Co-management of Natural Resources

Organising, Negotiating and Learning-by-Doing

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Cover picture: Participatory mapping around Mount Kilum forest, Cameroon. Photo by G. Borrini-Feyerabend

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Moreno Chiovoloni, a social anthropologist who assisted the Réseau Cogestion (Co-management Network) on behalf of the IUCN Collaborative Management Working Group. Moreno facilitated a workshop on social communication in Somalomo (Cameroon) in June 2000. During his staying in the area, in the heart of the tropical forest, he contracted malaria. He died of cerebral complications less than a month later.

Moreno was a competent and engaged professional. He was also very relaxed and fun. The participants in the workshop and the collegues with whom he worked remember him with gratitude and lasting fondness.

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Abbreviations

ABS/LISTRA	Protected Area Management and Transition Zone Development Project
BMZ	Federal German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CEFDHAC	Conference on Dense and Humid Forests Ecosystems in Central Africa (Conférence sur les Ecosystèmes de Forêts Denses et Humides d'Afrique Centrale)
CM	Co-management
CMWG	Collaborative Management Working Group (of the IUCN)
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH
ECOFAC	Programme for the Conservation of the Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (Programme de Conservation des Ecosystemes Forestieres d'Afrique Centrale)
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
IA	Institutional actor (stakeholder)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NR	Natural resource
NRM	Natural resource management
UN	United Nations

Foreword

Is it possible to go beyond what the State declares to be the best way to manage natural resources? If yes, how? To these questions GTZ and the IUCN attempt to provide some answers with this publication – a practical manual for natural-resource managers interested in negotiating multi-party agreements and institutions, and in learning by doing. The publication offers guidelines, checklists, concepts, ideas and a range of methods and tools to facilitate a co-management process. What it does not offer, and it emphasises could not be offered, is a set of hard-and-fast co-management rules.

For the IUCN, this publication constitutes an exemplary case of productive synergy between its Commissions and Secretariat. Indeed, the document is the result of a partnership between the *Collaborative Management Working Group* (CMWG) – a working group under the IUCN *Commission of Environmental, Economic and Social Policy* (CEESP) – and the IUCN *Regional Office for Central Africa* (ROCA), which operates the *Co-management Project for Nature Conservation in the Congo Basin* with GTZ sponsorship. The experience gained in this partnership deserves careful examination from the IUCN as a whole, also because it directly responds to the mandate of the IUCN Resolution 1.42 of the First World Conservation Congress (Montreal, 1996).

From the perspective of the German Development Cooperation, this publication perfectly fits its main policy tenets: achieving a balance between biodiversity conservation and development concerns. The publication emphasises the links between conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, on the one hand, and poverty reduction on the other. It also stresses the need to strengthen human and institutional capacities in GTZ's partner countries whilst learning from their local experience.

By making available co-management concepts, ideas, methods and tools, we hope to assist a variety of social actors striving to figure out «how best to manage natural resources». To all of them we wish good luck in the use of this volume, trusting it may lead to more sustainable and equitable approaches.

July 2007

Dr. Rolf Mack

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH
Project "People and Biodiversity"

Assitou Ndinga

IUCN–The World Conservation Union
Regional Director, Central Africa

Preface and Acknowledgements

This document was developed on the basis of five presentations given by Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend (GBF) at a workshop of the Réseau Cogestion (Co-management Network) in Maroua, Cameroon, in January 1999. The network was set up by the GTZ/IUCN project *Co-management for Nature Conservation in Unstable Socio-political Conditions: "Learning by Doing" in the Congo Basin*, to which the IUCN Collaborative Management Working Group is called to provide technical assistance (see Annex 4). After the presentations, GBF revised and completed the presentations and added the Annexes. A further extensive revision of the document was made together with M. Taghi Farvar (MTF) on the basis of field lessons presented at another workshop of the same network he facilitated in Buea, Cameroon, in November 1999. A final revision took place after yet another workshop in Somalomo (Cameroon), in June 2000. It included contributions from MTF and inputs, example boxes and the addition of an annex on the preliminary experience of the co-management project provided by Jean Claude Nguinguiri (JCN), Coordinator of the GTZ/IUCN project, and Vincent Awa Ndangang (VAN), Coordinator of the Réseau Cogestion.

This volume provides broad guidelines, methods, tools, concepts and ideas for co-management facilitators and partners. Practitioners engaged in promoting and facilitating co-management initiatives should however know (and usually do know!) that their specific context of work is more important than any externally devised set of instructions and guidelines. In other words, ***co-management processes are invariably experimental*** *and* ***ideas, methods and tools – including those provided here – need to be adjusted and bent around specific situations and environments***. With this spirit in mind, this volume may be used with benefit by project officers, community members, government staff, NGO staff, members of CM Start-up Teams and others interested in participatory approaches to managing natural resources. Several members of the IUCN Collaborative Management Working Group (CMWG) are currently working on a more in-depth treatment of the subject of this volume, which should hopefully be available by the end of the year 2000.

The generous professional and personal encouragement offered by Kirsten Hegener, Coordinator of the "Protected Area and Transition Zone Development Project" (ABS/LISTRA) at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and of her GTZ colleagues – in particular Klaus Mersmann in Yaoundé and Welf Petram in Eschborn – has made possible both the co-management project in the Congo Basin and this publication. To her and to them goes the heartfelt appreciation of all the authors.

The advice and technical inputs provided by Eileen Babbit, Didier Babin, Marco Bassi, Dianne Buchan, Christian Chatelain, Paul Chatterton, Kevin Clements, Emmanuel de Merode, Alex de Sherbinin, M. Taghi Farvar, Andrea Finger-Stich, Hillarie Greening, Alain Karsenty, Lisa Naughton, Tom Nesbitt, Josiane Olff-Nathan, Elinor Ostrom, Yves Renard, Farhad Vania and Jacques Weber, as well as the conversations with these experts and friends, were very important in the preparatory phases of the first Congo Basin workshop, in 1999. GBF would like to extend sincere thanks to all of these colleagues, as well as to Thomas Barton and Will Allen, who generously dedicated their time to set an earlier version of this paper into Word format and post it in the Internet, a fact that prompted the reception of several interesting comments and ideas. The authors are also very grateful to Christian

Chatelain and Moreno Chiovoloni – the CMWG members who provided technical assistance and written material for the workshops of the Réseau Cogestion, and to Joan Rita Larrucea, another CMWG member who provided excellent comments for the Spanish translation of this publication.

The hospitality of the Dja Projet (IUCN), the Waza Logone Projet (IUCN), the Korup Projet (GTZ), the Mount Cameroun Project (GTZ) and the Somalomo Project (ECOFAC) rendered possible the workshops that generated the exchanges and occasions to discuss the matters illustrated in this volume. To the professionals in charge of those projects goes the sincere appreciation of all the authors of this volume.

The participants in the workshops – Angèle Ankoh, Geneviève M. Anziom, Emmanuel Arrah, Frieda Arrey, Walters Arrey, Marie-Noëlle B. Asseo, Karin Augustat, Jeanne Balomog Ngono, Gervais Bangaoui Batandjomo, Mindjah Bibabissiel, Sonia Blaney, Moussa Boukar, Innocent Chia, Sylvain Dangolho, Christiana Diara Nyangono, André Djeumo, Elias Djoh, Ousmane Doubla, Harrison Ebong, Raphael A. Ebot, Régine Efandene, Samuel Ella Ella, John Etongwe Mesembe, Michael Ayuk Etta Atabe Ettanki, Valentine Eyabi Nzo, M. Taghi Farvar, Yolande Fouda, Ndian Gbeli Ddef, Kirsten Hegener, Fatimé Jolidon, Cyprian Jum, Albert Kembou, Martha Klein, Gilbert Koumba-Safou, Roger Kouokam, Annie Lefevre, R. Smith Llewellin, Henri Lo, Jean-Pierre Loemba, Noé Mabiala , Dieudonné Manga, Monono Matanga, Peter Mbile, Albert Mbio, Moïse Meboubo Sieh, Jean-Pierre Medjo, Thomas Megnengue,Réné Meigari , Luc Mendouga, Alain D. Meni Opono, J.C. Ottou Ottou, Michel Mentom, Saliou Miscouna, Georges Mouncharou, Placide Moussounda Nzamba, Léon Nkantio, Athanasius Nkwatoh, Roger Ntsoh Samson, Ntonga Nvondo, Placide Nzamba, Prosper Nzeh, Asundep Obi, Mambo Okenye, Christine A. Okoa, Octave Ondoua, Pierre Oyo, Phil Rene Oyono, Josiane Olff-Nathan, Emmanuel Sama, Dagobert Samba, Peter Sanga, Francis Sangwa, Prosper Seme, Emmanuel Tabi Arampe, Christine Tataw, Marcel Taty, Bertin Tchikangwa Nkanje, Belmont Tchumba, Elise Pierrette Toko Meno, Félin Twagirashyaka, Karin von Loebenstein, Bernard J. Yarissem, Maurice Yonta, Bernard L. Woloko and Parfait Zang Mvoua – enlivened the learning process with their knowledge, their doubts, their queries and their capacity to identify quickly the strong, the weak and the amusing side of every idea. Many thanks to them all! This work has been written for them, and for the colleagues facing similar co-management challenges throughout the world.

1. Overview

1.1 Co-management

(Also called: participatory, collaborative, joint, mixed, multi-party or round-table management)

> ***'co-management'** —*
> *a situation in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee amongst themselves a fair sharing of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources*

Co-management is:

- a pluralist approach to managing natural resources (NRs), incorporating a variety of partners in a variety of roles, generally to the end goals of environmental conservation, sustainable use of NRs and the equitable sharing of resource-related benefits and responsibilities
- a political and cultural process *par excellence*: seeking social justice and "democracy" in the management of natural resource
- a process that needs some basic conditions to develop, among which are: full access to information on relevant issues and options, freedom and capacity to organise, freedom to express needs and concerns, a non-discriminatory social environment, the will of partners to negotiate, confidence in the respect of agreements, etc.
- a complex, often lengthy and sometimes confused process, involving frequent changes, surprises, sometimes contradictory information, and the need to retrace one's own steps
- the expression of a mature society, which understands that there is no "unique and objective" solution for managing natural resources but, rather, a multiplicity of different options which are compatible with both indigenous knowledge and scientific evidence and capable of meeting the needs of conservation and development (and that there also exists a multitude of negative or disastrous options for the environment and development)

Natural resource management (NRM) is a major political arena. In the past, many traditional societies formed relatively closed systems in which natural resources were managed through complex interplays of reciprocities and solidarities. These systems were fully embedded in the local cultures and accommodated for differences of power and roles – including decision-making – within holistic systems of reality and meaning. Dialogue and discussion among interested parties on the basis of field experience (what is referred to as "co-management" today) were widely practised in some of these societies. In others, different social values such as religious authority, caste predestination and cultural norms determined most NRM decisions and the related sharing of costs and benefits. Communal property was generally widespread, and constituted a crucial element in the cohesion and sustainability of traditional NRM systems. Local knowledge and skills, built through extended historical experience, were another cornerstone. Most importantly, local communities tended to *create themselves* around a body of natural resources that they could manage together. In other words, ***in traditional societies the units of natural resource management and the units of social life tended to coincide***.

The historical emergence of colonial powers and nation states, and their violent assumption of authority over most common lands and natural resources led to the demise of traditional NRM systems virtually everywhere. The monetisation of economic exchange weakened local systems of reciprocity and solidarity, as did the incorporation of local economies into increasingly global systems of reference. In addition, the rise in power of modern, expert-based, "scientific" practices induced severe losses in local knowledge and skills. This generalised breakdown of local NRM systems finally resulted in the disempowerment and "de-responsibilisation" (see Banuri and Amalrik, 1992) of local communities. Attitudes of confrontation and reciprocal mistrust between local communities and the representatives of the state became widespread. Community-based trial and error and the detailed discussion of local NRM practices, wherever they existed, were largely substituted by the coercive imposition of practices through laws (e.g. the nationalisation of NRs), external rules, extension services, the police and the army.

In such situations, as in all societies structured around large power differentials, such as feudal hamlets in Europe or colonial possessions in Africa and Latin America, the "weapons of the weak" have rarely included frank, open and above-board discussions. On the contrary, the disadvantaged groups, whenever they did not resort to violence, attempted to protect themselves and gain access to natural resources by means of subterfuge, lies, passive resistance, ridicule, feigned misunderstanding, raids and the like (see Scott, 1985).

In some societies characterised by large power disparities, the recent development of democratic systems and the state of law has allowed a number of social movements, unions, and consumer and minority groups to adopt a transparent and direct strategy of confrontation, sometimes in a court of law. In others, the conditions for this to happen are still a long way off on the horizon. Whether honest dialogue and straightforward confrontation are the best strategy to protect the interests of the less privileged groups can be assessed only within specific contexts.

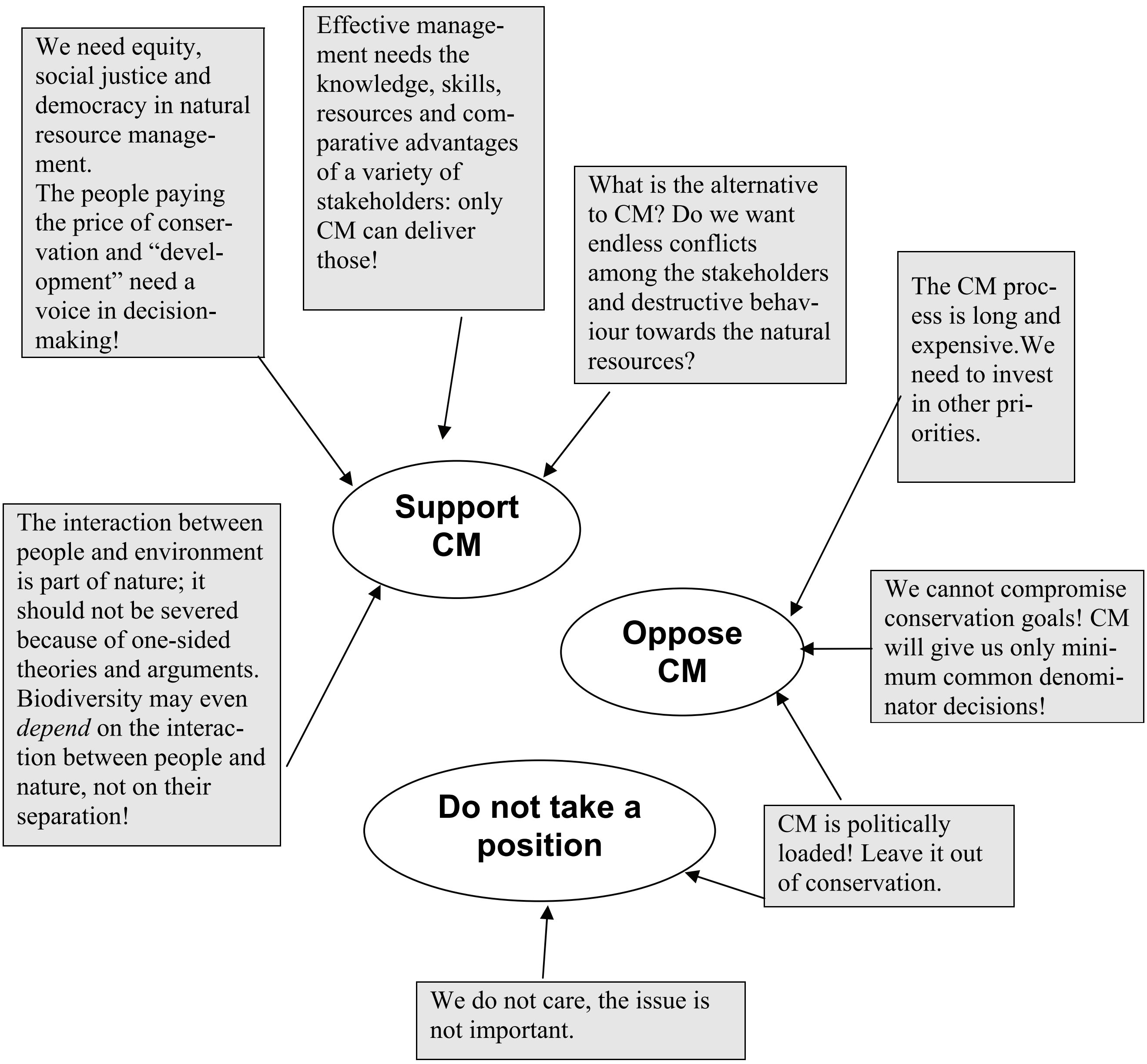
Some such groups opt for all-out confrontation with little to no space for compromise. This is the choice of some Indigenous Peoples still fighting for the basic recognition of their ancestral rights. Others attempt to find a place at the negotiation table with more powerful actors (business, the government and the like) and encounter all sorts of obstacles and difficulties. In some cases, *all* groups and individuals with interests and concerns about a given territory, area or set of resources understand that co-operation is necessary for NRM effectiveness and efficiency, and agree to pursue that cooperation in the interest of everyone. This latter attitude may not yet be the most common, but it is spreading. In fact, ***many contemporary NRM situations show an evolving mixture of the old and the new***. Some elements of traditional NRM systems persist, others are crushed by the powers of modernisation, still others adapt and evolve, incorporating new traits and ingredients.

