

Interlaken Group Special Session: Strategy Review and Program Update

Co-Chaired by Andy White and Mark Constantine

Meeting Summary

RRI Offices | Washington, DC

27 March 2019

Participants

- Andy White (Co-Chair)
- Mark Constantine (Co-Chair)
- Kate Mathias – twentyfifty
- David Bledsoe – Resource Equity
- Ben Bowie – TMP Public
- Chris Penrose-Buckley DFID
- Chloe Christman – Oxfam
- Matt Hamilton – Oxfam
- Alec Martin – AgDevCo
- Robin Barr – Earthworm Foundation
- John Nelson – Earthworm Foundation
- Dan Mullins – Terra Firma
- Kaitlyn Cordes – CCSI
- Bryson Ogden – RRI
- Shaza Zeinelabdin – IFC
- Dieter Fischer – IFC
- Natasha Schwarzbach – PepsiCo
- Genevieve Taft-Vasquez – Coca-Cola
- Charlotte van Anandel – FMO
- Ali Hines – Global Witness
- Karol Boudreaux – Landesa
- Scott Schang – Landesa
- Roger Steinhardt - IKEA
- Danielle Granatt – Landesa
- Mikael Bjornsen – PIDG
- Sarah Lowery – USAID
- MaryKate Bullen – New Forests
- Christina Healy – RRI

Background

A special session of the Interlaken Group (IG) was hosted at the offices of the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) on March 27, 2019 in Washington, DC. It was held alongside the annual World Bank Land and Poverty Conference. This event represented the first of a series of virtual opportunities for participants to join via video conferencing in an effort to make participation more accessible.

The purpose of this special session was to: refine the Interlaken Group strategy and workplan for 2019-2021 and agree on strategic priorities; to advise on development of an impact monitoring framework; and to steer proposed activities for the remainder of the year. The Group agreed on lessons for future country initiatives based on recent progress in Malawi, and on the process to scope and design engagements in Singapore, Laos, and Colombia.

Overview

The Co-Chairs welcomed the group.

An abbreviated **tour de table** then followed in which a subset of participants updated one another on recent experiences including:

- The release of Oxfam’s new company and scorecard report ““[Companies Spoke. Did their Suppliers Listen? Tracking Behind the Brands sustainability commitments through the supply chain with the ‘agribusiness scorecard’](#)”, which measures the strength of seven agribusiness companies’ policies on land and four other themes. The report follows on the previously released Oxfam report: Behind the Brands companies’ policies and standards for best practice;
- The launch of TMP Public’s Landscape (<http://landscape.info/>), a platform for assessing tenure-related business risks developed with the support of the Interlaken Group;
- The TMP-ODI developed Tenure Risk Tool (TRT): A new tool that helps investors meet environmental, social, and governance criteria through a discounted cashflow model;
- [The Social License Platform](#): A new platform developed by Landesa and TMP that will help companies find service providers;
- Case studies describing emerging practice of companies and investors in implementing land rights commitments;
- Earthworm Foundation’s new good practice guide to land acquisition and involuntary resettlement; upcoming trainings on FPIC, conflict resolution, and land tenure approaches in Latin America and Africa; and
- A gender update to the Interlaken Group’s VGGT Guide.

Malawi Initiative: Impact to date and lessons for future engagements

The Group received a progress update on its 2018 engagement in Malawi, which has resulted in the formation of a local platform focused on promoting responsible large-scale land-based investments. Over the past few months this platform has developed a multi-stakeholder leadership structure and agreed on a two-year workplan. The first activity the platform has agreed to complete is to host a public event in May or June 2019 to disseminate the findings from a case study on a sugarcane outgrower model in Malawi. The second activity the platform plans to complete in 2019 is a convening around the results of a mapping of large-scale land-based investments in selected districts in Malawi. The platform is assessing the demand for safe space dialogues between the private sector and civil society organizations.

Participants in the Interlaken Group who have been closely involved in this initiative shared their perspectives on the progress and potential of this local platform. They agreed that creating a space for these different groups to come together was a major achievement and are eager to learn more as the platform begins to implement its workplan.

The Group also considered how the lessons learned in Malawi could influence engagements in other countries. It was agreed that as new engagements progress, identifying a local facilitator is critical, and that the meeting design process used in Malawi should be adapted to new contexts.

Presentation of Interlaken Group Strategy and Impact Monitoring Framework

The Group considered how its strategy and workplan have evolved since participants met for the first time in 2013. In addition to global convenings, the Group is now increasingly engaging in countries to influence upstream supply chain actors—including host country governments—and documenting and sharing examples of emerging practice. A key focus of these in-country engagements has been to generate consensus on how to apply and implement domestic law which recognizes tenure rights. The Group discussed achievements to date, including the expanding number of organizations and sectors that have participated, the use of Interlaken Group developed tools to influence field level operations, the influence the Group has exercised to inform related tools, and the potential to further influence positive change in supply chains. It was clear that the Group has helped to advance private sector support for secure community land rights, but that a slightly revised strategy as well as an impact monitoring framework were required to continue delivering, more precisely measuring, and communicating results.

In terms of strategy, the Group agreed on three priority areas moving forward: to convene and support implementation at the global level; to convene and encourage implementation within countries; and to catalyze and disseminate new solutions such as arguments, tools, and examples of good practice in addressing land rights. The Group also discussed a revised governance structure that would allow for increased engagement and steering by participants.

The Group discussed the importance of monitoring the effectiveness of its actions. Participants emphasized the need for a framework that was simple and easy to implement. Participants recognized that most actions taken on the part of companies would not be solely attributable to the Group but agreed that it was still important to capture these changes as a result of engagement with the Interlaken Group. Finally, the Group agreed to establish a baseline and use a maturity model framework to systematically measure impact.

Some challenges to monitoring impact were raised including the variety of contexts the Group works in, creating a replicable methodology for different sectors and organizations, and the reticence of some companies to share their practices and progress. It was acknowledged that it is rare when everything related to an investment or operation goes perfectly. The Group also emphasized the importance of not only demonstrating the business case in terms of downside risks and losses but also quantifying the upside benefits of receiving a social license to operate.

Next Steps

The Group agreed to:

- Contribute to the review of the following upcoming products: Gender Update to the VGGT Guidance, Interlaken Group Strategy, and Impact Monitoring Framework; and
- Provide guidance on the design of the meetings in the following countries: Laos, Singapore, and Colombia.

The Secretariat agreed to:

- Organize and convene working groups to gather guidance and feedback from the Group on the upcoming products: Gender Update to the VGGT Guidance, Interlaken Group Strategy, and Impact Monitoring Framework; and the following upcoming events: Laos, Singapore, and Colombia; and
- Reengage the steering group and expand the number of seats to accommodate two companies, two civil society organizations (with at least one representing an Indigenous People's organization), and two investors (at least one development finance institution).