



Knowledge Session — Landscape Restoration

What's needed to scale-up landscape restoration?

December 11th

Impulse, Wageningen

Nandscape



Platform NLandscape Knowledge Session: Landscape Restoration

Date: December 11, 2018

Venue: Impulse, WUR Campus: Stippeneng 2, Wageningen

Facilitators: Cora van Oosten (WCDI), André Brassier (Secretariat/Beagle Sustainable Solutions)

Organising team:

- Willemijn de Iongh (Commonland)
- Arnoud Keizer (Aidenvironment)
- Violaine Berger (IDH)
- Aad Kessler (Wageningen University & Research)
- James Mulkerrins (WCDI/Secretariat)
- André Brassier (Beagle Solutions/Secretariat)

Aim of the day:

The knowledge session aimed to create a deeper understanding of the different approaches to scale-up landscape restoration, gain insight in approaches applied on the ground and identify ways forward in the cases discussed. We investigated the dynamics of scaling and how scaling should take place. In addition, we explored scaling from different angles, from scaling-out, to scaling-up and look at what scaling means for space, money and people and policy.

Programme:

12.00 Network lunch

13.00 Welcome & Network news

13.15 Opening – by Cora van Oosten

Key note speeches

- Approaches to scaling up landscape restoration – by Seerp Wigboldus (WCDI)
- A view from landscape restoration on the ground – by Chris Reij (WRI)

14.00 Case pitches – by case owners

Group A

1. Dairy & biodiversity in the Netherlands (Jacomijn Plumers, WNF)
2. Biodigesters in Burkina Faso and beyond (Harrie Oppenoorth, Hivos)

Group B

3. Scalability of business cases (Willemijn de Iong, Commonland)
4. Scaling smaller-scale restoration (Wolfgang Duifhuizen, Urban Street Forest)

Group C

5. The PIP approach (Aad Kessler, WUR)

Group D

6. Landscape Neutrality Fund, Technical Assistance Facility (Dagmar Mooij, IDH)

14.45 Case discussions break-out groups

16.00 Harvest & synthesis

17.00 Network drinks

For more information, visit: <http://www.nlandscape.nl/>

PowerPoint presentations are available [here](#).

Network News

- **Linda Calciolari – Delphy**
Delphi is starting a project in Kenya on saline agriculture and water management. I am here to receive inspiration and input on how to scale up this project. I would like to know what works in your experience.
- **Christine Ornetsmüller – Commonland**
We developed an online course (MOOC) within a consortium of WUR, IDH and Commonland: Innovating Landscape Business Models. The registration is now open and starts in February.
- **Ellie Reinierse – Clingendael**
I am writing a policy brief on stakeholder engagement in landscape restoration when funds become available. I am here to pick up on ideas and advice.
- **Leo vd Vlist – Restoration of the Earth**
We are working with Masaai people in Kenya and also in India. If anyone is working in these areas as well, you are welcome to think along and discuss ideas.
- **Jurre Zwart & Kris Devéria – RENEW Restoration Network**
We have a student platform to engage students in restoration. We are looking at organisational models and business models around restoration. You are welcome to think along!

Opening & setting the scene

- by Cora van Oosten (WCDI/Global Landscapes Forum)

Cora van Oosten opened the programme and welcomed all participants to the – for now – last meeting of the NLandscape Platform. This session has been preceded by other knowledge sessions on Water, Finance, Business engagement, Governance, Gender and Food & Nutrition. All these topics converge into the topic of Landscape Restoration. It was the need for restoration that initially triggered the landscape debates in the Netherlands. In 2008, the Netherlands was cofounder of the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR). In 2011, the GPFLR launched the Bonn Challenge: a global commitment to restore 150 million hectares of land before 2020. The question is: is this a realistic goal? Are we going to make it? And how do we reach the scale which is aimed for?



