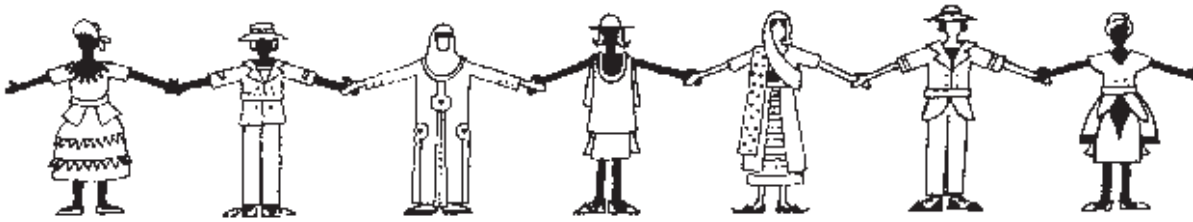
The Participatory Process for Supporting Collaborative Management of Natural Resources: An Overview



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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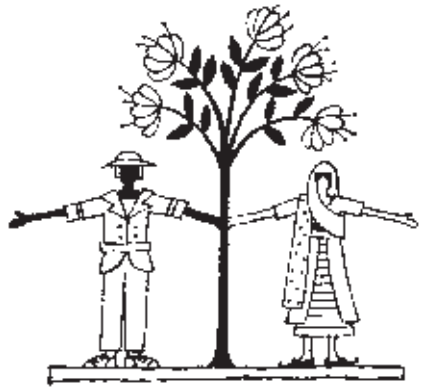

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PREFACE

This document, *The Participatory Process for Supporting Collaborative Management of Natural Resources: An Overview,* is meant to provide the conceptual context for the *The Participatory Package*, a new set of materials on the participatory process that is currently being developed by the Community Forestry Unit of FAO. The *Overview* describes the extent and nature of participation in collaborative management of natural resources, and focuses on the processes and practical aspects of promoting and supporting collaborative management in ways that are acceptable to governments and resource users.

The promotion of collaborative management is based on the assumption that effective management is more likely to occur when local resource users have shared or exclusive rights to make decisions about and benefit from resource use. There is an increasing interest in strengthening or creating collaborative management systems as a strategy for promoting rural development and resource conservation through empowerment and partnerships.

As the issue of participation has evolved, it has become increasingly recognized that although a lot of attention is being paid to rural community analysis, often little attention is given to the application of the analysis results to planning and implementing initiatives. In addition, decentralization has increasingly led to efforts to turn over the responsibility and authority for natural resource management to rural communities. This has led to a re-evaluation of the role of natural resource management professionals, projects and other initiatives in helping this transition to occur. With this *Overview*, we hope to facilitate this transition by describing the participatory process, by listing and discussing numerous management issues associated with it, and by giving examples of how important active participation of all stakeholders is, from initial problem and situation analysis through to the end of an initiative.

The Participatory Package is currently in the development phase. The primary objective of *The Participatory Package* will be to effectively deliver useful advice and ideas to forestry government officials to integrate effective, broad-based participation into all aspects of their work.

Support and funding for *The Participatory Process for Supporting Collaborative Management of Natural Resources: An Overview* was provided by the Community Forestry Unit and the multidonor Forests, Trees and People Programme (FTPP), which works to increase social and economic equity and improve well-being, especially that of the poor, through the support of collaborative and sustainable management of trees, forests and other natural resources.

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ACRONYMS

CIFOR	Centre for International Forestry Research
GIE	Groupement d'Intérêt Economique
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
RRA	rapid rural appraisal
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank Katherine Warner and Daniel Shallon of the Community Forestry Unit, FAO, for the support, guidance and stimulation provided during the preparation of this *Overview*. The initial idea for producing such an *Overview* and using a participatory approach for scoping and reviewing the content was theirs, and they provided significant intellectual and practical help continuously during all stages of preparation and writing.

In Rome, there were many people who assisted in identifying issues and organizing ideas, or provided comments on drafts of the paper. Their time and assistance were greatly appreciated. They are: Vanda Alterelli, Jon Anderson, Jean Bonnal, Susan Braatz, Alice Carloni, John Dixon, Florence Egal, Thierry Facon, Lyes Ferroukhi, Kevin Gallagher, Michelle Gauthier, Jan Johnson, Peter Kenmore, Lennart Ljungman, Ron Maine, Doug McGuire, Steven Post, John Rouse, Juan Sagardoy, Vicki Wilde and Patrizio Warren. Outside Rome, we were helped also by Pippa Bird, Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, Bob Fisher, Andrew S. Inglis, Cynthia Josayama, Nico Schulte Nordholt and Margaret Skutsch.

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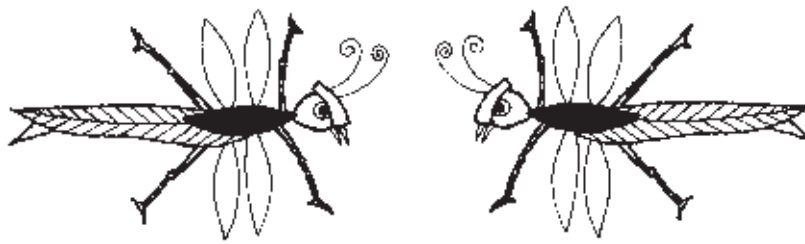
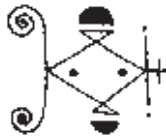




CHAPTER 1

Introduction

PROMOTING PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

This overview is about promoting people's participation in the management of natural resources, with a special focus on collaborative management systems.

The word 'management' is used here in its broadest sense to include management systems that are unstructured, simple and barely visible, all the way through to highly structured and technically complicated forms of administrative and operational control. Within this range, there are many different ways people go about managing natural resources such as water and land, and the stocks of plants and animals that inhabit such environments. Governments, private organizations, groups of resource users, families or individuals solely or cooperatively direct, control or regulate the use of natural resources under various formal and informal arrangements. In some cases, there may be no management at all.

The rationale for promoting collaborative management is based on the assumption that effective management is more likely when local resource users have shared or exclusive rights to make decisions and benefit from resource use. There is an increasing interest in strengthening or creating collaborative management systems as a strategy for promoting rural development and resource conservation through empowerment and partnerships.

Participation can be seen primarily as a means to achieve specific goals such as building a better management structure, obtaining improved goods and services, and getting natural resources into a 'good condition'. Participation to achieve specific purposes more efficiently requires that judgements be made about what represents 'better management', 'improved services' and 'good condition'. The efficiency argument draws attention to the fact that participation is all about negotiating goals (Patrizio Warren, pers. comm., 1997).

Alternatively, the most important feature of participation can be seen as its potential to enhance the power of resource users to influence things (Nelson and Wright, 1995). In this case, the purpose of the participatory process is seen as increasing the skills, knowledge, confidence and self-reliance of resource users to collaborate and engage in sustainable development. Participation becomes an end in itself rather than just a means to achieve other things.

Both arguments propose that the management of natural resources can be improved through people's participation, whether or not participation is a means or an end.

Unfortunately, participation is a vague label that can mean a little or a lot. It can include situations in which someone takes part in joint action, shares something in common, or is actively involved with other members of a community in decisions that affect them (*The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, 1993). This general definition is open to wide interpretation and allows for many different activities to be labelled as forms of 'participation'. Indeed, it is a concept that is widely used in development literature and practice but obeys no single definition (Oakley, 1988).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe briefly the type and nature of participation used in the process of promoting and supporting collaborative management. Following chapters provide an overview of this process, a description of the actors involved and the environment in which the process occurs, and a discussion about some of the practical aspects of managing a support programme.

COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

This overview focuses on the process and practical aspects of promoting and supporting collaborative management of natural resources in ways that are acceptable to government and resource users. Collaborative management of natural resources[1] refers to:

- the **arrangements** for management that are negotiated by multiple stakeholders and are based on a set of rights and privileges (tenure) recognized by the government and widely accepted by resource users; and
- the **process** for sharing power among stakeholders to make decisions and exercise control over resource use.

This definition contains a number of special terms that may not be familiar to the reader. An expanded definition is provided in Box 1.1, including explanations of the key terms and ideas.

The definition above covers a wide range of activities and programmes that have been promoted in recent years under various titles, such as:

- Comanagement of Protected Areas;
- Community Forest Management;
- Integrated Watershed Management (alternatively labelled Participatory Upland Community Development);
- Farmer-managed Irrigation Systems;
- Integrated Pest Management; and
- Cooperative Management of Inland Fisheries.

Such programmes include situations in which stakeholders work together on the management of a single resource (such as a park, block of forest, fishing area or irrigation scheme), and where stakeholders cooperatively address management issues of common interest (such as water conservation and delivery, minimization of soil erosion, and elimination of pests) over multiple properties.

BOX 1.1

EXPLAINING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

Collaborative management implies that there are two or more separate parties involved. The concept of a stakeholder is useful to help explain this point. A stakeholder can be defined as any individual, social group or institution who possesses a stake (or interest) in the management of the natural resource concerned (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). The interest may arise for a variety of reasons, such as being dependent on the resource for subsistence or commercial survival, having cultural or historical ties to it, living nearby, or holding delegated responsibilities for its welfare. Stakeholders can be thought of as those parties who are affected directly or indirectly by management decisions, in a positive or negative way. It includes those who can influence such decisions, as well as those who would like to influence decisions.

So, collaborative management is something that is done by multiple stakeholders. This feature alone represents a major difference in relation to more conventional forms of management, where one party retains sole responsibility for decision-making and other stakeholders remain at the periphery.

Commonly, the approach to management is tied to tenure, which defines the bundle and allocation of rights and privileges to use the resource (Fisher, 1995). In general terms, various tenure systems can be grouped into the four categories of state, private, communal and open-access property.[2] Of course, the recognition of tenure depends on who you are. The state may not recognize some private or communal rights that are accepted by local resource users, and conversely, local users may not respect some claims of ownership made by the state through its various government bodies. At various times, new claims emerge and old ones are questioned. When disputes about rights and privileges exist, management is problematic because there will be a lack of confidence in whether decisions made by either party will be agreed to or followed.

Collaborative management implies that government and resource users agree about tenure, thus providing a foundation of confidence and legitimacy for management. If disagreements arise, collaboration implies that there will be a willingness to resolve differences and an effort to negotiate an acceptable tenure arrangement. Whether it is active or passive, the hand of government is usually present in some way in collaborative management systems, even if it is restricted to approving the allocation of rights and privileges for using and managing the resource.

Often, governments are interested in setting limits on use rights and the way resources are exploited by those who hold rights. These limits can be set and imposed by the government alone, or they can be established through a negotiation process that allows the participation of those who will be affected. Collaborative management implies that a participatory process is followed because rights and limits to exploitation are central to management, as they determine who will benefit, by how much and under what constraints.

We would argue that some degree of power-sharing in making decisions and controlling outcomes is a pre-condition for any system of collaborative management. Meaningful participation in a negotiation process is impossible without some power to influence the results. Without power there is no bargaining position, and negotiation becomes a one-sided affair.

These ideas provide the ingredients for the definition of collaborative management provided in the text.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION AND LEARNING APPROACHES

Dimensions of participation

There are many ways for people to participate in decisions about the use of natural resources. There are extreme approaches, such as going to war or to court, and various passive and active approaches, provided in specific decision-making processes. Box 1.2 provides some examples of the various ways to participate in decision-making.

BOX 1.2

SOME DIMENSIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

FORCING A SAY:

WAR
LITIGATION
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
LAWFUL PROTEST ACTION
PUBLICITY

OPPORTUNITIES TO SETTLE DISPUTES:

COURT-ORDERED ARBITRATION
PUBLIC HEARINGS/INQUIRIES
REFERENDUMS
MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION PROGRAMMES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKERS:

ELECTIONS
OPINION POLLS
LOBBYING
PUBLIC MEETINGS
WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS
RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL (RRA) EXERCISES

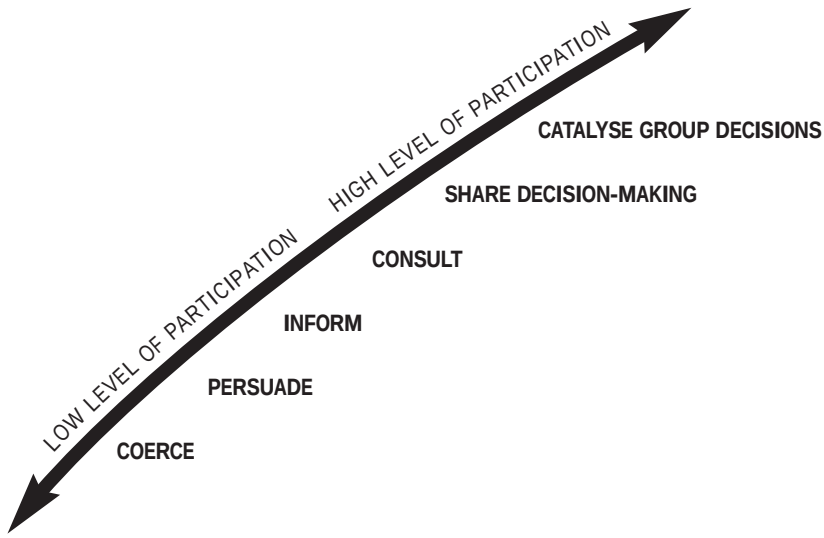
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING OR TAKING DECISIONS:

ADVISORY COMMITTEES
PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA) EXERCISES
ASSEMBLIES OF COMMON PROPERTY USER GROUPS
FARMER ASSOCIATIONS

The approaches presented in Box 1.2 have different levels of participation, corresponding to different underlying objectives for participation in each process. These characteristics provide a basis for making a classification of participatory approaches (see Figure 1.1).

FIGURE 1.1

SIX TYPES OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES BASED ON THEIR MAIN OBJECTIVE



Based on ideas from the classification by Arnstein (1969)

Clearly, some of these approaches are more suited to promoting collaborative management than others. The two most appropriate approaches for supporting the collaborative management of natural resources are **catalysing group decisions** and **sharing decision-making**.[3]

The use of various approaches in supporting collaborative management is dealt with further in following chapters.

Development programmes

Development programmes concerned with natural resource management can similarly be classified by the type of participatory approach predominantly used for making decisions about the nature of assistance provided at specific sites. A simple classification, which recognizes four basic types, is provided in Box 1.3.

BOX 1.3

FOUR TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES[4]

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH USED		CHARACTERISTICS
1. TOP-DOWN INTERVENTIONIST	INFORM OR PERSUADE	Decisions are made by a small set of powerful stakeholders (such as government, international donor projects or private enterprise groups), according to their own agendas, knowledge and value systems. There is little or no participation from other stakeholders, hence planning is top-down.
2. MODIFIED TOP-DOWN INTERVENTIONIST	CONSULT	Same as the above, except that there is an attempt to obtain information from other stakeholders about their interests and knowledge before decisions are taken. There is some participation as a result of this information-gathering, but planning is still top-down.
3. PARTICIPATORY INTERVENTIONIST	SHARE DECISION-MAKING	The programme is designed and owned by a small set of powerful stakeholders, but it is implemented by using bottom-up planning. Stakeholder groups are engaged in assessments, and joint decisions are taken about programme activities at specific locations. These activities are comanaged by the programme and beneficiaries, and they are evaluated jointly.
4. CATALYTIC AGENT	CATALYSE GROUP DECISIONS	The programme is designed and owned by local stakeholders with the help of outside facilitators. The interests and judgements of local stakeholders are given primacy in decision-making, and management of activities shifts rapidly to local institutions.

Development programmes that aim to support collaborative management ultimately need to have the characteristics of either a 'participatory interventionist' or 'catalytic agent'. This is because collaborative management involves multiple stakeholders who share decision-making power. Supporters must be prepared to either share decisions with others or facilitate local decision-making and action.

Using such approaches, development programmes act as one of the stakeholder groups that has interests and something to contribute. It enters a particular setting with resources and either preconceived ideas (such as a project) or the desire to coordinate negotiations and arrangements between others instead of intervening itself (Jean Bonnal, pers. comm., 1997). This provides an important distinction between programmes. Some support collaborative management, using the participatory approaches described above. Others merely provide token opportunities for participation and retain decision-making power over what happens to the resources concerned.

However, it is worth noting that over the last ten years or so, there has been a definite shift in development programmes from the 'top-down interventionist' to the 'participatory interventionist' type. This is an encouraging sign, reflecting the increasing acceptance of the rationale for people's participation in natural resource development.

The nature and scope of support offered by the 'participatory interventionist' or the 'catalytic agent' is discussed briefly in the following section.

The role of supporters

We are concerned here with any situation where individuals or organizations wish to create, strengthen or guide a collaborative management system. Providing support includes helping, influencing and intervening in management. Help implies providing things that are requested, but a supporter may do things that were not asked for, or things that satisfy the supporter's needs more than those of the beneficiaries. Stakeholders can hold different perspectives about what is good and bad support. This allows for disagreement about what support should be provided.

Supporters can choose to support the various interests of stakeholders according to what appeals to them or matches their expertise. Alternatively, supporters can assist other stakeholders to analyse, plan and implement any idea that stakeholders agree on. Either way, supporters attempt to:

- learn from and respond to the interests and preferences of beneficiaries;
- facilitate participatory assessments and planning exercises;
- negotiate agreements about the inputs to be provided and the distribution of benefits; and
- make their own judgements about what they will offer to do.