From the point of view of development and conservation professionals – to whom this document is primarily addressed – the history of co-management is rooted in decades of field-based and theoretical efforts by individuals and groups concerned with:

- **social justice and equity;**
- **sustainable use of natural resource;**
- **community-based and community-run initiatives.**

Many political battles have been fought for and against co-management in the field as well as within national and international organizations. The following schematic figure summarises some of the arguments voiced by participants in the battles and debates.

Some arguments for and against CM



Main CM values and principles

- recognising ***different values, interests and concerns*** involved in managing a territory, area or set of natural resources, both outside the local communities and within them
- being open to ***various types of NRM entitlements*** beyond the ones legally recognised (such as private property or government mandate)
- seeking ***transparency*** and ***equity*** in natural resource management
- allowing the ***civil society*** to assume ever more important roles and responsibilities

the above lead to
natural resource management PARTNERSHIPS

- harnessing the **complementarity** of the capacities and comparative advantages of different institutional actors
- **linking entitlements and responsibilities** in the NRM context
- appreciating that the **process** is more important than the short-term products
- learning-by-doing through **on-going revisions** and improvements in NR management

There are no blueprints or universally applicable paths for a CM initiative. On the contrary, there is an enormous variety of options depending on specific contexts. However, to allow for comparisons and to break down the process into manageable units, four key CM components and three main phases in a CM process can be identified:

Four inter-related CM components

→ **CM context**
→ **CM process**
→ **CM plan(s) and agreement(s)**
→ **CM organisation(s)**

Three main phases in a CM process

1. Preparing for the partnership (organising)
2. Negotiating co-management plans and agreements
3. Implementing and revising the plans and agreements (learning by doing)

1.2 Concepts and approaches contributing to understanding and practicing co-management

- adaptive management
- pluralism
- governance
- patrimony
- management of conflicts
- social communication

Many other relevant concepts and practices – such as participatory action research, environmental stewardship, *gestion du terroir*, etc. – exist, but will not be explored here.

Concepts and approaches → adaptive management

> ***'adaptive management' —***
> *an approach based on the recognition that the management of natural resource is always experimental, that we can learn from implemented activities, and that NRM can be improved on the basis of what has been learned*

The adaptive management approach is based on scientific findings about natural ecosystems and on field-based experience gained in several environments. These lead to acknowledge the lack of unequivocal and definitive knowledge of the ways in which ecosystems work, and the uncertainty that dominates our interaction with them. The central tenet of adaptive management is thus an open, investigative and analytical attitude. Adaptive NRM activities state explicitly what they aim to achieve, specify indicators and monitoring and evaluation methods and are modified as learning proceed (see Holling 1978, and Wilston 1986).

Basic elements of adaptive management

- explicit NRM objectives and explicit hypotheses on how they are to be achieved (including monitoring indicators),
- prompt collection of data (monitoring indicators),
- on-going evaluation of monitoring data and NRM results,
- coherent changes in NRM practice in line with the results obtained and the lessons learned.

The stages of adaptive management (adapted from Taylor, 1998)

- appraisal of the NRM situation and problems, generally in workshops, with several institutional actors

- design of NRM activities, also generally in workshops, on the basis of a comparison of several possible options,
- implementation of NRM activities closely following the chosen plan (which may include zoning the land and experimenting with different activities in different zones— a procedure known as "active management"),
- monitoring the achievement of the expected results on the basis of indicators drawn up for the expected changes,
- evaluation of results to test the effectiveness of the activities implemented,
- adjusting activities in line with lessons learned; this may include the re-formulation of the problems, the NRM objectives, the activities and indicators, etc.

all of the above stages have to be documented and communicated, to share and disseminate the acquired information; this is particularly important in the case of long-term initiatives (key persons may change their jobs, but the learning should not leave with them…)

Concepts and approaches → pluralism

> ***'pluralism'*** *—*
> *a situation in which autonomous and independent (or inter-dependent) groups freely interact and collaborate on natural resource management issues on the basis of different views, interests and entitlements*

A pluralist approach focuses on recognising, acknowledging and involving the various actors, interests, concerns and values that exists in any society with respect to almost any subject. In particular:

- there are different categories of social actors – for example governmental and non-governmental, groups and private individuals, local communities and outsiders with entitlements to local resources – bearing important complementary capacities for natural resource management.
- communities are social actors *in themselves* and provide the most natural and effective unit of identity, integration and defence for many under-privileged groups and individuals (see Farvar, 1999). Yet, communities are not homogenous entities, and their internal subdivisions should be recognised. In other words, while keeping their basic cohesion and identity, a plurality of values, interests and concerns should be recognised *within* any local community (see Agrawal, 1997).

A multiplicity of views and voices in the negotiation process is a fundamental pre-condition for equity and justice. Yet, it does not follow from this that all views and voices are *equal*, that they all carry the same weight or are all equally entitled to participate in the negotiation of the co-management plans and agreements.

Equity is profoundly different from equality!

Concepts and approaches → governance

Good governance depends on the legitimacy of the political system and on the respect shown by the people for its institutions. It also depends on the capacity of such institutions to respond to problems, and to achieve social consensus through agreements and compromise.

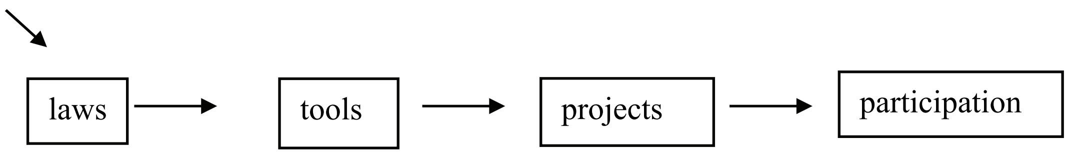
Governance:

- is neither a system of rules nor an activity; it is a process
- is not based on domination but on compromise
- involves both private and public actors
- is not necessarily formalised, and is generally based on an on-going interaction (Smouts, 1998)

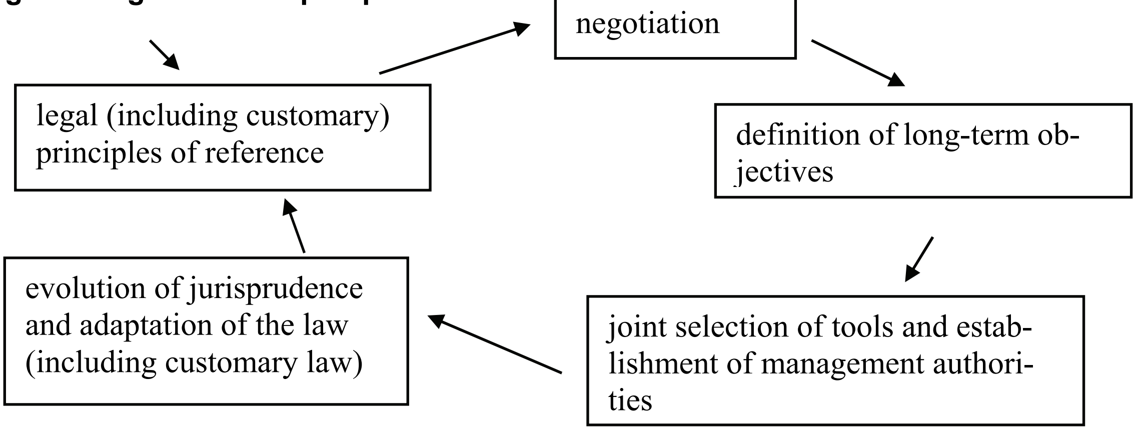
> ***'governance'*** *—*
> *the complex of ways by which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common concerns*

A comparison adapted from Karsenty (1998):

conventional scenario



Negotiated governance perspective



Concepts and approaches → patrimony

A patrimonial representation of a territory, an area or a set of resources

- links past, present and future generations of managers;
- focuses on the owner's obligations more than on the owner's rights;
- promotes a common vision of sustainability that reconciles the needs and opinions of various actors.

> ***'patrimony' —***
> *" the compendium of all material and immaterial elements that help maintain and develop the identity and autonomy of its owner, through time and space, by adaptation to its evolutionary context." (Ollagnon, 1991)*

Distinctive features of the notion of *patrimony* in comparison with the notion of *property*
(Karsenty and Marie, 1998)

property	patrimony
rights of owner	obligations of owner
mobility of goods (real-estate market)	predestination of goods (obligation of use)
market value determined at present time	value of use determined by passage of time
impersonal	constituent component of owner's identity

Various stages of patrimonial mediation (adapted from Weber, 1998)

- Launching: identifying actors, debating current trends for the status of natural resources and the acceptability of such trends; communicating one's own point of view and listening to the points of view of others.
- Establishing long-term patrimonial objectives and legitimating them by culturally appropriate "rituals" that make them inalienable, non-negotiable and difficult to violate.
- Elaborating medium-term NRM scenarios by the actors, to achieve their patrimonial objectives; defining acceptable resource uses, as well as access and control; agreeing on tools, methods, responsibilities and needed technical support.
- Setting up NRM organisations: deciding on executive, decision-making and advisory bodies and their operating rules (on the basis of a discussion of the variety of possible types); legitimising but not ritualising the specific NRM bodies, rules and adopted strategies.

Concepts and approaches → conflict management

(from Babbit et al., 1994)

> ***'conflict management' —***
> *guiding conflicts towards constructive rather than destructive results*

Conflict management is a non-violent process that promotes dialogue and negotiation. It implies:

- taking care of disagreements before they generate hostility
- helping the institutional actors to explore a multiplicity of options for agreement and subsequently select an option everyone can live with
- recognising and intervening in the underlying causes of conflict, with a view to preventing them in the future

Modern processes of conflict management are quite close to the processes used to negotiate a co-management agreement; both express the same values (dialogue, transparency, pluralism, fairness, etc.), have the same main constituents and can be facilitated in similar way.

Main constituents of modern conflict management approaches

- the social actors concerned
- a common area of interest and some points of conflict (different values, interests and needs of the various actors involved)
- a forum for negotiation and some basic rules providing a framework for the actors concerned to meet and discuss issues together
- some reliable data on the points of conflict
- various options for action generated by the actors concerned and discussed among themselves
- a written agreement on one of these options
- the legitimisation of the agreement
- the implementation of the agreement

Many traditional systems of conflict management obtained effective results via values, constituents and processes that do not fit the above description and list. Such culturally specific ways (which may use a variety of methods and techniques, from non-verbal social pressure to trance induction, from chance decisions to linguistic reframing of issues) should be recognised and responded to in a sensitive and inclusive manner. If they are sufficient and effective to deal with the conflicts at hand, by all means they should be preferred. However, when traditional systems do not suffice and/or when conflicts involve a variety of non-traditional partners, it may be appropriate to consider the modern approaches as well.

Whenever the conflicts are serious and the parties involved are distant and hostile, the presence of a facilitator, mediator or arbiter is highly recommended. A conflict-management instructor could also be called upon. Their role is similar, but not exactly the same (see below). These key figures in conflict management are often private individuals (religious leaders, retired judges, local wise-men and women, etc) possessing special characteristics and capacities (see also Section 3.1).

facilitators
assist only in the running of the process. They never allow themselves to be drawn into the arguments.

mediators
act as facilitators, but also help develop a wide range of options for the parties to discuss and choose from. They help conflicting parties to reach an agreement satisfactory for everyone.

arbitrators
act as judges: they listen to the various parties, review pertinent documents and issue a decision, which is treated by all concerned as an expert opinion or an obligation, depending on what was decided in advance.

instructors
help the parties (usually in separate sessions) to learn the elements of conflict management, which the parties will hopefully succeed in applying to their own conflict situation.

difficult circumstances

– one social actor controls another
– one actor gains from prolonging the conflict
– one or several actors have no confidence in the conflict-management process
– prejudices and stereotypes prevail
– some authorities and chiefs are stubborn and unwilling to negotiate an agreement
– the national or customary laws ought to apply to the conflict's matter, but they are not enforced

Some suggestions on how to overcome such special circumstances are offered in Section 6 but they do not, unfortunately, come with a no guarantee of success. Below are five main checkpoints for effective conflict management (adapted from Lewis, 1996):

- **Shift the attention from positions to underlying interests.** "Interests" are people's fundamental needs and concerns. "Positions" are the proposals that they put forward to try to satisfy those interests. Since many different positions can satisfy the same basic interest, focusing on interests can open up the way for conciliation and compromise.
- **Appreciate the merits of fair compromise.** A conflict-management effort in which all interests are satisfied is much more likely to result in a lasting and satisfactory resolution than one that addresses the interests of only one side. A fair compromise may be the best way to serve everyone's needs in the long run, especially when overt conflict is replaced

with the stability and predictability of a mutually agreeable solution. On the other hand, an unfair compromise, which may seriously curtail the entitlements of one or more social actors without effective compensation, may just be a recipe for brewing even more serious conflicts in the long run.

- **Address both the procedural and substantive dimensions of conflicts.** Procedural issues can include a group's need to be included in decision-making, to have their opinions heard and to be respected as a social entity. "Substantive" refers to interests that relate to tangible products, such as availability of firewood, protection from predatory animals or stopping a major source of pollution.
- **Include all significantly affected institutional actors in devising solutions.** Failure to involve all affected stakeholders in conflict management generally leads to unsustainable solutions and to new conflicts arising in the future.
- **Understand the power of various institutional actors, and take that into account in the process.** There are often extreme differences in power between different stakeholders. Each party's approach to the conflict will depend on their view of the power they have in relation to the other stakeholders. For example, a group that feels powerless to influence an outcome through a bureaucratic process may choose to use illegal activities instead.

Concepts and approaches → social communication

> ***'social communication' —***
> *bridging understanding within a human community, exchanging messages (communicating) to create meaning and enrich common knowledge, often in order to face change (adapted from Ramirez, 1997)*

It is people who bring about development and manage natural resources. There can be no change for the better without involving them, mobilising their capacities and energies and enhancing their knowledge and skills. Communication caters to all these human dimensions and is vital for any activity in which the participation of local people is envisaged and sought. In addition, effective communication generally has remarkable personal effects, such as raising morale, enhancing the sense of one's own value and dignity, and promoting social solidarity and collaboration.

