

# Tackling Deforestation Through A Jurisdictional Approach:

Lessons From The Field



Political Leadership



Participatory Design



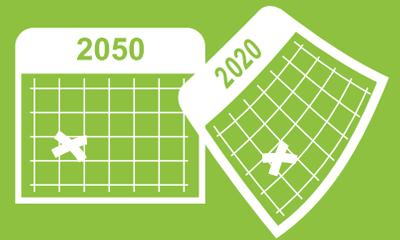
Sustainable Financing



Private Sector Role



Storytelling



Expectation Management

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The persistence of global deforestation and environmental degradation has increased pressure on both governments and companies to address these challenges. Further, limitations of existing mitigation strategies and the convergence of public and private sector commitments to reduce deforestation (e.g., Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Climate Agreement and “deforestation-free” pledges in the New York Declaration on Forests) have expanded interest in public-private collaborations widely referred to as “jurisdictional approaches.” With origins in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) and landscape approaches, jurisdictional approaches seek to align governments, businesses, NGOs, and other stakeholders around shared goals of conservation, supply chain sustainability, and green economic development; jurisdictional approaches also focus on the political level at which land use decisions are made and enforced.

The multiple jurisdictional initiatives that are underway around the world can be roughly grouped into three categories. First, models that deliver blanket demand signals to the market, such as corporate pledges to preferentially source commodities from geographies that demonstrate improved sustainability. Second, models that deliver blanket supply signals to the market, including ongoing efforts to achieve jurisdictional palm oil certification. And third, place-based initiatives that bring together supply- and demand-side stakeholders to agree on sustainability goals and implementation strategies.

Increased understanding of these approaches has not kept pace with growing expectations, in part because they are widely varied and mostly nascent, and because detailed information on their progress is not easily accessible. To help bridge this gap, WWF convened a workshop of practitioners from five place-based initiatives<sup>1</sup> to deeply explore each one in a peer-to-peer setting with additional global experts, and to extract theories of change, successes, challenges, and common lessons. This paper provides case studies and a detailed comparative analysis of the initiatives and lessons learned.

---

<sup>1</sup> Examples of the first two categories are still in methodological development and were not included.

## ★ KEY LEARNINGS



### POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

**Political leadership is key** to advancing a jurisdictional approach, but it is also a primary risk; initiatives need to be designed to be resilient to political change.



### PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

A push for quick results and a desire to avoid opposition to a jurisdictional initiative sometimes interfere with early, inclusive engagement; however, **success in the long term depends on stakeholder engagement in initiative design and implementation.**



### SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Several types of financing are needed, likely in stages, to support and sustain jurisdictional approaches; **proponents need to differentiate categories of finance and to be able to articulate and align specific needs (and deliverables) to financial offerings.**



### PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE

Private sector actors are crucial for success, given the dominant role that market forces often play in driving land use change compared with public finance. That said, **proponents must distinguish the needs and roles of different private sector actors to delineate asks, expectations, and compelling partnerships.**



### STORYTELLING

Skilled and tailored **storytelling that articulates a jurisdictional initiative's goals, needs, and early successes is critical to building support** and growth among different audiences.



### EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT

The complexity and duration of jurisdictional initiatives require sustained investment to achieve systemic change; therefore, **local and global expectations should be thoughtfully managed to avoid creating unachievable goals or time frames,** and to help ensure lasting results.

## CASE STUDIES



In **Mato Grosso**, Brazil’s “Produce, Conserve and Include” strategy, a government-led, multi-stakeholder steering committee advances a sustainable rural development agenda through implementation of the Forest Code, intensification of commodity production within existing degraded lands, restoration of other degraded lands to forest, and provision of improved extension services and rural credit to producers.

In **Liberia’s** oil palm outgrower and forest conservation scheme, Production Protection Agreements adjust the concession-based development model to one that empowers smallholders at the community level and weaves in incentives for forest conservation. A major palm oil company will invest in extension and guarantee offtake, while ensuring a growing, sustainable supply base.



In **Ghana’s** Cocoa-Forest REDD+ Programme, the Forestry Commission and Ghana Cocoa Board are teaming with private cocoa buyers to leverage international climate finance and advance a national development and conservation vision. The government will implement rural zoning aligned with optimal growing conditions, and private sector partners will support efforts to advance climate-smart growing practices.

In **Acre**, Brazil, a statewide economic and agricultural zoning plan and System of Incentives for Environmental Services support sustainable agricultural practices in predetermined production areas; diversification of a “green” commodity base including natural rubber, wood flooring, furniture, and Brazil nuts; and provision of benefits to indigenous peoples.



In **Colombia’s** Orinoquia Sustainable Integrated Landscape program, the government will leverage climate finance to prepare for agricultural expansion through careful land use planning, climate-smart agricultural practices, and investment in protected areas management.