A supporter's role largely depends on how rigidly the support programme has been defined. The scope of this role lies along a spectrum that includes the:

- **specialist** who listens to needs and negotiates the provision of support from a predetermined menu of possible inputs; and the
- **catalytic agent** who facilitates analysis, selecting and acting by beneficiaries in an open-ended way.

These terms and the spectrum are explained further in Box 1.4.

BOX 1.4

A RANGE OF POTENTIAL ROLES FOR SUPPORTERS OF COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

SPECIALIST:

The supporter has a special capacity to provide specific types of assistance under certain conditions. Usually, the speciality is limited to a particular sector (such as irrigation or forestry), or to activities that have some link to that sector.

A needs assessment is undertaken, but only those initiatives within the scope of the pre-determined type of assistance are taken up for further planning.

An example: A project implemented by a government forestry service has been designed to assist with the sustainable use of non-timber forest products. A complete needs assessment is done with forest users. The initiatives directly related to the use of non-timber forest products are taken up by the project, plus a few others that deal with health and reducing the workloads of women. These additional activities are done to increase the labour and time available for the special activities.

CATALYTIC AGENT:

The supporter has decided previously to assist in any feasible development activity of mutual interest. Usually, assistance is limited to building organizations and management skills, identifying sources of support and building strategic alliances.

A needs assessment covering all topics is facilitated and, after ranking, priority initiatives are taken up for further planning.

An example: An integrated rural development programme has been designed to improve living conditions in a certain district. Biannual planning exercises are done in villages. They can have any outcome, but there is a ceiling to the amount of money spent. PRA tools are used to make the planning process a conscious analysis of problems and priorities, rather than a reflex call for help. The result is a wide variety of activities implemented by different groups and institutional structures.

It is possible for a support programme or project to adopt more than one role, or to switch from one role to another, depending on the circumstances. The choice of roles is an issue to be addressed in the design of a support programme (see Chapter 2).

Key themes for supporters

The work of supporters is complicated by the fact that collaboration and management occur in complex biophysical, social and economic systems that are changing rapidly. As a result there is minimal certainty and a dearth of useful information for planning the next move (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). The combination of these circumstances means that development programmes need to operate with imperfect and incomplete knowledge, and at the same time, that they need to learn many things along the way to improve understanding and performance over time. These conditions and needs necessitate the use of an action-learning process.

Action-learning has been widely adopted in rural development and conservation projects and has been variously labelled 'action-learning', 'action-research', 'experiential learning' and 'learning by doing' (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991; Macadam, 1991). It is based on the idea that successful development programmes require a capacity for embracing error, learning with people, and building knowledge and institutional capacity through action (Korten, 1980). The process specifies that learning and action are intertwined, and that development proceeds through conscious and deliberate cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. These cycles provide guidance and structure to implementation and thus form a key part of the participatory process (see Chapter 2).

The preceding discussions emphasized that collaborative management involves negotiations among multiple stakeholders, people's participation in management and learning through action. These three important features of collaborative management give rise to several key themes for supporting collaborative management (John Anderson, pers. comm., 1997). These are:

- strengthening or creating new places and procedures for negotiations;
- building the capacity of people and institutions to manage; and
- facilitating adult learning by resource managers.

Action-learning cycles, the repertoire and objectives of participatory approaches, and the potential roles of supporters described above, represent some of the key ideas behind supporting collaborative management. The following chapter builds on these ideas and presents an overview of the process that can be used to build, implement and dismantle a support programme.

Chapter 1 - Endnotes

1. Our definition excludes situations where local users are managing natural resources that are claimed under state ownership, without having prior government approval. Such systems, referred to as 'indigenous' or 'traditional' management systems, are often effective and involve a considerable amount of collaboration among users. However, our definition seeks to include only those collaborative arrangements that are legitimized and strengthened by government recognition. It should be stressed that identifying indigenous management systems and building upon their strengths are critical steps towards establishing management systems that do have government approval.

2. State and private tenure are self-apparent. Communal property has a well-defined group of users, a well-defined resource that the group manages and uses, and a set of rules. Open-access refers to a situation in which exploitation of a resource is open to all. It is unlike communal property in that there is no user group, and no rules can be enforced about how the resource should be managed.

3. A decision-making process could use a mix of approaches at the same time. For example, participants might be involved in persuading, informing and consulting each other in an overall process that leads to sharing a final decision.

4. A specific development programme can have a mix of development activities, and decisions for each may be made in different ways. It is possible then for one programme to fit the description of more than one of the types described in Box 1.3, depending on the activity.

CHAPTER 2

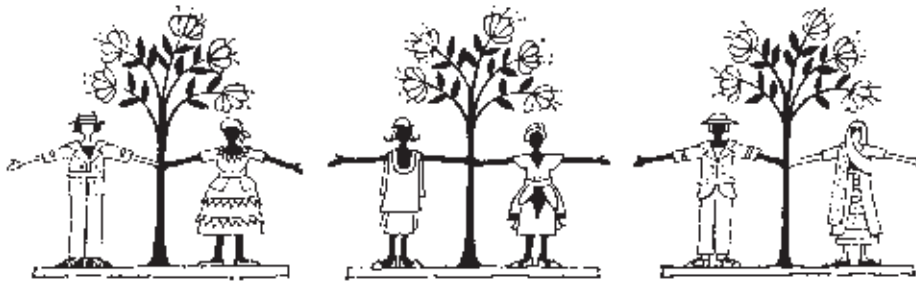
Overview of the Participatory Process for Supporting Collaborative Management

A SHORT PREVIEW

This chapter describes the nature and scope of the participatory process for supporting the collaborative management of natural resources. In real life, the sequence of events and their purpose depend on the participants and the context of the process. Consequently, there is tremendous diversity. It is possible to describe only a generalized process that is no more than a strategic and illustrative coverage.

Throughout this chapter we use the term 'support programme' to refer to any programme, project, organization or group that is established to provide some form of support to collaborative management. 'Supporters' is used to refer to the staff of such support programmes.

We appreciate that there are many readers who may be engaged in a support programme that has started already and where participation of a wide range of stakeholders has not occurred in each of the stages as described below. However, it is possible to redirect a support programme and make adjustments towards the participatory process without starting again. Some of the practical aspects associated with adopting the participatory process are discussed in following chapters.



Components of the process

Any 'process' includes:

- actions;
- the sequence in which they are carried out;
- a direction or purpose; and
- an environment in which it all occurs.

The first three are components of the process, and the fourth provides the context for it. This chapter describes the direction, actions and sequence of the participatory process, and Chapter 3 deals with its environment.

Direction

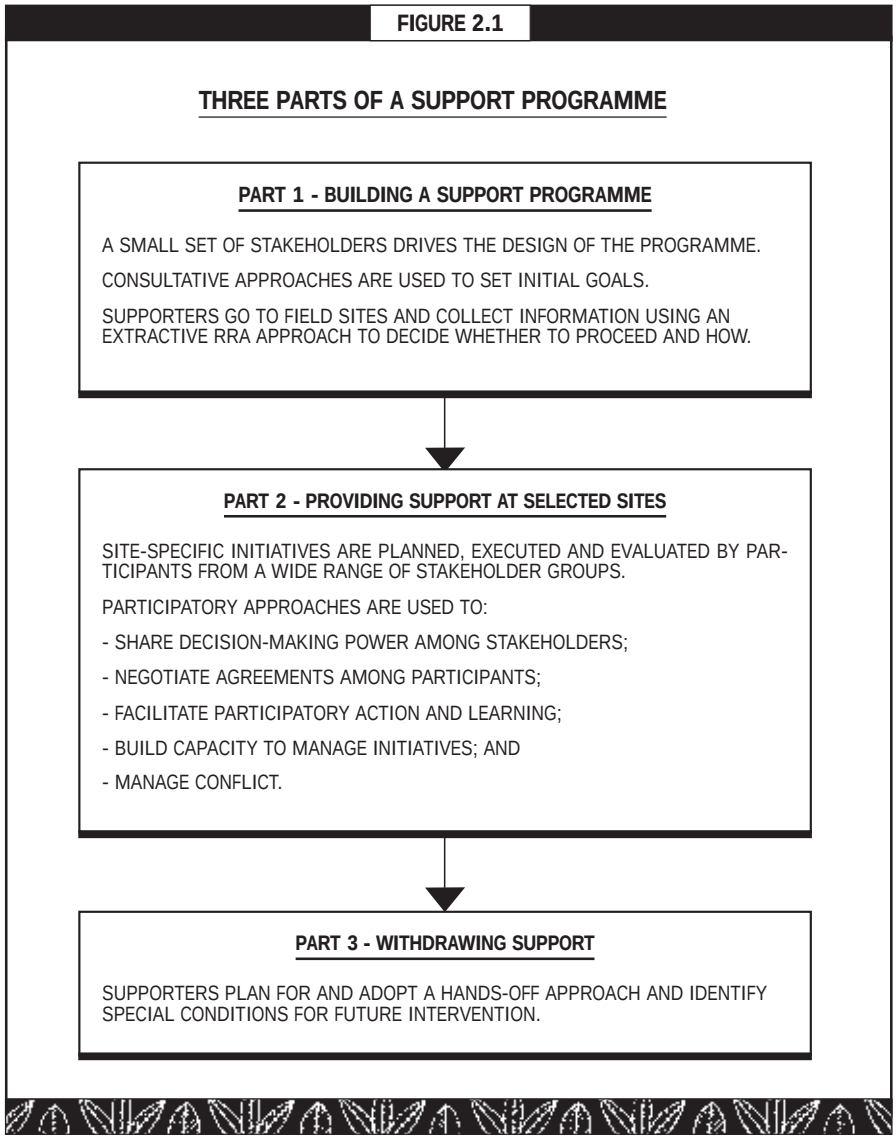
The direction, or purpose, of the participatory process for supporting collaborative management was described in the previous chapter. It is worth repeating here briefly that the purpose of the participatory process is:

to achieve a situation where stakeholders agree on tenure, share power to make decisions and exercise control over the use of natural resources.

Parts and stages

In its most simple form, the participatory process can be summarized as consisting of three sequential parts: building a support programme; providing support at selected sites; and withdrawing support. These three parts are presented in Figure 2.1.

FIGURE 2.1



The process involves the participation of multiple stakeholders in each of the three parts. Who actually participates depends on many factors, which can vary in the different parts.

The simple summary of the process provided above can be broken down further into eight stages. These are presented in Figure 2.2, which also shows how these stages relate to the simplified three-part version of the process presented above. The stages are previewed here and are explained in more detail in following sections.

FIGURE 2.2

EIGHT STAGES IN SUPPORTING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT THROUGH A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

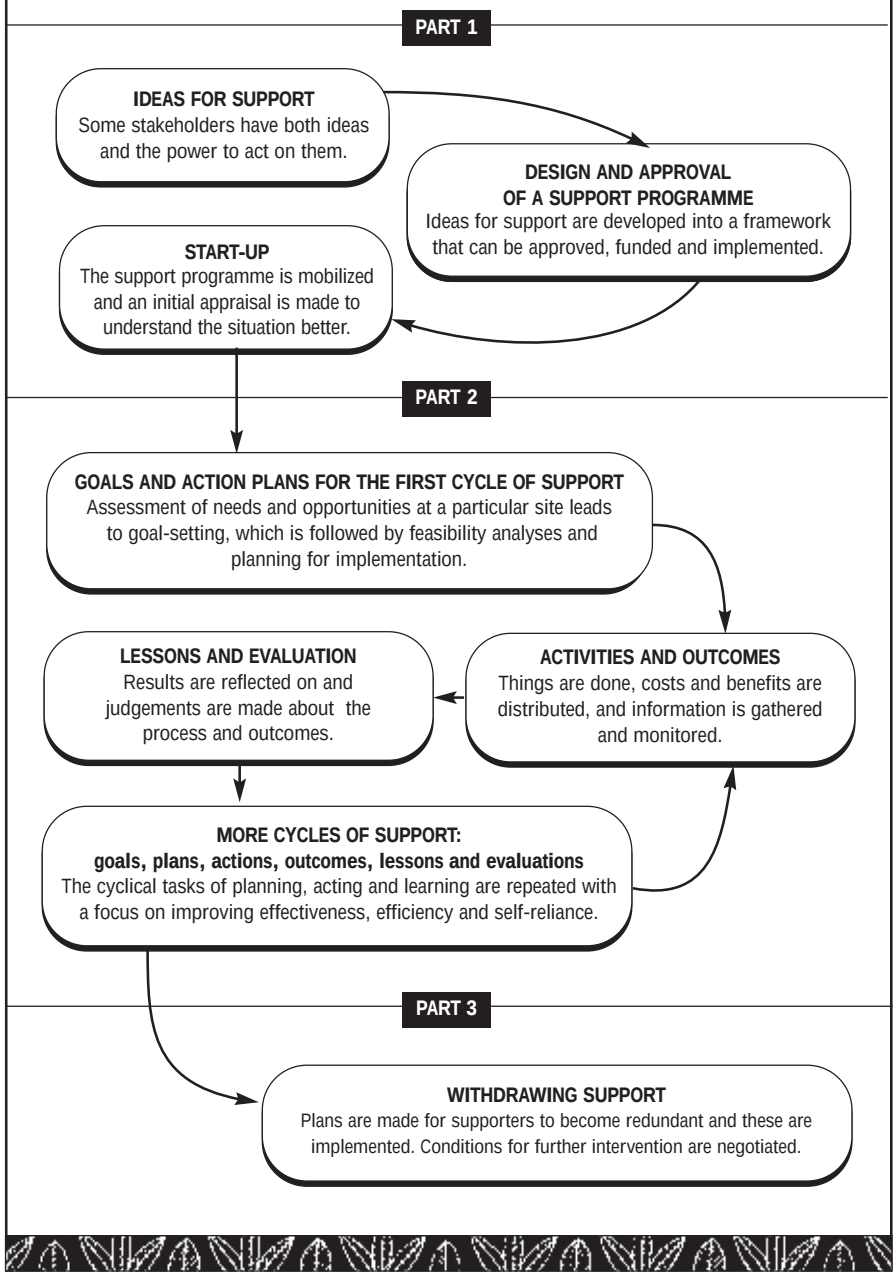


Figure 2.2 provides what we find are the common sets of actions for supporting collaborative management.[1] A pilot project can follow these stages also, but the depth and number of cycles could differ. In a pilot project, lessons in Part 2 can lead to expansion and further rounds of support at specific sites before Part 3 is considered.

There are numerous factors, both foreseen and unforeseen, that influence the selection and sequencing of activities. The participatory process follows a course that is highly dependent on the participants and the context, so it is not possible to break these stages down further into detailed steps that can be followed in every situation. The following discussion will provide only general remarks and objectives for each stage.

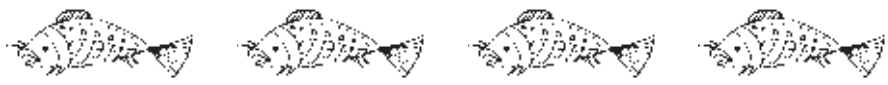
We will see from the discussion that a variety of participatory approaches are used throughout the process. There is no single participatory approach that is applied in each stage. Rather, persuasive, informing, consultative, sharing decisions, and catalytic approaches can all be of use within the overall process of supporting collaborative management. For each stage, there can be differences in who manages or drives the process, who gets to be involved (how participatory is it?), and why. These issues are examined further in the sections below.

PART 1 BUILDING A SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Introduction

Building a support programme commences from an initial position of ignorance (Griffin, 1988). It is common to encounter many unknowns and uncertainties about natural resources, stakeholders, support needs and preferences, opportunities, constraints and the feasibility of apparent solutions. Unfortunately, it is a common and significant trap for builders of support programmes to assume that they understand the problems well and have workable solutions (Byron, 1997). The first challenge is how to recognize and deal with this initial position of ignorance.

A stakeholder analysis identifies key actors and information holders (see Box 2.1). By starting with a stakeholder analysis, programme builders can undertake participatory assessments of existing conditions with representatives of key stakeholder groups, and get to understand better the needs and preferences of stakeholders for support. Participatory assessments can help generate ideas for support, set goals and objectives, and improve the design[2] of support programmes. As a general rule, the sooner stakeholders are identified and consulted the better.



BOX 2.1

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

A stakeholder is any individual, social group or institution that possesses a stake (or interest) in the management of the natural resource concerned (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996). Stakeholders can be thought of as those parties who are affected directly or indirectly by management decisions, in a positive or negative way. It includes those who can influence such decisions, as well as those who would like to influence decisions.

Stakeholder analysis concerns the inventory and analysis of:

- current stakeholders and those potentially affected by future decisions;
- their characteristics, such as interests, power, control over resources, knowledge and information, how they are organized or represented, and limitations for participation;
- their relationships with others, such as coalitions, dependencies, conflicts and strategies; and
- their influence and motivation towards decision-making, including expectations, likely gains and willingness to participate and invest resources (compiled from Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996; World Bank, 1996).

A stakeholder analysis can vary from a quick and superficial analysis that only summarizes who is there and what the basic interests are, to an in-depth review delving into such things as values, internal functioning, representation, capacity and needs for participating. Whatever form it takes, some clear benefits stand out. A stakeholder analysis can be used to predict the support that can be expected and the resistance that may be met in a participatory development process. It can be used to identify weak parties who may need special assistance and support in order to participate effectively. It can be used to avoid the pitfall of bypassing powerful stakeholders who can derail the process if they so desire, and other stakeholders who depend on and affect the resource in substantial ways.

