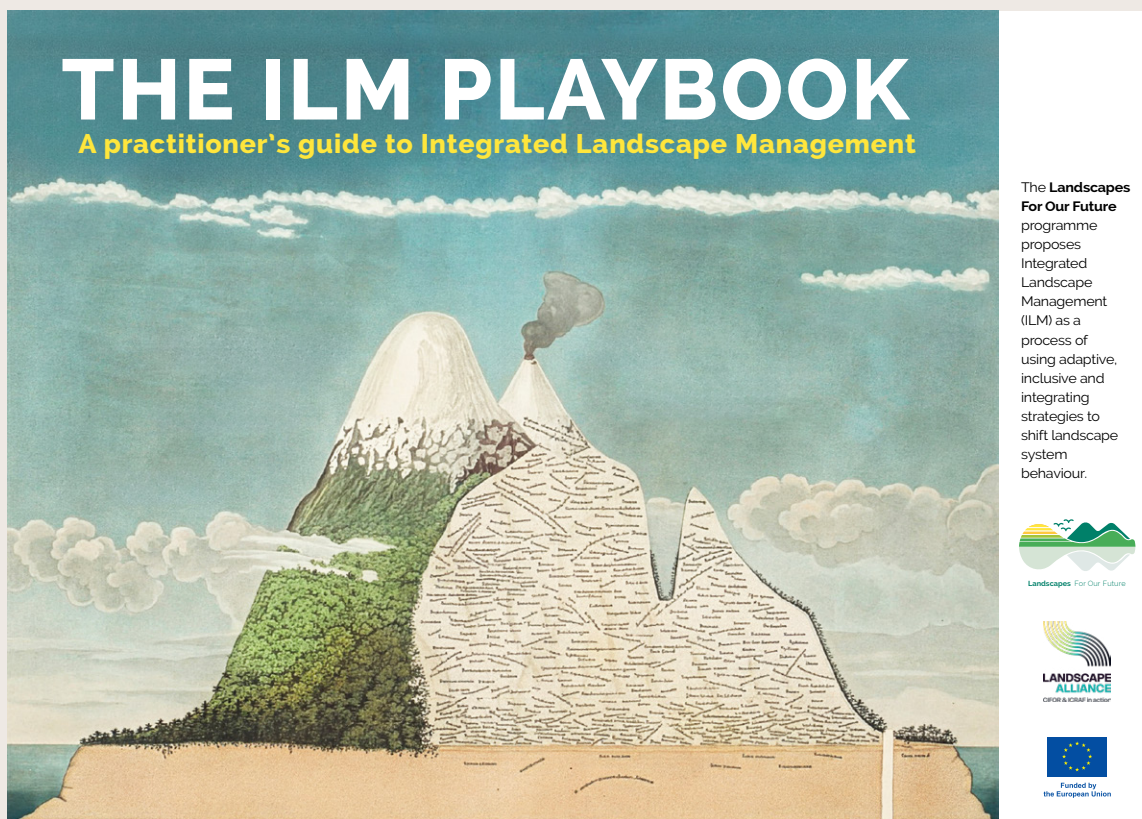


Extract from The ILM Playbook

The ILM Playbook is a practitioner curriculum developed through the EU-funded Landscapes For Our Future programme. Its **interactive web edition** provides a quick, non-linear route through the concepts and tools, while the **full-length PDF** provides the conceptual foundations, evidence and methodological depth behind them.

The concepts, methods and practical guidance were developed through the Central Component's work with project teams, partners and practitioners across the programme, and through the experience and learning generated in participating landscapes.



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Explore the full interactive ILM Playbook or access the complete reading edition at:
landscapesfuture.org/ilm-playbook

Stakeholders

Key take-aways

- The Playbook treats stakeholders as actors whose practices constitute strands – moving from “who has an interest?” (a list) to “who is doing what, to whom, with what regulatory effect?” (a strand map).
- Reading what is at stake requires the MMC lens: meanings as stakes (homeland, identity), materials as stakes (the whole material scaffolding of a way of life), competencies as stakes (place-specific knowledge that cannot be relocated).
- The asymmetry between place-specific stakes (existential, light strand) and portable stakes (instrumental, heavy strand) is itself a power analysis – and lies at the heart of what ILM has to address.
- Conflict is to be assumed in any landscape, and trust is the precondition for collaboration – fostered through consistency of conduct and an honest-broker reputation that treats actors with neither fear nor favour.
- *Target groups* are the strategic subset of stakeholders most likely to shift system heading – and must include both those expected to support the intervention and those expected to resist it.

What are stakeholders?

‘**Stakeholders**’ are people who have an interest in a system, and who may be affected (positively or negatively) if system patterns change. Typically, this is not a passing interest, but a vested one. Stakeholders drive change in landscapes through their practices – which drive the problems that affect it or the solutions that can sustain it.

