FTA ISC special workshop

on Sentinel Landscapes

19 June 2018, Bioversity Intl. (Maccarese)

Minutes

Participants

ISC members: Anne-Marie Izac (ISC Chair), Florencia Montagnini, Susan Braatz, Linda Collette, Rene Boot, Vincent Gitz.

Sentinel Landscapes' presenters: Yves Laumonnier (CIFOR), Denis J Sonwa (CIFOR), Eduardo Sommarriba (CATIE)

FTA Management Team (MT) members: Ramni Jamnadass, Fergus Sinclair, Pablo Pacheco, Peter Minang, Christopher Martius, Christopher Kettle

Alexandre Meybeck, Monika Kiczkajlo (MSU)

Observers: Marlene Elias, Andrew Wardell, Louis Verchot

Apologies

Yemi Katerere, Robert Nasi, Stephan Weise (ISC) Plinio Sist (MT)

Executive Summary

This workshop was organized at the request of the ISC, to assess the current status of FTA's work on Sentinel Landscapes (SL) and associated results. The workshop was also intended to provide a proper follow-up to the external evaluation of FTA by the CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA). Indeed, the external reviewers made a series of recommendations regarding FTA's work on SL (see background document). The workshop took stock of the phase 1 work and results, and participants discussed options for the future, based upon this stock taking and given the current CGIAR funding context and reduced donor's appetite for data-driven research.

Outcomes of the workshop: ISC requested all available data and papers regarding SL to be put in an organized and user-friendly way into the public domain, available to all stakeholders. It also made a series of recommendations on options for the way forward, that will need a careful study in terms of concrete implementation, given known funding constraints, and diverse local contexts in the different SLs. The FTA management team will look at the recommendations as part of the preparation of the 2019-2021 FTA workplan.

Detailed Summary

1) Introduction by the ISC Chair.

The Chair reminded participants that the workshop had been requested by the ISC. There were high expectations for FTA's Sentinel Landscapes (SL) work during phase 1, but it is difficult for ISC to see what specific results were produced that contributed to IDos or the SLOs. The external evaluation of FTA made various recommendations (see background documentation).

One of them was that once the Independent Steering Committee of FTA was created, it should look carefully at SL work, as part of its programmatic oversight of FTA.

The purpose of the workshop was to look at where SL work stands now and discuss what are possible futures and the best way forward for the work. The original setting was very financially demanding. The funding situation for FTA is very different now, with 3 times fewer W1+2 resources than when FTA started (around 10m instead of 30m).

2) What has been done in phase 1 and what are the results

Peter Minang, speaking for the whole group involved in SL reminded participants that the SL research design was based upon the forest transition curve. Each SL was chosen to be as different as possible from the others. It is noteworthy that data collection was not driven by a set of questions and hypotheses to be tested. In other words, it was a 'data driven' process. Representativeness of the set of SLs with respect to "forest transition curves" in the tropics was tested ex-post, in 2017[1]. In dataverse, there are huge datasets now available and nearly all data collected is now online. Some FTA publications did use SLs data, for instance on certification[2], with numerous partners involved.

Peter recalled that the proposal for phase 2 projected to look at characteristics of SLs, to review periodically the SL portfolio, to reconstitute the SL teams and create a data sharing platform. The objective would be to aim more at a "portfolio" approach, consisting in identifying issues for which convergent research and/or comparative analysis could be done using the sites, with better integration with the FPs, and with a focus on SDG related questions.

Then there are unresolved questions: can we do a 2nd round of data collection (not foreseen in the budget) and if yes on a reduced number of sites; what ambition for the data sharing platform. In Bonn, at the science workshop in December 2017, we decided to undertake a stock taking in 3 SLs. Could the stock taking be expanded to some other sites?

Yves Laumonnier, described the Borneo SL sites and presented an interim picture of the ongoing stock take study on Borneo (see background document for the terms of reference of the three stock take studies). He made the following salient points:

- There were difficulties over the **selection of sites** back in 2012: Borneo was advocated by CIFOR, Sumatra by ICRAF. The decision to have two separate sites in Indonesia was not strategic from a scientific perspective.
- **Research questions** were adapted during the life of SLs, and several remain unanswered: we need to figure out why. Is it that data collected does not enable to answer these? We cannot do much with the SL data only, but there is a potential to tap into other projects which have data collected in areas close to the SL.
- No project was specifically linked to sentinel landscapes in this site – there are only projects that have taken place irrespective of the SL set up.