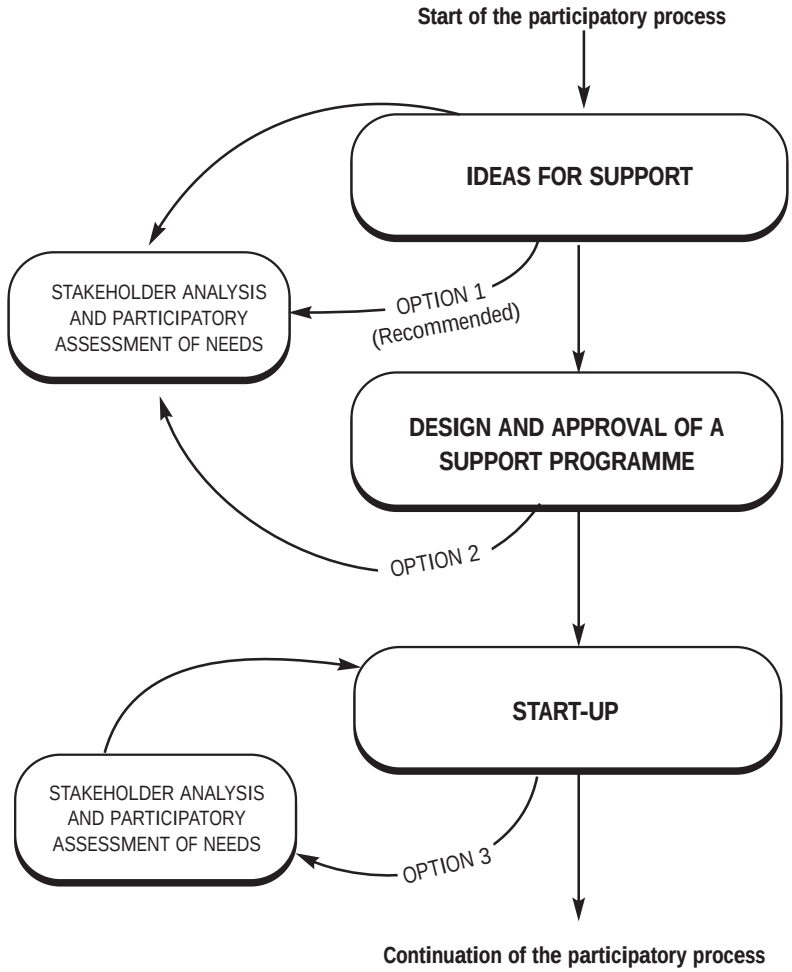
Stakeholder analysis is a tool for planning and guiding participation in natural resource management. It is done for particular settings, situations and activities because these determine who the stakeholders are in each case. Stakeholders' perspectives and interests change over time. The interest of the rural poor in food security may be relatively stable, whereas donors and policy-makers may change their goals more frequently in response to changing fashion and trends of the development industry.

Often, stakeholder analyses and participatory assessments are conducted after a support programme starts. It follows that the less done before the programme is designed, the greater the ignorance and need for information and interaction with stakeholders in following stages. Sometimes the need to gain funds or approvals to work will dictate that less is done in the first two stages and more is done after approvals and funds have been secured to move forward. The timing of stakeholder

analysis and participatory assessments involving stakeholders will depend on who is constructing the support programme and whether they are in a position to immediately invest in these activities or not. The variations in the timing of initial stakeholder analysis and participatory assessments are illustrated in Figure 2.3.

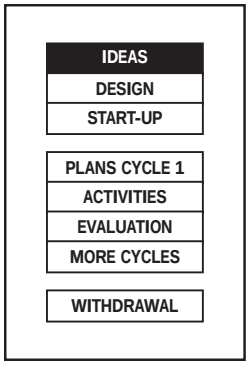
FIGURE 2.3

VARIATIONS IN THE TIMING OF STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AND PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENTS DURING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUPPORT EFFORT



The following sections describe the process for building a support programme[3] (i.e. the first three stages of the participatory process).

Ideas for support: whose initiative?



It is common for stakeholders who are relatively powerful or rich to initiate support programmes. Development agents and governments often develop ideas for support and turn them into 'projects'. There is a tendency for these stakeholders to dominate and maintain control over the whole development process in order to pursue their own interests, which can account for many of the perceived social and economic failures of development projects (Byron, 1997).

The reason for the imbalance in initiating support programmes is understandable. Relatively few resource users have the time, resources or willingness to support, in a substantial way, the management of natural resources owned by others. Rural people who do organize support may do so rarely, or may act only in organized groups. More substantial forms of support are possible when local ideas are connected to other stakeholders who can provide new knowledge, skills or resources. Unfortunately, such opportunities are limited, especially if local users lack the skills, time or motivation to locate and engage other stakeholder groups in their initiatives. If local management skills are weak, it is unlikely that major initiatives that provide substantial support to collaborative management will arise from local stakeholders independently. This feature generates the following concerns for the participatory process.

- If powerful stakeholders start the participatory process with their own ideas, substantial momentum could develop for them to dominate following stages.
- Powerful and distant stakeholders tend to be ignorant of site-specific issues that are relevant to developing appropriate ideas for support.
- The power of local stakeholders to generate and act on their own ideas and to develop the capacity for self-help needs to be increased (Daniel Shallon, pers. comm., 1997).

As mentioned above, a stakeholder analysis and participatory assessment of needs and preferences are recommended in this stage. However, it is more common for such activities to be undertaken in the design stage (see below).

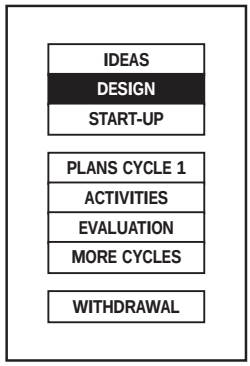
In simple terms, the main objectives of this first stage are to:

- identify and analyse stakeholders;
- develop some sensible ideas for support based on a participatory assessment of existing circumstances and needs for support;

- consider who might be affected by the implementation of the ideas;
- recognize that there are stakeholders who have not yet contributed; and
- build an awareness that the ideas are based on imperfect knowledge and assumptions.

The ideas should be sensible in that they should broadly match the aspirations, needs and circumstances of a country or locality, and they should provide a basis to move forward into a planning stage that can involve more intensively a wide cross-section of stakeholders.

Design and approval of a support programme



Often, a small team of technical experts is assembled to design a support programme in a relatively short period and the terms of reference lock them into an orbit around powerful stakeholders. Various organizations or individuals assume various separate or combined roles of designer, supervisor, sponsor and approver, and consequently become dominant actors in the design process. Enhancing the participation of other stakeholders in this stage represents a major challenge for adopting the participatory process.

One response to the challenge has been for technical experts to undertake RRA to better inform themselves about the prevailing conditions and interests in the field. These appraisals are a learning experience for design teams, but they are not a substitute for stakeholder analysis and participatory needs assessments, and they rarely increase the participation of stakeholders in decisions about the goals and objectives of support programmes.

When considering the participation of multiple stakeholders in this stage, it is useful to see the design as consisting of three distinct parts:

1) goals and objectives for the support programme;

2) arrangements for managing and supervising the programme; and

3) arrangements for funding and approving it.

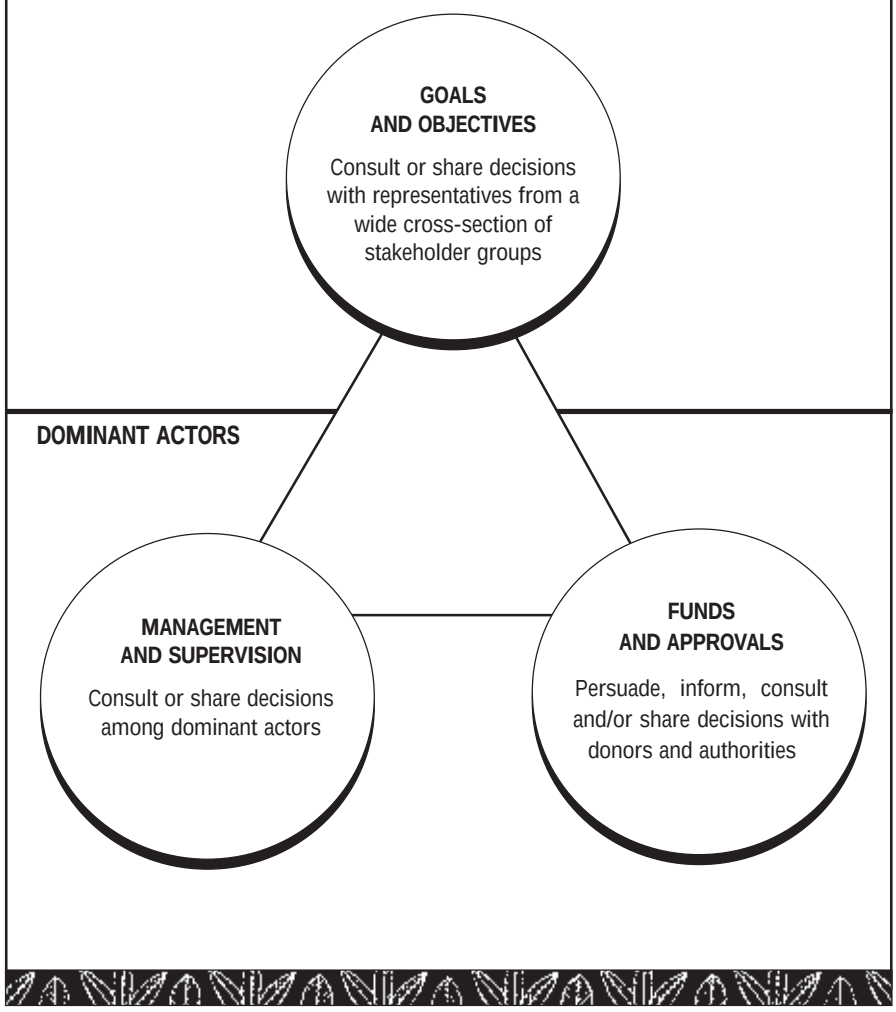
The parts are related but they have different characteristics of accountability and participation. The first part is of interest to a wide cross-section of stakeholders because it has a major influence on the types of support that will be provided to beneficiaries. As a result, it is the part that has the greatest relevance to the participatory process.

In contrast, the second and third parts are of direct interest to a smaller set of stakeholders, i.e. the dominant actors that take on future roles of managing, sponsoring and supervising the overall support programme. Unfortunately, this distinction

between the parts of the framework is commonly overlooked. The three different parts and their relevance to participatory approaches are presented in Figure 2.4.

FIGURE 2.4

PARTS OF A PROGRAMME DESIGN AND RELEVANT PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES



In general, the following tasks are central to encouraging the participation of multiple stakeholders in setting the goals and objectives of the support programme in the design stage:

- identification and analysis of stakeholders and a participatory assessment of existing circumstances and needs for support (if not undertaken in the first stage);
- consultation and dialogue with representatives of stakeholder groups, with special attention to disadvantaged groups. (The aim is to define clear goals and objectives that offer initial direction without unnecessarily constraining future activities. If the support is focused on a specific location and beneficiaries can be identified exactly at this early stage, decisions about programme design can be taken jointly [see Box 2.2]. In cases where there is a wide geographic area involved and a relatively open agenda for development support, decisions will be taken by the dominant actors after taking advice from stakeholder representatives.[4]);
- negotiation between the dominant actors to define management and supervisory roles;
- presentation of the draft design to stakeholder representatives to allow for feedback, further input and opportunities for amendment; and
- promotion and negotiation to secure the necessary funding and approvals to start.

Obtaining feedback from stakeholders about the draft design is important because designs are based on certain assumptions, which could be wrong. If they are presented explicitly to stakeholders, there is a chance that invalid assumptions and other design biases can be revealed and accounted for early in the programme.

A number of important choices about the nature and scope of support are finalized by the design team after their dialogue with selected stakeholder group members. The organization(s) that fund or otherwise approve the support programme also control its fate and thus have a great influence over decisions about the final design. This has important implications for the participatory process. They include the following.

- The people who have been consulted may not agree with the final design or not cooperate further with the programme if they disagree with design decisions made by the dominant actors. A one-off consultation with representatives of stakeholder groups may be insufficient to secure continued participation of key stakeholders. Repeated rounds of discussion and negotiation with stakeholders may be needed to obtain a widely accepted set of goals and objectives.
- There is no guarantee that the final design will match the interests and preferences of all stakeholders because usually only a relatively small number of representatives will have been involved with the design team. Therefore, the dominant actors may have to manage conflict and be prepared to modify the design at some future point.
- Some of the dominant actors may not have been exposed to the views of other stakeholders and therefore may not understand certain aspects of the design, or

know whose preferences have been favoured by the team. If this is the case, the content and results of stakeholder participation need to be summarized and presented to them.

- The risks associated with consultation rather than sharing decision-making in building a support programme can be minimized by keeping initial designs flexible.
- The design can refer to a number of issues related to the adoption of the participatory approaches itself, such as:
  - building a capacity for the programme to engage in participatory action and learning;
  - describing future stages of the participatory approach; and
  - providing guidance about what to do if things go wrong.

This discussion of tasks is not exhaustive. There are many situations and needs that may demand that other tasks be undertaken in this stage.

BOX 2.2

DESIGNING A BUFFER ZONE MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN THAILAND

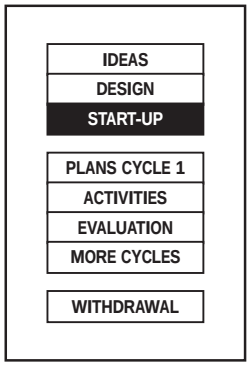
Three organizations (two non-profit private organizations and the government) agreed to design a project for a specific area together with stakeholders. After identifying stakeholder groups and representatives, a first meeting was held to identify problems and priority activities in order to address these problems. One coordinator, appointed by the donor, compiled all the information gathered and worked the ideas from the meeting into a logical framework showing objectives, outputs, activities and indicators. In order for the local people to understand the draft project design, it was translated into the Thai language and distributed. Representatives from all stakeholder groups met two more times to discuss, modify and agree on the logframe. A fourth stakeholder workshop involved a presentation of the design to the donor representatives. During a five-month period a number of other formal and informal exercises and meetings were conducted among different groups. The result was a programme design that most stakeholders were aware of, and for which they felt a certain ownership. This made the start-up of the programme and subsequent planning for specific collaborative initiatives much easier because the content and approach of the support programme was already well known and agreeable to stakeholders. Subsequent implementation benefited from lack of conflict and a high level of interest of participants.

In the discussion above, we have assumed that the design stage is driven by one or more powerful idea-holders who are not local users. Despite this assumption, many of the remarks and objectives presented above will apply also to other stakeholder

groups that get involved in designing a support programme. If a local organization drives the process, there will be a shift in emphasis from collecting information from the bottom to collecting it from above. This might include learning about the enabling environment, consulting powerful stakeholders, and learning about sources of funds and resources for support and how to access them.

At the end of this stage, the various ideas for a support programme have been developed into a complete, funded and approved framework ready for implementation. The more formal version of such a design is the 'Project Document', but it can take other less formal forms. The next stage takes the programme from an approved design up to the point where it can start collaborative work at specific sites.

Start-up: creating an action-learning organization and making initial appraisals



Designers rarely implement support programmes, because designing has become a rather special job. Implementers might be left to interpret the written design themselves, and they can create their own understanding about what the support programme is about. Clear goals in a design are useful, but often there will still be room for flexibility. Flexibility is both an asset and a liability. It provides opportunities to collaborate with others in new and effective ways but also allows distraction and diversion away from initial intentions.

The risks arising from flexibility can be minimized if:

- there is some continuity of personnel from the design to start-up stages; and
- staff have an opportunity to gain and share a clear understanding of the guidance provided in the design and what this might mean in practical terms.

The start-up sets the tone for following stages but unfortunately it is the stage that is often rushed under pressure from dominant actors, who want to see quick results and activities in the field. Start-up should not be rushed because there are several fundamental questions that always arise at this stage, and the way these are treated has a substantial impact on the participatory process. The questions are the following.

1) Who is going to deliver the support and how well are they equipped to undertake participatory action and learning with multiple stakeholders?

2) Are the sites under consideration really suitable for achieving the intended goals and objectives of the support programme?

3) What methods should be used to run the programme and to engage local people and other stakeholders in the first round of support?

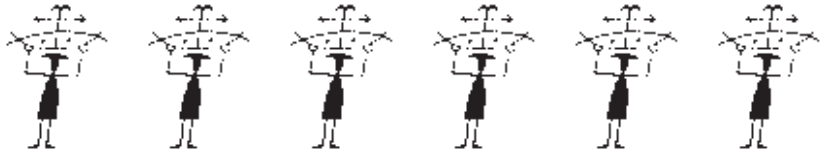
A design may be given to an existing organization to implement, or it may require the establishment of a new one. Either way, the organization needs to get or develop good staff to manage the programme and work in the field. Often, there is a shortage of skilled staff who can start work immediately, so the start-up stage usually takes some time to prepare staff prior to starting collaborative work in the field. The right attitudes, behaviour and skills appropriate to working in a participatory way are required in addition to the technical skills that are required to support natural resource management. This is particularly important for the first round of support, in which trust is built with other stakeholders. Staff need to be able to use specific participatory methods and tools, and need to have the skills to steer a course through uncertainty based on action-learning, as described in Chapter I. Achieving this state of readiness may involve the following tasks:

- recruitment of new staff, transfers, or the allocation of duties to existing staff to ensure that the aptitude and gender mix of senior management and field teams is appropriate for participatory work;
- assessment of training needs and the delivery of training programmes and follow-up support in the field to equip staff with the skills required; and
- promotion of participatory approaches and teamwork within the work practices of the organization. (This is based on a principle of demonstration that suggests that the organization itself must train, plan, work and reflect in a participatory way if it expects staff to work in a participatory way with users and other stakeholders.)