Communication may be ***personal*** (one-to-one), ***inter-personal*** (among a few individuals) and **social** (when it involves social groups, such as a local community). ***Social communication for co-management initiatives is about providing the conditions for informed decision-making in society, i.e. fostering the sharing of information and the discussion of problems, opportunities and alternative options for action.*** It is a generally a complex phenomenon, including a variety of avenues, from one-to-one dialogue and group meetings (i.e. personal and interpersonal aspects) to the use of mass media such as the radio, TV or Internet.

It may be useful to distinguish among various types of objective for a communication initiative. These may include: ***informing***, ***raising awareness*** and ***training*** (Chiovoloni, 1996), which can operate in an interactive fashion, but more frequently are carried out in a "top-down" mode, with the "sender" totally in control of the "message" to be passed on, and the "receiver(s)" hardly able to influence it. A rather different communication situation is generated by ***interactive learning*** (see below).

COMMUNICATING

informing	**raising awareness**	**training**	**interactive learning**
Enhancing the ***knowledge*** of the receiver; the "message" is generally controlled by the sender	Enhancing the ***awareness*** of the receiver; the "message" is generally controlled by the sender	Enhancing the ***skills*** of the receiver; the "message" is generally controlled by the sender	Enhancing ***common knowledge, awareness and skills by thinking, discussing and acting together***; the "message" is generated as part of the

Interactive learning is crucial for co-management initiatives, as these seek to overcome the logic of top-down expert authority and prescribed behaviour. Whenever there is a gap or a conflict between what is *legal* (prescribed) and what is *legitimate* (emerging from social consensus), efforts at merely transferring information, awareness or skills are likely to be useless. Only interactive learning, built on the direct confrontation and dialogue among different views (thinking, discussing and acting together) can overcome the gap or help in managing the conflict.

There are various types of communication ***media***, including:

- ***traditional*** (e.g., the spoken word, writing, theatre, songs, the arts)
- ***graphic*** (e.g. diagrams, illustrations, pictures, compositions, maps, films)
- ***electronic*** (e.g. videos, audiocassettes, television, national as well as regional and community radio, compact disks, digital versatile disks, the Internet)

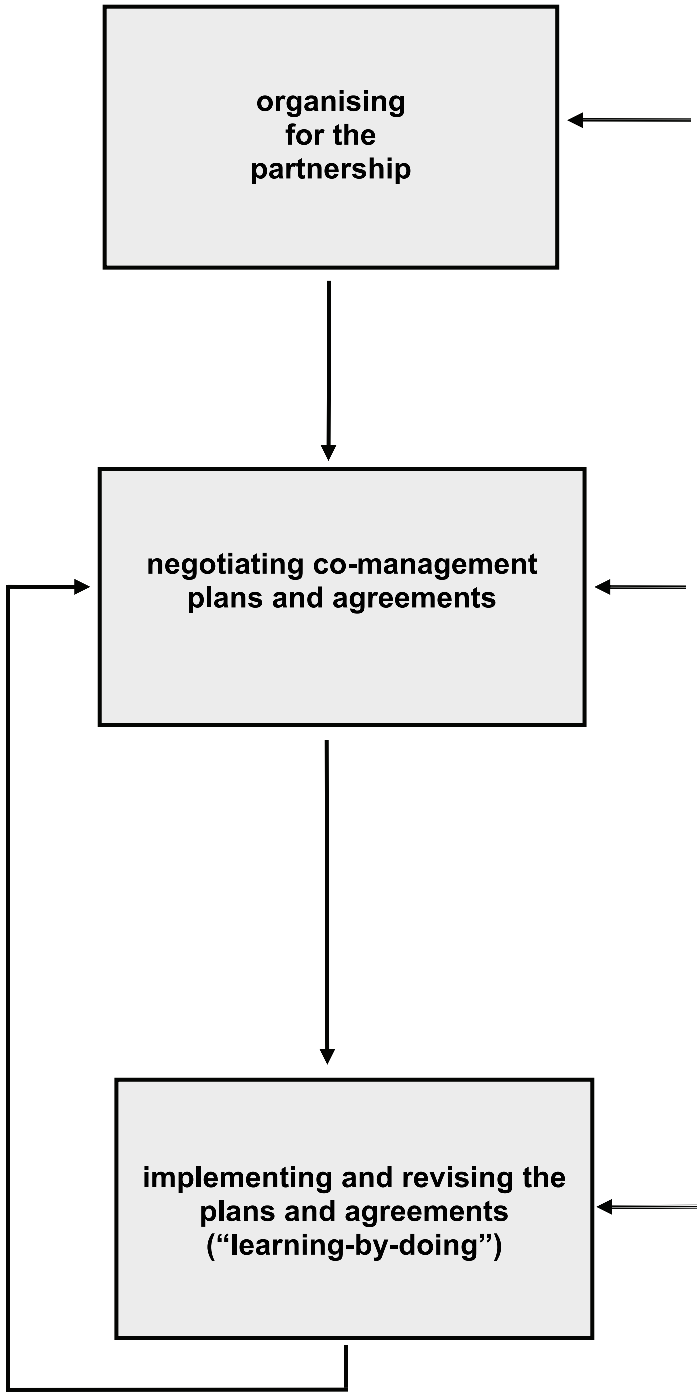
Providing communities with access and skills to control and effectively use both traditional and modern media is an essential component of community development, and thus of sound management of natural resources (see Annex 1 for street theatre and community radio, two examples of participatory methods in social communication). ***Local media*** refers to communication material produced locally, whether traditional or modern (electronic). Development and natural resource problems place great strains on communities, and their local media are usually employed to channel the ideas and feelings that accompany their efforts and struggle for change. In fact, there is a close link between traditional media and local culture, including social patterns to accommodate change.

The challenge of cross-cultural communication is to bridge local and outside knowledge. For expert professionals, this challenge is mostly about ***understanding the system of local media*** and about ***learning to listen***, including listening to silence (silence may be due to many causes and may express many types of messages, from full support to full hostility). This does not mean that expert professionals cannot set up information events or training programmes – on the contrary! Such initiatives are an important component of social communication efforts, but they should be developed with respect, intelligence and care, should be interactive rather than top-down, and should not exhaust all the resources available.

A few points to consider:

- "Communication occurs when people have something in common." (Fuglesang, 1982). If we wish to communicate with people we need to ***understand the language(s) in which they describe their own reality***, including fundamental beliefs, values and concepts (such as time, space, matter).
- Effective communication processes and tools ***do not discriminate*** against the weaker and less powerful in society (e.g. people who do not feel confident enough to attend meetings, who are not literate, who live far from main centres, etc.). In this sense, audio-visual presentations, such as picture stories and community radio programmes, or "broad participation events", such as street theatre, are much less discriminatory than others.
- Any ***information*** conveyed should be ***truthful, fair and reasonably complete***. Information depends on context, and decisions are conditioned by the perception of available alternatives. Fairness in communication is thus a complex phenomenon, depending just as much on the completeness of provided information as on strict adherence of information to "facts".
- Any ***awareness-raising*** initiative (e.g. a travelling theatre piece) should be ***respectful of local cultural traits and norms***. Difficult subjects could and should be raised, but the local culture should be treated with respect and not made to appear inadequate or ridiculous.
- Any ***training*** initiative should be offered with an eye to its social implications. Training a few individuals in crucial new skills for local production systems can give rise to important power changes and imbalances, and should be done to ***enhance not only skills but also social equity*** in the relevant context.
- Most importantly, social communication initiatives should include ***plenty of occasions for dialogue and discussion***, and the opportunity for everyone to express their own views, to ask questions and to dissent. This, in fact, represents the main difference between social communication and conventional information, education and training initiatives. While in the latter information flows from the sender to the receiver of messages, in the former information flows in all directions and ***collective knowledge, awareness and skills are actually generated*** as part of that very flow and exchange (e.g. by social dialogue and debate).

Taking account of concepts, approaches and values in a co-management process: a schematic view



- Pluralism of interests and views
- Social communication initiatives
- Active support for the social actors to organise themselves

- Patrimonial vision of environment
- Integrating environmental, social and governance aims
- Recognising a plurality of management options and entitlements
- Respecting local cultural values, norms and practices
- Effective facilitation of meetings and mediation of conflicts
- Overcoming communication challenges
- Transparency of negotiation procedures
- Seeking equity in sharing management benefits and responsibilities

- Keeping in mind the experimental nature of NRM (adaptive management, action-research)
- Maintaining a lively social communication process
- Changing practices as learning proceeds

2. The preparatory phase

A typical situation in the beginning

- different social actors are concerned about a territory, area or set of natural resources; these actors may include local communities (including traditional authorities, elders, user groups for a particular resource, men and women, the youth), government representatives at different levels, NGOs, associations, individuals with special interests, local, national and trans-national businesses, and so on. The number of concerned actors is increasing as a result of recent historical processes such as the decentralisation of government authority, the privatisation of previously state-controlled economies, the emergence of new democratic institutions, the proliferation of businesses, NGOs, associations, etc.
- there are different points of view on that territory, area or set of natural resources, as well as different interests and concerns and different assigned values
- there is some (perhaps minimal) form of management for that territory, area or set of natural resources, even when it may hardly be discernable by non-local people
- some or all social actors perceive environmental and/or social problems in need of solution.

What can be done to promote co-management?

- the first task is a realistic assessment of the need for co-management and of the feasibility of the process.
- if co-management is deemed to be needed and feasible, the next task is to identify the human and financial resources necessary to support it.
- once such resources have been identified and secured, a Start-up Team should be established and assigned the role of promoting and facilitating the process through which stakeholders will negotiate a pluralistic and flexible management system (over time, such a system will need to respond to the changing needs of both the concerned ecosystem and society).
- in real life the above tasks are not always undertaken, or not in the order mentioned above. For instance, the co-management process may be initiated to take advantage of a specific financial opportunity, to attempt to resolve a conflict or because of political expediency. Sooner or later, however, the specific needs, feasibility and resources available should be analysed in all CM processes.
- the initial phases of the process may sometimes be long, difficult, costly and even arduous. Yet, the participants can look forward to a positive outcome that, in addition to the judicious management of natural resources, will bear upon some of the most important aspects of social life – such as equity, participation, culture and development.

2.1 Assessing the need for co-management and the process feasibility

Is co-management needed in the context at stake? The analysis may begin with a realistic evaluation of the existing NRM situation, including what is *de jure* (i.e. in accordance with existing laws and norms), and what is *de facto* (i.e. what actually happens on the ground). In other words, the analysis should cover the existing power system and entitlements to manage (for instance, who plans?, who advises?, who takes decisions?, who has access to the resources?, who benefits from the resources?, who evaluates whether NRM activities need to change?) but also the unrecognised claims.

> ***'entitlement' to manage natural resources —***
> *a socially recognised claim to participate in one or several management activities, such as planning, advising, taking decision, implementing plans, sharing benefits, assuming responsibilities, monitoring and evaluating results, etc.*

Some form of consultation and the seeking of consensus among the main stakeholders in a given territory, area or set of resources can be recommended in all situations. Yet, depending on the particular context, initiating and devoting energy to a negotiation process may be more or less appropriate depending on the perspective of the particular institutional actors.

From the point of view of government agencies possessing legal jurisdiction over a territory, area or resources at stake, it may be more appropriate to pursue partnership agreements with other stakeholders (and prevent wasteful conflicts) when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- the active commitment and collaboration of several stakeholders are essential to manage the territory, area or resources at stake;
- the access to such territory, area or resources is essential for securing the livelihood and cultural survival of one or more stakeholders;
- local actors have historically enjoyed customary/ legal rights over the territory or resources;
- local interests are strongly affected by NRM decisions;
- the decisions to be taken are complex and controversial (e.g., different values need to be harmonized or there is disagreement over the distribution of entitlements to land or resources);
- the current NRM system has failed to produce the desired results and meet the needs of the local actors;
- stakeholders are ready to collaborate and request to do so;
- there is ample time to negotiate.

On the contrary, it may be inappropriate (or not yet appropriate) to embark on a CM process when decisions have to be taken extremely rapidly (emergency situation).

From the point of view of local communities who have customarily enjoyed full access to the relevant territory, area or resources, it may be appropriate to pursue a NRM partnership when:

- powerful non-local actors are forcing their way into the territory or extracting resources with no respect to traditional customs and rules (in this case a partnership agreement with the national government or some NGO or research organisation may help assure some protection and respect of customary practices);
- customary practices are falling into disarray and an open-access status has ensued with resources being extracted in an unsustainable manner.

It may instead not be advisable to enter into a NRM partnership when:

- as a result, the local communities would be renouncing a customary status of unique rights with no expectable comparable advantage in exchange;
- the political environment does not secure the safety of all negotiating parties.

Even when certain individuals or groups have determined that, for them, co-management is needed and desirable, they may wonder whether it is feasible in the particular context at stake. In this case, it may be expedient to ask the following questions:

Is co-management legally feasible?

Who has the mandate to control the land and resources? Can a pluralist approach be accommodated within the existing customary/ legal frameworks? Examine traditional and modern laws, regulations, permits...

Is co-management politically feasible?

What is the history of land management and resource use in the territory or area at stake? Examine current political will and stability, the capacity to enforce decisions, the confidence in the participatory process, the presence of phenomena such as corruption and intimidation...

Is co-management institutionally feasible?

Is there a chance of building a pluralistic management institution for the territory, area or natural resources? Examine inter-institutional relations and their possible conflicts, existing examples of multi-party resource management organisations and rules, the capacity of stakeholders to organise themselves and express their choice of representatives to convey their interests and concerns...

Is co-management economically feasible?

Are there economic opportunities and alternatives to the direct exploitation of natural resources? Examine local opportunities to reconcile the conservation of nature with the satisfaction of economic needs, examine the extent of poverty in the region, the availability of capital for local investments…

Is co-management socio-culturally feasible?

Are or were there traditional systems of natural resource management in the context at stake? What are (or were) their main features and strengths? Are those still valid today? Are the traditional NRM systems still in use? Regardless of whether the answer is yes or no, why? Who is keeping them alive? What is specifically sustaining or demeaning them? If they are not being used any more, does anyone have a living memory of the systems (for instance, are there elders who practiced them and still remember clearly "how it was done")?

Examine the current population status, population dynamics and structure, the main socio-cultural changes under way

Examine social and cultural diversity amongst the institutional actors and the history of group relations among them

Examine factors affecting opportunities for social communication, including:

- language diversity
- varying degrees of access to information
- different attitudes, for example with regard to speaking in public or defending personal advantages
- traditional and modern media currently used in the particular context

Feasibility conditions do not need to be absolutely ideal to decide to embark on a co-management process, but thinking about feasibility factors gives a good idea of the obstacles and hot spots to expect along the way.

An important question is also: "For all main stakeholders, what are the best alternatives to a negotiated agreement?" If some stakeholders are better served by the *absence* rather than the presence of co-management plans and agreements (e.g. if they currently enjoy undue benefits and/or have others bear some substantial management costs) they will have no incentive to enter into the process of negotiation. In such cases the feasibility of co-management is severely reduced and outright opposition to the CM process can be expected. Some special incentives, cajoling or even law enforcement and coercive measures may be needed to get all the stakeholders around the negotiation table (outsiders, however, should be very careful before assuming that a group is blocking negotiations to its unfair advantage. A local community, for instance, could rightly feel better protected by a firm and uncompromising stand than by entering into a negotiation as the weakest of all parties).