[1] Dewi et al, 2017 looked at the global representativeness of SLs, that cover 5% of the tropical area, 8% of people, 9 % of tree cover, 12% of potential tree crops.

[2] A special issue of the International Journal of Biodiversity Science (2017), Ecosystem Services & Management, on "Certifying Environmental Social Responsibility" includes a comparative analysis of coffee, cacao, rubber, oil palm and tropical timber certification systems and experience in different contexts.

- There was no real involvement of partners: no budget for them, so they were not interested in working with SL. Participation was limited to students from local universities to collect the data, this despite other partners working in the area.
- There is to date no real analysis of data nor publications. The team is now preparing a monograph of the site using also co-located research, following the request of the FTA Director. This analysis will be using all the datasets (SL and co-located work).

Denis J. Sonwa summarised what was done in Cameron during the first phase, with three main points:

- The location of sites was the result of an institutional compromise reached among the organizations working in the country (CIFOR, ICRAF, Bioversity, CIRAD, IRD) and followed a gradient from conservation to highly degraded forests
- The institutional governance was complex, with very difficult interactions among centers. Consequently, there was little partnering and not much integration of the work of the different partners. It was more like a single partner approach.
- There were difficulties in working with the global coordination unit of SL.

Eduardo Sommariba presented the Nicaragua-Honduras Stock take. The SL started in 2010.

- CATIE leveraged its partnerships in the region and the various actors were happy with the selection of the sites along the forest transition curve. This was presented to national authorities from which it attracted a lot of attention. These stakeholders were happy with the framing questions.
- Eduardo mentioned **three phases in this SL**.
    - 2011-2013 were the "golden years", with the start of data collection, see the website www. paisajecentinella.org. However, analysis was often done in a centralized way in Nairobi with little cooperation with and feedback to local research teams. Two platforms were established, one at national level the other at local level.
    - In 2014-2016, things slowed down, funding disappeared, coordination was difficult. CATIE decided to carry on with the SL work regardless. They used other financial resources and also some unrestricted FTA money to support the work. They produced a database for baseline studies and disseminated results to local stakeholders.
    - 2017 – empty pocket phase. FTA unrestricted funds to partners went down to zero across the program. Funding is linked to FP outputs, and no FP built in SL work in their workplan. CATIE abandoned the communication part (workshops, symposia) which was important. There is still no colocation from within FTA. CATIE is still working in the area, with others and third-party funding, not linked to SL.
- **Co-location of FTA FP projects** in SLs on a voluntary basis did not work out. The FPs did not elect to do research in the context of the SLs. There are still projects on-going in the area but not collocated with SLs, with the exception of IKI project 2018-2022 on trees on farm. There is also little donors' interest in this region, Central America not being a global priority. However, CATIE used SL to do research in the area. The concept of territorially bounded research is still valid and key to attract stakeholders. This concept implies that a global analysis is undertaken that provides the overall context for the regional analyses coming out of the SLs in the different regions. It can lead to efficiently link research to rural

development and education, by providing room to integrate in research projects local concerns and priorities, facilitating the involvement of local institutions and actors.

- In spite of the above limitations, **there is a list of publications** (see interim report) that are based upon the Nicaragua SLs and data are being used for other studies (e.g on Cedrela adorate, and there has been 40 master thesis in the SL area). This led overall to better understanding about trees on farms and linkages to agroecological intensification and contributions of trees to livelihoods, food security and nutrition. However, there is yet no synthesis of all this work, linked to the priority research questions identified by stakeholders. The lack of synthesis means also a lack of powerful demonstration of how this research was institutionally linked to the SL.

The Chair thanked the presenters, noting that striking lessons started emerging.

3) Flagships' perspectives on the SL set-up and related phase 1 results

FP leaders reported on the lessons learned from the perspective of their own FP. These are summarized below by main topic.

Number of sites and selection of sites: The number of SL sites was far too ambitious. There were also multiple tensions in the selection of the sites. Conceptually, they should have been selected based on hypotheses, trends and issues FTA wanted to analyse in the landscapes. In the absence of hypotheses ('data driven' approach) there were other places of higher relevance for FTA work, given what FTA was working on (e.g., locations where there was palm oil expansion).