Site selection is always a major issue at start-up. The design may include:

- no pre-selected sites, but the criteria for selecting sites;
- no pre-selected sites, but a generally defined area or district to work in;
- pre-selected sites, but without prescribed activities; or
- pre-selected sites and prescribed activities.

If sites have been pre-selected in the design stage, implementers should have the right to review these selections. This is justified because the circumstances at a particular location determine whether collaborative management can be promoted easily or not (see Chapter 3), and these need to be known before supporters commit themselves to working at any site. An important condition for collaboration is whether there is interest and willingness of local people to get involved with supporters. It is better to check things out at a potential site, using an extractive RRA, and confirm the suitability of the location before collaboration begins. A hasty commitment to a site by supporters might be regretted later (see Box 2.3).



BOX 2.3

CHECK IT OUT FIRST

According to the design of a support programme, a village in Senegal was supposed to engage in collaborative management of a new piece of infrastructure to service all the wards of the village. It was generally seen as a worthwhile initiative. In the feasibility study, the social and institutional situation was investigated rapidly with the help of some farmers.

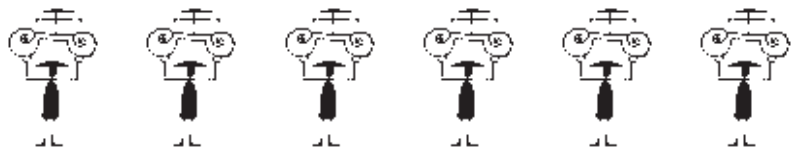
During implementation of the design, it turned out that four wards of the village had little history of working together, no common political basis for decision-making, and different ethnicity. While the four wards could generally coexist, no village institutions existed that could serve as a vehicle for collaborative management. Leaders also feared that the proposed development would increase conflict among the wards over authority and benefits. Having discovered this problem, the project was cancelled and replaced by some ward-level activities with the consent of all ward leaders.

The start-up stage of the project did not check out the circumstances before initiating the infrastructure development. Cancellation of the project occurred after promises had been made, expectations had been raised and work had commenced. Confirmation of the required conditions, or checking the critical assumptions of the design could have been undertaken by initial appraisals during start-up.

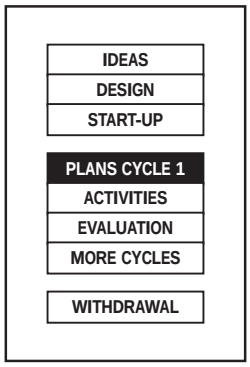
There are a number of other benefits obtained by undertaking an initial appraisal of sites before the real collaborative work commences. Such appraisals allow supporters to:

- refine previous stakeholder analyses and establish relationships with local people;
- tailor participatory tools to fit the local conditions by using the initial appraisals as a testing ground; and
- use improved knowledge about labour schedules, gender roles, politics, organizations and other local circumstances to improve the way supporters plan to go about their work in the next stage.

The supporters may choose to feed back the information collected in initial appraisals to stakeholders at each site and inform or consult them about the selection process. It is useful also to inform and consult the programme's sponsors about site selections so that implementers retain a secure mandate to move into the next stage.



Goals and action plans for the first cycle of support



In this stage, supporters get down to the business of developing specific collaborative initiatives at each selected site. Supporters adopt more active approaches to participation and take on roles of specialist or catalytic agent (see Chapter 1). Participatory assessment and planning exercises involving representative members of a wide cross-section of stakeholder groups are initiated to:

- re-introduce supporters to participants, build relationships and reduce suspicion;
- engage representatives in assessing needs, setting goals for collaboration at each site, and identifying potential initiatives;
- work out who wants to be involved in what;
- study the feasibility of initiatives; and
- negotiate arrangements for implementation.

At the heart of participatory assessment and planning for sustainable management lie negotiations about what can be done by whom, what is feasible, and how the costs and benefits should be distributed (Theirry Facon, pers. comm., 1997).

Facilitating such negotiations may sound relatively straightforward, but it is not. There is no single sequence of activities for each case. Each of the activities listed above may be repeated several times if new information is revealed, if participants enter or drop out of the process, or if preferences change. Challenges arise in working out who is and who is not participating in planning exercises and whether or not various groups have the opportunity and power to participate in decision-making (FAO Département du Développement Durable, 1997).

In addition, it is sometimes difficult to know at what level decision-making is happening. Decisions can be made on individual, household, subgroup, group and community levels, and positions are constantly being reviewed as planning proceeds. Often the problem has to be broken into manageable parts for decisions and negotiations to become meaningful to particular stakeholders (Theirry Facon, pers. comm., 1997).

Negotiations about collaborative initiatives can reveal differences between the needs and values of locals and the needs and values of external, technically competent specialists who are working as supporters. In developing countries, rural people are not always exposed to the same economic, political and technical knowledge that is held in other parts of the country. The common outcome when these differences are encountered is a form of incentive aid, in which locals get some of the support they

need in exchange for doing other things that the supporters think are necessary. Usually, local people do not ask for better systems for managing natural resources, and if they do, their request is ranked lower than other needs. This raises important questions about what the perceived incentives for collaboration are, how the different value systems are interacting, and whether the methods being used for negotiation are appropriate (see Chapters 3 and 4).

At many points, participants declare their interests, constraints and conditions for further participation. They decide what they can and cannot do when potential activities are being identified and examined. Supporters are participants also, and they will decide what they will and will not do for each of the collaborative initiatives being discussed. For supporters, such decisions are critical and will be grounded on an interpretation of the goals and objectives of the support programme, the role they have adopted, and a knowledge of the conditions and opportunities at each site. This is where the previous effort on programme design and start-up preparations pays off. If the support programme has not been built according to the description provided above, supporters may need to revisit some of the basic design questions at this stage prior to making decisions about future participation in various collaborative initiatives arising from planning and assessment exercises in this stage.

The interests and intentions of participants depend on the feasibility of successfully implementing activities and confidence about obtaining the benefits as predicted. Commonly, supporters spend substantial amounts of time and effort in assisting with feasibility studies so that initiatives can be selected or discarded by participants. Feasibility studies mainly explore various alternatives that have different technical requirements, costs, benefits and organizational arrangements. The aim of supporters is to help participants find the best alternative. In general, the best alternative is the one in which technical details and costs match the participants' technical requirements and their willingness to pay or otherwise obtain them (Theirry Facon, pers. comm., 1997).

Negotiations can lead to nothing or they can lead to an agreement between supporters and participants for each feasible solution of mutual interest. Recorded agreements provide clarity about promises and intentions to do things. In some cases, agreements are drawn up as legally binding contracts, but in others they are merely informal records of intent.

Throughout these exercises, supporters need to be concerned about what is really going on because some interest groups might not be participating at all or they may be powerless to influence group decisions. The outputs of participatory exercises cannot be taken at face value and special efforts may be needed to engage all stakeholder groups fairly. For example, in many rural societies women are subject to social norms and workloads that can prevent them from participating fully and expressing their views openly in meetings and other exercises. Various disadvantaged groups may be excluded from planning and decision-making, or their participation may be manip-

ulated by more powerful forces. Supporters can take account of such power and equity issues.

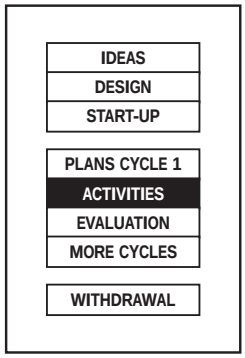
- They can conduct informal and low-key investigations:
  - to improve the understanding of interests, concerns and preferences of stakeholders; and
  - to monitor representation and other equity issues related to the participation of stakeholders in assessment and planning exercises.
- They can seek alternative exercises or modify tools to improve the access of disadvantaged groups to decision-making.
- They can undertake training and awareness-raising exercises to equip participants with the skills required to work effectively through assessments and planning activities.
- They can use the additional information obtained to question the reliability and hence the utility of outputs from planning exercises.

These efforts can provide a counterbalance to inequity in planning, but inequities may remain a feature of the social setting. Based on information from investigations about what is happening at each site, supporters can make their own decisions about how they will respond to the power and equity disparities that are revealed (see Chapter 3).

The discussion provided above focuses on things that are done with stakeholders located at a specific site. Other investigation and negotiation tasks may need to be undertaken at other locations and at higher levels of government in order to create or maintain favourable conditions for collaborative management and engage stakeholder groups that may be absent from the local area (see Chapter 3 for an overview of stakeholders).

Pre-existing or new conflicts may arise during negotiations and investigations, which can alter the sequence and nature of tasks described above. Indeed, supporters have choices about whether to get involved with conflict management, to delay certain tasks until circumstances improve, or to abandon the site altogether. Conflict management tasks and responses can arise at any stage and can vary or stop the generalized participatory process described here.

Activities and outcomes: implementing and monitoring



From the supporter's perspective this stage involves:

- assisting with managing implementation;
- building local capacity to manage;
- providing the inputs that were promised; and
- monitoring implementation according to the requirements of the support programme's design.

The overriding interests of supporters and participants alike are in securing the intended benefits from each activity and ensuring they are distributed to beneficiaries according to previous agreements. This is because the future of collaboration will depend largely on whether collaboration pays off in the first round.

Unfortunately, plans are based on imperfect knowledge, and reality rarely allows things to go according to plan. Some participants may not even know about plans if they have been negotiated by representatives. Implementation does not happen automatically, and it is problematic, especially when collaboration is voluntary. One way to deal with this is for someone to manage implementation so that things are facilitated, followed up and monitored, and so that emerging problems are addressed to ensure that progress is made towards achieving the agreed objectives for each initiative.

Initially, responsibilities for managing implementation may be either held by the support programme, shared with others, or allocated solely to another group. In the long term, supporters will be interested in making collaboration work without frequent outside assistance. Therefore, supporters may:

- provide only temporary assistance to the management of collaborative initiatives; and
- build the capacity of local participants to manage collaborative initiatives with minimal assistance.

Supporters can find themselves torn between the short-term need for success and the long-term interest in capacity building. Capacity cannot be built easily if there is always someone around to help. On the other hand, supporters find it hard to sit back and watch things go wrong when they have their own goals to achieve through collaborative work. This is an aspect of support that requires constant attention in first and subsequent cycles and becomes even more prominent in the withdrawal stage.

Managing implementation includes the following tasks:

- securing the skills, knowledge and other inputs required for implementation;
- collecting and recording information on progress and performance according to the plans for each initiative;

- distributing benefits;
- reporting progress to the wider group of stakeholders;
- addressing conflict; and
- deciding when to evaluate and review the original plan.

The actual role of the supporter and the length of time the supporter spends undertaking or assisting any of these activities will depend on agreements and plans made in previous stages. Since supporters wish to reduce their input over time, it is likely that the following tasks are undertaken in order to build capacity for local management:

- training needs are assessed and training opportunities are secured to equip nominated participants with the skills required for managing implementation;
- experience is shared and participants are engaged in hand-over phases for each management task held by the supporter; and
- problem-solving and back-up support is provided following hand-over of management responsibilities.

In addition to assisting management, supporters may have promised to provide certain inputs. This remains an obligation so long as everyone else adheres to the relevant agreement. It is good practice for the supporter to honour commitments by providing promised inputs and services in a timely and responsible manner. The supporter obtains credibility with other participants and sets an example for others to follow.

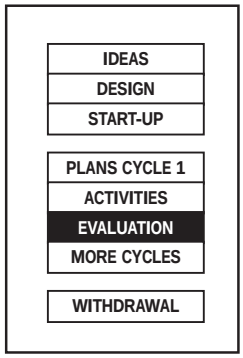
Both supporters and participants have interests in monitoring activities and outcomes that depend on the existence of a reasonable degree of transparency in implementation. Supporters have several monitoring issues to address.

- Is there open access to reliable information about activities and results?
- What issues are of interest to different stakeholder groups?
- Is the monitoring system able to reveal deviations from plans in a timely manner?

These questions arise from a general concern for power and equity and for the need to collect information for later evaluation. It is likely that supporters will need to assist participants with developing and managing a monitoring system that satisfies such requirements.

Supporters often have additional and separate monitoring requirements that arise from the design of the support programme rather than from any agreements for collaborative initiatives at specific sites. For example, it is common for donors and supervisors to require the support programme to provide progress reports that deal with many things that have little or no relevance to the other participants. In some cases, participants may agree to assist supporters with external monitoring requirements. Otherwise, supporters will simply undertake the additional monitoring separately from those of the collaborative initiative.

Lessons and evaluation: reflecting and making judgements about the process and outcomes



The participatory development process moves forward in cycles of action-learning (see Chapter 1). The previous stage includes some monitoring and corrective action undertaken during implementation, but in this stage supporters complete the first cycle of support by deliberately engaging participants in evaluation.[5] Experience is reflected on and lessons are extracted to feed into the next cycle. Evaluation contributes information and judgements towards the planning and assessment part of the next cycle, so there is some blurring of this stage with the next. However, it is important to recognize an evaluation stage separate from re-planning to ensure that it receives the attention it deserves prior to starting a new cycle of action-learning.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency for supporters to postpone or avoid evaluation, or to spend minimum effort on it unless there is some formal requirement to do otherwise. The reasons for avoiding evaluation include the fact that such exercises reveal bad things as well as good, and few people like to dwell on mistakes or poor performance. There is also pressure from programme sponsors to get tangible results quickly. This is unfortunate, because the lessons drawn from site-specific experience represent the single greatest asset for future planning, especially for pilot or research projects. On the positive side, there is increasing awareness of the need to make evaluations regularly at various levels, in addition to the more formal and conventional evaluations required by sponsors.

In this stage, the participatory process requires that supporters:

- raise awareness about the need for reflection on experience and evaluation of process and outcomes;
- facilitate reflection and evaluation sessions;
- build local capacity to reflect and evaluate; and
- conduct additional evaluations according to the requirements of the support programme's design.

There are two separate sets of reflection and learning required: one concerning the support programme itself and the other concerning the site-specific initiatives being supported. This means there is:

- evaluation by participants of process and results at specific sites (compared to plans and agreements for collaborative initiatives); and
- evaluation by supporters of approaches and results of the support programme (compared to the programme design).

Evaluation can reveal or initiate conflict because judgements have to be made about what is good and bad about the experience being reflected upon. Decisions need to be made about what criteria are used and how the experience compares to these criteria. Different stakeholders can have different perceptions about what worked well and what did not, just as there can be differences when initial plans are made. Records of initial agreements and preliminary discussions of criteria can help reduce the scope for disagreement over evaluation findings, but disagreement is still likely. Supporters may need to use their conflict management skills again to facilitate negotiation towards an agreement among the group about which findings should be taken into the next round of planning.

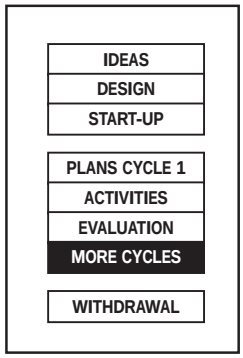
In summary, evaluations in this stage can include the following steps.

- Workshops or other types of exercises with participants to compare experience with expectations so as to determine:
  - what worked well and what did not work well;
  - what should be done differently and what should be repeated next time;
  - what are the main lessons; and
  - who should hear about them.
- Negotiations leading to final agreements among different interest groups about the main lessons to be fed back into the next stage of re-planning.
- Investigations to:
  - monitor representation and other equity issues related to the participation of stakeholders in evaluation exercises; and
  - improve the understanding of the impact of collaboration on various stakeholder groups.
- Complete or partial assessments of the impact of the support programme on human and ecosystem well-being using PRA techniques.
- Presentation of information from evaluations to representatives of a wider cross-section of stakeholders.
- Assessments of training needs and the securing of training opportunities to equip nominated local participants with the skills required for facilitating evaluation.

Evaluations of the management of the support programme are made informally by the support organization and its beneficiaries, and formally by its sponsors. In this way each of the two sets of reflection and evaluation described earlier is done in a participatory way involving multiple stakeholders.

The support programme and its sponsors may have additional and separate interests in learning and disseminating results from collaboration at multiple sites. This is not always the case, but it is common for a design to include objectives for evaluation that are separate from those for a single initiative.

More cycles of support: more planning, acting and learning



In the above discussion, there has been no attempt to define the scope and length of action-learning cycles, or the transition from one stage to the next. This depends on the nature of the collaborative action and the prevailing circumstances. Whatever the timing, there is a point at which plans and agreements are reviewed and the arrangements on which the collaborative initiative is based are refreshed. This assumes that the support is not limited to one cycle only and that the participants have not decided to stop or postpone the initiative based on the first evaluation. This is possible, of course, but for the purposes of our general description of the participatory process we will assume that there is agreement to continue with supported collaboration.

In this stage, the participatory process enters a new cycle, with the same major stages that have been described above, i.e. participatory assessment and planning, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation. The objectives and tasks for each stage, referred to above, also apply in new cycles. However, there is the difference that substantial support at a particular site usually comes to an end at some time, and each new cycle brings this point closer and closer. Most supporters want to get better at what they do and want to see local capacity grow so that collaborative management systems continue to improve and be effective after direct support has been withdrawn. These two interests of improvement and sustainability give rise to some additional objectives that supporters carry forward into subsequent cycles. These are:

- to become more effective in delivering support; and
- to reduce the costs of support at each site by becoming more efficient and encouraging greater cost-sharing.