2.2 Assessing the human and financial resources available

People engaged in promoting and supporting the CM process need knowledge and skills in the ecological, social and economic disciplines. They also need the capacity to communicate with all the stakeholders concerned and to obtain and maintain their confidence and trust. And they need energy, passion, willingness, creativity, dedication and continuity. Their work is certainly not routine work… In other words, the co-management process needs "champions"!

Are such human resources locally available? Are there individuals willing to become part of a Start-up Team to prepare and launch the co-management process (see Sections 2.3-2.10)? Are there financial resources to support the co-management preparatory phase (including visits by the Start-up Team to the potential institutional actors, participatory assessment exercises and social communication initiatives)? Are there financial resources to support the negotiation phase (including meetings, independent facilitation and the technical support that may be required along the way)?

The initiators of a CM process – which may be local individuals (e.g. an enlightened politician), local associations and NGOs, government agencies (e.g. the agency managing a protected area) or conservation and development projects supported by donors – need to dedicate time and care to the process of assembling the necessary human and financial resources before embarking on the initiative.

2.3 Establishing a Start-up Team

A Start-up Team (or Initiation Committee, Launching Committee, etc.) is a small group of people (perhaps 4 or 5 individuals) who agree to be in charge of the CM preparatory phase.
The group is usually selected by the initiators of the CM process—which may be an external project, a community leader, an enlightened government professional, an NGO, etc.— and/ or is self-selected on the basis of strong personal motivation. When the initiator is a donor-supported project, one or more project staff may become members of the Start-up Team (at times this helps assure the public perception of impartiality) but, as a rule, they should not be the majority.

Most importantly, **all institutional actors should trust and feel capable of communicating with *at least one* person in the Start-up Team**, even if they do not feel represented by him/her.

Some key characteristics of appropriate Team members are: diversity, credibility, personal motivation, and excellent communication skills.

Some key qualities of a good Team are: being active, efficient, fair, multi-disciplinary, and transparent in decision-making; acting on the basis of consensus and collaboration; being determined to launch but not to lead or dominate the CM process.

The tasks of the Start-up Team

The Start-up Team is entirely responsible for one phase of the process only: the one in which the partnership is prepared and rooted in the local context. After that, the stakeholders themselves need to take control.

During the preparatory phase, the main tasks of the Team consist in:

2.4 Gathering information and tools (such as maps) on the main ecological and social issues

The Start-up Team may wish to begin its work by gathering existing information and tools to describe the main ecological and social issues (problems, opportunities, history, conflicts, power relations, etc.) as well as descriptions and delimitations of the territory, area or natural resources of interest. Maps (including old maps) are particularly valuable tools in this sense.

Example Box 1
A Start-up Team centred on a key individual

The Nta-ali Forest Reserve is located in the South-West Province of Cameroon. Its initial vocation was the protection of forest ecosystems. Over the years its status was modified into a productive reserve, but a zone of integral protection was maintained. In early 1998, the Korup Project, with GTZ financing, initiated a co-management process for the Reserve. After an initial assessment of process feasibility, the project set up a Start-up Team. The main task of the Team was to help the stakeholders get ready for their involvement in the negotiation phase. To do so, the members of the Team had to possess certain capacities. In other words, the project identified a number of criteria to guide the choice, from acceptance by all stakeholders to personal motivation and sincere appreciation of the co-management approach. The project then went on to identify and contact a number of individuals who appeared to meet the chosen criteria.

It soon became evident that the Divisional Delegate of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MINEF) for Mamfe possessed all the qualities to effectively play the role of Team Leader. The project thus requested his assistance to animate the Start-up Team, which, besides him, was to comprise two other members. The choice of the MINEF Divisional Delegate may appear inappropriate in view of its professional role. Yet, several points appeared in favour of the choice:

- His dual "nature" as both belonging to the local community (as native of the region surrounding the reserve) and to the government (as local responsible officer for the Ministry of Environment and Forests)
- His social status as local "elite" recognised by both the local communities and the other stakeholders. By virtue of this position that he consolidated through the activities of his association (Nchang Youths Development Association), he often plays the role of mediator between the local population and the forestry administration. In this way, he relates two distinct worlds (and actually "embodies" both of them).
- His capacity to mediate between the culture of the governmental agencies in charge of conservation and the local indigenous culture. He has a mastery of the two systems and can translate the preoccupations expressed by one side to the other.
- The confidence he had already won from the local communities, the timber companies operating in the area and the environment and forestry administration.
- His willingness and readiness to engage the local communities in a co-management process.

The two other members of the team were staff of the Korup project, chosen in view of their capacity to set up social communication initiatives, master the phases of the co-management process and provide logistics and technical support to the Team Leader.

The Start-up Team remained operational for about 6 months. During this period its main functions were to facilitate the circulation of information among the stakeholders, spark up dialogue and provoke a social discussion on the phenomena and trends affecting natural resources and the measures needed to avoid their depletion. Through such initiatives, the Start-up Team succeeded in uniting all the conditions favourable for the holding of a first meeting among all major stakeholders. The meeting was organised on 1-2 December 1998. The 48 participants represented the local communities (26 individuals), the local government (4 individuals), the forests administration at local and national level (9 individuals), other local administrative departments (3 individuals) and the Korup and WCS project (6 individuals). The meeting was facilitated by the Korup project, and the debates developed in an open and candid spirit. In particular, the representatives of the local communities freely expressed their views and contributed to the definition of problems, issues and solutions.

As a result of this first meeting, a "declaration of principles" was issued and a Core Team of the co-management process, including five members representing the various stakeholders, was set in charge of facilitating the negotiation of the Nta-ali co-management plan. As of August 2000, the process is ongoing. Information generated in a participatory fashion has been utilised to prepare a zoning plan of the area. Meetings to discuss the zoning and other issues are regularly held among local residents and forest administrators.

A preliminary outline of the issues at stake can be summarised in a short report, in writing if appropriate, to be offered to the institutional actors at the beginning of the negotiation process. The report may summarise the particular NRM context from various perspectives (historical, social, legal, political, institutional, etc.). Such reports benefit from inputs by various social actors, which can be gathered during the preparatory phase (see later). Yet, the members of the Start-up team should refrain from stating or rephrasing the positions of various parties and give only a matter-of-fact account. If there are controversies, the report may mention them, and say what they are about. Preparing such a preliminary report, however, is not always appropriate. It should definitely be avoided when there is only the slightest hint that the social actors may be intimidated or upset by it.

Not only the report, but also the maps and other relevant data and information must be made available to all stakeholders, particularly to local communities who may otherwise be deprived of the information they contain. In fact, the Start-up Team may wish to set up a small reference library at the disposal of all institutional actors during the negotiation phase.

2.5 Identifying in a preliminary way the natural resource management unit(s)

On the basis of the preliminary ecological analysis, the Start-up Team can identify some possible natural resource management units (e.g. a water catchment area, a forest patch, a rangeland, a lake, a fishery area). Ideally, such "units" would make ecological sense (for instance they would comprise the essential elements of an ecosystem), but also social sense (for instance they would fall within a given administrative unit or community). When this coincidence of ecological and social units is not possible, the number of relevant social actors increases and the negotiation process becomes more complex. It is also possible to envisage a series of "nested" NRM units (for instance a micro-catchment nested within a river basin watershed, itself part of a larger island ecosystem).

> ***"At what 'level' should negotiations be held?"***
> *In general, it is best to negotiate at the local level, among the communities, agencies, organisations and people directly involved in NRM activities—all the while maintaining links with other levels (e.g. larger ecosystem, administrative units, region, country, etc.)*

When the NRM units are fairly small, the actors who negotiate the co-management plans and agreements are likely to be the same ones who will implement the related activities. This is often conducive to good management. In fact, many professionals would maintain that the best management level is the lowest possible one with the authority and capacity to take decisions (a criterion that often goes under the name of "subsidiarity").

It may be useful to recall that traditional societies are often characterised by a remarkable coincidence between a distinct body of natural resources and the social unit (local community) related to those resources. In more than one way, in fact, the territories, areas and natural resources under the care of a local community naturally "identify" an NRM unit.

2.6 Identifying in a preliminary way the institutional actors to participate in natural resource management

Usually, several communities, organisations, social groups and individuals possess a direct, significant and specific stake in the identified NRM unit(s). In other words, there are many "potential institutional actors" in natural resource management. Among them, only some will be willing and capable of investing time and resources, organising themselves, taking action to get their interests and concerns socially recognised and will be ready to take on some NRM responsibility. These are the true "institutional actors" in co-management plans and agreements, the ones that the Start-up Team needs to identify, contact and involve in the process. And, in case of nested NRM units, such true actors need to be identified at each level (e.g., in our prior example, for the micro-catchment as well as for the river watershed and for the island as a whole).

> ***'institutional actor' (stakeholder) —***
> *a community, a public entity, a group or an individual who organises itself, takes action to gain social recognition of its own interests and concerns and is willing to assume some task and responsibility for a given NRM unit*

How can the Start-up Team identify the potential institutional actors in a specific context? There is no recipe for that, but a checklist may help.

Identifying potential institutional actors: a checklist

√ Are there communities, groups or individuals actually or potentially *affected* by the management decisions? Are there historic occupants (e.g., indigenous communities or regular transients) and traditional resource users with customary rights of ownership or usufruct? Are there recent migrants? Non-resident users of resources? Absentee landlords? Major secondary users of local resources (e.g., buyers of products, tourists)? Are there local associations or NGOs concerned with natural resources? Are there businesses and industries potentially impinged upon by the NRM decisions? Are there research, development or conservation projects in the area? How many employees (national and international) live in the area because of such projects? Are these people active in natural resource management?

√ Who are the main traditional *authorities* in the area at stake? Are there government agencies officially responsible for the management units or resources at stake? Are there respected institutions, to which people have recourse in connection with a variety of needs and circumstances?

√ Who has *access* to the land, area or resources at stake? Who is using the natural resources at present? In what ways? Has this changed over time?

√ Which communities, groups and individuals are most *dependent* on the resources at stake? Is this a matter of livelihood or economic advantage? Are these resources replaceable by others, possibly in less ecologically valuable or fragile areas?

√ Who upholds *claims*, including customary rights and legal jurisdiction over the territory, area or resources at stake? Are there communities with ancestral and/or other types of acquired rights? Are various government sectors and ministerial departments involved? Are there national and/or international bodies involved because of specific laws or treaties?

√ Which communities, groups or individuals are most *knowledgeable* about, and capable of dealing with, the territories or resources at stake? So far, who has a direct experience in managing them?

√ What are the seasonal/ geographical variations in resource use patterns and user interests? Are these interests geographically and seasonally stable (e.g., are there seasonal migration patterns)? Are there major events or trends currently affecting local communities and other social actors (e.g., development initiatives, land reforms, migration, important phenomena of population mobility or natural growth or decline)?

√ Are there other co-management initiatives in the region? If so, to what extent are they succeeding? Who are their main partners?

At times, the "potential institutional actors" are not clear about their own interests and concerns in an NRM unit. Even more often, they are not organised to communicate and promote them and/or are not willing to take on NRM responsibilities. For their preliminary stakeholder analysis, the members of the Start-up Team may begin with a list of social actors obviously possessing *major* interests, concerns, capacities and / or comparative advantages in natural resource management. Through contacts and meetings with them, that list will be modified. It is likely that not all the ones initially identified may be willing to organise and invest time and resources in management, but new and possibly less obvious social actors might be.

A fairly usual dilemma in stakeholder analysis presents itself when the Start-up Team discovers a variety of different interests, concerns and capacities vis-à-vis natural resources within one and the same potential institutional actor (let us say a community in the vicinity of a forest). Should one or several institutional actors be invited to participate in the negotiation process? There is no simple answer to this question. The Start-up Team may wish to explore the pros and cons of the dilemma with the most directly concerned people and groups as part of their own process of self-organisation (see below). For instance, a united community has more weight at the discussion table than several people who cannot agree on a common position. ***And yet, the community may be willing to speak as one voice on certain occasions and as many on others…*** In other words, the people who find themselves united as "one stakeholder" for some decisions may need to split and regroup on another one. This phenomenon, at times referred to as "multi-culturality" of stakeholders (see Otchet, 2000), should be acknowledged and recognised as normal.

But, are interests and a willingness to participate sufficient to take on a management role? Shouldn't the Start-up Team also ask: "Who are the social actors *entitled* to manage the unit(s) at stake?" It certainly should. And yet, the understanding of what constitutes a legitimate entitlement is an evolving socio-political phenomenon, best approached in a participatory way. The Start-up Team could begin by asking the potential institutional actors whether they consider they have a fair claim to participate in the management of natural resources and, if so, on what grounds. In this way, the Start-up Team will obtain a list of factors and characteristics that at least *some* people recognise as legitimate "roots of entitlements" in the local context. Some examples of such factors and characteristics are listed in a box in the following page.

The roots of entitlements: examples of grounds on which to claim a role in natural resource management

- existing legal rights to land or resources, whether by customary law or modern legislation (e.g., traditional tenure and access rights, ownership, right of use);
- mandate by the state (e.g. statutory obligation of a given agency or governmental body);
- direct dependency on the natural resources in question for subsistence and survival (e.g. for food, medicine, communication);
- dependency for gaining basic economic resources;
- historical, cultural and spiritual relationships with the concerned territory, area or natural resources;
- unique knowledge of and ability to manage the concerned NRM unit(s);
- on-going relationship with the territory, area or natural resources (e.g. local communities and long-time resource users vis-à-vis recently arrived immigrants, tourists, hunters);
- loss and damage suffered as a result of NRM decisions and activities;
- level of interest and effort invested in natural resource management;
- present or potential impact of the social actor's activities on the land or the natural resources;
- opportunity to share in a more equitable way the benefits of natural resources;
- number of individuals or groups sharing the same interests or concerns;
- general, social recognition of the value of a given point of view or value (e.g., based on traditional knowledge; based on scientific knowledge; aiming at "sustainable use"; aiming at "conserving natural and cultural heritage"; following the "precautionary principle", etc.);
- compatibility with national policies;
- compatibility with international conventions and agreements.

Not all societies or groups within a society recognise *all* NR management claims from *all* social actors. They may recognise some but not others. They may recognise claims only in combination with others (e.g. dependency for survival + long-term relationship with the resources + uses based on traditional technology and practices). Some social actors may recognise their respective claims, but other actors may deny them.

Given such a multiplicity of possible views, how can resource management claims be assessed vis-à-vis one another? Who can determine their respective value and "weight"?

Towards empowered and responsible institutional actors: a schematic view

communities, groups, organisations and individuals	key steps
potential institutional actors	recognition of the values, opportunities and risks associated with land and natural resources; self- organisation to express those as own interests and concerns
institutional actors	recognition / negotiation by society of the interests and concerns of the institutional actors as “entitlements” (customary and legal rights included)
entitled institutional actors	entitled actors negotiate agreements and set-up organisations, rules and systems to enforce the rules to share natural resource benefits according to their own entitlements and capabilities
empowered institutional actors	**co-management partnership**: the institutional actors share benefits and responsibilities amongst themselves; they contribute knowledge, skills and financial resources to resource management; they are held accountable for their agreed responsibilities; they learn by doing in management tasks
responsible institutional actors	

> ***"Who are the 'primary' and 'secondary institutional actors?"***
> *This question cannot be answered outside of a specific context. Yet, some social actors are in the frontline of needs, knowledge and comparative NRM advantages pretty much everywhere. Such actors can also claim a unique historical relationship as users, managers, protectors and "producers" of the natural resources at stake. Such actors are the local communities.*

Ideally, this would be done via a ***socially endogenous process***, i.e. a socio-historical development in which groups and individuals organise themselves to express their interests and concerns (and thus define themselves as "institutional actors"), prompt society to recognise their claims as "entitlements", participate in negotiating an equitable division of benefits and responsibilities, and learn-by-doing in natural resource management (see the following schematic view). In this process, the institutional actors with socially recognised entitlements may also be subdivided between "primary" and "secondary", and thus accorded different roles in natural resource management.