Co-location: First there is a need for clarification of the word "colocation", used differently, either at site level, or in the same country. For the Chair, it implies that a purposeful decision is made to conduct research in specific preselected/existing/ known geographical areas in order to facilitate cross sites comparisons and more efficient and integrative collective work. Then the question is why has co-location of FP research not happened, with few exceptions (Nile Congo, Mekong, and Nicaragua Honduras)? There is also co-location outside SLs. There are projects around the SLs. This is linked to the issue of site selection: the SLs were not selected based on FTA's on-going and historical research activities but rather as long-term observatories of a variety of biophysical factors along the forest transition curve.

Global representativeness : The set of SLs could provide a global representativeness of the forest transition curve in the tropics, in relation to population dynamics, tree cover, vegetation types. The analysis of Dewi *et al*.[3] sets out major ecosystem types and assesses how well the set of SLs reflects them. However, key socio-economic, institutional and policy variables are missing.

Funding: Initially SLs were funded exclusively by W1+2, and no incentive was provided to fundraise bilaterally, to co-locate projects. Workshop participants pointed to the need to put in place an incentive scheme with a reasonable chance of attracting additional bilateral funding. Some participants recalled that even in the very beginning the sustainability of funding was not taken for granted, and Phase 1 proposal mentioned financial risks, as similar long-term

[3] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21513732.2017.1360394

observatories networks collapsed. Other proposed that joint fund-raising by FTA partners could facilitate greater collaboration, conceptualization, and co-location of research projects.

Evaluations: Workshop participants recognised that nothing happened regarding SLs following the FTA external evaluation commissioned by the IEA: the scientific teams did not take into account the results of this evaluation. This workshop is the first step.

Publications: In December 2016 in Edinburgh, teams were assigned a set of 7-8 publications to produce based on the SL data collected. However, to date no paper or document has resulted: this lack of progress is an indication that there is a fundamental problem.

Quality of data: Participants emphasized that though some baseline data were collected, these data are not sufficient in terms of coverage of key big variables to provide a good basis from which to produce meaningful and high quality analyses. Research questions cannot really be answered, as other data would first be needed.

Local partnerships and communication: in no site was a restitution workshop organized, and there was (with the exception of Nicaragua-Honduras) no proper communication with partners and no feedback to them. In some sites, other data were used (such as, in Borneo, data from GOLS and Colupsia projects), not coming from SL site data.

In conclusion participants stressed that 'It is very difficult to sell the current concept of SL' to donors and to partners, and that CGIAR W1+2 resources, with a cutback of more than 50% from FTA phase 1 to phase 2, cannot support the set-up.

4) Results of the science workshop in Bonn (December 2017)

The Director presented highlights of the Bonn Science workshop which he organised mainly in preparation for this special ISC workshop. A key point discussed (see minutes of the Bonn workshop) is co-location, what it means, how it is captured and leveraged. Some long term challenges were discussed: the need for long term funding, the difficulty to attract donors, the volatility of donors' interest in time and space, and the challenges for institutional memory. In terms of possible way forward, engagement with local actors, checking the usefulness and quality of data, communicating on what has been done, and linking with other networks were identified as essential.

In the discussion, ISC members emphasized the need for long term data to answer donors' concerns: a challenging question is what FTA needs to launch today in order to answer donors request in the future. It was recognized that it is difficult to sell a 'data-driven' project. What can be sold however are answers to strategic questions related to FTA's ToC. Also, the monitoring of a huge amount of data in numerous sites is clearly too ambitious. The need for cross SL projects and analysis was also noted. Overall, the main priority is to identify the relevant and interesting questions that can be answered through the SLs.

5) Way forward

The Chair opened the discussion by noting that results from SL phase 1 seem for now underwhelming in terms of (i) the paucity of significant results (ii) the acknowledged difficulties in trying to further analyse the huge data set collected (iii) and in view of the amount of W1 and 2 invested by FTA so far in SLs. She stressed that options for the future are open, ranging from

closing down the SLs that have not been used by the FPs to devising a strategy for continuing some of the work in spite of the difficult funding situation of FTA. She proposed that rather than focusing on SL per se, as a methodological tool and trying to see how it can be used by FTA, participants could instead look at what are FTA's needs for making its own place-based research more effective. This would give a more positive and productive orientation to the discussion.