There are currently quite a few research programmes on landscape restoration being implemented in Wageningen. They look at both the global commitments and the local action on the ground, and focus particularly on the relation between these two. Preliminary outcomes indicate that there rarely exists a causal relation between global commitments and local action. Global commitment does not necessarily trigger local action, while local action not necessarily lead to global commitment. On the other hand, global commitments may create an enabling environment at national levels, for local action to flourish. But in any case, research has revealed a number of persistent myths which are hard to debunk. These myths are:

Myth: landscape restoration is new.

Landscape restoration is in fact quite old. For example in the Netherlands, 99% of the forests are a result of landscape restoration programs. Moreover, after the Sahelian drought in the 80s, international cooperation invested heavily on landscape restoration to restore and revive the affected landscapes. What is new, however, is increasing business involvement in landscape restoration and climate change. These two factors made a major contribution in putting landscape restoration on today's agenda.

Myth: landscape restoration will only work when we have external finance and support

Yes, external funding and support may certainly help restoration programmes, but they are not always a requirement. There are plenty examples where restoration programmes were successfully implemented with solely internal funding and support. Chris Reij will elaborate more on this later in the session.

Myth: scale

Landscape restoration at scale, for scale, to scale. What do we actually mean here? People are using the word 'scale' all the time, but without specifying what they actually mean. This myth will be central in the key note of Seerp Wigboldus.

Key note speeches

Approaches to scaling up landscape restoration

– by *Seerp Wigboldus (WCDI)*

We have been talking about landscapes and landscape restoration, but it is important to realise that the word landscape has different meanings, and is being used in different ways. Some would focus on the “green” part of the landscape while others would emphasize a more integrated perspective which includes, amongst others, social dimensions such as how landscapes are a basis for identity and a community. Similarly, there can be different interpretations of what 'scaling' is about. If we want to be together in landscape restoration, we need to address and answer such questions.

First of all, there are different notions of what landscape restoration should entail. What are we restoring and to which state? To a particular point in time (when exactly?) or to a particular function or purpose? Similarly, there may be different ideas about what should take priority in the process of restoration. For example, economy or ecology? Or perhaps a compromise? There will also be different opinions around the use of technology and innovation to achieve restoration versus methods that use traditional approaches to achieve the same.

Then, what we do mean when we talk about 'scaling up'? The concept of scaling (up) is used differently across different scientific disciplines: geographers use it in different ways than ecologists or economists do. In the context of (international) development, the idea and practice of scaling innovations – often technologies – is currently high on agendas. It is important to be aware of common rhetoric around scaling innovations and consider the underlying paradigm of what makes for development and progress. We may need to be more careful about going along with this approach of scaling innovations and carefully consider potential negative implications, such as distortive effects, of the approach as such.



Ben Tiggelaar – behavioural scientist, writer and trainer – phrased it in his article in NRC¹: “If pilots are a successful method to realise change, then why not continue doing pilots? Stop rolling-out. Just do pilots” (translated from Dutch). Scaling a ‘good’ innovation does not automatically mean that getting more of it will lead to more of that good. Maybe it will only be good in some places, for some people, or up to a particular scale level. Scaling may lead to loss of diversity, or pull things out of proper proportion, or deplete resources when scaling is done excessively. In other words, we need to consider to what extent scaling rhetoric may even undermine agreed principles in landscape approaches.

A view from landscape restoration on the ground

– by *Chris Reij (WRI)*

Over the past few years, several targets and challenges have been formulated around landscapes and landscape restoration. Think of the Bonn Challenge (150 mln ha forest restored by 2020) or the AFR100 (100 mln ha in Africa by 2030). These are ambitious targets; How can these targets be

¹ Tiggelaar, B. 10 November 2012. Stop met 'uitrollen'. NRC. From <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/11/10/stop-met-uitrollen-12575945-a1218461> [accessed Dec. 20, 2018]

achieved? Apart from the fact that ambitious targets require considerable funding, they can only be achieved with a well-designed scaling strategy and with appropriate scaling techniques. In many countries, these are often lacking.

