding be directed to support the development of a shared vision that connects people to one another?	• Organize, support and dedicate funding towards cultural and community events • Conduct outreach to youth to raise awareness of landscape challenges and opportunities	Long-term funding is critical to instilling a culture of collaboration. Pooled funding sources and multi-year grants that offer stable, recurring and dedicated funding are needed.
	Knowledge sharing and learning	• How is information shared to inform decision-making? • How might funding be directed to better support more inclusive information-sharing?	• Establish knowledge-sharing platforms and channels • Organize forums for cross-landscape learning where actors from different landscapes can share challenges and ideas • Dedicate funding towards technical and traditional expertise to host trainings that develop capacities across actors	
	Conflict resolution	• What formal and informal conflict resolution mechanisms are used among stakeholders? • To what extent are these mechanisms known and accessible to all stakeholders? • To what extent are they applied fairly? • How might funding be better directed to support conflict resolution?	• Facilitated dialogues to resolve conflicts and disputes • Establish safeguarding mechanisms that can be proactively used to mitigate the likelihood of conflicts emerging • Legal support to advise actors and help navigate conflicts	