In many contexts, such a process will evolve with great difficulty, if at all. It may be blocked by individuals with vested interests, or by too strong a power imbalance among the social actors involved (e.g. big business and national and local administrations versus a traditional community). It may lack the human or financial resources it needs to take off. It may be impeded by a history of violence and bitter fights among relevant groups and factions. Or it may just be foreign to the local context because of a weak tradition of participatory democracy in the country.

Promoting and supporting co-management in a specific context means helping the aforementioned process (organising, negotiating and learning-by-doing) to start, and to develop in a fair way. In particular, it means helping local communities to identify and overcome obstacles such as the ones just listed above.

2.7 Launching and maintaining social communication initiatives

Social communication initiatives generate an on-going flow of information and dialogue between the Start-up Team and the institutional actors, and among the institutional actors themselves. They can be organised by the Start-up Team beginning with some specific event (a fair, a public party, a community meeting, a travelling theatre piece, etc.), but they should also include an on-going component, to take care of communication needs that emerge in the course of time. In the CM preparatory phase, social communication promotes an open debate and critical understanding of questions such as: "What is co-management? Is it needed here? If so, how do we develop it?"

No one in the world would be interested in co-management if it could not bring solutions to the environment and development problems besetting many people and groups in society. Thus, social communication initiatives can begin by promoting social discussion on existing environment and development problems, existing capacities to do something about them, existing entitlements to take decisions on the issues. Information should also be made available on who has initiated the CM initiative (a project, a community leader, a governmental agency), and why; on the Start-up Team and what it is doing to set the process in motion; and on what steps the process is likely to comprise and how people can participate.

Example Box 2

The "visiting card" of a Start-up Team

The project for the conservation of natural forests in the Southwest of Cameroon (PROFORNAT) is operated by the GTZ in a region inhabited by peoples of Bantu and Baka ("pygmy") origins comprising three protected areas (Lobéké, Mboumba-Bek and Nki), several forest concessions, game hunting territories, etc. The management of the forest ecosystem is characterised by a multiplicity of stakeholders with diverging interests, referring themselves to a plurality of norms regulating access to natural resources.

In this context, the PROFORNAT project opted for a position of facilitator of the co-management process. A Start-up Team revolving around the project staff with experience in the socio-economic field was created. The Team first dedicated itself to gathering information on the ecological and human environment, but also to introducing the project to the different stakeholders, and in particular to explaining its own potential role as process facilitator. To this end, a "visiting card" in various formats corresponding to the various stakeholders was prepared to diffuse information on the co-management process and on what it entails.

The visiting card for the local communities was created following the GRAAP method (GRAAP means Groupe de Recherche et d'Appui pour l'Autopromotion des Populations – group to Reseaarch and Support People's Self-promotion). The main tool of the method is a large canvas of paper of about 2.5 meters width, with a series of drawings in a specific sequence. The images are drawn to help the people reflect on their environment, discuss on the relevant trends together, identify possible solutions, identify the need for a facilitated co-management process among various stakeholders, and accept that the GTZ project may play the facilitator role. The discussion also touches on the process objectives, expected results, human resources, etc.

Four animators settled on various locations along the main road crossing the project territory were set in charge of organising village meetings, showing the synthesis table and discussing it in the local languages. These meetings have allowed a better local comprehension of what the PROFORNAT project is about, in particular, to distinguish it from other local actors such as the agents of the Forests administration, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Conservation Service (WCS). Several local communities expressed their willingness to get involved in the co-management process.

One objective of social communication initiatives could be to inform the public at large about the relevance of CM concepts and practices for the local context. Even more importantly, however, they may help people to own and transform whatever CM is all about. In other words, social communication initiatives are very different from conventional information or education initiatives. They do not merely aim at "passing on a message about an issue" but at promoting its critical understanding and appropriation in society. After all, the most important result sought by a genuine co-management initiative is not for people to "behave" in tune with what some experts believe it is right for them, but for people to think, find agreements and act together on their own accord.

A Start-up Team interested in developing social communication initiatives would begin by understanding the system of local media, including where and how local people discuss and take care of NRM issues. Whenever possible, the local media employed to convey this kind of information – from word of mouth to songs and story-telling, from informal meetings at market places to elders' ceremonial gatherings – should be identified and possibly utilised (often within a spectrum of other media). The Start-up Team might have to abandon some favourite conventional tools (e.g., pamphlets or microphone speeches) for more creative and effective ones (e.g., an environment-awareness game or lottery on local market days). Importantly, a mix of different media should be used, tailored to reaching and stimulating different groups and sectors in society. The Team should, most of all, avoid adopting a "teaching" or "preaching" attitude and instead always promote dialogue and the open discussion of different points of view (see also Section 1.2).

Although dialogue and discussions will end up establishing an "accepted common language", an important first step in social communication initiatives is to decide on an entry-point description (words, images, definition of problems, etc.) of the ecological and social issues to be tackled and the co-management process being promoted. For the latter, a culturally meaningful name or phrase in the local language, which would be perceived as appealing and inspiring (e.g., "Let's manage the forest together!", "Our community in the 21st Century", "Solidarity and wise use of our wetlands" etc.) should be tested and adopted. The terms and phrases should not be trite or resemble party slogans; on the contrary, they should convey the spirit of non-partisan collaboration, solidarity, working together for the common good. The local name of the CM process is usually crucial to local acceptance and success. It is important to avoid picking a "good name" from a few devised on the spur of the moment by outside professionals. Instead, the name should evolve in conversations with members of local communities and various potential institutional actors. Possible problems and inadequacies with the translation of the names and descriptions in the local languages should also be given careful consideration.

2.8 Engaging the institutional actors

The main task of the Start-up Team is to contact the potential institutional actors identified so far and to inform them about the upcoming process of co-management and the opportunities it offers to all parties concerned regarding the NRM unit(s) at stake. A member of the Team (usually the closest and best trusted by the relevant people) meets with individuals belonging to a community, an agency or a group identified as a "potential institutional actor" and asks to be accompanied to visit the NRM unit(s) at stake. Once there, issues and problems naturally come up and can be discussed. Participatory appraisal exercises such as land-use mapping, historical mapping, transect walks, interviews with spontaneous groups or focus groups and key informants, etc. can be very useful in prompting discussion. The next step is to organise meetings with more people who broadly share the same interests and concerns as the ones initially contacted (i.e., part of the same "institutional actor" camp). In such larger meetings the NRM issues and problems identified are re-introduced and discussed, and thereby validated or modified.

The goal of these meetings is for the potential institutional actors to identify and clarify their own NRM interests, concerns and capacities, as well as to decide for themselves if and on what grounds they wish to claim any entitlement to manage. In addition, they may also clarify what *type* of entitlement they claim. Do they wish to take an advisory, executive or decision-making role? Do they simply wish to have a share in the benefits deriving from the natural resources? In this way, the Start-up Team deepens and refines its own preliminary situation and stakeholder analyses with the help of the stakeholders, while they prepare themselves for the phase of negotiation.

Example Box 3
Social communication at the heart of co-management

The Conkouati Game Reserve is situated in the coastal region of Congo Brazzaville and characterised by a diversity of ecosystems (savannah, forest, lake, lagoon, etc). In the early 1990s the Congolese government agreed to develop some management measures for the reserve with the help of a GEF project implemented by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). In view of the multiplicity of existing stakeholders, norms, interests and open conflicts, the participatory approach presented the only, if scant, hope for success. It proved an approach more easily said than done. At the beginning, all attempts at dialogue promoted by expatriate personnel were met by disdain and open hostility. It was only when a local person employed in the public administration took at heart the objectives of the project that a real dialogue began to develop. All the villages in the area were visited and repeated discussions and debates took place over a period of many months. At the same time, meetings were held with all the other stakeholders, such as government officials and forest concessionaires. These proved not less difficult to engage in a positive dialogue than the local communities. Yet, the efforts eventually succeeded and the various stakeholders agreed to form a joint management committee (the COGEREN) and developed their co-management plans, including zoning.

Information on the agreements on the basic elements of the management system (especially the zoning plan) and the setting up of a pluralist management authority (the COGEREN) was extensively diffused in the territory of the reserve. All this was part of the social communication initiatives initiated well ahead of the ceremony to ritualise the common vision and legitimise the agreements. The initiatives made use of a variety of communication avenues, chosen in order to suit the various partners, places, availability of finances, etc.

Two main phases marked the diffusion process of the management agreements. The first corresponds to the preparatory phase of the ceremony to ritualise the common vision and legitimise the management agreements. The main objective was to announce the awaited ceremony to all stakeholders. The means used were borrowed from both the local and modern systems of communication. The members of the local Committee for the Management of Natural Resources (COGEREN), all delegated by stakeholders, had the responsibility of informing the respective groups they represented. Among the tools used in the occasion, the audio cassette occupied an important place. It comprised two songs on the process of co-management which were sang at the rhythm of modern musical instruments in the vernacular language (*Lingala*) and in French by an artist well known in the region. Each member of the COGEREN used the communication channel they mastered. In the villages, the local heralds were often asked to assist. The songs of the cassette became popular in bars and main piers along the borders of the Conkouati lagoon (meeting place for fishermen, hunters, business men, etc). In town, particularly at Pointe-Noire, the songs were diffused several times on the national radio and the local Radio Pointe-Noire.

The second phase was that of feed-back from the key events of the ceremony of legitimisation and of the ritual which went with it. The support that was used here included photos taken during the signing of the charter and the ritual dance, a video cassette that recorded the whole ceremony, a video cassette on the synthesis of the ceremony, a poster on the charter signed and the zoning map, etc. The posters were distributed in all villages, including the neighbouring villages not directly concerned with the signing of the agreements. Projections of the video cassette on the whole ceremony were organised in all the villages, to make sure that everyone, even the ones absent from the ceremony, were informed about it and aware of its meaning. The film on the synthesis was also shown by the regional television of Point-Noire.

Social communication on the management agreements obtained at Conkouati was realised through a variety of avenues and on the basis of a full understanding and utilisation of the local media environment. Information was shared and discussed among all stakeholders with the help of communication channels appropriate to each of them. Because of these initiatives, the local stakeholders decided to engage in the process and are now well informed on all the implication of the reached agreements and on the existence of the COGEREN, the multi-party institution responsible for monitoring the fairness of the process and the respect of agreements.

It is particularly important to examine the *grounds* on which various actors base their claims to natural resource management, which we described before as the "roots of entitlements". These offer an overview of the main NRM stakes in the specific context, and inform the Start-up Team of controversies likely to surface during the negotiation phase.

2.9 Helping the institutional actors to organise

To participate in the negotiation process, the institutional actors need to arrive at an internal consensus on the values, interests and concerns they wish to bring forward. They also need to appoint people to represent them vis-à-vis other actors. For some (e.g., an established government agency) this may require little effort. For others (e.g., a traditional community living in a remote area) it may require major investments, at least in terms of time, and it may even necessitate external facilitation and support.

> ***"What type of assistance should the Start-up Team provide to the institutional actors?"***
> *Assistance is at times necessary for certain individuals or groups to participate in the negotiations. Some types of assistance are usually not problematic (e.g., financing the participation at meetings or facilitating the choice of a representative) while others (e.g., supporting the establishment and legal recognition of an organisation) possibly imply more continuous and onerous financial commitments. They may also take on a clear political connotation.*

For instance, a member of the Start-up Team may help a community or user group to select the most appropriate person(s) to represent them. He/she may facilitate a meeting in which the main qualities and characteristics of a good representative are elicited, listed, discussed and agreed upon through brainstorming. On the basis of such a list of criteria (including, for instance, factors such as knowledge of the local NRM situation, personal commitment, honesty, negotiation skills, capacity to represent the interests of the community, etc.) the group can list, discuss and prioritise the names of people who fit the criteria and can effectively represent the group as a whole. In this way, a group can free itself from having to choose the "expected names" (such as the person who usually deals with government officials, the son of the village chief, etc.). It is important that the criteria are genuinely identified by the community or interest group, and not by the Start-up Team, and that the decision on the name of the representative is taken in a congenial atmosphere, free from coercion. On the basis of specific needs and available resources, the Start-up Team may thus provide stimulus as well as technical and/or financial support to the self-organising of the institutional actors. Once this step is completed, they will indeed be ahead in the CM process.

2.10 Preparing for the negotiation meetings: rules, procedures and equity considerations

This task is another of the Start-up Team's most important duties. On the basis of the preliminary decisions on the institutional actors and the level of agreement to be reached, the Team proposes *how* the negotiation should be held — an advice charged with cultural and political implications.

Example Box 4

Strengthening social actors before the negotiation process: the case of the Baka People

The Dja Game Reserve is situated in the dense humid forest zone of Cameroon. It is part of the world network of Biosphere Reserves and has been declared a World Heritage Site. The management of this reserve affects and concerns several stakeholders: the Bantu and Baka residents, the timber exploiting companies, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the local administration, and others.

The Baka are pygmies. They are a hunter and gatherer society characterised by nomadic customs. Under the influence of the government settlement policy, some Baka communities have been compelled to settle down in villages located in proximity of Bantu villages. This unprecedented co-existence has perturbed the organisation of the Baka society and modified their relations with the Bantu. In fact, the settled Baka found themselves obliged to abide by the norms regulating the social relations of the Bantu. Thus, the Baka were deprived of their traditional rights to land and natural resources: the Bantu recognised for them only the right of mere subsistence. In fact, they have a prejudicial image of the Baka. For the Bantu, the Baka are an inferior People.

It is in such a context that the project Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Biodiversity of the Dja Reserve, financed by The Netherlands ands implemented by the IUCN, decided to promote a co-management process. For that, it seemed necessary to make sure that the capacity of the Baka to sit at the negotiation table would be adequate, and that the Bantu would recognize them as a social actor with valid resource entitlements. For this, activities were designed to address both the local Bantu and Baka communities. Regarding the Baka, the project facilitated the recognition of the Baka chiefdom by the government administration, the rightful remuneration for Baka work by the Bantu employers, the government's attribution of community forests to the Baka, the self-reliance of the Baka women in the acquisition of their cooking salt, etc.

At the beginning, the support of the project was geared towards the internal sharing of information and discussion among the Baka themselves about their entitlements and what they recognise to be the entitlements of the Bantu. As a second step, the opportunities for discussion were provided also between the Baka and Bantu communities. It became evident that the two groups were interdependent for a number of reasons, including the practice of barter, which makes the two ethnic groups complementary with respect to several needs, and the custom of blood pacts, which binds some Baka clans and Bantu families.

The project stood on the ground of this interdependence— well recognised by the two groups— to promote a dialogue on issues hitherto considered taboo and to bring the Bantu to accept to lose certain prerogatives by ensuring just remuneration to the Baka and by recognising their chieftaincy and their rights to have access to community forests. In this way the project succeeded in bringing both the Baka and Bantu to agree on the daily wages for the Baka who work in the fields of the Bantu. This agreement has been legitimised in a ceremony in 1988, during which the Baka and Bantu delegates embraced each other— a remarkable feat in the local context!

Unfortunately, the severe scaling down of the operation of the Dja Project in 1999 has nearly interrupted the efforts towards the co-management process in the area.

Traditional societies have arrays of convivial procedures for negotiating agreements, such as a meeting of community elders or a larger gathering on the occasion of a spiritual festivity or a market fair. Many of those are simple, effective and inexpensive. If the Start-up Team is truly in tune with the stakeholders, it will consult them and eventually agree on whether any such culturally specific event is suitable for deciding on the issues at stake. In some cases, however, convivial gatherings may not be sufficient for negotiating a fair and sustainable NRM agreement.

