

Community Of Practice

BUSINESS IN LANDSCAPES



1. Need

As 2 billion hectares – 75 percent (!) of the earth’s arable land - are being degraded, land degradation poses one of the most urgent global threats to more than 1.5 billion people. The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) estimates that the loss of fertile soil costs about \$10.6 trillion a year. In addition, biodiversity loss is happening at an unprecedented rate while unsustainable agriculture accounts for between 10 and 20 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions.

Many businesses are sourcing from landscapes that are affected by degradation and biodiversity loss, and thereby part of a system that produces a negative impact. Many businesses, and in particular professionals working within these businesses, want to work towards positive outcomes, but feel powerless in responding to these challenges. In order to make a positive impact on the social and ecological dynamics of these landscapes, professionals need to understand these landscapes, their connection to them, and to determine the role they want to play within these landscapes.

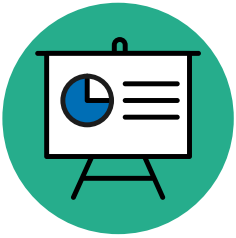


2. Opportunity

Uniting business professionals working in businesses that are connected to certain landscapes, provides an opportunity to mobilize these professionals, their expertise and their networks. A ‘Community of Practice’ (CoP) supports and facilitates the cross-over learning process of the participants, mobilizes change within companies, and increases the understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to landscape degradation and restoration. Furthermore, the journey of exploration and learning can be fun, interesting, meaningful and therefore a goal in itself.

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3. Set-up of the CoP

A group of 10-20 business professionals working in industries with strong connections to landscapes (such as agri-food, forestry, and fashion) will meet in approximately 10 in-person CoP gatherings over a 1,5-year period. These gatherings are designed to facilitate co-learning about the effects of international supply chains on landscapes and the opportunities to create a positive impact. Next to interactive methods to facilitate this co-learning and to form strategies for internal (resource) mobilization, the CoP will include expert meetings, co-design workshops, field visits, informal drinks and fosters communication of the results to both the participating companies as well as the outside world.



4. Expected outcomes

The overall expected outcome of the CoP is to enable innovation at various levels: at the individual, organizational and at systemic level. In particular the CoP will result in:

- Individual knowledge and skills development with regards to business in landscapes.
- Activation of change agents to inspire and enable change within their respective organizations.
- Strategies for mobilizing people and resources on a company level, and beyond, to take action on the ground.
- Up to 20 pilot studies that explore and test various strategies for business in landscapes.
- Insights into barriers and opportunities at systemic level.
- High-quality communication materials demonstrating the results and thought leadership developed through this CoP.

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5. Participants

We strive to organize a diverse group of companies with respect to company size, industry, stage within the supply chain, and level of sustainability ambitions. To enhance the positive impact created by the CoP, we have set the following selection criteria:

- Professionals working in the Dutch private sector related to food&agri, forestry, and fashion.
- Professionals who are motivated to learn about how to realize positive impact in landscapes.
- Professionals who want to engage their colleagues and wider organization on this topic.
- Professionals who are in the position to ignite changes within the company and who have active endorsement of their respective organization.

We strive to create a well-balanced group with a good gender balance and a variety of function profiles, i.e. not only engaging sustainability managers but also bringing on board professionals from other departments, such as procurement. We also ask for a clear commitment from the participants which touches upon their motivation to start a true learning journey, the ability to attend all sessions, active participation within the CoP and strong engagement with colleagues, and the willingness to share main outcomes and lessons learned with a wider audience.



6. Program & timeline

The CoP will be structured into four phases ranging over a period of 1,5 years, after this initial preparation phase. The first phase is the start-up phase where we recruit the participants, get to know each other, identify learning goals, and create a common understanding of the CoP and key aspects of the landscape approach. In addition, the participants will start with the development of their pilot projects. Phase 1 will close after presenting the first results to a wider public. During phase 2, we will organize thematic knowledge sessions and work with the participants on the pilot implementation. There is a strong focus on exchanging experiences. Phase 3 is the phase of systematic learning where we identify lessons learnt and understand systematic barriers and opportunities. A closing event will be held and a publication will be made. During the fourth and last phase we will share our insights and kick-start a follow-up.

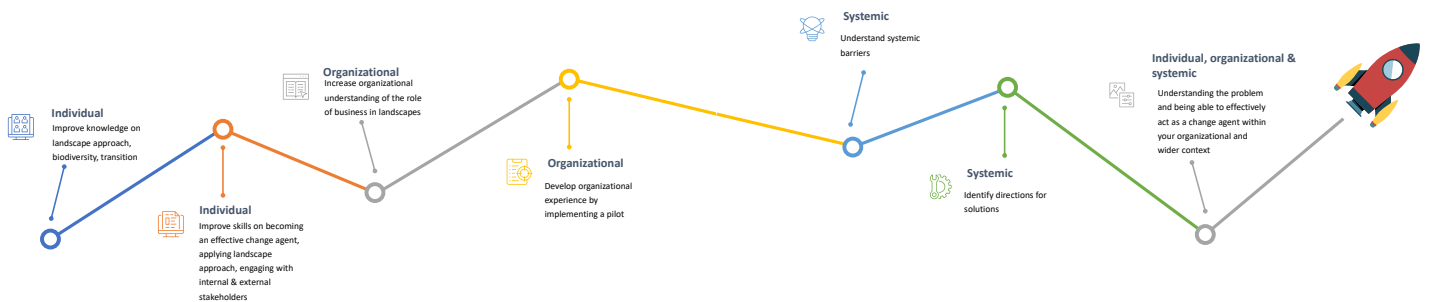


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7. Learning journey

The Community of Practice will realize a learning journey on multiple levels. Firstly, the participants will experience an individual learning journey (micro) by gaining knowledge on the landscape approach and system transitioning, and improving their skills on becoming a change agent. A learning diary will be kept to document these changes. Secondly, the participants are empowered to drive an organizational learning journey (meso). By engaging their colleagues, they will increase organizational understanding of the role of business in landscapes and help to put the landscape approach in practice by implementing a pilot. Thirdly, the CoP facilitates a systematic learning journey (macro). By sharing experiences and effectively structuring these, the CoP helps to understand systematic barriers and identify directions for solutions.



8. Consortium

The Community of Practice Business in Landscapes will be organized by a consortium consisting of Nature²Squared, Solidaridad and MVO Nederland. Through our consortium, we can combine our vast networks to approach suitable participants, provide relevant knowledge on sustainable landscapes, support the learning process, and create and distribute inspiring communication materials to the wider public.

In addition, we have reached out to two potential international partners – the 1000 landscapes for 1 billion people initiative and CSR Europe- to investigate the possibility to embed the learnings of the CoP within their wider programs.

For more information, or to receive the full information package, please reach out to info@nature-squared.org or call Daan Groot on +31 6 3824 8897.