

Effective company claims about landscape investments and actions

Landscape and Jurisdictional Practitioner Community - Joint Position Paper

March 2023

This joint position paper is the second in a series of collective positions from the landscape and jurisdictional practitioner community¹ that aim to provide companies and the organisations that support them with accessible and consistent guidance for effective investment and action in landscapes and jurisdictions. The series provides a common baseline set of expectations on which the practitioner community is building more detailed guidance and tools.

This second position paper sets minimum expectations for information to include in company claims about the investments they are making or the actions they are taking at a landscape scale. It also outlines the supporting information that should be disclosed to strengthen those claims. Companies talking about actions and investments in a consistent way will provide clarity and comparability

and will help to build trust with stakeholders within and beyond their sourcing regions. This paper builds on and complements the first collective position² on what constitutes a landscape investment or action. Additional positions will focus on assessing and validating sustainability performance improvements and on the claims companies can make about their contributions to those improvements.

1. See end of document for a list of participating initiatives supporting this position

2. See Landscape Practitioner Community position paper 1: [‘What constitutes a landscape investment or action?’](#)

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1. Minimum information to include in company landscape action claims

Company investment or direct action in landscapes and jurisdictions aims to address sustainability challenges at a scale that is meaningful for delivering impact. However, improvements in sustainability performance at the scale of the landscape or jurisdiction can take time to be realised. In the interim period before those landscape-scale performance improvements come about, companies can make claims about the investments they are making in landscape actions. Robust action claims can also support companies in their corporate reporting and disclosure.

Transparency of information about a company's investment or action is the cornerstone of effective company action claims and enables stakeholder trust and collaboration.

Company landscape action claims are expected to include the following core elements:

- 1 Description of the type of landscape action³;
- 2 The sustainability outcomes prioritised by local stakeholders⁴ towards which the action is contributing;
- 3 Scale⁵ and duration of the action or investment, and whether it is financial or in-kind;
- 4 Bounded geographic area where the action is taking place;
- 5 Timing and duration of the action (e.g. when and over what time period the action is being implemented);

- 6 The name of the landscape initiative and local multi-stakeholder process in which the company is participating, where such a process exists; and
- 7 Partners through whom the action is being implemented, if any.

In addition, as the action is being implemented, **companies are expected to report on progress in implementation of the action.** This would ideally include reporting progress against time-bound milestones that are defined at the outset of the action⁶.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IS AN EXAMPLE OF AN ACTION CLAIM THAT INCORPORATES THE CORE ELEMENTS:

We are contributing \$1X over 5 years to support restoration efforts in A landscape with B implementing partner. Our goal is to support C landscape initiative to achieve its vision of 1M hectares under restoration by 2040. Since March 2022, we have been investing in D and E types of activities that aim to bring 50,000 hectares under restoration by 2027.



3. There is a broad range of actions a company can invest in or act on directly, ranging from restoration projects to securing land tenure for producers to support for the multi-stakeholder partnership. A framework for categorising the type of action can be found in the WWF, TFA, and Proforest [Practical Guide for Companies to Engage in Landscapes](#)
4. Priority sustainability outcomes are those set by the local landscape or jurisdictional initiative or through engagement with an inclusive and representative cross-section of stakeholders in the landscape, including, where present, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. See [position paper 1](#), section 1a.
5. Companies are encouraged to disclose the amount of their investment but can also communicate the scale of their investment in other ways, e.g., percent contribution to total initiative cost. Information about the scale of investment linked to supporting information provides context to stakeholders about a company's relative contribution (section 2).
6. Milestones are the intermediate results expected from implementation of the action. Milestones can be set by the company itself or its implementing partner and would ideally be consistent with collective action plans from related landscape or jurisdictional initiatives. Proforest's [Landscape Reporting Framework](#) for the CGF Forest Positive Coalition is an example of an action reporting framework.

2. Supporting information to strengthen company landscape action claims

Company action claims are strengthened by the disclosure of supporting information that substantiates the claim.

Companies making claims about their landscape investments or actions are encouraged to make the following information publicly and easily accessible, e.g. on their website or in sustainability reports or disclosures⁷. In some cases, this information will also be made available through reporting by the landscape initiative in which the company participates.

Where companies are investing in actions, they can also use the list below to assess whether their investments are being managed appropriately for the claims they intend to make.

1 **RELEVANCE: The company shows how the action will address one or more of the sustainability outcomes prioritised by stakeholders in the landscape.**

- There needs to be a clear path connecting the action to the prioritised sustainability outcomes so that a plausible link can be made in the future between the action and any improved sustainability performance. This can take a number of forms, ranging from a full theory of change to a simplified results chain to document the expected linkages between actions and outcomes. Companies can refer to relevant work by the landscape initiative, where this exists.
- To maximise impact, companies can assess continued relevance of actions over time through good quality monitoring data to understand whether measurable progress is actually being made. Continued relevance of actions can then be reinforced through adaptive management based on learning about effectiveness of the actions.