Although these objectives are those of the support agent, they also have advantages for beneficiaries, in that support services are improved and self-reliance is encouraged.

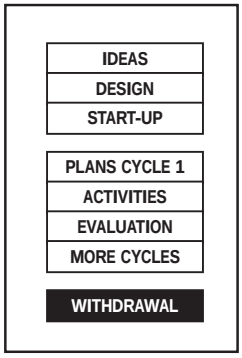
Several general tasks are associated with trying to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of support in successive action-learning cycles. They are:

- ongoing training programmes and follow-up support in the field to equip staff with the skills required for refining methods and improving productivity;
- participatory planning workshops to engage support staff and other participants in thinking about how to reduce costs and encourage greater cost-sharing;
- assessments of training needs and the securing of opportunities for field staff to further improve their management and negotiation skills related to the new cycles of support; and

- evaluation of the approaches and methods used by supporters against criteria of effectiveness and efficiency.

Again, there may be numerous other tasks undertaken in new cycles of support depending on the nature of activities. The ones described above are limited to those that are adopted by the support agent to prepare for withdrawal at one site and possible expansion over other sites. This reflects the focus of this entire overview on the support to collaborative management rather than on the collaborative management itself.

PART 3 WITHDRAWING SUPPORT



Having assisted a group of stakeholders for a number of cycles, as either a facilitator or an active participant in collaborative initiatives, it would be good to make an orderly departure of some kind. Unfortunately, support is withdrawn often in a disorderly way because of conflicts, poor performance or shifts in politics or policy, or simply because the support was never planned to be withdrawn in an orderly fashion. A disruptive exit does not contribute much to the maintenance of the gains made at a site. Indeed, the main test of the benefit of support comes when the support is taken away (John Rouse, pers. comm., 1997). The participatory process calls for a deliberate plan for withdrawal that requires the participation of multiple stakeholders.

In this stage, supporters:

- negotiate the circumstances and conditions for withdrawal; and
- engage in a phased dissolution or transfer of roles and responsibilities from supporters to other stakeholders.

The first objective seeks to plan the redundancy of the supporter in a participatory way, and the second objective puts this plan into effect.

There are several options for withdrawing and the choice depends on who the supporter is. The options are to withdraw:

- completely and forever;
- to a minimum but constant level; or
- until some special conditions or problems arise that require the provision of additional support.

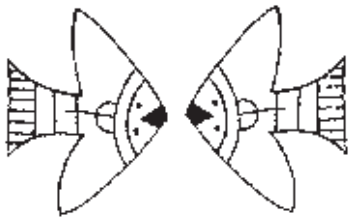
Some of the withdrawal tasks mentioned below may have been tackled in earlier stages. Indeed, it is preferable to make preparations for withdrawal over a long period. Supporters and beneficiaries could start planning for redundancy from the start

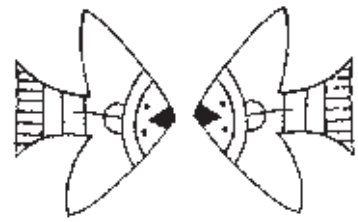
of their relationship, but this is not realistic in many settings. If nothing has been done before, the following activities may be undertaken in this last stage.

- A programme of negotiation between relevant stakeholders to define:
  - new allocations of roles and responsibilities in the absence of the supporter;
  - arrangements for phasing out support; and
  - the conditions under which future support will be sought and provided.
- Additional training programmes, periods of transitional support, trials of new arrangements and other preparatory activities prescribed by the agreement reached above.
- If agreed, follow-up support according to the negotiated conditions.

It is likely that an agreement for follow-up support may include some form of conflict management and authoritative support for enforcing the major rules of collaboration and resource use. If this cannot be provided by the support agent itself, there may be additional tasks involved in arranging for some other organization, such as a local government body, to commit and prepare itself for this service. However, it is likely that such an organization would have been engaged already in the collaborative initiative, even if it was not the main support agent. In such a situation, these tasks will form part of the agreement referred to above.

Although this stage represents the end of the generalized participatory process for supporting collaborative management, it is of course possible for supporters to return for other purposes. For example, supporters may wish to undertake a post-withdrawal evaluation to find out how participants are doing several years later. They may wish to engage stakeholders in other research, training or dissemination activities that relate to the supporter's own work plans. The withdrawal stage may be the endpoint of a particular process, but it does not necessarily end relationships and interactions between the beneficiaries and their supporters.





Chapter 2 - Endnotes

1. FAO guidelines describe the project cycle as consisting usually of seven main stages, which are reconnaissance, identification, preparation, appraisal, approval, implementation and evaluation (Heck, 1990). The first five of these are all about constructing a support programme and are covered by the first two stages of the participatory process as described here. The implementation stage of the project cycle has been broken down into five separate stages by us and the evaluation stage has been redistributed into several other stages. The FAO guidelines conceive the project cycle as a flexible and fluid process that can include various stages as described here.

2. It should be noted that in this chapter we use the term 'design' to refer to the structure of the support programme itself, rather than to the engineering design of any particular piece of infrastructure that might be built at a particular site.

3. It is not our intention to explain every aspect of designing and establishing a project here. There are publications that do this already (Paul, 1983; Uphoff, 1993; FAO Investment Centre, 1995a, b; World Bank, 1996). Rather, we wish to focus on those activities that involve the participation of multiple stakeholders. The practical aspects of implementing them are dealt with in Chapter 4.

4. The design of the support programme is separate from the design of actual collaborative initiatives at selected sites. Greater emphasis is placed on decision-making by stakeholders when specific initiatives are designed in later stages.

5. It is not within the scope of this overview to explore the topic of evaluation. The evaluation exercises described here could be formative or summative, depending on the needs and interests of managers. In general, the discussion refers to more informal and frequent forms of formative evaluation associated with providing lessons for management, rather than summative evaluation for determining impacts.

CHAPTER 3

The Actors and Environment for Collaborative Management

Having described the purpose, actions and sequence of the participatory process in the preceding chapter, it is now necessary to provide a brief overview of the actors involved and the environment in which the process takes place. The first part of the chapter provides generalizations about stakeholder groups encountered in the management of natural resources. The second part briefly summarizes circumstances of the physical and social environment that can have a major influence on collaborative management.

AN OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDERS: WHO ARE THEY?

The following overview is intended to provide some general ideas about stakeholders[1] and their basic characteristics. The overview does not represent a stakeholder analysis for any particular location or for any specific development initiative. It provides a simple classification of stakeholders, their possible interests in participation, and some of the barriers to their participation that might exist. Our classification recognizes four major groups of stakeholders. Each group is broken down into various subgroups based on different interests (see Figure 3.1).

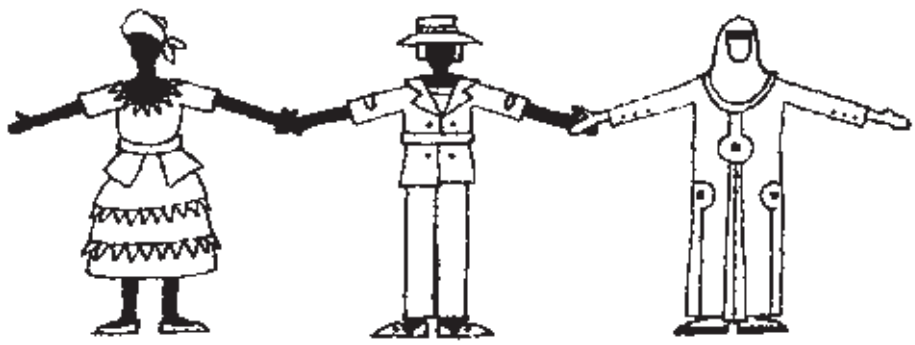
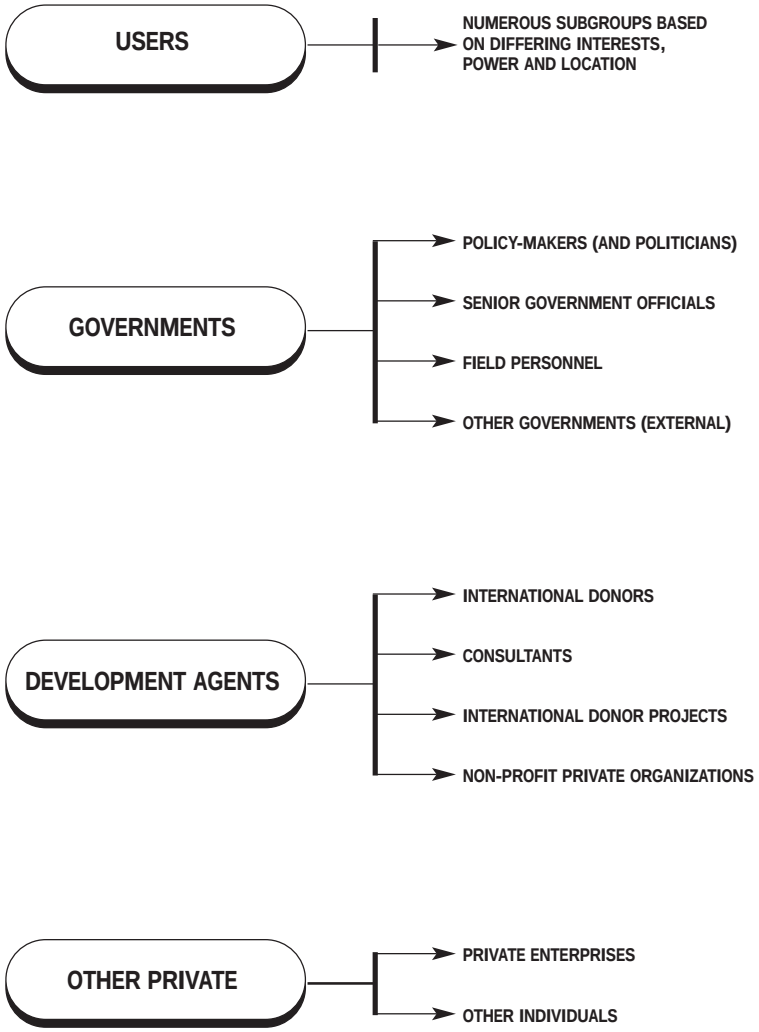


FIGURE 3.1

STAKEHOLDERS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



The classification shown in Figure 3.1 requires some explanation.

Users

Users are mentioned first because they represent the most complex group and the one that is most affected by resource management decisions. They rarely form a homogenous group because of the diverse range of interests that may exist among them. Indeed, the notion of an 'interest group' is a useful tool to assist identification of subgroups in a particular situation. Simply put, an interest group refers to a group of people who have similar sets of interests in respect to a particular situation (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). The most obvious subgroups are those based on livelihoods. For example, livestock owners, loggers, blacksmiths and hunters could represent different interest groups as related to their use of a particular forest. Another set might include landless people, poor women, members of lower castes and other disadvantaged peoples.

BOX 3.1

USERS

Interests: To secure use-rights and food security; to obtain access to decision-making; to obtain gifts and other development assistance; to obtain access to credit and new technologies; and to resolve conflicts and remove other obstacles to development.

Barriers: Lack of time, skills and confidence; distrust or misunderstanding, presence of hidden conflict; addiction to handouts; benefits that are not apparent; and participatory approach/methods that are not attractive.

In general, differentiation can be made on the basis of equity and power divisions, which may be defined by class or caste, education, wealth, gender, age and ethnicity. In addition, there may be important differences based on residential location. There are so-called transboundary users who might depend on the resource but have to put up with what other users do first. Examples include water users who are located downstream, or hunters who depend on the migration of wildlife populations across territorial boundaries. These users have the least chance to participate in resource management, and they represent some of the most vulnerable and the weakest stakeholders in natural resource management.

Governments

This group includes both the government with sovereignty over a specific natural resource and other external governments that have various regional or international interests in this resource and want to influence what happens to it. A classic example of a situation where external governments have a stake in natural resource management is where a major river crosses international frontiers.

The government is an important stakeholder because everybody else concerned with resource management has to work with it or through it to some degree. A number of other subgroups can be differentiated within government, based on their role and interests in resource management.

Policy-makers, including politicians, are likely to view natural resources in terms of how their management can contribute to the broader development goals of the

BOX 3.2

GOVERNMENTS

Policy-makers (and politicians)

Interests: To gain popular support; to reduce expenditure by cost-sharing; to secure better protection and utilization of resources; to obtain hard currency and other support from donors; to stimulate sustainable economic development and rural stability; and to manage conflict.

Barriers: Fear of changing power relations; reluctance to downsize government; tendency to over-regulate; reluctance to transfer authority; and government that is too busy and too distant.

Senior government officials and field personnel

Interests: To execute policies; to achieve targets linked to career advancement; to obtain resources, training opportunities and salary supplements through sponsorship; and to obtain greater job satisfaction.

Barriers: Doubt about the technical capacity of others; inappropriate attitudes and skills; lack of facilities for fieldwork; uncertainty about their role; and high mobility of skilled personnel and lack of continuity.

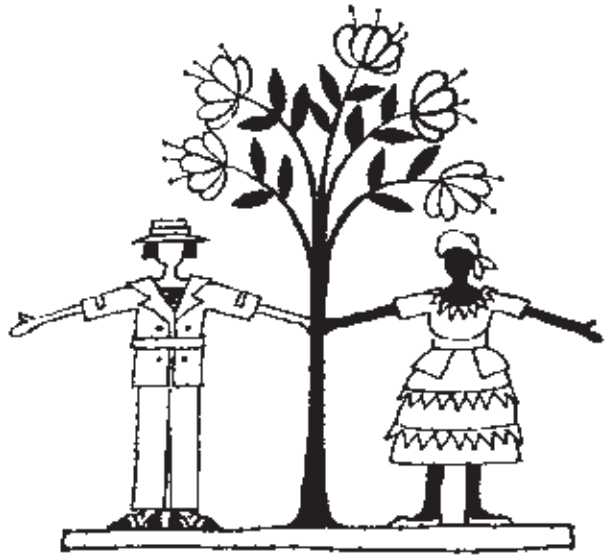
Other governments (external)

Interests: To raise awareness of transboundary impacts of resource management; to implement foreign policy; and to provide development aid and promote humanitarian and environmental agendas.

Barriers: Lack of forums for participation; divisive cultural, historical, commercial or political differences; and excessive distance from other stakeholders.

country, to local political agendas, or towards fulfilling the obligations of international treaties. Senior government officials in different line agencies, local government and other government bodies direct efforts for implementing policy and have a substantial impact over what is, or can be done by the government in particular locations. These people can influence policy and the way it is interpreted and implemented. For these reasons, they represent powerful stakeholders in collaborative management.

The government's field personnel represent another subgroup because they can provide the direct link between the government's requirements from above, the needs and interests of stakeholders absent from the local scene, and the needs and priorities of local stakeholders. In general they have different interests, knowledge and power than the other government subgroups and have a different role in collaborative management and its support. Overall there is great diversity within governments due to structural and other institutional differences. For this reason it is difficult to be very specific about their interests and barriers to participation. Some generalizations are presented in Box 3.2.



Development agents

Development agents provide funds and other services to national development programmes. This group includes: international donor organizations that grant or lend money; the consultants hired to formulate, review, study and evaluate development programmes; and non-government personnel of projects funded by the international donors.

BOX 3.3

DEVELOPMENT AGENTS

International donors

Interests: To disburse funds; to execute policies; to remain competitive and use resources effectively; to promote human or ecosystem well-being and capacity for self-help; to comply with international treaties; to promote political and humanitarian objectives; to gain prestige; and to promote exports.

Barriers: Lack of flexibility; short-term horizons; and excessive distance from other stakeholders.

Consultants

Interests: To promote the development industry; to follow donor and government policies; to gain satisfied clients; to improve reputation and income opportunities; and to extend network of contacts.

Barriers: Out-dated or lacking solid field experience; time constraints; inappropriate preconceived ideas; inflexible terms of reference leading to inflexible 'project documents'; underestimation of preparation and learning periods required; and rapidly changing priorities and policies of clients.

International donor projects

Interests: Similar to those of senior government officials, field personnel and consultants, plus, to achieve targets; to build the capacity of counterpart staff; and to remain competitive.

Barriers: Similar to those facing senior government officials, field personnel and consultants, plus, being bound to project cycle.

Non-profit private organizations

Interests: To execute policies; to remain competitive and use resources effectively; to promote human or ecosystem well-being and capacity for self-help; to enhance reputation and image; and to improve membership or funding base.

Barriers: Similar to those facing consultants and donor projects, plus, hidden political or personal agendas; reluctance to work with government; lack of time, skills and confidence; and over-reaching the capacity to implement.

Donors are administrators of funds and may have to follow policies that are set elsewhere. As a source of scarce funds, they wield substantial power. The consultants also have a large influence on how development programmes and projects are shaped and judged because they are involved in advising donors and governments about what to do, or what has happened, and often design support programmes. International donor projects have to follow the policies of the counterpart government, the conditions of the donor, and the design of the project, and they have to try to match all of this with the local situation. As a result their interests and influence on collaborative management is again different from that of the others.

Private non-profit organizations include a multitude of international, national or local organizations that hold some interest in natural resource management. Such private organizations can be self-appointed providers of development support acting as a donor, a consultant, a 'project' or an organized interest group. Alternatively, they can be formal associations or unions that promote shared positions, provide services to members or coordinate certain types of common activities. They include many different types of organizations also referred to as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), from local farmer organizations and community service organizations to international conservation groups.