The World Resources Institute (WRI) has identified six steps to re-greening success 'at scale':

1. Identify and analyse existing re-greening successes

It is crucial to be able to identify successes and find examples on the ground. For example in Niger, an agro-forestry parkland of 5 million ha has been re-greened since the 1980s. The success lies in the fact that farmers in this area are replanting but not in an organised, structured way. Instead, they cultivate, protect and manage whatever grows on their land. A similar approach is being applied in Ethiopia in the Humbo Mountain landscape.

2. Build a grassroots movement for re-greening

Investing in local capacities is needed to let re-greening initiatives flourish on the ground. By encouraging farmers to learn from each other and let them train each other, a bottom-up movement can be initiated and strengthened.

3. Create enabling policies and legislations

This step is key for bottom-up initiatives to meet top-down processes. Examples can be legislation that enhances ownership to stimulate farmers to invest in trees. Similarly, mainstreaming re-greening such as agroforestry into existing and new agricultural development projects can be a method to promote landscape restoration. For such enabling policies to successfully connect with grassroots activities, it is important for farmers to organise themselves and strengthen existing institutions.

4. Develop and implement a communication strategy

Success need to be communicated with citizens. Mass media can be very effective in reaching the wider public, for example through radio programs, documentaries on (inter)national TV, but also workshops to share and discuss experiences. Communication should be done by farmers and beneficiaries themselves, as they are able to understandably communicate their successes and benefits from their own experience, thereby increasing the acceptability.

5. Develop or support value chains around agroforestry

When a larger focus is placed on the value chains, farmers can be able to profit from the role of the market in promoting re-greening initiatives and scaling them up.

6. Expand research activities

Although we have collected a considerable knowledge base on re-greening strategies, there are still knowledge gaps to be filled. Not only is it important to continue collecting success stories, other aspects of re-greening, such as the impacts (both positive and negative) of restoration, costs and benefits, and winners and losers need to be further explored.



However, these steps are no golden rule nor guarantee for success. Despite all efforts, many projects often fail when they tend to become too complex too fast. Keeping it simple and steadily building up complexity is essential to give an initiative the opportunity to grow into a success. In addition, we should always keep in mind what could motivate farmers to invest in trees/re-greening projects. Motivational factors can be a serious crisis that requires immediate change of practice, but also knowledge, ownership, empowerment and low costs with multiple benefits.

Discussion

First, Chris and Seerp reflected on each other's key notes. Seerp explained that in his view, the re-greening examples are not necessarily about rolling out innovations and technologies but rather focus on creating a wider vision around re-greening. As Chris explained, in these examples the population is expected to grow rapidly while crop yields are not increasing in the same speed. This applies to numerous African countries and means that – unless we seriously scale solutions to food security problems – we are in deep trouble. We need to balance what we lose in terms of land with what we can win through restoration, but preferably win more than we lose. The real bottleneck here is that people need to be triggered to invest in solutions. Not just rolling out solutions that work in one place to another, but rather motivate more people to restore their landscape in the best way possible. It should be noted that farmers are often well-aware of success stories in their own environment. When a certain method works to make their lands more resilient to drought for example, they will copy and be intrinsically motivated to maintain this practice.

As the discussion moved to the audience, topics such as the role of NGOs and the enabling policy environment were discussed. For NGOs, it is essential not to swoop in and tell communities what to do. Instead, bring stakeholders together to create a vision and facilitate a dialogue. In doing so, a common ground and common goals can be identified that can be achieved collectively. This can also help to facilitate a connection between bottom-up approaches and top-down policies and legislations. Moreover, networks of regenerative agricultural practices can be found around the globe, which can form a good starting point for local initiatives to become better organised, scale up and actively create a pipeline in which bottom-up can meet top-down.

