

Nature-Based Solutions and Landscape and Jurisdictional Approaches: Complementary Means to Achieve Lasting Benefits



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Among policymakers, practitioners, companies, funders, and investors, **nature-based solutions (NbS) and landscape and jurisdictional approaches (LA/JAs) continue to gain prominence** as means to halt and reverse nature loss.

However, **these concepts overlap in scope, and the synergies between them are not universally understood.**

Given the multitude of terms used to describe NbS and LA/JAs, many ask:

- How are they similar and different?
- Is one approach more effective?
- How are NbS and LA/JAs complementary?

We aim to answer these questions here, beginning by defining each approach and ultimately addressing the potential for NbS and LA/JAs to advance the international nature agenda and realize political and corporate commitments outlined in the:

- Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF);
- Paris Agreement;
- Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi); and
- Science Based Targets Network (SBTN).

Nature-Based Solutions and Landscape and Jurisdictional Approaches

The United Nations recognizes NbS and ecosystem-based approaches as the primary action framework for the GBF,¹ providing a political basis for definitions and high-integrity implementation of these approaches.

In the case of LA/JAs, the terminology is especially challenging since there are multiple synonyms depending on the context. An analysis by EcoAgriculture Partners identified roughly 80 different terms similar to LA/JAs, such as “ecoregional planning,” “eco-territorial development,” and “holistic land management.”² Recently, the LA/JA practitioner community agreed on four [Core Criteria for LA/JAs](#), establishing a tangible framework to guide the development, execution, and assessment of effective initiatives using these approaches. Companies and other actors can now use this framework to guide the establishment of concrete landscape, seascape, and jurisdictional engagement targets and pathways.

LA/JAs and NbS are:

- Based on science and reduce pressures on Earth system boundaries specific to biodiversity (natural ecosystems and working landscapes);
- Examples of best practice for sustainable management and the conservation of natural resources;
- Grounded in integrated socioenvironmental and economic assessments, planning, and monitoring systems; and
- Related but distinct place-based approaches to achieve overarching sustainability outcomes on the ground.

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	What is it?	Why is it useful?	Examples
Landscape Approach	A socioecological and multistakeholder management strategy at the landscape level to reconcile and align multiple conservation, development, climate change, and human well-being goals and build socioecological resilience at scale in the short, medium, and long term.	• A response to the need for a systematic approach to sustainability at the landscape scale. • A more efficient way of meeting sustainability goals/policies shared by multiple stakeholders. • A response to the failure of stakeholders acting alone in short-term project-level interventions. • A response to address drivers of nature loss and deliver durable nature impacts at scale.	• Sustainable landscape initiative • Ecosystem-based initiative • Seascape initiative • Integrated watershed or river basin action plan
Jurisdictional Approach	A type of landscape approach in which the landscape is defined by a political boundary and the government is highly involved.	<i>All of the above and:</i> • A better way to coordinate and complement public policies and government participants. • A strong governance and accountability structure, ensuring responsibilities for implementation and enforcement are well defined. • A way to enable consistent gathering of data and tracking and monitoring of progress and impact.	• Jurisdictional REDD+ • Intersectoral nature program • Subnational jurisdiction sustainable action plan • Intermunicipal associations/ compacts
Nature-Based Solution	An action to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems that addresses societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits. ³	• A cost-effective intervention that leverages nature to generate multiple benefits. While NbS are gaining favor as responses to climate change, they have benefits beyond climate mitigation and adaptation.	• Forest restoration project • Freshwater and wetland project • Flood mitigation project • Marine and coastal adaptation project • Urban ecological project • Project-based REDD+

The Complementarity of Landscape and Jurisdictional Approaches and Nature-Based Solutions

LA/JAs aim to:

- Align multiple stakeholders around a common vision of sustainability;
- Achieve multiple nature, climate, and people-centered goals at a landscape scale; and
- Improve the overall connectivity and operationalization of policies and sustainable interventions (such as NbS) in a landscape.

NbS are one category of interventions that leverage nature to deliver multiple benefits that may or may not be implemented within a landscape or jurisdiction.

LA/JAs can facilitate **delivery of high-quality NbS when they are effectively designed and implemented**. On the other hand, **NbS deliver better and more resilient outcomes when they are embedded in LA/JAs**.