Other private stakeholders

This group is also large and complex, and includes many other types of stakeholders not otherwise covered by any of the characteristics provided above.

Private enterprises and entrepreneurs that do not use a natural resource directly but are otherwise dependent on the flow of products from it, form an important subgroup. They have both valid interests in, and commercial influence on, management decisions.

Sometimes there are influential individuals whose interests and acts need to be recognized separately from other organized groups. Examples include a wealthy patron who might act independently, like a donor, or a researcher who completes a study and takes up a particular cause armed with the findings.

BOX 3.4

OTHER PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS

Private enterprises

Interests: To secure better access to raw materials or products from users; to sell goods and services to other stakeholders; and to gain a comparative advantage for business.

Barriers: Reluctance to share commercially sensitive information; divisive history of exploitation and debt creation; lack of representation; and distance from other stakeholders.

Other individuals

Interests: To achieve altruistic or personal objectives; and to attract attention and popular support.

Barriers: Can be similar to other private stakeholders and development agents.

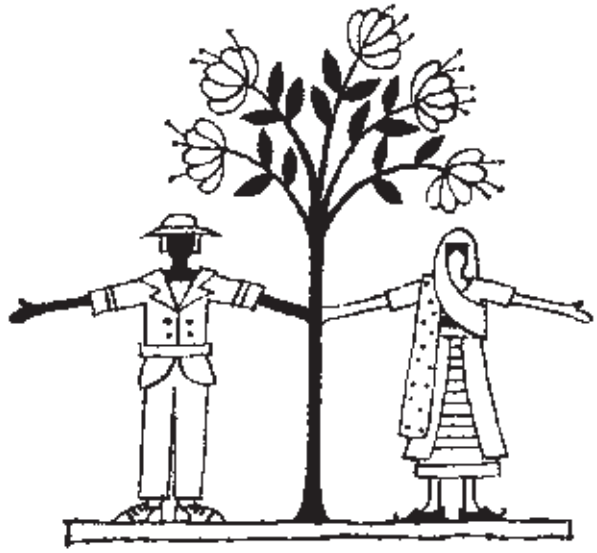
The role of stakeholders

Borrini-Feyerabend (1996) observed that stakeholders usually are aware of their interests, possess specific capacities or comparative advantages for participating in resource management, and are willing to invest something in management. However, not all stakeholders are interested in conserving resources or social welfare, nor do they all deserve an equal role in decision-making. In addition, many may only want to participate at particular moments, rather than be burdened with involvement in day-to-day management decisions. Therefore, there are significant differences in the dependency, interests, knowledge, motivation and power of stakeholders to be

involved in the collaborative management of natural resources. The major problems for anyone attempting to adopt a participatory process to work out are:

- who should participate;
- what role they should have;
- how they can be assisted to participate effectively; and
- how the influence over decisions should be distributed among them.

Many of these judgements will be made in a participatory way and will be reviewed over time, as more information is uncovered. It is important that issues be considered early in the participatory process to establish who the actors are, what their interests and roles in collaboration are, and how they can be engaged. Indeed, the participatory process starts by seeking answers to these questions in a stakeholder analysis (see Chapter 2).



THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT: ARE CIRCUMSTANCES RIGHT?

Introduction

Many attempts to support collaborative management run into trouble because of problems originating in the social or physical environment in which they operate. The circumstances that influence collaborative management and related support programmes can be referred to as the 'enabling environment'.[2] An enabling environment is not designed, but it can be avoided, influenced or accepted by supporters if there is a conscious effort to understand it. Box 3.5 provides an example of the sort of problems that can arise if the enabling environment is not understood.

BOX 3.5

UNDERSTAND THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT, OR ELSE…

An integrated rural development project in Bangladesh did not seek to be completely informed about government plans for economic development and water policy at the national level. As a result, they missed a crucial government decision to build a major weir upstream of their project area. The weir would deeply affect the local water supply. Many of the previous collaborative efforts by farmers and the project were wasted because they were based on wrong assumptions about the future availability of water. Participatory planning had to be done again and farmer confidence in the project was shaken badly.

Certain circumstances make people feel more or less confident about what they can do and how they use natural resources, and this affects their inclination towards collaborative management. Circumstances vary according to location and they can change over time. For example, both resource availability and access to markets vary from village to village and can change rapidly.

Supporters and potential supporters find themselves putting considerable amounts of energy into trying to understand what circumstances work for and against collaborative management. They also consider what can be done about the negative ones and how much difference any support can make under the prevailing circumstances. Parts of a support programme can be dedicated to improving the enabling environment. For example, changes in laws or policies can be sought at the national level and credit schemes can be promoted to improve the environment for doing other things. If nothing can be done about severely negative conditions, supporters must seriously consider not starting at all, or withdrawing, if they have already started.

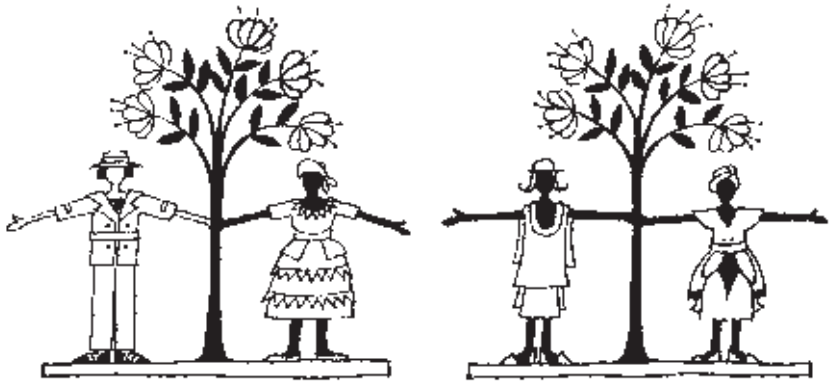
In summary, supporters are involved in:

- understanding the enabling environment and analysing what it means for the support programme;
- deciding whether to influence or adapt to it, or go elsewhere; and
- if influencing or adapting to a less than perfect environment, working out what to do.

Because circumstances can change, this understanding - analysing - deciding effort is ongoing.

The following section provides a broad overview of the enabling environment in the form of a checklist that illustrates the wide range of factors that can affect a support programme. We do not intend to be exhaustive because many social, physical and technological factors are highly specific to locations and natural resources.

Some of the issues are described as situations that are generally favourable to promoting and supporting collaborative management. Other issues are raised without indicating what situation is favourable or unfavourable because the outcome is linked to the type of initiative being promoted, so a definitive statement of their impact cannot be given here.



Some preconditions

People have basic preconditions for living, like food, shelter and health. If any of these are lacking or are under threat, people will focus their attention on them and have little interest or time to collaborate on anything else (see Box 3.6). Major disasters and other crisis situations create extremely difficult conditions in which to work on natural resource management, and many initiatives break down or are suspended until the crisis is over and basic preconditions of life are restored.

Conditions will be unfavourable when:

- people have major worries about the safety of life and property (arising from factors such as disease, violence and natural disasters);
- refugees arrive in a new area with heavy and unpredictable demands on local resources; and
- economic breakdown or political crisis within government causes institutions, law and order, and markets to disintegrate.

Natural resource management could form part of a response to a crisis. However, crisis management is a special subject and falls outside the scope of this overview. The participatory process described in Chapter 2 assumes the absence of such crises. Supporting natural resource management in times of crisis is a special subject that deserves attention. There is also a grey area between times of crisis and normality, often coinciding with relief efforts. During such relief operations, short-term coping strategies can be supported in anticipation of being able to engage in resource management initiatives later. Participation of local people in relief situations is positive because it helps to get people out of the role of victim and into one of decision-maker. This change is beneficial as a preparatory step towards engaging the same people in resource management (Wilde, 1997).

BOX 3.6

LIVING IN TIMES OF WAR

During the 1960s and the early part of the 1970s, many rural people in Laos lived under a constant threat of aerial bombing and relocation as a result of the war in Southeast Asia. Villages were abandoned and many people moved frequently over long distances, establishing temporary homes in caves and forests for protection. Normal commerce and trade was suspended, and economic development was severely disrupted.

In the absence of social stability, rural people did not develop and maintain local systems of collaborative forest management. In these times, the boundaries of resource use and user groups could not be determined with confidence, and there was little government effort to recognize and allocate forest use rights. Nowadays, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is able to undertake land allocation and support collaborative forest management.

Is there political and legal backing from a competent government?

The government influences a large part of the enabling environment through its policies, laws and development plans, and through the actions of politicians and government agencies. The influence of government is increasing in some areas and declining in others. There are huge differences between countries and sectors, but some basic and common issues can be identified.

Policy

Collaborative management takes place within a national economic development strategy. The orientation for this strategy may be inspired by ideology about the role of the state, or it may be imposed by fiscal crisis and associated prescriptions for structural adjustment of the economy. Whatever the reason, economic development policies and plans of the state have a large bearing on what can and cannot be done at subnational levels. Designers and implementers of support programmes will always need to know about state policy and plans, even if they wish to stay relatively clear of governments during implementation.

Some governments prefer development projects that operate in a top-down way. For example, they might prefer a project in which all the farmers in a particular village are forced to plant the same crop on a contiguous piece of land. Such a plantation mentality probably arises because it is easier for the government to control, regulate and supervise such projects compared to small, varied and scattered activities. Therefore, the operation of the participatory process will depend on how narrowly the government prescribes its development policy and how narrowly the policies are interpreted and implemented by government staff (Alice Carloni, pers. comm., 1997).

Clearly, flexible economic policies and open interpretation are favourable circumstances for collaboration. Narrow definitions and rigid implementation are not favourable. Having said this, it is still worth pursuing a participatory approach even if the government has made up its mind already and is only marginally willing to listen to the people. Development is better with participation than without. Information derived from a participatory planning approach can be used to identify conditions under which government proposals will not work or under which they need to be modified. Information gathered by using a participatory approach can still influence senior decision-makers and can help create space for more participatory implementation at village level (Alice Carloni, pers. comm., 1997).

The next thing to consider is whether natural resource management is or is not a priority area for the government. If it is, how far is the state ready to go in transferring or sharing control of natural resources with others? This question is related closely to whether the government is planning to become a bigger or smaller presence in the sector concerned. For some sectors, such as irrigation in developing countries, small government presence is a favourable circumstance (Juan Sagardoy, pers. comm., 1997). In other sectors, such as in marine fisheries, a strong government presence may be desirable.

Specific resource policies can be analysed to determine whether or not they are conducive to collaboration by asking:

- what would be the roles of the government and users in implementing the policy;
- who would make decisions at various levels;
- who would pay the costs; and
- who would be affected (Uphoff and Cohen,1979; Small and Carruthers, 1991).

A situation in which stakeholders can influence policies is better than one in which they are excluded. In order to get and keep collaborative management on the policy agenda, it is instrumental to have a high-placed 'champion' in the government (Kevin Gallagher, pers. comm., 1997). A champion is a knowledgeable and influential person who passes on information, speeds up helpful processes and slows down harmful ones, 'massages' decision-makers, and is willing to use his or her formal and informal power to help.

The politics of participation

Politics involves public decision-making, wielding authority and allocating public resources. It also involves exercising power to control resources that can be directed towards pursuing ideological causes, generating favour or securing political support.

Supporting collaborative management has consequences for political processes and vice versa. Participation can work only if the political circumstances are right (John Rouse, pers. comm., 1997).

BOX 3.7

MANAGING THE POLITICS

A regional support programme that operated with a high profile in several countries and emphasized people's participation in development, experienced major problems because it upset politicians in several countries. As a result, activities in Sri Lanka and Zambia were modified to include a specific strategy for dealing with politicians and the political process.

Activities were re-started deliberately on a small scale and with a low profile. Activities and results from pilot efforts were communicated to local politicians to show them what was going on. They were engaged as participants rather than observers and they were kept informed. Endorsement of the activities by the politicians followed in most cases, making intensification and replication of activities elsewhere much easier.

Desirable political circumstances include the following:

- there is a high-level political support for collaborative management;
- collaborative management systems enjoy local legitimacy; and
- the leaders or membership of any organizations set up under collaborative management systems are acceptable to prominent politicians, and these politicians agree with what the organizations are doing.

At the local level, a number of different political factions may be evident and may be strong enough to be considered as representing separate interest groups. In this case, their interests and preferences will be dealt with much like any other interest group in a stakeholder analysis. The difference is that such groups can stand to lose from power changes, and their fears will influence their behaviour. There may well be conflict. The question is whether any political conflict is too disruptive for collaboration to work. This can only be answered by making a judgement on a case-by-case basis.

Legal aspects

The legal basis of resource management

Collaborative management can work if stakeholders have confidence in receiving the anticipated benefits from resource use, both in the short and long term. The following are the basic legal criteria for gaining confidence:

- management is based on officially recognized rights;
- the rights are enforced; and
- stakeholders stand a reasonable chance of successful appeal if the rights are infringed or ignored.

Customary or locally accepted rights are of limited use. Holding legal rights as well as customary ones can increase confidence, which in turn stimulates interest in collaboration with the government and investment in resource management. However, the legal situation is often complex, and laws can be interpreted or applied differently by government officials. Another problem might be that people do not know about the law or their rights.

Therefore, there are some additional criteria for the enabling legal environment:

- use rights and privileges are secure and are recognized by the government;
- people know about their legal rights;
- if rights are not secure now, the government intends to help and recognize some of them in the future;
- there is sufficient access to authority and appeal procedures to protect these rights and settle disputes;
- laws and regulations are applied without arbitrariness or randomness;
- laws and regulations are applied without corruption or favouritism; and

- if government implementers do act in negative ways, there is an accessible independent body that can deal with complaints in a constructive way.

The enabling environment is complicated when there are current activities or uses that are seen as illegal, or when there are major differences among stakeholders regarding the interpretation and acceptability of various formal and informal rights.

Unhelpful laws can be changed, poor implementation of laws can be addressed, and disputed rights can be renegotiated, but it may take a long time. Such unfavourable circumstances may not stop a supporter if plenty of time is available and if the behaviour and views of stakeholders indicate that such improvements are achievable.

The legal basis of local organizations

In addition to rights that deal directly with the use of natural resources, there are legal issues that affect how groups conduct business and other formal affairs. There is a legal basis to many economic transactions and activities in society. Local[3] organizations that wish to conduct their affairs on a sound legal footing require appropriate legal status and protection.

The following illustrate some of the favourable legal conditions for collaboration:

- a legal foundation is available to user groups that permits them to enter into contracts, open bank accounts, borrow money and go to court (see Box 3.8);
- contracts with private organizations and agreements with governments are enforced; and
- if there is no legal foundation, it is possible to achieve the aims of collaboration without a legally recognized organization.

BOX 3.8

IN SEARCH OF LEGAL PERSONALITY

Senegal's Groupements d'Intérêt Economique (GIE) provide an example of an effective legal foundation for local organizations. It is now copied elsewhere in Africa.

A GIE gives legal personality to a cooperation between individuals. A GIE can own assets, sue and be sued, and can apply for credit.

Originally thought of as a way to provide easily accessible legal status for small family enterprises, GIEs soon proved handy vehicles for the purposes of collective action. Donor projects and others started recommending local organizations to apply for GIE status, often scrapping associations with ill-defined legal status. The GIE construction reduces risks for the individuals that compose it because it is clear. This is good news for them as well as for other stakeholders, such as banks, traders and donor projects.

Policy implementation by government bodies

Supporting collaborative management involves either working through or with one or more government bodies. There are circumstances where government bodies can definitely help the participatory process, such as when:

- there is clarity about which government bodies are responsible for executing certain policies;
- the allocation of power and responsibility is efficient, i.e. there are only a few rather than many bodies, and the concerned bodies have a mandate to work with others;
- it is clear who else in the government should be involved or consulted in initiatives;
- the main government body is flexible and has credibility with stakeholders;
- there is sufficient budget and personnel for them to do their job;
- government officials have the necessary attitudes and skills (see Box 3.9); and
- the support programme can work with the government and other stakeholders without having to provide many incentives (countless are the programmes where, in the name of the enabling environment, officials drive programme cars, field staff drive programme motorbikes, outside personnel take on regular agency tasks, everybody goes to nice courses and seminars, and consultants are present all over the place).

BOX 3.9

SKILLS AND ATTITUDES CAN BE CHANGED

A pest management programme in Asia worked with government extension services to conduct crop protection experiments jointly with farmers. It was clear that many extension agents lacked the skills to help farmers analyse and learn from their own experiences, because the agents were caught up in a routine of technical training courses and follow-up visits.

The pest management programme took the extension agents through intensive courses on 'how to be a facilitator'. This involved teaching how to train without formal lectures, spending time in the fields brainstorming and sharing observations with farmers, learning how not to give immediate textbook answers but to ask new questions instead, and conducting exercises in which the roles of farmer and extension agent were reversed.

The results of the new programme were striking. Extension agents applied their new skills and continued to work in the new way after the programme ended. The farmers, extension agents and even curious politicians welcomed and enjoyed the change.

Do markets provide opportunities and confidence?

Markets influence resource management by providing (or not providing) economic and financial benefits to stakeholders. People will not participate in collaborative management unless they see some gain in doing so (Chambers, 1988). Among the numerous values and benefits of natural resources are the products or raw materials that can be used for subsistence, barter or sale. Financial gains are a major motivator and are determined largely by market opportunities and their associated risk. If people feel more certain about the gains and costs involved in resource management, they will be more inclined to invest in collaboration. Among other things, the interests of stakeholders in resource management are dependent on:

- the importance of natural resources for people's livelihoods;
- the linkages between the resources and other productive systems;
- the orientation of the economy, whether primarily towards subsistence or cash;
- the market places and prices;
- the presence and nature of various actors in market chains;
- the costs of labour and other inputs;
- the availability and costs of financial services;
- the availability of reliable market information; and
- knowledge about rights and market regulations.