For instance, the institutional actors may not share the same cultural backgrounds, values, attitudes and habits. A handshake equivalent to a sacred pact for some may just be a pleasant discussion of possibilities for someone else. Some people may not speak the same language, both literally and metaphorically, in the sense that the meaning of their respective terms and concepts may need a careful "translation". There may also be large power gaps or unsettled conflicts among the stakeholders, so that people may not feel comfortable, or even safe, to volunteer their views and expose their interests and concerns.

In such cases, the Start-up Team may well take a pro-active role in proposing a schedule of meetings, some rules and procedures for participation, and some support in facilitating negotiations (see also Section 3.1). The institutional actors could well discuss and modify all of these, but it is important that an entity trusted by all parties take the initiative to plan in detail at least the first meeting among the institutional actors. In other words, the Start-up Team should obtain an agreement on the place, date, hour, working language (or languages), participants, agenda, logistics and facilities needed for the meeting that will launch the CM process.

> ***"What does 'equity' mean in a co-management process?"***
> *Specific answers depend on specific contexts. In general, equity can be sought by helping the less privileged to "develop their own entitlements". It can be sought by promoting the recognition of entitlements rooted in valid and legitimate grounds (as defined by the relevant society) rather than entitlements rooted in the exercise of one form of power or another. It can also be sought by promoting a fair negotiation of functions, benefits and responsibilities among the entitled actors.*

But the Team needs to remember that its tasks are not only of a practical nature. Indeed ***the Start-up Team is also the prime guarantor of fairness and equity in the whole process***. Thus, it is never too early to stat thinking about equity, and on how it can be fostered throughout the entire CM process. The results arrived at should be made explicit, discussed and incorporated into the rules and procedures of the negotiation phase.

Results of the preparatory phase

The preparatory phase generally has some or all of the following outputs:

- information and tools (e.g., maps) on the main ecological and social issues at stake in the identified NRM unit(s), collected for the use of the parties in the negotiations;
- a short report on the NRM context listing, for example, historical, social, cultural, legal, political and institutional issues;
- one or more proposed NRM units, identified on the basis of ecological and social considerations;
- a preliminary analysis of relevant institutional actors, including entitlements, claims, power differentials and NRM conflicts amongst them, both existing and potential;
- a "name" and a description of the co-management process that are culturally valid and broadly understood and accepted in the context at stake.

Promoting equity in co-management: some examples and ideas

- disseminating information on environmental values, opportunities and risks of relevance to potential institutional actors
- disseminating information on various natural resource management options
- ensuring freedom to express views and organise for action
- giving a fair hearing to every actor's grounds for entitlements, with no discrimination in favour of some with respect to others (discrimination may be based on ethnicity, gender, age, caste, class, economic power, religion, residence, and so forth)
- helping the institutional actors to participate in the negotiation process, for instance by supporting them to organise, to develop a fair system of representation and to travel to meetings
- organising discussion platforms where all the institutional actors can voice their ideas and concerns, selecting the least discriminatory places, times, languages, formats, etc.
- supporting the negotiation of a fair share of management functions, rights, benefits and responsibilities
- ensuring effective and unbiased facilitation during negotiations
- supporting (via training and allocation of resources) the skills and capability of actors to negotiate
- promoting a tight proportionality between the management entitlements and responsibilities and the benefits and costs assigned to each institutional actor
- keeping an open door for new institutional actors who may arrive on the scene
- supporting participatory democracy and multi-party agreements and organisations in all sorts of social decisions
- ensuring a fair measure of democratic experimentalism, allowing the adjustment of NRM plans, agreements, organisations and rules on the basis of learning by doing
- ensuring that the negotiated co-management plans, agreements and rules are enforced effectively

- social communication initiatives that opened up and maintain two-way communication channels between the Start-up Team and the institutional actors, and foster a broad discussion of NRM issues in society
- institutional actors who are reasonably well-informed, organised (e.g. having identified their own representatives) and ready to negotiate co-management plans and agreements
- a set of suggested procedures for the negotiation process, including a first meeting among the institutional actors organised in detail
- ideas and concrete proposals on ways to promote fairness and equity in the negotiation process

Including equity considerations in the process towards empowered and responsible institutional actors: a schematic view

communities, groups, organisations and individuals	**key steps**	**equity considerations**
potential institutional actors	recognition of the values, opportunities and risks associated with land and natural resources; self-organisation to express those as own interests and concerns	relevant information accessible to all; freedom to express views and organise for action; time and resources to organise; fair system of representation
institutional actors	recognition / negotiation by society of the interests and concerns of the institutional actors as "entitlements" (customary and legal rights included)	absence of social discrimination; fair hearing available to all institutional actors; political openness towards participatory democracy
entitled institutional actors	entitled actors negotiate agreements and set-up organisations, rules and systems to enforce the rules to share natural resource benefits according to their own entitlements and capabilities	existence of negotiation platforms; capability of entitled actors – including economic and political capability – to negotiate with others; non-discriminatory time, place, language and format of meetings; impartial and effective facilitation, in languages all the actors understand
empowered institutional actors	**co-management partnership**: the institutional actors share benefits and responsibilities amongst themselves; they contribute knowledge, skills and/or financial resources; they are held accountable for their agreed responsibilities; they "learn by doing" in natural resource management tasks	a measure of democratic experimentalism, i.e., "legal and political space" to accept new (or "old") actors, rules and systems to enforce rules; flexibility to adjust plans on the basis of experience; effective enforcing of negotiated agreements and rules
responsible institutional actors		

Example Box 5

Beyond customs: women engaged in co-management

The zone at the periphery of Waza National Park, in Northern Cameroon, comprises sixteen villages inhabited by three main ethnic groups – the Fulani (Peuls), the Bornois and the Kotoko—devoted to agriculture, cattle raising and fishing. Side by side the sedentary population one finds also transhumant and nomadic peoples, used to take their animals to graze in the periphery of the park. In this complex social context the temptation was strong to exclude from the co-management process the groups less socially powerful and recognised. This was the case for the transhumant and nomadic people, on the one hand, and for the women, on the other. Women, in particular, despite representing more than half of the concerned population, were customarily not at all involved in decision making.

The Waza Logone project, operated by the IUCN and financed by the Dutch Cooperation Agency, integrated the gender approach and some equity considerations in its operations. In this light, it has favoured the involvement of both women and transhumant and nomadic groups in management decisions.

The task has been difficult because of the place traditionally reserved for women in the society of Northern Cameroon. The local administration, the traditional Chiefs and the men in general could not see any interest or reason to involve the women in the co-management process. They did not hesitate to express their disapproval in public. On their part, the women were not keen to take part in decision-making and were sceptical about being able to negotiate with the game guards, who had always repressed their desire to gather natural resources from the park.

Facing this situation, the project Waza Logone started some special activities for the women, to raise their interest in the co-management process. The accent was placed on income-generation activities in relation with the existence of the park, re-enforcing women's capacity to negotiate and encouraging their participation in the management structures. It soon became apparent that women could become enthusiastic participants in the process as soon as they would perceive their chance of affecting the matter of gathering of resources from the park without being repressed by the Conservation Service. In fact, women ended up actively participating in the negotiation of the management plan and the creation of a pluralist management structure – the Advisory/ Management Committee for the Park of Waza and its Periphery.

Some of the interesting results obtained include the direct representation of women in the above Committee – 7 women are among the 15 representatives of the population in the Committee, identified by all the local population – and the negotiation of specific agreements between women's groups and the Committee itself. These negotiations allowed a first agreement on the management of a restaurant at the Visitors Centre in Waza, which has been assigned to a group of local women. The women agreed to respect the park rules and to denounce all individuals who enter the park in an illegal manner or perform illegal activities there. In addition, the women of several villages at the border of the park are negotiating the right to harvest certain quantities of natural resources from the park's territory, such as gum Arabic, dead wood, wild *gombo* and *doum* leaves. As of Spring 2000, the process is on-going: the opinion of the Scientific Committee advising the Park is expected but not yet delivered. On the basis of this opinion the various stakeholders will develop specific agreements with the women of the relevant communities.

3. The negotiation phase

Negotiating among institutional actors: the heart of co-management

The co-management plans, agreements and organisations are as good as the process that generated them. It is wise to invest in this process!

Critical challenges

- to develop a partnership by which the benefits and responsibilities of natural resource management are shared in the most efficient and equitable manner possible, starting from a situation that may be neither efficient nor equitable. Also, sometimes:
- to develop a partnership among people who do not share the same culture (e.g. values, attitudes, capacities, ways of working, reference systems, languages), which means overcoming serious communication difficulties.

What has to be remembered?

- that there exist a multiplicity of good and poor NRM options (the terms *good* and *poor* referring to the goals and objectives to be defined, which themselves are many and varied);
- that many institutional actors may have difficulties in getting their claims heard and accepted and that the discussion platform should offer them a fair means to do so;
- that conflicts of interest between the institutional actors are inevitable but can be managed, and all the more so if recognised as early as possible (not every one has to share the same goals, a compromise among all those concerned is quite sufficient);
- that all the institutional actors (and especially the professional experts!) need to adopt a mature, non-paternalist and non-ethnocentric attitude, and that they need to acknowledge the legitimacy of values, interests and opinions different from their own.
- That— given the complexity of the ecological and social systems— the best approach is one of adaptive management (learning by doing);
- that even when a satisfactory NRM solution has been found, it will not remain valid forever; the conditions in the given context will change and the NRM solution will need to change in response to them– something everyone has to be prepared for;

The negotiation meetings

Ideally, at the beginning of negotiations there are:

- some reasonably well-informed and organised institutional actors
- a discussion forum, a set of suggested rules and procedures, and a preliminary schedule of meetings and events
- professional support on hand to facilitate the negotiation meetings and mediate conflicts, if necessary

No matter whether the institutional actors are many or few, whether they are organised formally or informally, whether they feel in basic agreement or oppose each other with strongly contrasting values and interests, they need to meet and discuss issues of common concern. The goal of such meetings is usually to achieve a broad accord on:

- a long-term ***vision*** (ecological and social) for the NRM unit(s) at stake
- a short- and medium-term ***strategy*** to achieve such a vision, including ***co-management plans*** for the natural resources at stake and ***complementary agreements*** to address socio-economic issues related to such resources
- an evolving social institution (***organisations***, ***rules***, ***etc***.) to implement the strategy and ensure on-going reviews, as necessary

3.1 Agreeing on the rules and procedures of negotiation

All institutional actors are sent, in advance, a copy of the proposed agenda for the first of a series of meetings and an invitation for their chosen representative to participate. Reference is made to the name and process description already adopted during the social communication initiatives. The goal of the meetings to come may be set quite high, for example a series of meetings "…to understand the main challenges to our natural resources in the next twenty years, and prepare together to face them." It should be specified, however, that not only lofty goals but also substantive issues of relevance to the institutional actors will be part of the agenda. The convenors could be the Start-up Team and/or, as appropriate, some respected local authorities and personalities. The presence of a facilitator would be useful, and should be announced in advance.

Main qualities and tasks of a good facilitator / mediator

Facilitating meetings is a task firmly anchored in the culture of the actors concerned. As mentioned, many traditional societies do not need external facilitators and know well how to negotiate in a convivial manner as part of normal life. An external facilitator may be important, however, when there are strong power imbalances, unresolved conflicts or communication problems among the parties concerned, and when the parties belong to quite different cultural backgrounds.

An external facilitator should be:

- recognised as independent
- generally respected by all those involved
- capable of relating with everyone on their own terms
- able to listen
- able to pose key questions (for example, on the root causes of the various problems and the feasibility of the options put forward)
- capable of getting the best out of the participants and helping them to see a better future for themselves and their communities

Tasks of an external facilitator:

- helping the Start-up Team and the institutional actors to identify and agree upon the rules and procedures of the negotiation meetings
- being responsible for the logistics of the meetings (e.g., agenda, seating arrangements, translation services, discussion tools, etc.)
- ensuring that the process takes place in accordance with the agreed rules, that the meetings' atmosphere is comfortable and that everyone has a fair chance to participate
- checking out that the representatives of the institutional actors truly represent them (e.g., they are not merely self-appointed)
- promoting the best possible communication among institutional actors, e.g., by rephrasing points, asking questions, suggesting the exploration of new ideas
- helping a group to be conscious of itself and of its goals, mission and opportunities
- helping a group to broaden its range of options
- pointing out the positive aspects of the process, i.e., when the actors' old habits have given way to more constructive attitudes, for example:
  - when the institutional actors actually talk to each other directly, if this was impossible before
  - when new points of doubt and self-doubt are raised
  - when the institutional actors clarify and enhance their perception of the others
  - when new information is brought to the attention of everyone
  - when an agreement that has a chance of being sustainable has been found.
- *avoiding* stating his/her opinion on substantive issues and influencing decisions

The first meeting among institutional actors may begin with an introduction by the members of the Start-up Team, who will describe their work thus far. It is important to be transparent about who is facilitating and financially supporting the Team's work and why. The participants (representatives of the institutional actors) may then introduce themselves and mention how they are organised internally and how they (themselves) have been selected as representatives. The facilitator and Start-up Team may then illustrate a proposed set of rules for the negotiation phase as well as procedures and a schedule of meetings. The discussion could then be opened to adjust and modify the proposed rules and procedures until a broad accord is achieved.

An example of a set of rules for the negotiation process

(Rules for negotiation processes are strongly dependent on the cultural milieu; it cannot be stressed enough that the set offered here is only an *example*, and that this example may be appropriate in some situations and entirely inappropriate in others)

- all main institutional actors should be present in the meetings and participate via their formal representatives
- participation is voluntary, but whoever does not come is taken as not being interested in taking part in decision-making; however, if more than X% of the institutional actors are not present for a meeting, the meeting will be adjourned

- language should always be respectful (people should refrain from insults and verbal abuse)
- everyone agrees not to interrupt people who are speaking (the facilitator will remind people of the need to be concise)
- everyone agrees to talk only on the basis of personal experience and/or concrete, verifiable facts
- everyone agrees not to put forth the opinions of people who are not attending the meetings (unless they are officially represented)
- consensus is to be reached on all decisions (voting will be avoided as much as possible, as it always assures an unhappy minority…)
- "observers" are welcome to attend all negotiation meetings. (The decision as to whether the meetings should be open or closed needs to be carefully evaluated vis-à-vis the specific context. In fact, the decision to allow closed meetings should be taken by the institutional actors themselves, rather than by their representatives.)

Procedural and practical aspects, such as the ones listed above, are generally easier to deal with than questions of substance (e.g., what uses of natural resources are allowed) and relationships among the institutional actors (e.g. who has a legitimate entitlement to manage the resources). In the first meeting, it is good to limit the discussion to matters of rules, procedures and logistics. An initial meeting in a calm and productive atmosphere is a good way to help the institutional actors to find out where they stand, establish working relations among themselves and start to "own" the participatory process.

When discussing who shall attend the next meeting, some people may object to the very presence of others and attempt to exclude them. The facilitator could help diffuse these potentially disruptive objections by ensuring that an inclusive approach at the discussion table does not mean that everyone present will share *equally* in entitlements and responsibilities for natural resource management. The people present at the meeting are representatives of social actors who have organised themselves to express their concerns. It will be the task of *all* representatives together to identify everyone's role and weight in terms of substantive issues and decisions.