The three persons, Yves Laumonnier, Dennis J Sonwa and Eduardo Sommariba responsible for the three stock-takes and the 5 FP leaders and the gender CCT lead presented their views on the way forward from their respective perspectives. Highlights of their presentations are in Table 1, arranged by main themes discussed.

The Director presented possible ways forward from the perspective of the overall programme. His proposed points were based on the Bonn discussions in December 2017, the interim stock-take, and a virtual discussion by the Management Team two weeks prior to this workshop. The starting point is that there seems to be a **consensus on the following premises** :

1. The SL concept is a distinctive characteristic of FTA
2. As originally conceived, SL needs time, and sustained resources, to show value.
3. Making it work could benefit the whole program; in turn it can only work if the FPs are involved and engaged. There is an opportunity in terms of cross-feeds, concentration and richness of the analysis for all FPs if they make it a central piece of their work.
4. A main challenge is to factor in changing funding conditions and lack of sustained interest of donors, as well as the severe data limitations identified in this workshop

The director presented the following three strategic directions for the future, towards a fundamental re-think of the set-up (see Annex 1 for details).

First, it is important to **understand, take stock and report** on what has been done in phase 1 to avoid a full sunk cost. A range of actions could be pursued (see Annex 1) on which the MT will need to reflect upon.

Second, **SL should evolve towards a more decentralized model**, both within FTA and with partners. Internally, the engagement of FPs in SLs should be facilitated and increased, so that FPs are attracted to work in those landscapes, including through co-location of projects. Externally, long term engagement with national governments, local authorities and actors should be also facilitated and increased. The director proposed several ways for doing this (see Annex 1), including by (i) « giving them back » data and analysis (local workshops), (ii) integrating their concerns in data collection and analysis, and (iii) building partnerships with local research institutions, public authorities and other actors.

Third, FTA should **build a vision of placed-based[4], people-focused research. This should rely on a framework to incentivize, facilitate and organize the integration of place-based research.** The framework could be constructed making use of centers' frameworks, when they exist. The data collected in the SLs could be used in building the framework, including to review the

[4] Noting that place-based research has multiple meanings and interpretations to different scientific disciplines, especially in how it can relate / feed in – be linked to more theoretical, methodological or transversal approaches (such as value-chain or sectoral approaches).

potential of each SL to remain an element of the framework. Geographically, the framework should not necessarily be equal to the set of current SLs, but could include part of the SLs and other locations “close by” either spatially or because sharing some characteristics, biophysical, economic, social, institutional. The framework should promote co-location of projects in the SLs. It should enable to better organize collection (and sharing) of data originating from different projects in the same locations. It could also be prioritized to structure FTA-wide comparative research, when such approaches are needed.

Table 1: Ways forward from different perspectives

Theme	Borneo	Cameroon	Nicaragua Honduras	Flagships	Gender
Phase 1 data collection : gaps to be addressed, quality issues	- Amend the SL baseline data. - Discuss its scientific credibility, as on some points methods were weak - Address data gaps: water, nutrition, links between household and farm boundaries (Limits of farm boundaries difficult to define in swidden agriculture).	- Need to finalize delineation process around the sites. - Explore how to deal with health and institutions	- Need to do more research: baseline studies are too broad. For example, if we want to use SL for restoration programs we need more data.	- work still needed to finalize the base line. Still ' junk' data, not pulled together into any meaningful way. - need to clarify what data is actually available, what is the quality of this data, whether we can rely on the data collected	- there was no gender specific question in the original SL, except equity in distribution of benefits. If it goes forward, need to integrate gender. - need to see what kind of datasets are going to be available? - Lot of ethnographies around could provide context knowledge, missing in the methods to date. Understanding historical trajectories of these landscapes.

