

Foreword

Sectorial approaches to land management have singularly failed to fully integrate the fields of forestry, agriculture, health, infrastructure development, education, etc. This has led to a scattergun approach to solving problems related to both biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development. As a response, integrated landscape approaches have been, under various names, at the forefront of the sustainable development discourse. Such approaches have been advocated as a means of achieving global commitments as well as reconciling oft-competing land uses.

Over the past 20 years, forests and the landscapes in which they occur have been a central focus of the research strategy and actions of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). While great strides have been made in the “theory” of integrated landscape approaches, evidence of success on the ground remains elusive. Managing landscapes in their entirety is complex, with the need to reconcile the needs and aspirations of multiple stakeholders and their interests.

We need action on the ground to test our theories, and we need to honestly evaluate the impacts of such actions. The COLANDS initiative, funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety is a real-life attempt at identifying what works at scale in the landscape and, perhaps as importantly, what doesn't. This book, coming around halfway into the implementation of COLANDS, presents a sanguine overview of the differing geographical, social and political contexts of the selected landscapes in each target country – Indonesia, Zambia and Ghana – and identifies the main drivers that have a dynamic influence on the trajectories of change in each. This is a first attempt to describe the opportunities and constraints to landscape-scale integration of differing land uses, negotiating with multiple stakeholders and just what role research organizations such as CIFOR and our partners can play in creating a world characterized by sustainable and self-supporting landscapes.

Only by honest and evidence-based reporting, as presented in this book, will we know if integrated landscape management is truly the answer to the numerous problems facing our contemporary environment and wider society. We have spent many years “talking the talk” – now is the time for “walking the walk”.

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