The question was raised what language or which words can be used to avoid the term 'scale'. It is important to tell a story without using this term by unpacking what you mean exactly when you want to talk about scaling: what goes to scale and on which scale? In addition, also think of the implications. If one thing goes to scale, then probably something else will scale down because of it. What is this and what will be the impact? Always try to think of the consequences for water, cultures, people and environment when scaling your project.

Case pitches

1. Dairy and biodiversity in the Netherlands (WNF - Jacomijn Pluimers)



WNF is working with FrieslandCampina and the Rabo Bank, and together we want to change the system for dairy farmers: enhance biodiversity, restore degraded soil. But how do we rework this new model? We want to reward farmers on their performances, so we look at indicators (KPIs). These KPIs that should be applied through the market chain, including rewarding models, form the basis for the new revenue model. The question is: how can we engage stakeholders in this biodiversity model and attract farmers to this new model?

2. Biodigesters in Burkina Faso and Beyond (Hivos – Harrie Oppenoorth)

Hivos is working on a technology that is being rolled out to scale: a biodigester for small-scale farmers. This technology digests manure and other organic material to make gas and compost. These products can be used for fertilizers (leading to higher crop yields), cooking, and extra income. We have implemented this technology in Burkina Faso with a market based approach: we teach how to build digesters, how to sell them, and how farmers can spread the word and promote the technology. Now we see that a market starts to emerge and the system starts to propel itself. Governments of other countries have committed themselves to bring this technology to their countries as well. But

do they understand the steps, the time and the funding needed to slowly bring this technology onto a market?

3. Scalability of business cases (Willemijn de Iong – Commonland)

In the Altiplano region in Spain, Commonland collaborates with Farmer's associations. They are looking for business cases that promote land restoration and how these can be used elsewhere in the landscape. They have started to collaborate closely with Almendrehesa, a large regenerative almond company. In terms of scaling, Commonland is searching for opportunities for partnerships with the aim to promote the '4 returns approach', get more people involved and become part of a movement to restore the land, and unlock investment capital through businesses and investors. However, short-term and silo thinking and fragmented activities are among several reasons hampering scaling of successful business cases.

4. Scaling smaller-scale restoration (Wolfgang Duifhuizen – Urban Street Forest)

The main goals of Urban Street Forest (USF) Foundation is to plant as many trees around the globe as possible. In this particular project, USF started to work with Aloe Vera farmers in Aloe de Sorbas (Spain) to turn slopes into terraced slopes, followed by planting of trees. In this area, there are also several intensive olive plantations which use a lot of scarce water. A change in attitude is needed, especially among those olive farmers. USF is now successfully collaborating with the Aloe Vera farmers, but there is a need to scale these practices also among other farmers. The question is: how can these practices be made attractive to farmers financially, and how can local people be involved to make these projects part of the local economy?

5. The PIP Approach (Aad Kessler – WUR)

This project takes place in Burundi and aims to scale-up resilience-based stewardship by motivating people to invest in their land and develop resilience (healthy land). PIP stands for an integrated farm planning approach. With this method, farmer families draw two pictures: their current situation and the desired situation of their household and their land. By developing this vision, farmers become intrinsically motivated to realise this vision. When you develop this foundation, all other activities around land restoration will fall into fertile ground and therefore have a more positive and sustainable impact. Core principles in this approach are: empowerment (believe that you can do it), integration (seek diversity) and collaboration (learn from others), which together lead to proud stewards.

6. Landscape Neutrality Fund, Technical Assistance Facility (Dagmar Mooij – IDH)

This case is more of a scaling mechanism than a case. IDH works for the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) for the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Fund. This Fund emerged from the realisation that private funds are needed to achieve SDG 15.3 on Land Degradation Neutrality. IDH works with several partners to achieve this, but the mechanisms is not operationalised yet.

The LDN Fund aims to combine public and private funds to finance any project that contributes to any form of land restoration. IDH can assist in the pre-investment phase in making a project investable, to increase opportunities for funding, but also in how to increase your impact once you have received funds (post-investment phase). IDH also provides support in monitoring and increasing adaptive management.