In the Playbook’s vocabulary, stakeholders are actors – people and groups whose practices constitute the strands that produce system heading. What conventional practice calls ‘stakeholder analysis’ we call reading the system’s actors. The difference is not semantic. A stakeholder analysis asks who has an interest; an actor analysis asks who is doing what, to whom, and with what regulatory effect. The first produces a list; the second produces a strand map.

All stakeholders in a system influence its patterns – but in different ways, depending on their practices, and the regulation they are able to bring to bear. This is an inherent power in all stakeholders. Associated with this is another inherent power: stakeholder **agency** – i.e., the power to act. As we have repeatedly emphasized, stakeholders are not necessarily located in a landscape but can nevertheless influence landscape system dynamics from beyond it.

Reading what is at stake for each actor requires an expansive mind. Conventional analysis tends to identify financial or political interests – the obvious ones. But the MMC framework (see the Practices section) reveals deeper and more diverse attachments:

Meanings as stakes: the landscape as homeland, as the place where ancestors are buried, as the territory that defines identity. A pastoralist's stake in rangelands may not be economic alone. It could be existential. A politician's stake may be symbolic: this landscape demonstrates national progress, or it is where his voter base live.

Materials as stakes: not just financial investments but the entire material configuration of a way of life – paths, markets, water points, infrastructure. When a dam submerges a valley, the material stake is not 'land' but the physical scaffolding of daily practice.

Competencies as stakes: the landscape where a practice has been learned, failed, and adapted over generations. A fisher's knowledge of a lake's seasonal patterns, a farmer's understanding of their particular soil – these are place-specific competencies that cannot be relocated. A mining company also has a competency stake, but its competencies are portable and transferable in ways that indigenous knowledge is not. This asymmetry in competency-stakes is itself a power analysis.

ILM interventions inevitably create shifts in which stakeholders benefit, or bear the costs – these are trade-offs which require careful attention in intervention design and implementation.

It is important to remember – persistently – that **when an intervention commences, it also becomes a stakeholder**. Intervention teams are neither neutral nor disembodied from the system they enter to change.

Stakeholders are nearly always part of a **community**, which is a unit of social organization in which individuals are connected via shared interests and/or identity. Foremost in our minds is that community may form around a practice – hence, those who farm see themselves as farmers. But community can also form around ethnicity, religion, occupation, politics, culture, values, customs, norms, and/or institutions. A community, we emphasize, is not only a village in a landscape – it could be a community of politicians, a community of mining engineers. Note also that a member of one community may be a member of several others at the same time.

Whatever the case, the trick is to identify which communities stakeholders themselves identify with – it is these groups who we will be targeting.

In a landscape, the stakes are **heterogenous** – a quality that reflects its diversity. Of necessity, therefore, many of these stakes will contrast or even conflict. Heterogeneity can introduce instability into a system – especially if these different stakes are competing against each other. The challenge then becomes one of introducing homogeneity and stability. Community implies a certain degree of homogeneity, even if this is only around a particular theme or issue. Therefore, how do we create community where it did not exist previously?

“[A] central problem of environmental management is to establish systems of regulation and compensation that bring about a convergence of narrow self-interest and the common good.”
– Kenneth Oye and James Maxwell

It is important to dwell for a moment on conflict. The latter is disagreement or disharmony between people or ideas. Most conflict is low grade – i.e., it is not open and/or violent. Conflict-avoidance is a significant reason for why institutions form in societies. All societies contain conflict, and where such societies are stressed (e.g., by insufficient access to natural resources), these can shift to dominate social interactions and may even get violent. **When designing an intervention, it is important that conflict is assumed.**

Trust is an essential tenet of human organization. An intervention will want to foster trust (a) between itself and stakeholder groups; and (b) between stakeholder groups. For collaboration to occur, levels of trust between actors must be very high. Trust can be understood as a measure of belief in the honesty, fairness, or benevolence of another person or group. Trust is sometimes defined as the belief that another person will behave as expected.¹ It is important here to emphasize that this implies expected behaviour within a certain bandwidth. Imagine a person known for their serenity who suddenly freaks out. That moment will be judged decidedly out of character – beyond the normal bandwidth – and invite questions about that person’s reliability and trustworthiness. For you intervention, trust can – among many other strategies – be fostered through consistency of conduct. If your intent is to engage in the interaction space among several actors, it makes sense to develop an honest broker reputation – of treating all groups more or less the same, providing neither fear nor favour to any group.

“Trust is a confident relationship with the unknown.” – Rachel Botsman

Close attention needs to be paid to the stakeholders in a landscape, and we include this analysis in our suggested approach to developing an ILM intervention. Through this process, a very large number of stakeholders will potentially be identified. Due to your own resource limitations, however, you will not be able to address them all. Therefore, a subset of stakeholder groups must be selected. This will be a strategic choice – the groups selected are the groups in landscape system who you think, if your strategies are successful, are most likely to generate a change in system heading and achieve your alt-heading. We call these people **target groups** and, of necessity, should comprise both those who you think will be supportive of your intervention, as well as those who you think might resist it.

1 Schilke et al, 2021.

References and further reading

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