It is too soon to collectively assess the success of jurisdictional models; if successful, they will deliver results in years rather than in months. However, given the growing understanding of the complexity and systemic nature of the issues underlying continuing forest loss in many geographies, these initiatives are increasingly compelling. They contain the building blocks to align multiple stakeholders and incentive mechanisms around core, common interests such as responsible commodity production, improved economic growth and livelihood opportunities, and a resilient natural resource base that can continue to provide crucial ecosystem services. This long view of jurisdictional approaches, and the time needed to build effective multi-stakeholder initiatives, is also likely the greatest challenge to their success, because governments and businesses alike are often motivated to seek short-term results and rewards. In this light, workshop participants widely viewed jurisdictional approaches as a complement rather than a replacement for other strategies—critical for building improved governance over time, reaching more producers with improved practices, and maintaining focus on the ultimate metric of success: reduced forest loss at landscape or jurisdictional scales.

Another significant challenge is the limited degree to which companies have engaged thus far in jurisdictional initiatives. Companies have historically emphasized sustainability activities that can be quickly and easily measured, such as reductions in their own environmental impacts, instead of evaluating themselves against broader landscape- or jurisdiction-level metrics (e.g., reduced deforestation rates) that take longer to achieve and are harder to attribute to individual actors. This has likely kept demand signals for sustainable commodities delivered at landscape or jurisdictional scales relatively weak, and limited direct financial or technical investment by the private sector in sourcing geographies (although these are becoming more numerous).<sup>2</sup> Buyer and trader interest in jurisdictional approaches is growing, both due to transaction costs of alternative strategies and persistent deforestation-related supply chain risks; however, they need clearer road maps for how they can specifically engage, and whether and how this engagement will be viewed as a credible step in meeting their sustainability commitments. Multi-stakeholder platforms like the Governors Climate and Forests Task Force and the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 can seed innovative partnerships as they increasingly focus on implementation.

Collectively, jurisdictional approaches are worthy of increased focus and investment, bearing in mind that they will not be the best strategy in every context and that greater clarity is needed concerning the preconditions that lend themselves to success. And even when such preconditions are present, it is clear from the diversity of approaches that initiatives should be tailored to regional conditions and designed flexibly. Care also needs to be taken to ensure that deforestation eliminated in one jurisdiction does not simply shift to another. Academic interest in these initiatives must

---

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, a recent CDP analysis on palm oil showed that while 87% of reporting manufacturers and retailers said they were engaging their suppliers, only about a third conduct supplier audits or provide training to suppliers, and fewer than 10% provide technical support. McCoy & Servent (2017), Public- and Private-Sector Roles in Achieving Zero Deforestation, section 5.1 in ETFRN News 58, <http://www.etfrn.org/index.php?id=49>.

translate to more on-the-ground piloting and direct engagement by all stakeholders involved in landscapes where commodity production is driving deforestation and environmental degradation. The time is now for governments to demonstrate their commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement (in particular as they strive to achieve and increase ambition in Nationally Determined Contributions), and for actors across the private sector to show how they can help achieve these goals, as well as make good on rapidly approaching deadlines to end deforestation announced in individual corporate supply chain commitments and in the New York Declaration on Forests. Time is short, and jurisdictional approaches can play an important role to scale up measurable progress toward reaching these goals.

---

### **Workshop participants framed seven questions that require further analysis as jurisdictional approaches continue to be tested:**

1. Many jurisdictional initiatives seek to blend agricultural production with forest protection by intensifying production so that greater outputs can be obtained from the same area of land. What interventions need to be paired with intensification to ensure that deforestation actually declines?
2. Policy reform to align laws and regulations with conservation objectives is fundamental to jurisdictional approaches. But what are the mechanics of successful policy reform, and at what level of government is it needed?
3. Workshop participants called out early stakeholder engagement as a key condition for jurisdictional initiatives to succeed in the long term. What are effective strategies for proponents of these initiatives to determine the motivations of the various stakeholders that need to be engaged so as to develop compelling value propositions for them?
4. Jurisdictional initiatives seek to leverage market forces to drive conservation in several ways, including via direct buying power. How can the market be moved to preference products from sustainable sources or to offer a premium for such products?
5. Many jurisdictional initiatives rely on market pressure exerted by international companies responding to international consumer demand. How can domestic markets be moved to exert pressure where external market levers are limited or where demand for sustainable products is weak?
6. Workshop participants agreed on the importance of markets rewarding jurisdictions that make progress toward achieving environmental goals. But given that blacklisting could harm rather than help nonperforming jurisdictions, how should markets treat lack of progress?
7. Jurisdictional initiatives differ in the level of environmental ambition captured in their targets. How should the value of a jurisdictional approach be judged, given that some may fail, and that some may not set a very high bar?