Many companies in agricultural commodity supply chains have made commitments to responsible sourcing of commodities. This includes, for example, taking action to reduce deforestation, improve labour conditions, support smallholder producers and respect human rights. There are many ways in which companies can do this and it is clear that, in many cases, they need to collaborate with other companies, government agencies and civil society organisations to deliver their commitments and have large-scale impact.

Companies can implement actions both within and beyond their own supply chains, in order to achieve their commitments and contribute effectively to sustainable development.

**Within supply chains**, companies can require assurances from their suppliers that the volumes they purchase were produced responsibly, through certification or legal assurance.

Companies can also engage with their suppliers to cascade commitments up the supply chain, driving changes in production practices.

**Beyond a company’s own supply chain**, collaboration and alignment at landscape, jurisdictional or sectoral scale can address issues that require collective action and deliver wider impact (see Proforest Briefing Note 13: Agricultural Commodity Responsible Sourcing).

Our experience has shown that actions are needed both within and beyond individual supply chains to effectively implement responsible sourcing commitments and achieve positive, long-term impacts. Many companies are therefore seeking to work directly with initiatives to improve environmental and social outcomes. Landscape or jurisdictional initiatives are being developed in many different places with different structures and aims. This InfoNote Highlights introduces Proforest InfoNote 3*, which collates initial learning on where and how companies can engage with these initiatives.

*see Proforest InfoNote 3: Engaging with landscape initiatives: a practical guide for supply chain companies. Available at www.proforest.net
Why work at landscape scale?

Working at a landscape scale can be a way of scaling up impact. Perhaps more importantly, many issues central to responsible sourcing commitments are not under the control of a single producer, mill, aggregator or actor in the supply chain. Addressing these issues requires action from multiple actors in the landscape including government, local communities, producers, civil society organisations and other companies. Therefore, delivering responsible sourcing commitments can only be achieved through some sort of collaborative initiative within the production landscape.

Figure 1 highlights some issues that may be best addressed at a landscape level. For example, working at landscape level may be necessary to:

- **Maintain forests and natural ecosystems:** Considerable progress has been made in delivering zero deforestation commitments by working with existing producers, for example, by excluding existing producers who are still clearing forests or other natural ecosystems. However, many of those involved in deforestation are smallholders or small-scale speculators who are not yet part of any supply chain, and so cannot be engaged through traditional supply chain approaches. Addressing these drivers of deforestation requires engagement and collaboration in the landscape before the forest is cleared (see Proforest Responsible Sourcing and Production Briefing Note 10).

- **Resolve or avoid land conflict:** Land-use planning at a landscape scale must involve multiple stakeholders to ensure effective and equitable land allocation and conservation.

- **Water catchment management:** Coherent action to protect and conserve water resources requires engagement with all water users, many of whom will be outside any specific supply chain.

- **Support smallholder production:** Mills and other production sites may share a common smallholder supply base. Companies buying from smallholders through intermediaries may be unaware of the location, production standards and legal status of the smallholders that supply them. Smallholders can be more efficiently supported through collaborative action to raise awareness, build capacity and introduce more sustainable management practices. This may be more effective than trying to trace the supply chain to individual farmers, and more equitable than excluding smallholders from supply chains.
• **Improve labour conditions:** Many issues in labour markets have complex root causes that need to be addressed across a sector or jurisdiction through policy, legislation, enforcement and education. Migrant labourers, for example, can be particularly vulnerable to exploitation, and landscape-scale systems can help ensure rights are protected across a sector or jurisdiction.

**What do we mean by a production landscape initiative?**

We recognise a range of different types of landscape or jurisdictional initiatives that supply chain companies may want to engage with (see Figure 2). Landscape or jurisdictional initiatives generally bring together elements of working at scale, participation of government and other stakeholders, agreement on shared goals, mechanisms to ensure accountability and credibility, and alignment of activities among stakeholders.

In addition, we also see supply shed projects and initiatives that are working ‘at scale’ and that are effective pathways for supply chain companies to implement their commitments to responsible sourcing. These supply shed projects work at a landscape scale but may lack the overall coordination or government and stakeholder participation of a landscape or jurisdictional approach. Sectoral approaches, which work across a range of locations within a single sector or commodity, can also provide a mechanism for achieving impact at scale on issues that are specific to, or best addressed through, the institutions of a sector.

In this document, we include all these types of ‘at scale’ initiatives under the term production landscape initiative.

**Find out more**

Proforest InfoNote 3 provides guidance for supply chain companies on how to engage with landscape scale initiatives. It describes 10 steps to help companies decide where they should engage, what kind of initiatives they might support, and how they can start to work with existing landscape scale initiatives.

InfoNote 3 is divided into two parts: **Part 1** is aimed at helping downstream companies to identify **where** to start engaging with landscape initiatives. **Part 2** is guidance on how to engage with a landscape initiative and will be useful for all companies that already know where they will work.

The 10 steps are outlined on the next page. Although the steps are presented as a sequence for simplicity, most steps are likely to be iterative, undertaken in parallel, or revisited as users gain a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges.
The 10 steps to engaging with landscapes initiatives

**Part 1 Preparing to engage in a production landscape**

1. **Understand the supply base**
   - Through supply chain mapping, understand the places where the commodities are produced
   - Understand the risks that production doesn’t meet responsible sourcing commitments

2. **Identify priority landscapes**
   - Identify priority landscapes for engagement, considering importance for procurement, level and materiality of risk, existing leverage and success factors

3. **Decide what kind of approach is appropriate**
   - For each key issue decide the best approach, which may be a supply chain initiative; collaboration within a landscape, jurisdiction or sector; or a combination.

4. **Identify and assess initiatives in the selected landscape**
   - Identify existing initiatives in the selected landscape
   - Explore selected initiatives’ goals, governance, mandate and inclusiveness

**Part 2 Practical engagement in a landscape**

5. **Understand local motivation, expectations and decision-making**
   - Understand local motivations and expectations to help align company objectives with local priorities
   - Identify who has authority and mandate for decision-making

6. **Clarify resources available and scope of engagement**
   - Identify level of funds or in-kind support that can be committed over what timescale
   - Decide scope of engagement, such as direct funding, expertise, preferential sourcing
   - Consider level of engagement from limited participation to leadership role
   - Clarify expected timeframe for engagement and delivery of results

7. **Understand governance and build trust**
   - Understand governance structures and mechanisms for private sector involvement
   - Build trust by supporting existing and developing governance structures
   - Consider pre-competitive collaboration with other companies

8. **Plan and implement interventions**
   - Interventions may be at a variety of scales, within a landscape or at wider policy level
   - Clarify expectations for company support
   - Align timelines for implementation with other stakeholders

9. **Coordinate communication**
   - Seek to align partners’ communications and plan communications in advance
   - Allocate a communications lead in the company; consider shared support for communications
   - Develop a contingency plan to deal with miscommunication and adverse publicity

10. **Monitor and evaluate**
    - Align with existing landscape monitoring frameworks where possible
    - Seek to share common indicators and monitoring processes with other partners
    - Set clear rules for action if the initiative is failing to deliver expected results