Harvest & Synthesis

During the break-out session, the audience divided itself over four groups. Afterwards, the audience returned for a plenary discussion.



What is being scaled up?

For WNF, scaling means getting more farmers on board to change their practice and increase biodiversity on their lands, but also enhancing the incentives the farmers to come on board. Similarly, Commonland seeks to scale regenerative practices by inspiring other farmers to replicate successful business models. For Hivos, scaling means aiming for biodigesters to cover 15-20% of the market, as this is the percentage needed to be able to pull-out and leave the technology to the market itself. For the PIP approach, scaling means 'building a movement' in which farmers increase a sense of stewardship and intrinsic motivation and build a network to learn from each other.

What are the barriers for scaling up?

Adopting or scaling certain practices means changing behaviour. How to ensure that farmers change their practices not solely because of financial incentives, but because of their intrinsic motivation? Scaling therefore also requires facilitation of social processes. Farmers need an enabling environment and a sense of security to adopt new practices and at the same time a sense of urgency and a vision behind the new practice. Together these elements can slowly transform their thinking from traditional approaches to a new norm for approaches that restore the land. However, when new practices reach a certain scale, you may lose control over the process and the direction. The more you scale up, the more you lose control. Although this may seem like a barrier, it could also be considered something positive: when you lose control, you know something is changing.

Do these interventions address the original problem?

A key question is whether or not you should invest in the current economic system to enhance restoration practices, or should you invest in a fundamental systemic shift? WNF, for example, is working together with the largest dairy company in the Netherlands, which actually forms part of the problem itself. An alternative could be to develop restoration initiatives with front runners. WNF chose to focus in this project on the middle section of the industry, as this is the largest section that eventually needs to adapt their practices. However, working with both front runners and the main players in the field would be ideal.

New insights and key take-aways

- Whenever we are talking about 'scaling something up', consider what exactly is meant to go to scale and on what scale (social, technical, physical? Up- or down-scaling?). The scaling rhetoric tends to conceal such complexity.
- Learn from success stories and try to grasp the principles from it that can be adopted in other contexts as well. Don't simply replicate successes, they are no blueprints.
- Access to finance is key to scaling! We need to learn to speak the language of finance and learn how financial instruments work. Involvement of investors in an early stage is crucial.
- For every innovations, we should think of how to show impact, but also how to facilitate the right infrastructure (including social processes) for the innovation to become successful
- Farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange is very valuable for scaling good practices, but this should be integrated with policy change and finance reform to achieve sustainable impact.
- Communicate successful restoration practices and their impact
- Involvement of the private sector should play a larger role. Intrinsically driven change is very important, but can take a long time. When collaborating with the private sector, techniques applied on a small scale can be propelled to rapidly reach a massive scale. This combination

of social processes and technology is needed to eventually make impact on large geographic scale.

Closure

As Chris reflected, there is a lot of knowledge present in this session, including experiences from Europe. He suggested to keep organising such sessions on a regular basis and keep Nlandscape alive. It is encouraging to focus on the success stories, but we should also learn to get rid of our 'project thinking': we should always aim to work towards a phase in which a project is sufficiently scaled/strengthened which allows you to pull out. Key to strengthening is then that evidence is collected to show that a certain practice is viable and able to reach scale, and that farmers are empowered to adopt the practice themselves. Then policy can follow and the private sector can follow with more confidence. However, we should not forget that small-holder farmers themselves are the largest private sector here.



Seerp closed the session with some final reflections on the principles of scaling. We should be careful not to approach scaling as a blue-print approach, which would be merely generalising solutions as generic models to be applied similarly in different contexts. We can surely learn from "successes", and from what was a "solution", somewhere, for some people, in view of some particular purpose. However, rather than scaling up fixed models for landscape restoration, we need to work with agreed and evidenced good principles and purposes and creatively apply those at scale in diverse ways which are fit-for-purpose and fit-for-context in the specific realities of different landscapes.