Phase 1 SL results and analysis			- we have a lot of information, created with local partners. - Need to integrate knowledge of partners and bilateral projects with the SL base line. (teams have started) - Go across the SLs, going through the original questions: what information to be integrated.	- need to be clear about balance between (i) comparative analysis across SLs, and (ii) what is happening in a specific landscape. Both are needed but avoid having data disappearing in a global place.	- Use standardized elements from two existing methodologies to compare across projects: (i) Women's empowerment in agriculture index, appealing to donors; (ii) Gennovate, the CG study on gender norms and capacity to innovate.
Partnerships, restitution and outreach	- conduct an analysis of the ILTSER network - ensure that national and local partners are interested in our sites. - aim at a restitution workshop, that would include other results, not only based on SL data.		- Look at broader networks towards general conclusions, comparisons - spend more time on communication and governance, and application. - minimal resources needed for multi-stakeholder	- partner and ensure local ownership with other FTA centers and stakeholders in the landscape, organizations working there for decades. - conversely, can they share the data they have with us? - What can we gain by merging datasets such as PEN, GCS REDD+.	- Care about ownership of data. Data sharing is also important and there can be resistance to it. It's an open access requirement but need clear incentives. Need for due accreditation.

	- improve communication to partners, to raise awareness on results, do advocacy, to discuss results with them.		dialogue platforms to put the work into use as scientific papers are not enough.	- how does the data link to more policy oriented, country-level, issues?	
Collaboration between FTA centers and SL teams	- improve collaboration between FTA centres around common research questions (FTA priorities).	- Need to bring more FTA scientists in the SL.	- more integration is needed as most analysis has not been integrated, as the central unit was not performing. - bring SL teams together again to do the analysis in more participatory ways	- do it right so that SL teams are empowered, collective not dictatorial	- How are we engaging with the big data platform? Could be a way also to align elements of methodologies.
Co-location and other sites	- have a site in drier poorer areas of Indonesia, in the East, building on existing projects	- Map centers activities taking place in SL.	- Do not give up on colocation in these territories - find ways to attract FPs to do collocation, for instance nutrition diversity and FP1 work, etc.	- Need to look at SL in the context of all place-based research. - not hide the SL off but looking at them within that whole. - Trying to maximize the benefit of us being a collective. We can	

				collocate only if there is something to build on. - address the incentives to collocate: why would someone co-locate, especially with no certainty on future and funding. Is it worth spending the time and the resources. Can we deliver on the promise. May be partner with another network - can W1-2 be used to incentivize co-location?	
Future of SL set-up	- repeat the data collection, so that it could be used for monitoring, would require training of local actors. - could develop a group on South East Asia, to do long term monitoring			- Having long term observatories in the tropics is very important. Is it the role of a CRP such as FTA to do it? - Stop SL as it was with what we have, not collect new things: base future studies on the available SL data and portfolio of other studies. - Only invest if there is real value.	- To reduce costs we can also collect data less often. Not necessarily every year, every five year is enough.

				- Need to tune the SLs to the relevant and current scientific problem statements, and not decide on SLs irrespective of the priority research questions. - Link to foresight, gap analysis needed, where info is or not available - a more rigorous review of the approach, budgets and timeframe adopted in developing the PEN database may provide useful lessons for FTA, including an assessment of the extent to which repeat data collection has actually been conducted.	
Funding		- ensure minimum funding		- Need to update the funding model, not relying on W1+2 for data collection - be clear on what to spend W1+2 on: use it for synthesis, new methods.	

In practical terms, we should also **find ways to deal with the heterogeneity of data, to show value to partners and to raise funds**

The Director concluded that these points (details in Annex 1) are proposals for discussion, and that the next steps, whatever the decisions, would be to integrate the results of choices to be made, both (i) in the writing up of the SL priority and its objectives, (ii) in the organization of SLs in the program, (iii) in the FPs, and finally (iv) in the POWB 2019.

The Chair opened the discussion on the way forward.

Participants were in general agreement with the points proposed by the Director. The Chair stressed that the workshop is not meant to prescribe specific options, as this is the function of FTA management. The workshop is to provide strategic guidance to FTA management on SLs and ISC expects that FTA will submit to ISC its strategy to move forward, based upon this guidance.

ISC and MT members pointed that in view of the lessons learned from phase 1 about the limitations of the concept of SLs as long-term observatories, **a different approach, framework, and resulting operational implementation are needed** to make the SL concept fully relevant to FTA's current and evolving activities as well as fully operational within FTA.

One key issue is to re-visit the overall purpose of SLs. Does FTA need, for scientific reasons, **SLs that are long-term observatories or does it need SLs that are intervention based?** SLs were originally designed for long term observations. Phase 1 showed that getting funding for long-term observations is difficult and FPs are not particularly interested in using such observatories for their own work. In addition, long-term observations are probably not a comparative advantage of the CGIAR system so are difficult to fund. FTA and FPs' concerns today focus on where to do their place-based/intervention-based research in the most scientificly relevant places and in a cost-effective manner.