The opportunities for resource managers to benefit from production is an important circumstance to understand. In complex economies, raw products can be transformed many times over and pass through a large number of actors along a market chain, from the original collector of the raw resource to the end consumer of a finished product. Many of the issues listed above influence the benefits available to resource managers by determining how much of the economic activity based on the resource is controlled by them and how much value they get in return.

Powerful actors such as governments, factory owners or large logging companies may control important parts of the market chain, reducing returns to resource managers and creating substantial economic disincentives for collaborative management. Local users may be excluded from many stages of production, with only raw materials or semi-processed products being handled by them.

Marketable resources are often scarce, so conflicts arise over resource use because of their potential value. Similarly, economic values can change over time, provoking new conflicts over use or access rights. The term 'collaborative management' may imply harmony and working together happily, but economic and financial circumstances can create or encourage competition and reveal new or hidden conflict over resources.

Prices are fundamental to the concept of incentives. In many cases, producers of forest products do not have much information about realistic prices anyway, especially

in rural areas. In addition to the manipulation of prices by the private sector, governments can also alter prices and create disincentives through such things as:

- government regulations that fix prices or constrain the quantity of products that can be produced or moved;
- government subsidies or levies;
- the presence of the government as both regulator and buyer or seller; and
- the way regulations and charges are enforced and applied.

In addition, development agents can adversely affect markets and prices indirectly through various forms of support. For example, donor projects that fund nurseries and give away free tree seedlings can depress seedling production in the private sector and lower seedling prices. Another example is provided in Box 3.10.

In many places there are black, or unofficial, markets, with their own set of players and prices. Black markets that trade in products from natural resources can cause problems when there is an attempt to facilitate open collaboration between the government and other stakeholders. In some cases, black markets can prevent collaboration between the government and users if the users are heavily engaged in the black market and neither party is interested in legitimizing it.

BOX 3.10

IMPACT OF A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON THE IRRIGATION SERVICES MARKET

A donor project in Senegal used to help farmers with the management of small irrigation systems by providing free inputs. This effectively prevented private enterprise from establishing services in the area.

A currency devaluation affected both input and rice prices, and the economics of the project were reassessed. The project stopped providing gifts to the irrigation schemes, much to the chagrin of farmers and at the expense of attacks by local politicians. The project had involved higher level government in the reassessment and as a result, the project withstood local criticism.

As the political dust settled, private enterprise started to serve the area. Procurement officers of farmer groups began to organize collective bargaining with traders, using the framework of a hitherto unnoticed farmer federation. The change assisted the private sector and strengthened the capacity of the farmer group. Says a member of the federation's board: "All we used to do with the project was wait for presents, but this is business, you know."

Infrastructure

The influence of infrastructure on collaborative management depends on the needs of stakeholders and what collaboration is trying to achieve. The protection of a core wilderness zone inside an important national park might best be served by the absence of infrastructure. On the other hand, the interests of the rural poor who are using natural resources outside of a protected area system might best be served by access to physical infrastructure such as roads, electricity and irrigation. Infrastructure development in a specific area may or may not be prescribed by government development policy and plans, and a support programme may or may not have the resources to create the required infrastructure if it is absent. Either way, infrastructure forms an important component of the enabling environment. A support programme might choose to:

- target or avoid sites that are remote and devoid of infrastructure;
- select sites that have specific infrastructure characteristics;
- encourage others to assist in the development of critical infrastructure at selected sites; or
- make infrastructure development a component of the support programme for collaborative action.

In simple terms, the decision depends on what infrastructure is required, what is already present, whether missing infrastructure forms a critical part of the development agenda of the support programme, and what the social and environmental impacts of establishing it are.

Does the philosophy and practice of collaborative management fit the culture?

People's behaviour occurs in the context of shared beliefs, values and institutions. Societies establish rules and sanctions for rule-breaking, and assign various institutional roles to members. Collaborative management of natural resources must somehow fit into this cultural setting. According to the definition of collaborative management (see Chapter 1), the basic requirements are that multiple stakeholders can share decision-making about natural resource use and cooperate in implementing management arrangements. It might be difficult to identify easily the relevant cultural circumstances and whether collaboration can be promoted easily or not. To complicate matters, a number of different ethnic groups may be present in a given situation, each with different sets of shared norms and values.

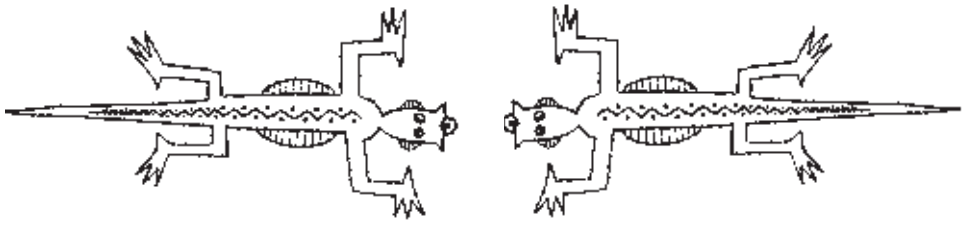
A starting point for understanding the cultural environment is to explore whether:

- people's participation has a place in the ideology of the state;[4]
- a tradition for collaborative management of natural resources exists in the locality concerned; and
- appropriate institutions for collaboration already exist.

The following aspects can be examined at a particular location to gain a better understanding of the conditions relevant to promoting collaborative management.

- What are the roles and rules for resource use?
- How are rights and privileges distributed and how are decisions made?
- How do disadvantaged groups perceive their rights and how are they perceived by others?
- What can and cannot be discussed in public?
- How do local users respond towards government?
- What are the institutional rules of representation?
- How are conflict, rule-breaking and mistakes handled?
- How do local people interact with outsiders?

Appropriate behaviour, roles, procedures and rules for collaborative management either pre-exist in a particular setting or need to be developed. Clearly, it will be easier to promote collaborative management if the cultural and institutional environment can accommodate it already. However, it is important to remember that cultural norms are not fixed. Cultures are dynamic and can be modified if people perceive a need for change. Therefore, resource users can modify and change norms for the purposes of collaboration if it is in their interests to do so (Bob Fisher, pers. comm., 1998). Cultural circumstances and the interests in collaboration can be explored early in the participatory process, and a determination can be made about whether an enabling environment is present or likely to emerge.



CONCLUSION

The preceding discussion has shown that there are many circumstances that can influence the enabling environment for collaborative management. There can be many stakeholders with different interests and preferences for management, and rarely is it possible to engage every single stakeholder in decision-making. There can be significant differences among people in their capacity to participate and influence outcomes. There can be conflict and numerous problems arising from the cultural, political, legal and economic circumstances.

As a result, a participatory approach to supporting collaborative management might be seriously constrained, or might fail, for a number of reasons. For example, one or more of the stakeholders may not be in favour of collaborative management, and if these stakeholders hold significant power they can make sure that collaboration does not work.

There is little to be gained by pushing an approach in an environment that is unsuited to it. This means that a support programme should always undertake a stakeholder analysis and check the enabling environment. It should reserve the right to walk away from an impossible set of circumstances in a specific location. Indeed, the act of walking away might stimulate stakeholders to rethink their position, or to work through a particular problem in the enabling environment, so that collaboration may have a better chance to succeed in future attempts.

This position is justified because often supporters are in the business of encouraging people to take risks and make investments that they might otherwise have avoided in the absence of the support programme. Mistakes by supporters and others during collaboration can be costly both for the rural poor and for the supporter. The rural poor can lose time and resources, and the supporter can lose credibility. Supporters carry this responsibility towards the people whom they are trying to help. This increases the importance of checking on stakeholders and the enabling environment at the start, and of reflecting and evaluating frequently so that problems and mistakes can be anticipated or revealed as early as possible.

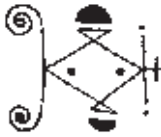
Chapter 3 - Endnotes

1. This term was defined previously in Chapter 1, and the definition is repeated in Box 2.1 in Chapter 2.

2. The term has been coined by David Korten in publications describing how the Philippines National Irrigation Authority turned hundreds of irrigation systems over to farmer management (Korten and Siy, 1989).

3. Uphoff (1986) provides a useful definition of the term 'local', which includes three levels of society: the locality level, "...a set of communities having cooperative/commercial relations"; the community level, "...a relatively self-contained, socio-economic-residential unit"; and the group level, "...a self-identified set of persons having some common interest; maybe a small residential group like a hamlet, or neighborhood, an occupational group, or some ethnic, caste, age, sex or other grouping."

4. Notable instances of changes of state ideologies from hostile to favourable towards participation are seen in connection with Indian independence and, more recently, with the ascendancy of Mandela in South Africa.



CHAPTER 4

Practical Aspects of Managing a Support Programme

INTRODUCTION

Understanding stakeholders and the enabling environment is a great advantage for implementing the participatory process. However, the success of a support programme also depends on how the programme is managed and what sort of relationships are established with the groups who actually manage natural resources. In addition to the many conventional management and relationship issues, there are a number of aspects that are specific to managing a participatory process and servicing the needs of collaborative management. These aspects are discussed below.

For the following discussion, we will assume that a group of local users is responsible for managing a specific resource, through collaboration:

- with various parts of government;
- with private enterprises, based on the productive outputs of the resource;
- with a support programme; and
- among themselves, as a user group.

In this case, the support programme does not aim to take over the core activities of collaborative management, which are represented at the centre of the diagram provided in Figure 4.1. Rather, supporters concentrate on servicing the fundamental needs of users for undertaking collaborative management. These include:

- confidence to manage;
- forums and process for negotiating overall goals with multiple stakeholders;
- knowledge and skills for management;
- communication channels for being informed and informing others; and
- financial and other resources for management.

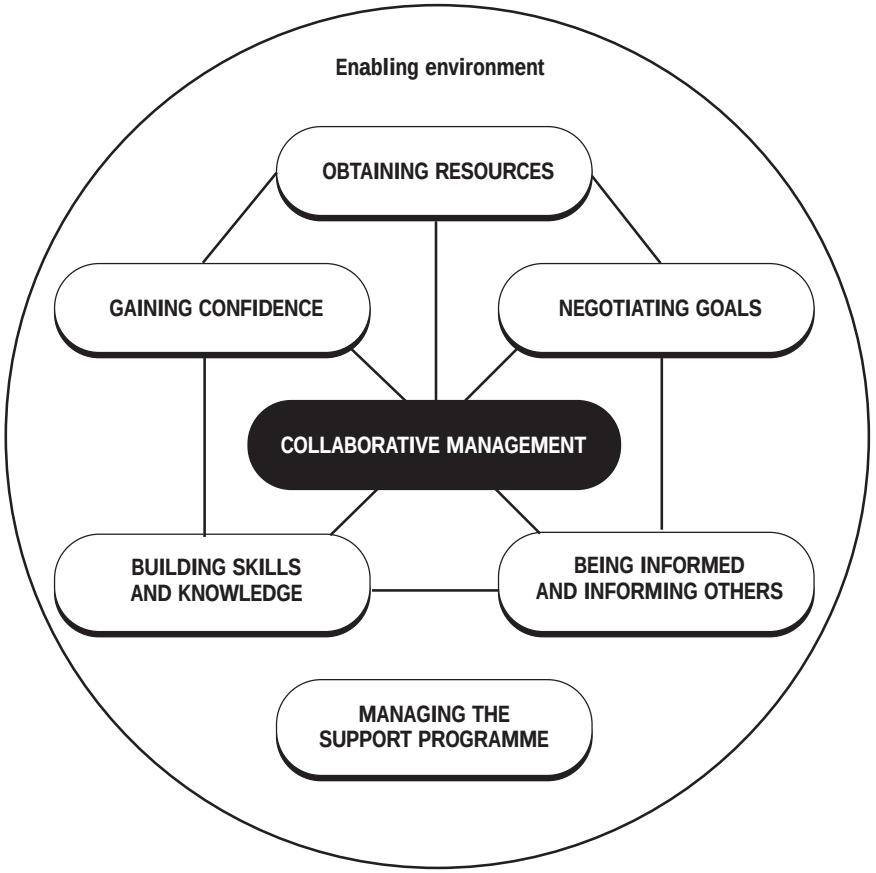
These sets of issues are represented in the diagram presented as Figure 4.1.

These needs for support, combined with the unpredictable nature of the participatory process, place significant demands on a support programme. The chapter opens with an overview of some of the common management problems and pitfalls experienced by support programmes. It then discusses some suggestions for programme management and the needs of stakeholders.

The chapter draws largely on the experience of the authors and other colleagues involved in collaborative management. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the issues. Rather, it is indicative of the scope of practical aspects that can emerge during implementation of the participatory process.

FIGURE 4.1

SETS OF ISSUES RELATED TO SUPPORTING COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT



CONSTRAINTS AND PITFALLS IN ADOPTING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

It seems that support programmes can suffer from a number of internal problems that become impediments to undertaking action-learning and adopting appropriate participatory approaches. Some of these impediments, and possible reasons for them, are described below.

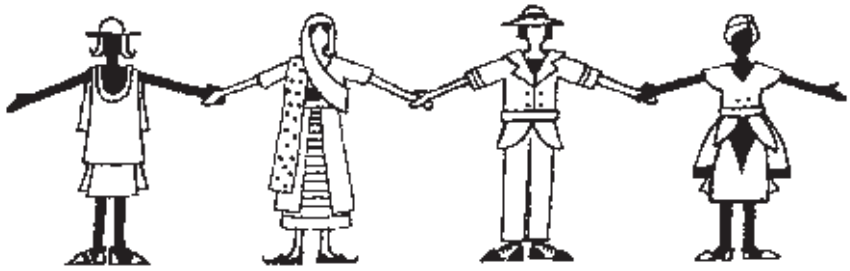
Problems with the design of, or commitment to, the support programme

Sponsor's preferences for starting big and setting physical targets

A donor or government policy-maker may be interested in disbursing funds at a specific rate and may be eager to have a support programme do as much as possible, as quickly as possible. This interest can be accommodated if there has been a history of experience and learning, and if the programme is ready to expand. However, if it is working in a new area, or on a new issue, the sponsor's preferences can be incompatible with action-learning. The danger exists that the programme will take shortcuts to please the sponsor, resulting in inappropriate behaviour, top-down planning and potential programme failure.

Lack of real commitment to support programmes

Naturally, the development and implementation of support programmes will stand or fall on the resources allocated to them. The sponsor may not provide adequate funds, staff and continuity for particular programmes. Within government, the perceived high costs of participation, the lack of information about its effectiveness and moves towards economic rationalism all act to limit the resources made available for people's participation (Gericke *et al*., 1992).



Assumption that participatory approaches are too costly and time-consuming

The adoption of active participatory approaches may increase the costs and time of programme implementation, and this is sometimes used as an excuse for not adopting them, or adopting them in a minor way only. The choice may be to use more conventional approaches to programme planning and risk failure, or to invest in a process that has a good chance of securing collaboration among stakeholders.

BOX 4.1

PRA TOO COSTLY?

In a comparative study undertaken in Uganda, it was found that using PRA tools increased the planning costs of an integrated conservation and development project by 9 percent. This amount was deemed to be insignificant, given that the previous approach of the project was failing to deliver reliable or useful information for guiding the project's activities.

Short lifespans of programmes

Sponsors tend to underestimate the time needed to establish an organization that can operate effectively and the time required for this organization to build local capacity for collaboration at field sites. They also have their own preferences for committing funds for specific periods, such as three to five years. Successful programmes may be built upon many cycles of acting and learning, occurring over a long period. For some natural resources, such as forests, periods of 10 to 20 years may be more realistic for building the knowledge and capacity for successful support in a particular setting.

Programmes with short lifespans and uncertain approval procedures for extensions can contribute to a high mobility of skilled staff (Patrizio Warren, pers. comm., 1997). This can regularly deplete the organization's capacity to apply participatory approaches and action-learning, leading to a loss of momentum in its activities.

Attitudes, behaviour and skills of supporters

Beliefs that the knowledge of outside experts has greater relevance and validity than that of local people

Highly trained 'technical experts' can often assume that outside knowledge has greater relevance and validity for resource management than does local knowledge. If such beliefs are present in support programmes, indigenous knowledge may be ignored or devalued, and the necessary efforts to learn about the resource and its management from local people may be diluted (Fisher, 1993). Especially in developing countries the knowledge of local users about resources is great, and is often better than that of government officials (Vanda Alterelli, pers. comm., 1997).

Tendency for staff to lack confidence in the ability of untrained local people to manage resources

The culture of the expert, referred to above, also creates a situation in which relevant officials lack confidence in the ability of untrained local people to manage resources (Fisher, 1995). Such a situation can sabotage the opportunity to achieve acceptable arrangements for collaborative management, especially where the state is the owner of the resources and is involved in the support programme. In addition, experts can hold technical definitions of sustainable management that may not be understood or shared by local users who do the actual managing. The expert may get stuck with these definitions rather than learning and reaching a shared notion of sustainability with users (Jon Anderson, pers. comm., 1997).

