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JURISDICTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Guidance Document for Multiple Stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Jurisdictional or “territorial” approaches to sustainable development hold great promise. By bringing together key stakeholders, the potential for achieving more food, more forests, fewer emissions and better livelihoods at large scales and over long time frames becomes feasible. The pathway to jurisdictional sustainability is not easy or quick, however. This document is intended to highlight some of the key elements of successful transitions to jurisdictional sustainability and guidance on how best to achieve them.

This document builds upon a jurisdictional sustainability whitepaper and multi-sector discussion of that whitepaper (Annex 1, January 2015) and is informed by other recent assessments (Annex 2).

DEFINITION

We define “jurisdictional sustainability” as the successful transition to sustainable development across an entire political geography—a state, province, county, district or nation¹. Success is measured “wall-to-wall” across the entire jurisdiction and therefore encompasses the full range of activities, production systems, ecosystems and actors. The jurisdictional approach is a subset of the broader category of “landscape” approaches to sustainability with the main differences being that (a) governmental engagement is deliberately high and (b) geographical boundaries are chosen to maximize linkages with public policy. (See Annex 1) Successful jurisdictional approaches must be durable (that is, they must be able to survive political turnover) and flexible (they must be capable of responding to new information and new opportunities).

¹ A jurisdiction can also be defined by a natural boundary, such as a watershed, if there are public policies that operate at this level.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Sustainable development is achieved within a jurisdiction when there is a shared understanding of what it means and what success looks like, when the political and economic power of those who support it surpasses that of those who oppose it, and when enabling conditions and incentives for achieving it are locked into public policies, business models, and formal land designations that are positively reinforced by increases in market access, financial flows, job creation and poverty alleviation.

VISION

Jurisdictions competing in a “race-to-the-top” to demonstrate progress towards sustainable development that is broadly recognized, accepted and reinforced by markets, consumers, NGOs and governments.

DOES THE JURISDICTIONAL APPROACH REPLACE FARM-LEVEL APPROACHES?

No. Farm-level interventions to foster and measure progress towards sustainability will always be needed. Jurisdictional sustainability is best seen as a complement to farm-level approaches. The two approaches are potentially highly synergistic.

RESULTS OF JANUARY 2015 DIALOGUE

Independent, regional multi-stakeholder processes are guided by global principles and recommended best practices that are developed through a consultation process managed by an international steering committee. These principles and best practices would be developed with the goal of unifying or inter-connecting commodity roundtable standards, REDD+, and domestic policies and programs.

WHY IS A JURISDICTIONAL APPROACH NEEDED?

Jurisdictional REDD, corporate deforestation commitments, certification and endogenous public policy initiatives are pushing tropical forest regions towards sustainability. A lack of alignment among these approaches represents an important impediment to progress. The jurisdictional approach can potentially increase the scale of positive sustainability impacts while lowering the costs of achieving those impacts by aligning these approaches. When successful, it could “mainstream” the sustainability agenda, supporting all producers and communities and the full range of economic activities around a shared agenda. Through a jurisdictional approach, powerful incentives for fostering collective action and peer-to-peer (farm to farm) encouragement/pressure are possible.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN CHALLENGES OF THE JURISDICTIONAL APPROACH?

- Garnering sufficient support among important political and economic actors
- Weak governance capacity
- Political turnover due to election cycles and other disruptions
- Garnering support from other levels of government
- Perverse incentives and subsidies
- Inadequate positive incentives
- Fragmentation: multiple metrics for the same key issues (e.g. deforestation)

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS?

1. Shared Definition of Jurisdictional Success (Time-Bound Goals and Milestones)

- Represent meaningful progress towards jurisdictional sustainability
- Accepted/supported by key local/regional stakeholders
- Endorsed/recognized by key external actors and, eventually, compliance with jurisdictional standard or “rating system”

2. Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

- Reliable, accessible, transparent and, eventually, “official²” data
- Reporting migrates towards online, interactive platform that facilitates querying tailored to diverse array of users

- Verification: shift from farm-level audit to jurisdiction-wide data and online, crowd-sourced verification through grievance procedures

3. Integrated System of Financial, Administrative and Market Incentives

- Diverse incentives: financial, administrative (streamlining bureaucracy), contractual
- Sustainable sourcing agreements with key markets that include jurisdiction-wide targets
- Incentive systems that foster collective action to tackle deforestation as they deliver farm- and community-level incentives to adopt sustainable practices
- Integration achieved through jurisdictional business and investment plan

4. Multi-Sector Governance Structure

- Government engagement/endorsement
- Progress does not fully depend upon government leadership
- Designed to endure political transitions
- Represents key stakeholders
- Reinforces and builds web of strong relationships and collaborations between civil servants and civil society partners
- Adaptive management

PATHWAYS

1. Jurisdictional certification

- Multi-stakeholder process is motivated by decision among key stakeholders to achieve jurisdictional certification (e.g. RSPO)
- Assumption: Single commodity certification provides foundation for eventual wall-to-wall certification for all production and jurisdictional sustainability

2. Jurisdictional REDD

- Multi-stakeholder process grows out of jurisdictional REDD opportunity (e.g. German REM, FCPF, Biocarbon, UN REDD, prospect of California market) and the rules and systems that have been developed (e.g. safeguards, reference levels, MRV)
- Assumption: carbon finance can support readiness process; prospect of performance-based finance is sufficient to drive processes and land-use changes when orchestrated with related markets and investments

² “Official” refers to government-endorsed data that becomes the basis of policy decisions.

3. Endogenous

- Local actors (often political leaders) committed to sustainability, land rights (e.g. Acre), encouraged by external opportunities (e.g. REDD, markets) or responding to regulations/public policies (e.g. Programa Municipios Verdes). Many of the 25 tropical forest states and provinces of the Governors' Climate and Forests task force fall in this category, motivated in part by the inter-governmental partnerships and political opportunities
- Assumption: "If we build it, they will come" Success in slowing deforestation, recognizing indigenous land rights, alleviating poverty, etc. will bring market, financial and reputational benefits.

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO JURISDICTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY?

1. Understand the power relationships and identify the coalition of individuals and institutions that could drive the process
2. Identify some of the common issues/threads that could bring this coalition together
3. Engage potential champions for driving the process
4. Devise a strategy for achieving an early "win"—tangible benefit(s) that send a positive signal to those who have supported the process
5. Bring existing initiatives into the tent—or else they could become opponents
6. Develop the political case, the business case, and the social case for jurisdictional sustainability



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PARTNERS The Forests, Farms and Finance Initiative includes Earth Innovation Institute, Bonsucro, Denofa, Forest Trends, Governors' Climate and Forests task force, Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Grupo Amaggi, Grupo de Trabalho da Pecuária Sustentável, INOBU, Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazônia, Proforest, Roundtable for Responsible Soy, Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil, Solidaridad, Unilever, and World Wildlife Fund.

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