It is clear that the original observational objectives do not attract interest anymore. A focus on a placed-based network for interventional aspects, linked to other similar networks is definitely more attractive to FTA and the FPs.. How can intervening in landscapes lead to transformational change? If we look at the whole of place-based research in FTA, there is growing involvement of national authorities, which is critical for design and implementation of impactful projects/programmes/policies on the ground.

The need for a more sophisticated framework to understand and assess changes in landscapes was discussed. SL is one way to look at changes in the landscape, and only represent a subset of landscapes in which FTA is working. For some of FTA's work additional SL sites will be needed and some of the existing SL sites may need to be closed. What SL aimed to cover in terms of variables has been too limited: there are gaps concerning gender, institutions, policies. Forest transition is not only about trees, it also concerns institutions and people. We should thus focus on people as well as trees in the SLs. It is awkward having thought about gender after the fact, and FTA management should bear in mind that it is always costly and sometimes impossible to correct, ex-post, errors in research planning.

The link to NARS was discussed. For efficiency purposes there is a need to anchor SL with other networks. What are the alternatives, do we have to keep this within the CG or are there other suppliers? Results should be made available to NARS, with a specific packaging. FTA should talk to the forest resource assessment team (FRA) at FAO, to see how databases can talk to another.

ISC members emphasized that the future **of SLs will depend upon how well the SL concept can be implemented to support and facilitate FTA's research for development agenda.** SL should be integrated within the ToC of FTA: SLs could then become a tool, from characterization and baseline to doing impact assessment, to test the hypotheses in FTA's ToC.

Participants discussed the idea to use the data **to inform land use trade-offs**, which are relevant to the recent IPBES report and the future IPCC reports on the consequences of a limitation of average temperature increase to 1.5 degree and on how this could be achieved on the one hand and on land use trade-offs on the other hand. For these, there is not a wealth of tropical data. There is only one available integrated model that can be used for such issues, Globiom. So, why not use Globiom to have data and models on land use trade-offs in tropical areas.

On valuing the existing data, ISC members agreed with the first recommendation of the director regarding **understanding, taking stock and reporting** on what has been done in phase 1 to avoid a full sunk cost. FTA needs to be able to say: FTA invested in SLs over the years, and these are the answers we can now provide, using what has been done. To do so, FTA should be teaming up with other datasets and networks, and facilitating understanding and access to SL data. This should also lead to more awareness about the SL datasets, and their use by stakeholders.

The question whether it is possible to make comparative studies across sites was discussed. Participants agreed that the only feasible comparison at this stage is a characterization of the sites, based on households and biophysical data. Data has not always been consistently collected across sites, and there are gaps in data collection. Also, raw data collected in SLs did not include important dimensions for comparative studies such as the institutions and their evolution. Therefore, the idea of using the raw SL data for comparative studies is abandoned.

On co-location, the participants noted that the "where" is generally decided by the donor, not by FTA. This is a challenge that some initiatives such as ASB managed to overcome, as ASB sites were selected by scientists with partners, following a logical and transparent method, and donors subscribed to the selection of sites because they liked the method which required the close involvement of national level partners. FTA has currently about 150 projects in 50+ countries: there are different levels of co-location, within countries and within specific geographical subsets.

Participants suggested to look at the overall project portfolio to see where there are more opportunities to use data from projects for analysis and to find out where we have the opportunity to learn together and create scientific synergies and more efficiencies. This is the so-called "Portfolio analysis approach" to places we can zoom in for our ToC.

6) Conclusions

The Chair concluded the meeting by emphasising that participants had reached a clear consensus on the need for FTA to re-visit the objectives of SL sites towards something immediately relevant to the needs of the FPs. It could be along the lines of providing a network of sites where FPs can test their hypotheses, collect baseline data as well as conduct impact assessments and interventionist research. The value addition to FTA as a programme should be the major concern. The Chair stressed that FTA needs to be able to explain to the CGIAR leadership, to other scientists and to our partners, how the FPs get together to produce research results that are greater than sum of the parts. Presumably the SLs are one of the means for FPs to do this and re-visited objectives for the SLs should explicitly refer to this scientific and developmental value addition functions of SLs.