3.2 Developing a common vision of the desired future

One or more meetings can be devoted to establishing a base of common interests and concerns among all the institutional actors. In such meetings, the participants are encouraged to discuss their long-term wishes for the NRM unit(s) at stake, i.e. the kind of environment, natural resources and living conditions they would ideally like to leave to their children and grandchildren. On this basis, the facilitator helps the participants to develop a consensus on a "vision" of such a desired future, with specific descriptions – as visual and concrete as possible – of the ecological and socio-economic situation in the NRM unit(s) (see Annex 1 for some guidance on visioning exercises and Annex 2 for an example of a rural community's vision of its desired future).

Checklist for procedures and logistics

- Who will need to be present at the next meetings? (Who are the main institutional actors in NRM in our specific context? Have we missed out anyone so far?)
- Should representation be formal (written *affidavit*) or accepted also in informal ways? (A written affidavit may be very inappropriate in a non-literate context, as it may allow the literate to dominate others within traditional communities.)
- How many institutional actors need to be present to declare the meeting valid? (Consider that key stakeholders, including the local communities, should never be left out. Also consider, however, the possibility of coalitions among stakeholders who wish to boycott meetings and thus block the negotiation process.)
- What language(s) shall we speak? Have arrangements been made for interpreters? (This is a fundamental issue to ensure a fair and equitable negotiation.)
- Approximately, how many times shall we meet?
- Where shall we meet and, at least approximately, when? (Consider the negative effect of certain meeting places on stakeholders. The meeting place should not intimidate anyone, and especially the representatives of the local communities. In terms of timing, consider the seasonal changes in workload of rural communities and the daily task schedule of the different actors, especially men and women.)
- Is there a need for one or more facilitators? Could the facilitator be a local person, or should we call for a professional from outside?
- How shall people be seated in plenary meetings? (Round arrangements, with or without tables, are generally preferable.)
- Are facilities available for smaller meetings of working groups?
- Are there financial resources to support the meetings? Who can provide those resources?
- Who will be responsible for the logistics (e.g. send a reminder to the agreed participants, getting the premises opened, cleaned, etc.)?
- Is there a need for rugs and mats, chairs, tables, lamps, boards, paper, cards, felt pens, sticking tape, pins, projectors, and/or other materials to support discussions and presentations? Will everyone feel comfortable using such presentation aids?

Social consensus on the vision of the future desired is extremely important for the negotiation of effective co-management plans and agreements. If conflicts and disagreements surface during the negotiation process, the facilitator will be able to bring everyone back to the vision they all wish to achieve. For this, it is useful to write up or draw the main features of the vision on a large sheet of paper (or other appropriate support) and pin it on a visible surface at the site of the negotiation. It is also a good idea to transform the vision into a charter of principles or other appropriate form of social contract (see Annex 2, again).

3.3 Ritualising the common vision

An agreement is legitimised when it is accepted and recognised as binding not only by the institutional actors who developed it, but also by society as a whole. The process by which such legitimisation is achieved, however, differs according to the importance of the agreement. A simple local rule is easily legitimised and easily undone. Instead, a common vision of the future desired by an entire community is a sort of *constitutional* agreement. In many cultures, this calls for a strong ritual, respected and acknowledged by the whole society. Such a ritual helps raise the common vision to the spiritual and symbolic level, making it valid in the long term and particularly difficult to disavow.

The choice of the appropriate type of ritual is a culturally specific act, concerning the moral, spiritual and often religious values of the institutional actors at stake. Traditional practices are often at the heart of such ceremonies. When non-traditional actors and/or governmental representatives are involved, however, it is advisable that the institutional actors also produce and sign a written document. In this case, the ceremony held to ritualise the vision could include both a traditional ritual and a modern ritual (see, for instance, example box 6). The latter could be the public reading, signing and celebration of a document, such as a charter of principles for natural resource management and development approaches in the territory at stake.

The common vision of a desired future is a most appropriate type of agreement to ritualise. If such a vision is ritualised it will, in fact, be regarded as intangible and sacrosanct. As such, it will be possible to use it as a ***common ground where all stakeholders can reconcile the controversies and conflicts that may present themselves in the course of negotiations***. It cannot be said, on the other hand, *when* it is best to hold the ritual ceremony. In certain cases, the ceremony precedes the negotiation of specific plans and agreements. In others, the ritual does not come until after the agreements, as the partners need to see that something concrete can come out of their vision before committing the time and social capital necessary to celebrate a strong ritual.

3.4 Reviewing the current socio-ecological situation and trends

With the help of a facilitator, the institutional actors can analyse the present ecological, social and economic situation and trends in the context at stake, as well as their desirability and acceptability. The discussion can start on the basis of a short report illustrated by the Start-up Team (and possibly submitted in advance), although the report should not define the limits of the discussion. Other good starting points are participatory exercises such as land-use and historical mapping, trend analysis, group interviews with the local elders, a transect walk, etc. (see Annex 1 for a description of some of these exercises).

Example Box 6

Fusing the traditional and the modern to ritualise a co-management vision

The Conkouati Game Reserve is situated in the coastal region of Congo Brazzavile and characterised by a diversity of ecosystems (savannah, forest, lake, lagoon, etc). From the early 1990s, the Congolese government and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are supporting there a co-management process implemented by the IUCN. The process offered an opportunity to develop a common vision among local stakeholders for the future of natural resources, to agree on the basic elements of a management system (particularly the zoning plan) and to institute a multi-stakeholder management authority—the COGEREN.

The vision of the future was facilitated and developed through a series of meetings between stakeholders and IUCN staff and partners. It was then legitimised and ritualised during a ceremony organised on 8 May, 1999. The adopted procedure stemmed from the usual ones performed at village, administrative and political ceremonies. This one was characterised by a mixe of traditional and modern practices. On the one hand, there were prepared speeches, banners, tee-shirts, slogans, etc. On the other, there were songs during which spirits were invoked, oaths taken by the local traditional land authorities (*fumu si* or *chefs de terre*) and dances performed—the same dances usually exhibited during the supplication of spirits for the fertility of women and natural resources (*cianga*). In order words, there was a fusion of rituals: a modern ritual dominated by the signature of the charter on the management of natural resources and a traditional ritual characterised by fertility cults offered to clan spirits.

The patrimonial mediation method (see a summary of it in the Overview session of this volume) was utilised by the IUCN staff and partners but, contrary to the classical procedure, the ritualisation of the common vision was organised not immediately after the agreement on the long-term vision, but later on, at the same time as the legitimisation of agreements and the multi-stakeholder management authority. There were at least three reasons for this:

1. Essentially, a vision is an anticipation on time. The local stakeholders do not have the habit of projecting, and avoid speculating on future events : a visioning exercise is not familiar to them.
2. The vision appears to people as an abstraction, similar to the promises of the political parties, which the local populations receive with considerable scepticism.
3. The most important ritual in recent years, namely the hand washing ceremony of the political class in June 1991, has not been respected despite its “sacred” value: the armed conflicts that brought the country to mourn many deaths were evidence enough of the violation and transgression of oaths.

By organising the ritual only *after* the specific agreement had been made the project departed from abstract considerations and reasoned on concrete and transparent engagements, a fact which re-assured the local stakeholders.

A few methods and tools that can be useful in facilitating the development of a situation analysis among several partners are listed below:

Methods and tools for situation analysis

- **Brainstorming**. This is a crucial technique employed to gather the views and perceptions of a group of people on a specific subject. It is based on a freewheeling offering of ideas started by an open-ended and somewhat provocative question put forwards by the facilitator, such as "What main problems do you face in managing natural resources?" "What obstacles forbid you to live in the ideal community you visualised for your children?" "What are the key resources in the area, the "good points" about local life and culture?" Opening statements and questions should be general and non-leading, i.e., should not stress or overemphasize a point of view that could bias the participants. It should be clear that brainstorming is a free and non-committal way of exploring ideas, i.e., no one commits him or herself to something simply because he/she mentioned it in a brainstorming session. Usually people offer ideas orally, one after another, and the facilitator draws relevant pictures or writes the ideas up on a board. The clarifying, grouping and rephrasing of these ideas is then done through general discussion. The result is a consolidated and hopefully coherent and exhaustive list of items (problems, resources, etc.)

If all the participants in the exercise are literate, it is also possible to utilise a ***structured brainstorming*** exercise. In this case the facilitator asks the question, leaves time for people to think individually and then asks them to write their replies in large letters on colour cards and to describe them, one by one, to the rest of the group. After each idea card has been presented, it is pinned up on the wall and the group decides where it should be set, to cluster with related ideas. The final result is a series of "card clusters", each dealing with a main subject. Each cluster can later be assigned to a sub-group, which will clarify it, rephrase it and explore it in detail (see also Annex 1).

- **Problem analysis**. Depending on the questions posed to the group, the stakeholders may have identified a list of issues (such as "management of the watershed") or problems (such as "deforestation in the watershed"). In all cases, issues and/ or problems and/ or anything that requires action and change need to be analysed by the institutional actors with the help of the facilitator.

  "Clarifying" means obtaining a coherent common understanding of the issues/ problems at the present moment. In particular, can everyone agree on what constitutes a "problem" and thus by definition requires change? If people disagree on this point, a helpful question may be "Is this blocking/ impeding/ slowing down the achievement of the common vision of our desired future?"

  "Analysing" means setting the issues/ problems within a meaningful context of root causes and consequences, in particular with respect to the vision of the ideal future agreed upon by everyone. Such an analysis is vital to direct energy and resources in an effective way. Can everyone see the same causes and consequences for a given issue or problem? A good analysis is comprehensive and investigates several dimensions of a given context, but can be completed in a reasonable amount of time and, most importantly, is understood by everyone. Graphic conceptual frameworks are very useful to organize and communicate a situation or problem analysis (see below).

- **Conceptual frameworks**. A conceptual framework is a schematic illustration of the relationships between an issue or problem, the phenomena contributing to creating and maintaining it, and the consequences arising from its existence. Usual forms may be a graph of boxes and arrows or the drawing of a problem-causes-effects tree (see Annex 1). Ideally, a conceptual framework is coherent and comprehensive, for instance able to accommodate the potentially multi-sectoral nature of problems, but it is also simple. If possible, it includes some consideration of the time dimension (history, seasonality, processes of social and environmental change, etc.).

  A conceptual framework can be produced collectively during a meeting to analyse the existing situation. Once a problem has been identified, the facilitator asks what are its causes and consequences. The participants in the exercise draw symbols and / or write names or very short phrases on cards and pin them on the drawing of a tree. The main problem is usually pinned over the trunk and the causes and consequences close to the roots and branches. Alternatively, cards can be spatially arranged on a board and connected by lines and arrows. Dealing with movable cards is better than dealing with a single drawing on a sheet of paper, as cards can be moved and changed much more easily at the suggestion of the participants in the meeting. ***In this way, the collective thinking of the group can be developed and expressed.*** The discussion on the conceptual framework should continue until everyone is satisfied that all the main causes and consequences of a problem have been identified, and no more ideas are offered or corrections requested.

- **Breaking down large problems/issues into smaller or sectoral components**. A problem that is too large and complex is often very difficult to analyse, and even more difficult to treat. One way of overcoming an impasse is to break it down into smaller sub-issues or problems and to assign them for discussion to sub-groups and task forces of the participants in the meeting. Time, however, should be set aside for common discussion of the overall strategic view.

- **Analysing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/limitations** (SWOT). SWOT is a powerful tool a group can use to assess an issue of concern, in particular a project, an organisation or a public service, and to identify opportunities for action and change. Basically, it is a group brainstorming on the positive factors (strengths), the negative factors (weaknesses), the possible improvements (opportunities) and the constraints (threats and limitations) related to the initiative or entity at stake. Usually the results of the session are listed on a four-column matrix, drafted on flipcharts on a wall.

  At times, participants have different opinions or express contradictory statements. In such cases, the facilitator can ask further questions to deepen the arguments, but a consensus among group members is not necessary. Contrasting views and alternative options can be listed on the same column in the matrix. In particular circumstances, it may be necessary to gather more information once the meeting is over, information that will be communicated to the whole group in the next meeting (see Annex 1 for details).

3.5 Agreeing on a strategy towards the common vision

When institutional actors have had time to discuss current issues and trends, the common vision of the desired future is recalled and compared with the present situation. What are the main points of difference? Do the trends identified and discussed indicate that society is moving towards or away from the common vision? What are the key problems and obstacles blocking progress towards the common vision? What opportunities, resources and assets can be relied on? After a realistic discussion of these points, the facilitator may ask the institutional actors to focus their attention on identifying the ***components*** (dimensions of work, key performance areas) ***of a strategy*** to achieve the common vision from the present starting point. Basically, these would be the ***areas in which it is necessary to act in the short to medium term in order to achieve some tangible results and change*** (objectives). Such results will constitute the building blocks of the common vision i.e. will help transform the desirable into the possible and/or real.

Some of the components will deal directly with natural resource management, whereas others will bear upon it in more indirect and complementary ways, i.e., via interventions geared towards economic development, health, education, social organising, governance, culture and so on (see the example in Annex 3). Indeed, it would be neither effective nor wise to conceive a management plan for natural resources in isolation from the socio-economic reality in which they are embedded. Coordinated interventions in several sectors are also important to allow an equitable distribution of the social costs and benefits of sound natural resource management.

At this stage it is not yet necessary to clarify the details of what needs to happen, but just to specify:

- the key areas or problems that need to be tackled (i.e., the components of the strategy); and
- the broadly desirable outcomes (objectives) for each such component.

If the discussion proceeds well, the facilitator may challenge the participants not only to identify the main components of the strategy, but also to understand and evaluate the links among them, so as to assemble a coherent overall plan. If at all possible, the result of the discussion should be summarised on a sheet of paper and posted on the wall on the meeting premises, possibly next to the description of the agreed vision of the desired future.

3.6 Negotiating co-management plans and agreements for each component of the strategy

For each component of the strategy, the institutional actors need to identify what needs to be done to progress towards the desired future. The objectives identified up to this point are generally broad (e.g. "to manage the forest on top of the hills in a sustainable manner") and need to be transformed into work plans that answer specific questions such as "What exactly shall be done? Who shall do it? By when? Where? How? With what financial means and human resources? Towards what specific aims? What indicators will be used to measure progress?" This is the moment when everything becomes concrete, a multiplicity of strategic options and choices becomes apparent to everyone, different points of view abound, and conflicts surface in all their power and complexity.

At this time, it is expedient to ***form a working group for each component of the strategy***, making sure that the actors most directly affected are represented in the relevant group. It is also a good idea for each group to have its own facilitator/moderator, perhaps one of the parties themselves, who could take on the neutral role learned by watching the professional facilitator at work (the latter could remain available for all eventualities).

The groups have to come to terms with the great many avenues and options open to them to achieve a given objective and, among them, select the one best suited to the conditions and needs of the given context. Since different avenues and options will bring different costs and benefits to the institutional actors, each actor may have strong interests and concerns attached to one course of action versus another. How can they all reach a consensus or at least a broad accord among themselves? The tools already used for the situation analysis (e.g. brainstorming, conceptual frameworks, SWOT) can help again, but other methods can also be useful. Among those are the ones listed below:

Methods and tools to agree on a course of action

- **Listing alternative options and facilitating their direct comparison.** Alternative options can be examined on the basis of various **criteria**, such as effectiveness, feasibility, cost in human, material and financial resources, expected benefits and impacts (in particular impacts in terms of environment and social equity), sustainability, and so on. The open comparison of alternative options is a very useful tool to help a group decide which option it should select from amongst the many available. The discussion can easily be summarised on a board, with alternative options listed in rows and criteria in columns. For all the criteria chosen by the group the alternative options can be scored, and the matrix will then offer a broad comparative view of options and scores. It is to be stressed that the scores should not be assigned from the top of the head, but only after a discussion of concrete issues. For example, with regard to feasibility, who is ready to take on the major responsibility for each alternative option? In what time frame? Using which material and financial resources? With regard to impact, what are the expected environmental but also the social and economic consequences of the proposed options? What degree of certainty are we dealing with in those previsions? Are there any options expected to have a positive impact on *all* the components of the strategy? Are there any options expected to have a negative impact on one or more strategic components?