However, they are not exactly the same. The following chart highlights how each concept manifests when implemented alone and the “sweet spot” when they converge:

Characteristics of LA/JAs Implemented Without NbS	Characteristics of LA/JAs Implemented With NbS	Characteristics of NbS Implemented Outside of an LA/JA
Broad scale The design of the interventions is relevant at the landscape/ jurisdictional scale.	Interacting scales NbS projects are embedded within landscape/jurisdictional strategies, complementing the other interventions within the landscape.	Small scale The spatial design of the intervention is usually at a project-level scale (e.g., farm, forest holding).
Multistakeholder governance Decisions are taken collectively by landscape stakeholders according to their aligned vision for the landscape via multistakeholder processes/platforms.	Embedded partnerships Individual actors collaborate on actions that comprise part of a landscape strategy.	Partnerships or agreements Decisions are taken and activities are conducted by one or two organizations or project implementers.
Goals & actions are comprehensive They cover multiple environmental, climate change, social, and economic objectives.	Goals & actions are embedded Project-level goals complement those of other projects to help advance landscape-level goals.	Goals & actions may be limited They can focus on a single environmental or climate objective.
Collective monitoring & reporting Impacts are monitored and reported on at the landscape level using a collectively agreed framework.	Aligned monitoring & reporting Monitoring is done at the project level, and impacts are reported up to a landscape-level monitoring framework.	Individual monitoring & reporting Monitoring and reporting are limited to the project scale.
Long-term planning They advance a long-term sustainability vision and require long-term commitments and sustained investments.	Long-term planning underpinning short- & midterm interventions Interventions with varying implementation timelines complement each other to deliver on an integrated vision of sustainability.	Short- & midterm interventions Interventions advance shorter-term objectives and may not account for broader dynamics affecting their durability.

The key differentiators between NbS and LA/JAs are:

- The scale and spatial design of implementation;
- The comprehensiveness of the goals and actions they aim to achieve;
- The level of governance and transparency around them; and
- The temporal commitment and vision for the strategy.

NbS are usually applied at a smaller, project-level scale, primarily with short-term results, and don't necessarily have to include multistakeholder processes/platforms to decide on collective goals and actions.

In contrast, the spatial design of LA/JAs occurs at a landscape/jurisdictional scale, building on a longer-term vision, and has collectively defined goals, actions, and monitoring processes that consider social needs and interests. LA/JAs always require multiple stakeholders' involvement. Specifically, JAs emphasize the importance of governmental participation and commitment, while NbS could be implemented individually by private, public, or civil society organizations. Rigorous LA/JAs secure enabling conditions that support direct interventions, including optimization of law and public policy enforcement.

Conclusion

- **LA/JAs and NbS are important complementary approaches to action.** Both tackle nature loss, degradation, and social and economic injustice. LA/JAs deliver the broadest outcomes for nature, climate, and communities when they leverage NbS to deliver against landscape strategies.
- **In the same way, the impacts of NbS are more effective, durable, and transformational when embedded in LA/JAs.** When brought together, they can achieve multiple socioenvironmental benefits at local, landscape/ jurisdictional, and global scales.
- **Integration within an LA/JA is a core component of high-quality NbS.** When embedded within a landscape strategy, NbS help deliver impact at meaningful scales, and an LA/JA's multistakeholder governance and alignment with government policy help ensure durable NbS impacts.
- **Investing in nature is a highly efficient delivery mechanism for multiple impacts.** NbS build on the connections/interlinkages between climate, nature, and human well-being to benefit all three. LA/JAs that incorporate NbS within holistic landscape strategies are best positioned to secure lasting and resilient outcomes.
- **LAs/JAs provide opportunities to align and connect multiple NbS and other interventions.** They serve an umbrella function, ensuring all interventions across a landscape or jurisdiction help deliver scaled impacts, including delivery on regional, national, and global commitments like those in the GBF, the Paris Agreement, and the SBTi and SBTN.
- **Capital markets, companies, policymakers, and other landscape stakeholders are encouraged to leverage LA/JAs and NbS in their transition/policy plans for nature.** NbS and LAs/JAs are effective mechanisms to address the interconnected challenges facing nature, climate, and people and to build intergenerational resilience at a meaningful scale. LA/JAs and NbS reinforce one another when they are applied together in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and corporate Nature Transition Plans (NTPs).

Learn More

CDP [Meeting Nature Goals: Landscape and Jurisdictional Approaches](#)

WWF [Nature-Based Solutions Origination Platform](#)

Footnotes

1. Convention on Biological Diversity | [Ecosystem Approach](#)

2. IUCN | [Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#)

3. EcoAgriculture Partners | [Defining Integrated Landscape Management for Policy Makers](#)