

Potential for integrated landscape approaches

A review of Zambia's national environment and development policies

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Key messages

- This brief explores Zambia's national environment and development policy climate and whether it is conducive to operationalizing an integrated landscape approach (ILA).
- We find Zambia's national development plan and environment and development policies are characterized by three themes: diversification, decentralization, and integration. This suggests favorable conditions for operationalizing a landscape approach, however, putting these policies into practice remains a challenge.
- Challenge areas include: clarifying rights and responsibilities, strengthening stakeholder capacity, and identifying a negotiated and transparent change logic that resonates at the national, regional, and local scale.
- We suggest a greater commitment to these principles and the adoption of a landscape approach holds potential to enhance policy performance and equitable natural resource management in Zambia.

Integrated landscape approaches

Integrated landscape approaches (ILA) are widely promoted as a strategy for addressing interconnected issues such as biodiversity loss, food security, and poverty. Broadly defined, a landscape approach is a participatory process for reconciling competing land uses for improved socioeconomic and environmental outcomes (Sayer et al. 2013). This process necessitates multiple stakeholders coming together to identify and negotiate synergies and trade-offs, ideally resulting in more sustainable and equitable land and resource management. A landscape approach is not prescriptive, it will vary depending on context-specific social and environmental needs defined by local stakeholders. However, Sayer et al. (2013) outline ten overarching principles to guide landscape approach implementation (see Figure 1). Some principles are likely to be more relevant than others, depending on the landscape (i.e. the interactions between human and non-human elements) and as needs evolve over time.

With the ten principles in mind, it is important to examine whether existing policies enable collaboration between stakeholders and are conducive to a landscape approach. Landscapes are contested political spaces, meaning current governance structures and policies are indicative of potential challenges and opportunities for operationalizing a landscape approach.

As part of the Collaborating to Operationalise Landscape Approaches for Nature, Development and Sustainability (COLANDS) initiative, which seeks to operationalize landscape approaches in Ghana, Indonesia, and Zambia, a review of national environment and development policies was conducted for each landscape³. In this brief we discuss the findings for Zambia. The review focused on Zambia's current development plan (the Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021 (7NDP)) and several policies designed to accomplish development objectives. Three policy trends were identified: diversification, decentralization and integration.

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³ The review is available as a chapter in *Operationalizing Integrated Landscape Approaches in the Tropics* (2020): <https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/7807>



Figure 1. Ten principles for a landscape approach.

Source: Sayer et al. 2013.

Diversification

Zambia has been pursuing economic diversification since gaining independence in 1964 (PMRC 2020). Presently, the Zambian economy is heavily dependent on mining and agriculture, both vulnerable to external shocks such as fluctuating market prices and hard-hitting environmental shocks exacerbated by climate change. For these reasons, a priority of the 7NDP is establishing a diverse economy, resilient to external shocks. Agriculture, mining, and tourism have been prioritized for their high-growth potential. Focus has been placed on increasing the productivity of smallholder farmers and the agro-diversification of crops, fisheries, livestock and forestry products (Zulu et al. 2016; 7NDP 2017). To mitigate the effects of climate change, the 7NDP promotes the adoption of climate-smart agriculture techniques such as agroforestry, conservation farming, crop rotation, and organic fertilizers; as well as an energy mix to include renewable energy (7NDP 2017; PMRC 2020).

Diversifying agricultural production and the other priority sectors will require significant infrastructure development and investment in small-scale producer groups. Challenges surrounding land tenure, lack of transport and reliable energy threaten production and dissuade investors, and long-term investment in land by smallholders. Another challenge is the high cost of taxes and fees (licensing, inspections, impact assessments), preventing long-term investment and reducing affordability for smallholder producers (Mabeta et al. 2018; 7NDP 2017).