Individuals and organizations have difficulty seeing and accepting error as a learning resource

It is often difficult for individuals and organizations working in a competitive environment to examine error and failure, especially where there is a cultural preference for avoiding confrontation and conflict, as in many Southeast Asian societies. Ignoring mistakes, or dealing with them in a negative way, will of course limit the capacity of a support programme to learn from relevant experience and improve performance.

Tendency to overlook perceptions of local people

In some situations, there will be significant differences between the socially shared perceptions of local users and those of supporters. If these differences are overlooked, it is possible that supporters will not fully understand the preferences or behaviour of the users and will make flawed analyses of observations.

Tendency to ignore local institutions and local decision-making mechanisms

Initially, outsiders new to an area have little relevant understanding of the local situation, regarding norms of behaviour, local decision-making and informal organizations (Fisher, 1993). This results in a tendency for supporters to form new committees or establish new systems for decision-making that frequently do not work.

Overemphasis on questionnaires and large, formal meetings

The use of conventional questionnaire surveys commonly generates vast quantities of data with narrow scope, dubious reliability and low utility for participatory planning (Fisher, 1987). Despite the significant problems and costs, questionnaire surveys remain a popular tool in rural development. There is a role for short, simple questionnaires, but only after a significant amount of learning has been undertaken already, using other tools.

Meetings can be useful for information-gathering and decision-making if they are managed well and complemented by other less formal activities. However, in general, large group meetings provide limited opportunities for exploring issues in a participatory manner and they often fail to gain the active participation of the less powerful, poorer and less confident sections of the community. Key stakeholders rarely get to influence important decisions such as where meetings will be held, who should come, what will be discussed and how they are run. Despite these significant problems, there is a tendency for support programmes to overemphasize this technique in the attempt to engage local people in planning. If a support programme relies solely on meetings and questionnaire surveys for bottom-up planning, it is likely that its good intentions and effort will be largely wasted.

An incorrect assumption that local people have a low capacity to draw, plan, organize and act

It may be assumed by supporters that because of low literacy levels and a lack of formal education local people have a low capacity to draw, plan, organize and act. Such untested, erroneous assumptions may prevent support programmes from using many powerful participatory tools. When people are given the appropriate opportunity, they are found to be quite able to diagram, map, rank, plan and analyse (Chambers, 1992).

Low capacity of field staff in difficult circumstances

In developing countries, it is common to find that field staff have a low capacity to facilitate participatory development. Most formal education systems did not provide the current generation of field staff with the skills and knowledge necessary for taking on the new roles expected of them (Michelle Gauthier, pers. comm., 1997). The necessary skills are not readily obtained in short training sessions, and require long periods of training and follow-up to achieve (Patrizio Warren, pers. comm., 1997). To make matters worse, staff that do receive additional training and become highly skilled are likely to be promoted or recruited out of the field (Ron Maine, pers comm., 1997).

Even if field staff increase their skills and knowledge and get to stay in the field, their supervisors may have much less exposure and understanding of collaboration and what it means in the field. High demands and numerous constraints are put on field staff, which makes it difficult for them to do their job or apply the skills that they may have. They can also be subject to conflicting demands from above and below that intensify any capacity problems that they might have.

The capacity of a field team to undertake participatory action and learning with rural people can be enhanced if there is an appropriate gender balance in the team. This can help the team communicate with women where there are cultural constraints for outsiders to talk to women. In many developing countries, there is either a shortage of women candidates for field positions or an absence of equal employment opportunities. These represent challenges for assembling a field team that can work effectively with both men and women.

Anybody can claim to be an expert in the use of participatory approaches

It is not easy to judge the quality of practitioners either before or after participatory exercises are conducted by them. The recent interest in PRA has generated a high demand for expert advice, which may be supplied partly by people with limited or poor understanding and skills. Poor work may not only impact badly on individual support programmes but may also impede the adoption or sponsorship of these methods by others if such programmes continue to fail.

Participatory approaches can be improperly used

The problems associated with poor practitioners are compounded because participatory tools such as RRA and PRA can be badly used because of time constraints or a simple lack of understanding (Chambers, 1992). The approaches can be:

- rushed, if they are seen as providing short-cuts, thus yielding unreliable information;
- biased towards local people who have time and motivation to talk to field workers;
- misused through superficial adoption of methods in the absence of complete understanding and adequate training;
- seen as a replacement for other forms of investigation and study, even in situations where more formal or analytical research is called for;
- biased towards those people who appear to have knowledge; and
- either facilitated in a highly formalized way, or applied too rigidly and repetitiously, which reduces their potential effectiveness.

There is a danger for people who have been trained in PRA to become mechanistic and rigid in the application of the tools and to do poor analysis (Alice Carloni, pers. comm., 1997). Indeed, a major challenge for supporters is to achieve quality and rigour in using participatory approaches (John Dixon, pers. comm., 1997).

Recognition of such constraints and pitfalls provides a good starting point for improving the performance of support programmes. Lasting responses and solutions can be sought through programme management. Some examples of relevant management issues are provided below.

MANAGING THE PROGRAMME

Flexibility and action-learning

It has been stated many times in this document that there is no standard or unified formula for providing support to collaborative management. As a result, there are two special challenges for a support programme in managing the participatory process. These are to create and maintain:

- conditions that allow flexibility in programme implementation; and
- organizational capacity for action-learning.

The first challenge involves creating space to undertake action-learning. Unfortunately, the need for flexibility can conflict with the bureaucratic preference for set designs, workplans and timetables. There is a tendency for sponsors and programme managers to follow plans rigidly to achieve targets as initially set. Flexibility, and thus better support, can be sacrificed for the sake of getting the project completed as prescribed.

Flexibility can be won from sponsors and other programme partners by sharing more of the uncertainties, assumptions, approaches and lessons from the field with them. This can be done through meetings, awareness-raising workshops, documents and videos. Unfortunately, writing and sharing lessons is something that practitioners do not like to do very often, but it is worth the effort if it buys confidence and flexibility from programme sponsors.

Flexibility is useful only if it is tied to the use of action-learning approaches. As discussed in previous chapters, action-learning allows the programme to take account of changing circumstances and new information. There are some key institutional practices that are fundamental to engaging in successful action-learning. They include:

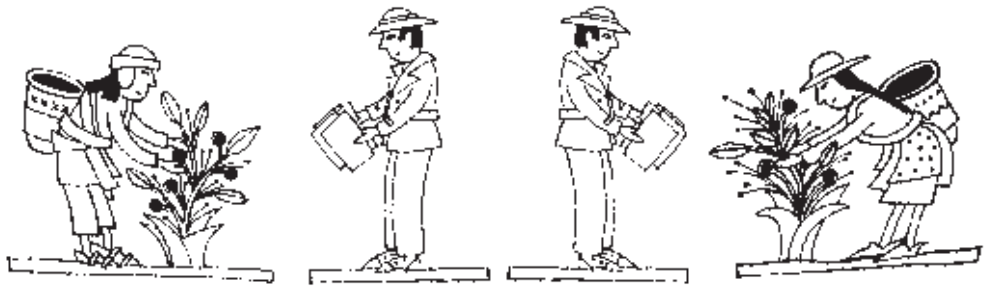
- identifying assumptions and hypotheses, and designing activities that test and improve them;
- taking a holistic view;
- strengthening horizontal communication between people and organizations;
- sharing and debating experiences, understandings and objectives;
- feeding back experience to inform and change policy and plans;
- encouraging beneficiaries to take control of their own projects; and
- accepting error and failure as important opportunities for learning (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991; IUCN, 1997).

A support programme needs to have staff who are capable of leading and participating in such practices. However, most of the responsibility for this will fall on programme managers. In addition to recruiting and training the right staff in the right way (see Chapter 2, Start-up), it is worthwhile for programme managers to develop internal policies, practices and incentive schemes to push the adoption and use of

participatory approaches and methods. Such policies, practices and schemes could include:

- activities for developing an action-learning capacity in the programme design and workplans;
- a participatory approach for internal programme planning and decision-making;
- plans for identifying and addressing skills development and gender issues within the programme;
- investment in staff training and follow-up support in the field;
- adequate field equipment and incentives to reward field staff for appropriate and productive periods of fieldwork;
- compulsory reporting of fieldwork and experience;
- incentives to reward timely completion of field reports and adequate record-keeping;
- involvement of field staff in frequent, informal evaluations; and
- rewards for good ideas, analysis and performance.

These are just a few of the specific actions that can be adopted by programme managers to improve the capacity of the organization for action-learning. The main thing is for programme managers to recognize that such a capacity is necessary for implementation and that it must be nurtured as a priority action in addition to the specific activities of the programme design.



MANAGING RELATIONS WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Entry-points

Of course, the behaviour of supporters in specific cultural settings is important to establishing relationships with stakeholders involved in managing natural resources. After behaviour, the next relationship issue is about how, and with whom, the programme should start working. What is the best entry-point for the programme?

A basic principle is to try to understand the perspective of stakeholders, and in particular to start by discussing the goals and problems of local users. If users have food concerns, these will prevail over other concerns. In such a situation, it is sensible to start with food and, together with users, analyse the links that go back to the management of natural resources (Florence Egal, pers. comm., 1997). In general, nutrition, health, income and other high-priority issues of users can all provide entry-points for assessing needs and identifying activities that are related to natural resource management.

If the sponsor of a support programme lies outside of government, several dilemmas may emerge as to how to start. Two of these are whether to:

- work initially with the government, the private sector, or both (John Rouse, pers. comm., 1997); or
- work initially with the disadvantaged and disorganized, or with the advantaged and organized, or with both?

In some countries, local non-profit private organizations are banned, and there is no option but to work with the government. In other countries, the alternative NGOs may have weaknesses similar to those of the government. The answer also depends on ideas about the role of the state (ideology), and the capacity of government bodies (Korten and Siy, 1989).

This decision is related only to making a start in a specific site. Once a programme is under way, the participatory process can lead to all sorts of partnerships after arrangements for sharing decisions are made.

Regardless of the decision about where to start, everyone must work through government to some degree. A support programme benefits from having a license to experiment, a highly placed 'champion', and a relationship with politicians, to alleviate fear (John Rouse, pers. comm., 1997).

Another good idea is to treat the first round of collaboration as a special case, with an emphasis on demonstrating the potential gains of collaboration. This may involve working on activities in which there is consensus and interest, rather than on those with the highest priority. Once there is some proof that collaboration pays off, other activities can be addressed (Jan Johnson, pers. comm., 1997).

The next set of management issues arises from the fundamental needs of users for undertaking collaborative management (see Figure 4.1 on page 62). These needs provide a major focus for managing relations with stakeholders.

Gaining confidence

Much of the discussion in the section on the enabling environment dealt with circumstances that increase or reduce confidence. However, many of the supporter's actions also have an impact on the confidence of users to manage natural resources. The following sections mention aspects, such as building skills and knowledge, gaining information and resources, and having clear goals, that have obvious links to the confidence of collaborators.

One additional aspect that is worth emphasizing here is that there is little point in handing over the responsibility for management unless the corresponding authority necessary to discharge these responsibilities is also given. Authority to manage is a prerequisite for confidence. Usually it will be a major challenge for the supporters to help local users obtain it and decide how to wield it.

Negotiating overall goals

Negotiation lies at the heart of the participatory process because it is aimed at facilitating collaboration between multiple stakeholders. Arrangements for collaboration, and their subsequent implementation, are best secured when participants share clear goals and objectives.

There may be circumstances that constrain stakeholders to reveal their preferences or that make people agree to do something that they really do not like and have no intention of doing. Conflict can arise or remain hidden. In addition, people go about making decisions and negotiating positions in many ways, some of which are invisible to supporters. Negotiation is not something that just happens in meetings facilitated by a supporter. On the contrary, a meeting may be the last place where meaningful negotiations occur. A meeting may merely approve or overturn a previously agreed position. A useful idea is to give participants some influence over establishing the rules and process of negotiations (Ostrom, 1992). There may also need to be separate events and processes for various stakeholder groups if there are significant differences in their capacity for participation.

Individuals may be representing families or other groups, and they will need time to communicate information and positions to the people they represent. As a result, decisions from representatives should not be demanded immediately after a new issue or option is raised. Rather, opportunities and support need to be provided for representatives so they can do their job for the issue and social setting concerned.

When a support programme strengthens or establishes new forums for negotiations, its relations with all stakeholders will hinge on how the forums and process is perceived by participants. Supporters need to operate fairly and be aware of equity, content and conflict issues (see Box 4.2).

BOX 4.2

SOME ISSUES FOR ESTABLISHING FORUMS AND PROCESS FOR NEGOTIATING OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF COLLABORATION

Equity[1]

- A wide cross-section from all stakeholder groups is involved.
- Opportunities for 'being heard' in decision-making are distributed equitably.
- There is representativeness of participants.
- How the silent majority (the non-organized public) is represented.
- Who represents the interests of absent stakeholders and how.
- Whether access to negotiations reflects cost-sharing.
- Special arrangements and advocacy are needed for disadvantaged groups.
- The commitment to collaborative management is not token.

Content

- The scope of decisions is restricted inherently to what individual users are willing to transfer to the group, and by the authority conferred by government.
- Information from evaluations is used when resetting goals.
- Representatives are exposed to views and convincing arguments from others.
- Pre-existing and new incentives are revealed.
- Technical specifications and costs of solutions are matched to requirements and the willingness to pay.

Conflict

- Conflict and problems provide the motivation to fix things, and can be managed to create change rather than simply to resolve conflict (Jon Anderson, pers. comm., 1997)
- Mechanisms for addressing conflict recognize and build on local ones.
- An acceptable authoritative body is needed for resolving difficult disputes, using acceptable procedures and recognizing all parties.

The role of a support programme in facilitating negotiations is a difficult one, but it can be made easier by:

- holding a good understanding of the power and interests of stakeholders; and
- having appropriate skills.

Building skills and knowledge

There are a number of conditions that influence how the opportunities provided by the participatory process are used by the participants. A key set of conditions relates to the skills and knowledge of the local users who will assume or share the responsibility for resource management under certain conditions. The outcome of the process also depends greatly on the skills of supporters. Some of the difficulties encountered in adopting the participatory process arise because in many countries neither supporters nor users have had the education and experience to prepare them well for collaboration in complex situations. Supporters face this reality and can choose to do something about it. A checklist of desirable skills for each group is provided below. Some may be held already, whereas others may need to be obtained through other forms of collaboration.

Users would benefit from having the skills to:

- analyse and make their own choices as individuals and groups;
- create and articulate convincing arguments to decision-makers;
- undertake analyses of financial or technical feasibility directly, or alternatively to be able to contract someone else to do them;
- negotiate; and
- manage conflicts.

It would be helpful if users :

- were aware of resource management issues;
- knew their rights and how to protect them; and
- could recognize and address critical gaps in local knowledge.

Informing and being informed

In addition to skills and knowledge, collaboration works best if there is appropriate information available, people are aware of it, and it can be easily accessed and used. In many cases, this situation will not exist, and supporters will need to identify what information systems and flows need to be encouraged.

For example, there is information about policy, rights and sources of help, markets, and natural resource management. There is information from assessments that is useful for replanning, and there is information to send to policy-makers about local situations and the results of collaboration.

Where there are gaps in knowledge some forms of collaborative research may be undertaken in order to understand better the condition of the resource and the impacts of management, to solve production problems, and develop criteria and indicators for monitoring.

The act of management requires that certain information is collected and stored and then used at the appropriate place in the management cycle. These practical aspects of information management will almost always arise in supporting collaborative management.

Financial and other resources

Finally, there are a number of issues related to mobilizing and distributing the costs and benefits of collaboration.

Stakeholders may become interested in:

- gaining access to medium- to long-term credit and other resources and services;
- assessing risks and the financial viability of operations when investments are required; and
- obtaining the support available from government and other stakeholders.

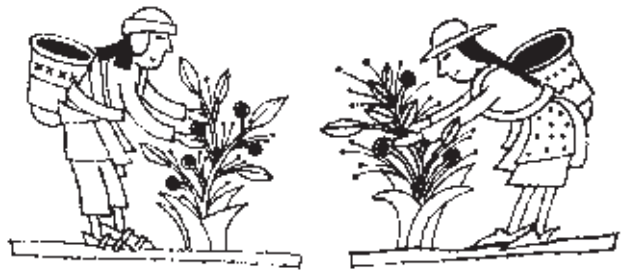
A common problem is that the resources available for support are limited, whereas the demands from users can be almost unlimited. This means that users will need to have a realistic idea about the capacity of the supporter and a set of priorities for using resources.

In addition, equity problems are common in the allocation of costs and benefits, creating more room for conflict. The main question for the supporter to consider is how the distribution of costs and benefits is perceived by other stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

In this overview, we have dealt only with the participatory process for supporting collaborative management, rather than the entire subject of natural resource management. Often, supporters will become involved with the technical aspects of natural resource management, increasing the scope and complexity of work beyond that described here. We have described the participatory process, listed numerous management issues associated with it, explained how important and varied are the circumstances of the environment and the stakeholders involved, and provided examples of how support programmes can fail to manage participation effectively.

It is clear from all of this that the promotion and support of collaborative management is a complex and risky business. Development programmes and their specialist practitioners may have increasing willingness to promote people's participation in natural resource management, but they probably face a difficult period of transition to gain the skills, experience and confidence to understand the circumstances in various situations and implement the participatory process effectively. The challenge of reorientation represents the investment required to secure the substantial benefits for development and conservation promised by collaborative management systems.



Chapter 4 - Endnotes

1. Equity can be defined as that which is fair and just. Equity is not the same as equality, because equity represents value judgements about what is fair, whereas equality represents being exactly the same in quantity, degree or value.

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