A question which was much discussed during the workshop was: what do we do with the existing databases? As a publicly funded institution FTA has a responsibility to make all data available for everybody, globally and for all sites. It also needs to document the methods used and to properly clean up the data bases. This requires a minimum of investment to be seen as a service to the global research community, and to give back the data to all the partners.

The Chair was pleased to note that the participants had reached a consensus on:

1. The absolute need for FTA to put all SL data in the public domain, and to inform all its partners accordingly.
2. The need to consider whether all SL sites would benefit from the stock take SL site perspective, as appropriate, and the need to analyse what has been done so far (quantitatively, qualitatively).
3. The need to explore, based on stock taking and its results, whether we can attract bilateral donors to fund work along new objectives for SLs in phase 2.

She invited the FTA Director and senior management to rethink co-location as a means for FTA to organize its place-based research. Co-location here means that "*a purposeful decision has been made to conduct research in certain preselected geographical areas in order to facilitate collective work through synergies and efficiencies*". A lot has been achieved in this workshop in terms of defining better the objectives and what *could* be done. The ISC invites FTA to draw operational conclusions on the best *options* and *how* these could be achieved, meeting the needs of FTA and its FPs, and aligned to overall FTA's ToC and objectives.

She thanked all the participants for their intellectual engagement in the discussion and for their excellent preparations of the workshop. The ISC is looking forward to receiving FTA's way forward on the SLs.

Annex 1. Proposal for a practical way forward from the perspective of the programme (presented by the Director)

There seems to be a **consensus on the following important premises**:

1. The concept of SL is a distinctive characteristic of FTA
2. As originally conceived, SL needs time, and sustained resources, to show value.
3. Making it work could benefit the whole program; in turn it can only work if the FPs are involved and engaged There is an opportunity for all FPs to make it a central piece of their work
4. A main challenge is to factor in changing funding conditions and lack of sustained interest of donors, as well as the severe data limitations identified in this workshop

So how do we move from there?

First, it is important to understand, **take stock** and report on what has been done in phase 1 to avoid a full sunk cost. The following could be done:

1. Publish the methodologies for site selection, for data collection
2. Gather all that has already been done: data collections, analysis, publications, and publish it online in an organized way, as FTA products.
3. Extend the ongoing stock taking pilot studies to the other SLs
4. Compile, analyze and synthetize all this information, by SL, and in comparative studies.
5. Revisit the list of SLs, being very careful about representativity of contexts, and long term benefits vs short term opportunities (gaps or opportunities)

Second, **SL should evolve towards a more decentralized model**, both within FTA and with partners:

1. Internally, the engagement of FPs in SLs should be facilitated and increased
2. Facilitate and increase long term engagement with national governments, local authorities and actors, including by (i) « giving them back » data and analysis (local workshops), (ii) integrating their concerns in data collection and analysis, and (iii) building partnerships with local research institutions, public authorities and other actors

Third, we should **build in FTA a vision of placed-based, people-focused, research**

1. Build a framework to promote integration of place-based research within centers, and within FTA; this would result in the following benefits for FTA's work:……[Vincent: merge this point with the 4th point to make a stronger case]
2. Use the data collected to characterize the SLs
3. Promote co-location of projects in the SLs
4. Consider links between SLs and other locations "close by" either spatially or because sharing some characteristics, biophysical, economic, social, institutional

5. Promote the use of SLs as a set of well-known places to conduct comparative research
6. Organize collection and sharing of data collected in the same place by different projects, including over time

Fourth, we should **find ways to deal with heterogeneity of data:**

1. Accept the heterogeneity of data
2. Increase the quality of data overall. For instance, consider adopting across FTA the principles prepared by CIFOR on data quality.
3. Explore means for comparisons with less standardized data, such as (i) through comparison of less harmonized data (statistical means or even « big data »), (ii) through 2nd level comparisons, comparing analyse.
4. Enquire the possibility to use information from comparable sites to fill gaps in data collection (with all due caution).

Finally, we should **show value to partner and raise funding**

1. Show what has been done in order to raise interest of donors. In various settings, local, regional, global.
2. Potential contributions to national political agendas.
3. Think about significant outputs to be promoted and best venues in the next 3 years. Including links with international political calendar, UNFCCC, CBD, SDGs and the importance of year 2020.
4. Link with other networks that have a history of long term, placed based, studies, such as ILTER