2 **RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION: The company shares information about the relative contribution of its investment or actions to the prioritised sustainability performance outcomes in the landscape, to any broader commitments or targets it has set⁸, and to other actions in the landscape.**

- Stakeholders are interested to understand whether there is a meaningful correlation between the scale of investment and the scale of improvements the company is aiming to bring about. Companies should share more detailed information about the scale of outcomes they aim to contribute to, both in

the landscape and overall, as well as any additional information about the role of the specific action in their overall investment strategy to improve sustainability performance.

- The company (or the landscape initiative of which it is a part) should also share information about the scale of other investments or actions in the landscape that aim to contribute to the same prioritised sustainability outcomes. This helps stakeholders to understand better the relative contribution of the company's investment within the broader framework of landscape actions.

3 **COMPLEMENTARITY: The company shows how the action builds on existing work in the landscape and when the action is focused on remediating previous negative impacts the company was responsible for.**

- Complementarity of the action to existing landscape activities is necessary to maximise the collective impact of investments in the landscape. Complementarity can most easily be achieved if the action is derived from or embedded in a collective action plan agreed with local stakeholders, which can then be referenced to show how the action builds on existing work. In the absence of a collective action plan, the company should at least document how their action is complementary to other actions that are being implemented in the landscape.
- Company actions focused on remediating past negative impacts are important for the ecological integrity of the landscape, but a company should avoid making claims about positive sustainability outcomes based solely on remediating the negative impacts it was responsible for. Where production and processing companies with direct links to the landscape are remediating their past negative impacts, they should make this clear in their communications. Downstream companies should aim to build an understanding of the impacts (both positive and negative) their actions or sourcing have been linked to in recent years and should communicate whether their current actions are addressing any of the negative impacts.

4 **DURABILITY: The company shares information about how the action and its intended results aim to be embedded in the landscape and with local stakeholders.**

7. Such as company disclosure through [CDP's Forests questionnaire](#).

8. For example, many companies are setting targets for carbon and nature through initiatives such as the [Science-Based Targets](#) initiative and [Science-Based Targets Network](#).

- Ideally, the action is structured in ways that result in permanent performance improvements. An effective way of achieving this is to embed the actions within a broader multi-stakeholder process and secure buy-in and engagement from local government and other local stakeholders, so that improvements can be managed and maintained beyond the implementation period of the activity.
- Practically, the goal is for the results of discrete actions (e.g., protected areas, tenure rights, investment pathways) to be embedded in the formal practices of stakeholders working in the landscape (e.g., local or regional government regulation, longer-term formalised collaborations).

5 TRANSPARENCY: The company shares information regularly about progress on implementation of actions and has a mechanism for taking stakeholder feedback into account.

- When companies are reporting on implementation of actions (see section 1), they should provide sufficient supporting information for stakeholders to be able to confirm the accuracy of the statements made, including that the actions have been undertaken as stated. In practice, progress will often be communicated by the implementing partner or landscape initiative.
- It will be important that local stakeholders in the landscape are aware of these progress updates and have the opportunity to provide additional insights about what they are seeing. Where this differs from progress reports, companies may want to seek broader input to better understand how actions are progressing.

6 MONITORING: The company shares baseline, landscape-level performance data on relevant sustainability indicators and metrics.

- Baseline data for the relevant sustainability performance metrics is necessary to provide a reference point against which to measure and communicate future performance change. Companies are encouraged to support the collection of baseline data as close to the start of any investment or action as possible, and to conduct monitoring jointly through landscape initiatives and with local stakeholders, using standardised frameworks that allow for local customisation⁹. Companies should ensure that the baseline data is made available, ideally as part of a collective reporting framework.

7 SAFEGUARDS: The company can show how potential adverse impacts from its investments or actions have been assessed and are being avoided or mitigated.

- Priority sustainability outcomes are often closely linked. Actions that improve one outcome can potentially have negative or unintended consequences for other outcomes. Companies need to be aware of potential trade-offs and have made informed decisions, ideally collectively, about whether these trade-offs are acceptable or whether they would lead to unacceptable outcomes. In the latter case, steps need to be taken to avoid or mitigate these unacceptable outcomes. The company should then be able to communicate about the trade-offs and about any steps taken to avoid or mitigate any unacceptable outcomes.



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9. [Landscape](#) is an example of a standardised reporting framework

Organisations and initiatives supporting this position



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