Decentralization

The Decentralization Policy is key to implementation of the 7NDP, but implementation is contingent on enactment of the recently (2018) amended Public Finance Act. The policy's objective is to devolve central government authority and resources to provincial, district, and sub-district levels. The policy is supported by a number of existing policies and laws encouraging governance at multiple scales, such as the Registration and Development of Villages Act (GRZ 1971). Another example is the Urban and Regional Planning Act (2015), which established guidelines for multi-sector and multi-level governance for integrated urban and regional planning (GRZ 2015b). The Water Resources Management Act of 2011 provides governance representation down to traditional authority levels through catchment councils, sub-catchment councils and water users associations. Other examples include the National Forestry Policy (2014) and Forests Act (2015) that decentralize forest management through Community Forest Management (CFM), Joint Forest Management (JFM), and Private Forest Management (PFM) (GRZ 2017). Similar provisions are made for wildlife and fisheries in the Wildlife Act of 2015 and the Fisheries Act (2011); where the former provides for Community Resource Boards (CRBs) and the latter for Fisheries Management Committees. These are largely influenced by the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) concept, which decentralizes natural resource management to communities (ZCBNRM 2020). In Zambia, the Zambia CBNRM Forum helps facilitate such activities, and an official CBNRM policy is being developed (ZCBNRM 2020). Community Resource Boards are considered to be the cornerstone of CBNRM in Zambia, but application on the ground requires more collaboration and revised relationships with other committees and sectors also active in the landscape. To be effective, these policies and actions require collaboration with multiple sectors, actors, and levels of government, underscoring the importance of integration.

Integration

The 7NDP departs from the prevailing top-down sectorial approach, moving towards a new vision of multi-sectorial integration. The plan introduced several new coordination mechanisms; one example is the Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs), composed of sectors sharing common objectives. Prior to the 7NDP officially adopting an integrated approach, several policies, strategies and structural changes were already reflecting this shift and could be utilized to help achieve 7NDP objectives. For instance, the Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP2), formulated by the Ministry of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MLNREP) to implement the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), matched CBD targets with groupings of ministries across sectors responsible for their completion

(GRZ, 2015a). Another notable shift towards integration is the harmonization of the Second National Agricultural Policy (SNAP) and the National Policy on Climate Change (NPCC) (GRZ, 2013).

Potential for a landscape approach in Zambia

The policy trends outlined reveal favorable conditions for operationalizing a landscape approach. Impressive first steps have been made that align with the ten principles of the landscape approach (Sayer et al. 2013). For example, the 7NDP's focus on diversification, specifically through integration, signals Zambia's commitment to adaptive management (Principle 1) and resilience (Principle 9) to external shocks.

Further, national strategies like the 7NDP and NBSAP2 recognize the many stakeholders (Principle 5) and land uses (Principle 4) shaping Zambia's landscape. Each of these key development strategies identify cross-sectorial groups that need to work together, which links to Principle 2: common concern entry point and Principle 7: clarify rights and responsibilities. However, for policies constructed at the national level to be successfully realized, they will need to be renegotiated at the provincial, district, and ward level. This ties into Principle 6: negotiated and transparent change logic.

Decentralization is a focal point across many of Zambia's strategies and policies. However, the devolution of power means more people are given more responsibilities, drawing attention to an ongoing struggle in Zambia: lack of capacity. Without the technical and fiscal capacity, it is difficult for people to step into new roles and make the most of the rights they are given. All the national strategies in this review cited lack of capacity as a major roadblock to the success of previous plans. Consequently, this has resulted in unfulfilled potential of well-intended acts and policies. One of the greatest consequences of lack of capacity is the inability to monitor and evaluate, and share information (Principle 8). Without monitoring and evaluation, it is difficult to learn and adapt (Principle 1), and understand changes at multiple scales (Principle 3), which ultimately reduces resilience (Principle 9).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this review, a challenge repeatedly cited in Zambia's national development reports is a lack of capacity, leading to unfulfilled policy and development objectives. Therefore, we believe strengthening stakeholder capacity is one of the biggest challenges and, at the same time, one of the greatest opportunities for operationalizing a landscape approach in Zambia, especially since capacity building takes time and Zambia is facing pressure to develop rapidly. A lack of capacity (i.e. fiscal, institutional, and capacity to coordinate actions across sectors) makes it difficult to

operationalize a landscape approach, as nearly all the other principles depend on it. At the same time, this underscores how impactful investing in Principle 10: strengthened stakeholder capacity could be. On paper, Zambia's national policies and plans appear to be very encouraging for integrated landscape approaches; however, moving policies from paper to practice has proved challenging. To address this disconnect, we suggest a landscape approach that focuses on clarifying rights and responsibilities (Principle 7) and establishing a negotiated and transparent change logic (Principle 6) that resonates at not just the national level, but at regional and local levels, too.

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