



The Food Security
Standard in Context:

Food Security beyond the farm gate: the FSS in a Landscape Approach

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Landscape Approaches (LA) are systemic approaches for integrating policy and practice for different land uses in a given area to ensure equitable and sustainable land use, while strengthening livelihoods of people and climate change adaptation. Traditionally, LAs primarily deal with environmental challenges. However, FSS certifications can add value by strengthening the social perspective and providing hands-on tools for stakeholder consultation and monitoring impacts on the area of influence. The mandatory participation of stakeholders within FSS-audits may even converge with the applied LA-methodology and can contribute to the knowledge of circumstances and requirements within the planning area.

In our globalized reality isolated actors are no longer able to register all factors that make up for sustainable development. Therefore, systemic approaches are needed to lay out developmental pathways while simultaneously addressing the existing diverse ecologic, economic and social interests in a balanced way. On the global level the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were ratified by the UN-member states to serve this purpose. In 2021 the UN Food Systems Summit was held to enhance the sustainability and design of global food production systems and consumption patterns.

In this context the LA can be seen as a tool to implement these suggested systemic strategies – however, merely in a clearly defined local space. Having been first mentioned in 1983 the approach is not new, and it has been renamed frequently ever since. Comparable approaches are used within development planning, however, with a distinct focus on social issues. They are for example implemented as Integrated Rural Development, Territorial Development or River-Basin-Management. The core methodical pillar of the LA is the participative planning process in which all stakeholders design their development pathway in

an emancipated fashion. Establishing LAs therefore usually results in a compromise that facilitates the diverse ecologic, economic and social development goals. Within the processes the regard to social issues is steadily growing.

How to implement the Landscape Approach?

In planning and implementing a LA requires a driving force that identifies all relevant stakeholders within a given natural region and subsequently leads and mediates the participative process. Such processes can be initiated by enterprises or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and but are then carried out by state actors.

The conceptual core of LAs comprises of joint definitions of long-term goals and the appropriate distribution of responsibilities and resources between the actors involved. This makes every LA a locally specified process that must be adapted to local conditions. However, with the size of the geographical area and the number of actors involved the complexity of the process grows exponentially.

The Landscape Approach can contribute to sustainable and food-secure development

LAs can significantly contribute to food security because coordinated and concerted efforts are essential in regions where (periodic) hunger, malnutrition and stunting are prevalent. Building and extending roads, energy supply systems as well as health - and educational facilities is crucial for economic development. However, investments must be tailored according to ecological, social and economic constraints. The agricultural sector – from cultivation to processing and maintenance – plays a pivotal role in rural development. If smallholders as well as co-operatives and plantations are well integrated into the landscape, they can contribute to sustainable development



and food security. If, for example, the planning of water use has been comprehensive it should result in a decent drinking water supply and support agricultural irrigation as well. Using LAs ideally regulates responsibilities which leads to considerate investments.

How does the Food Security Standard fit into a Landscape Approach?

Farms that participate in LAs can implement sustainability standards to meet the agreed criteria as well as to evaluate performance and prove that they are meeting the goals. Farms that are already certified can stimulate LAs. If sustainability standards are combined with the FSS - social criteria are met accordingly. Within a Landscape Approach the mandatory participation of stakeholders in FSS-audits converges with LA-methodology and can contribute to the knowledge of circumstances and requirements within the planning area. At the same time changes on people and environment – possible repercussions of the LAs - are systematically recorded and monitored for feedback. Therefore, certified agricultural entities fit especially well into LAs.

What are the challenges?

LAs require a broad multi-stakeholder methodology. Public institutions from diverse departments (agriculture, forestry, environment, economy, energy, telecoms), corporations as well as representatives from indigenous communities and NGOs have to coordinate their efforts in spite of diverse goals that often contradict each other. Therefore, LAs so far predominantly serve as models. However, sustainability standards that integrated the FSS ensure that local and regional planning is considered because its criteria require companies to comply with food security strategies, climate protection plans, spatial planning and to protect indigenous lands and the environment. At the same time social factors like health, education and civil protection are being addressed. That makes sustainability standards in combination with the FSS especially suitable to add considerate agricultural (export) production to LA-projects. However, this will only work out, if the public institutions are able to implement the planning they have agreed upon. NGOs can play a vital role by initiating and monitoring the implementation.

Sources:

[Connect, Share, Learn & Act - Global Landscapes Forum \(GLF\)](#)
[Landscapes for Life \(FAO\)](#)
[Landscape Partnerships for Sustainable Development \(LPFN\)](#)

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