- **Stimulating explicit discussion** of the hypotheses and basic assumptions underlying alternative options. Why is it thought that a certain action will lead to a certain outcome? Taking a natural resource management plan as an example, the results expected from implementing the plan should be specified (including the values expected to be attained by biological and environmental indicators) and the ecological plausibility of achieving these values should be examined in depth. The results to be expected from socio-cultural or economic interventions should also be specified (values expected to be attained by social or economic indicators) and lessons learned from similar interventions in the past or in other places should be examined as well.

- **Facilitating** the achievement of ***satisfactory compromises*** through the use of ***flexible instruments***, such as the ***zoning*** of the territory or area to be managed and/or the specification of ***detailed conditions of resource use*** (such as by type, time, season, users, techniques, tools, etc.). Zoning basically involves subdividing a territory or area into subareas subjected to different objectives, conditions and rules. Examples of detailed conditions of resource use include type of resources, time of day or season, legitimate users, technologies that can and cannot be employed, etc. Zoning an area and specifying the detailed conditions of natural resource use in each zone greatly enhance the spectrum of options available to the negotiation partners, the flexibility of an NRM plan and the chances of achieving effective compromises.

- **Calling for an expert opinion** on controversial issues. If disagreements among the institutional actors exist over matters of fact, it may be useful to call on the service of expert professionals (such as a biologist to explain the characteristics of a viable habitat, a hydrologist to estimate how much water can be extracted from a source in a sustainable way, a community elder to recall traditional range rehabilitation practices or cost-sharing mechanisms within the community, and so on). This is not to say that expert opinion should be followed, nor that, indeed, different experts may not disagree. On the contrary. But expert opinions (especially when free from economic and political conditioning) can be a helpful means of shedding light on controversial issues under discussion.

- **Providing effective conflict mediation.** Conflict mediation focuses on the fact that an agreement that satisfies every party (a win-win solution) is likely to be more long lasting and more satisfactory than win-lose results. In the long run, compromise may be the best way to serve everyone's interests, especially when overt conflict is replaced by the stability and predictability of a mutually agreeable solution. An effective mediator brings the conflicting parties to agree upon a compromise solution with the help of several expedients.

  One expedient is to provide space and time for everyone concerned to clearly explain their views and positions: what they want and why. They should not be interrupted except for points of clarification. Another expedient is to recall the common vision of the desired future (coming back to the present from the future). If all institutional actors have agreed upon, and perhaps even ritualised, a common vision of the desired future, it is difficult for anyone of them to abandon the negotiation table. The mediator can in fact reduce the disagreements to a matter of different paths taken to reach the same goal. Such paths can be compared, as described above, on the basis of various criteria.

- **Asking the institutional actors to devise incentives** that will encourage them to agree on a given option. If one option that otherwise appears particularly interesting demands major costs and sacrifices from one or a few institutional partners, all the partners could figure out how to compensate the relative losers for everyone else's benefit. This could involve the provision of specific incentives and clauses in the plans and agreements. The very actors who would be compensated may advance suggestions about the incentives that they would like to receive, which could then be discussed by everyone (costs, feasibility, assurance of benefits to be obtained, etc.).

- **Facilitating** the setting up of ***Community Investment Funds*** for sustainable development, which benefit both entire communities and the individuals or groups engaged as partners in various productive and conservation activities and services. While discussing NRM plans, one often encounters the case of a community with customary entitlement to a set of natural resources (say a forest or a fishing area) but not yet organised to invest the means and human resources necessary to manage it productively or to defend its own rights. As a consequence, the natural resources may be falling into an open-access status, and being used in an exploitative fashion by all sorts of entitled and non-entitled actors. In other situations, although the local resources may not be mismanaged or threatened, there still may be a clear need to generate financial resources for sustainable community development.

In such cases it is useful to establish a productive partnership among the community (which may contribute natural resources such as land, water or access to the fishing area), certain individuals (who may contribute their labour, including surveillance labour) and other partners who may bring in the missing factors of production (such as seeds, water, boats, engines and nets, a tourism business, etc.). Once the productive partnership is active, the benefits can be divided among the production partners, one of which is then the community in its entirety. The community share of such benefits (or an initial "factor of production" provided from the outside, such as pumps for irrigation water, boats for fishing, tractors for ploughing or vehicles for transport) can be utilised to set up a Community Investment Fund (see the Table on the next page).

The rules governing a Community Investment Fund are devised by the members of the specific community, who generally set up a specific management committee. The fund is usually not loaned nor replenished by payments. It is, instead, invested in productive activities, which *generate* a suitable wealth for the community and income for those directly involved in its operations. This tends to make a Community Investment Fund grow rather than shrink under the effect of inflation and missed repayments. At the end of each production cycle, the growing Fund can be partially or totally re-invested for community-based productive initiatives, with or without partnerships with other groups or individuals.

Community Investment Funds for sustainable development have important and natural applications in the field of co-management, both as an approach that promotes and strengthens collaboration in society and as a co-management institution in its own right, with internalised incentives for using natural resources in a sustainable way.

- **Developing a simple logical framework** for the course of action agreed upon. A simple framework lists the relevant responsible actors, activities, times, resources, expected results, monitoring indicators and key assumptions. Very detailed logical framework analyses can be painful intellectual exercises, listing layers of objectives, multiple assumptions and the like. When the participants in the negotiation are from different cultures and backgrounds such exercises may be useless, if not outright counter-productive. In contrast, simple and concrete logical frameworks— each dealing with only one strategic objective—are easily understood and appreciated by everyone, including people unable o read and write.

Comparing types of community-funding mechanisms

(adapted from Farvar, 1999)

community investment fund	community revolving fund
is managed by, and benefits, the whole community;	may be managed by the whole community but loans are made to, and benefit, individuals;
does not need to be in cash, it can be a factor of production (e.g. land or natural resources owned by the community, or an initial outside input);	is in cash;
is invested in productive activities, usually in partnership with community groups or individuals;	is loaned as cash to individuals in the community;
produces wealth and capital for the community to re-invest;	produces income or emergency support for individual members of the community;
is subject to production risks, which are shared by all the partners;	is subject to re-payment defaults and inflation risks;
stimulates community initiatives and joint activities between the community and other partners;	stimulates individual initiatives (may even weaken community spirit and cohesion);
accommodates for and sustains common property resources.	fosters the privatisation of natural resources;
accommodates for cultural values opposed to interest charges;	where interest is charged, is unfit for cultural values opposed to the practice (e.g. some Islamic societies);
the owners or contributors of each factor of production receive a share of what is produced;	the “beneficiaries” receive loans, which they need to pay back, possibly with added interest;
the community and partners have the same incentive to improve production;	incentives are for individual production only;
the partners have incentives to use the factors of production, including communal NRs, sustainably;	incentives are for sustainable use of individual property only;

Example Box 7

Units of natural resource management and zoning of the territory

Mount Cameroon hosts an important wealth of biological diversity. It is now five years since a project has been active to conserve such biodiversity with support from GTZ and the British Cooperation Agency. The approach they adopted is the co-management of the relevant natural resources. The Social Forestry Unit of the project was charged with facilitating the CM process. The Unit started by gathering information on the key ecological and social issues in the territory, identifying the main stakeholders, assisting the weakest stakeholders to organise and identifying the units of natural resource to manage.

The approach used for defining the units of natural resource management has responded to both ecological concerns and social concerns expressed by the local population and the other stakeholders. This implied preliminary work by the project staff on the basis of an ecological analysis. The technical and scientific data were compared with the points of view of the local communities and the other stakeholders. In this way, the units of natural resources to manage were identified following criteria that accommodated both conservation values and the interests of traditionally entitled and dependent resource users.

The two dimensions of space and species appeared important to define the management units. The first involved three main levels: the entire region of Mount Cameroon, the two forest reserves classified by the State (including the one named Small Mount Cameroon), and the village traditional territories. This space configuration is characterised by a mosaic of small management units within several larger and more complex systems such as the forest reserves of Bomboko and Mokoko and the Mount Cameroon region. The borders between the small management units are not considered fixed once and for all: they can be slightly moved following various events and compromises among local groups.

The second dimension concerns the local endemic species of fauna and flora, some of which are in an endangered state. Data collected by biologists show that about ten species are in critical condition. Each endangered species defines a management unit. Currently, only *Prunus africana* or pygeum, endemic on volcanic soil, has been the subject of specific negotiations. The tree is highly appreciated by local communities for its traditional medicinal properties. It also supplies raw materials to Plantecam, a pharmaceutical company specialised in extracting and exporting the active ingredients in pygeum.

Agreements, disagreements, consensus and compromise

Despite its best efforts, a working group of stakeholders may not arrive at a consensus on any given option for a strategic component. In this case, one possibility is to present all the alternatives to the broader group of all institutional actors and ask for everyone's advice. The broader group may again examine and compare alternative options on the basis of a number of specific criteria, but also look at the courses of action required for the other components of the strategy. By examining all the components of the strategy at once, it may be possible to reveal, for instance, that the "losers" in one of the dimensions are the "winners" in another one. Or the discussion may advance with the help of proposals for cross-component compensations and incentives.

The aim of the negotiation is a consensus on what needs to happen– such as specific objectives, actors, means and activities– to foster each component of the strategy. As mentioned, this is likely to include specific ***co-management plans for the relevant unit(s) of natural re-***

sources, but also ***complementary agreements dealing with other building blocks leading to the common vision of the desired future***. The co-management plans will specify a share of functions, benefits and responsibilities and will be signed by all institutional actors involved (see the first box on the next page). Formal agreements on the other building blocks, also signed by the actors concerned, may include project implementation contracts, a letter of intent, a municipal by-law, etc. (see the second box in the next page). The more actors and the more finances involved, the more advisable it is for the plans and agreements to be made binding (such as formal or legal contracts). The signatories should be those individuals who are directly assigned responsibility in the plans and agreement (and *not* the authorities who represent them!).

All NRM plans and the associated agreements should specify actors, activities and means, but also a follow-up protocol, including the anticipated results and impacts to be monitored, the indicators and procedures to be followed and the individuals to be held accountable. It should also be noted how long the actors concerned will wait before meeting again to assess whether the chosen course of action has been effective and/or needs to be adjusted (for example through evaluation reviews). Finally, it is good to specify a set of indicators and follow-up procedures for the co-management *process* itself (see Section 4.3).

Copies of the co-management plans and agreements– written in terms that are simple, easily understandable and in the local language(s), or also in the local language(s)– need to be disseminated to the institutional actors and to the public at large. If a system of zoning has been agreed upon, the maps illustrating it will also need to be reproduced and disseminated.

It is important to keep the institutional actors informed about what has happened in the negotiation meetings, and especially to communicate why certain options have been retained and others excluded. The social communication system set up during the preparatory phase will again be very useful for this purpose.

3.7 Agreeing on specific CM organisations

Socio-economic development and the management of natural resources require a variety of initiatives and activities, as well as on-going experimenting and learning. In fact, the process of negotiating and implementing plans and agreements is never "finished", and some organisations need to remain in charge of executing and reviewing these plans and agreements on an on-going basis. It is also important to make sure that a pluralistic perspective in NRM is internalised in society and becomes the norm rather than the exception. In other words, it is useful to "institutionalise" the process in line with local practices and needs.

> ***'institution' —***
> *the complex of organisations, rules, behaviours and values by which society pursues a goal*

One of the crucial ingredients of a social institution is *time*. Only a day-by-day experience through time can give people the sense of normality and the confidence associated with spontaneous, acquired behaviour and its associated social values. Another essential ingredient is a relatively stable organisational set-up, developed on the basis of the agreed pattern of entitlements.

Elements of a co-management plan

- the geographical limits of the territory, area, or set of natural resources at stake;
- the complex of functions and sustainable uses it can offer;
- a co-coordinated series of objectives, priorities and activities for the management of natural resources;
- the recognised institutional actors;
- the *functions* and *responsibilities* assigned to each institutional actor;
- the *entitlements* and *benefits* granted to each institutional actor;
- procedures for negotiating on-going decisions and managing eventual conflicts;
- procedures for implementing and enforcing decisions;
- expected results at given times;
- rules for monitoring, evaluating and eventually revising the co-management plans and agreements (follow-up protocol).

Examples of agreements associated with a co-management plan

- A training initiative for one or more local community groups (elders, youth, women, farmers, pastoralists, forest dwellers, etc.)
- The building of local infrastructures (e.g. a road, a health centre, a school, a communication network, water supplies, power supplies)
- The setting-up of a Community Investment Fund
- A by-law to assign some exclusive rights to one or more local stakeholders (e.g. the right to set-up a tourist businesses, the right to collect defined quantities of specific products from a protected area)
- A public health initiative (e.g. training and supporting community health workers, providing safe water supply systems, public and private baths and toilets, etc.)
- A project to intensify/ improve local agricultural production
- Economic and technical support for the creation of local small industries
- Assistance to the commercialisation of local products

Functions and characteristics of co-management organisations

The organisations that may be set up to sustain the co-management plans and agreements through time may be of different types (e.g. a Board, a Council, a formal or informal Association, a Fund). Their functions (Terms of Reference) may also be fairly different, including:

- **executive bodies** (responsible for implementing plans and agreements on the basis of decisions produced by others, e.g., an association of local businesses responsible for executing a project negotiated between the director of a protected area and the bordering communities)
- **decision-making bodies** (fully responsible for the management of a given territory, area or set of resources, e.g. the Co-management Board in charge of a state forest, or the committee in charge of a Community Investment Fund)
- **advisory bodies** (responsible for advising decision-makers, e.g. a Coastal Council, directly linked with the regional authorities charged with the NR management mandate)
- **mixed bodies** (for instance holding partial management responsibility and partial advisory responsibility, such as an Advisory/Management Committee responsible for advising a Park Director on the decisions to be taken in park management but fully in charge of decisions and activities pertaining to the areas at its periphery)

The institutional actors could decide to set up several CM organisations for the same NRM unit(s), for instance an advisory body and a management body, including an executive secretariat. Other important characteristics of CM organisations are:

History and duration

Does the organisation pre-date the co-management plans and agreements or has it been set-up on an *ad hoc* basis? The former is sometimes preferable, as organisations and rules are a form of valuable social capital that require time and resources to develop. Yet, the perpetuation of a society's organisations may also mean the perpetuation of its internal systems of power and social inequities. Also, is the organisation permanent or is its life-span limited to a given period or activity?

Composition

The members may be representatives of *all* the institutional actors who developed the co-management plans and agreements, representatives of only a few of them, or mere professionals who do not represent any of the actors concerned (which may be the case for executive bodies). For a decision-making body, composition is a crucial issue. It is important to know who is being represented and what the balance of power is among the different institutional actors (e.g. relative number of members with entitlement to decide).

Internal rules

Is the organisation formal (legally recognised) or informal? Is it voluntary and self-organised or mandated by the State? Is it an open-membership organisation or a closed body, whose members can only be elected or appointed? Can anyone become a member or are there specific requirements? How is membership terminated? Is there a Chair? If so, how is the Chair elected? Is there a Secretariat? What are the terms of reference for the Chair and/or the Secretariat? How often and how are the meetings organised and held? Are the decisions taken by consensus? How are conflicts managed? Is there recourse to mediation or arbitration? Can the public, or stakeholders in general, attend the meetings? Are there reporting rules and/or arrangements for the dissemination of the proceedings? Etc.

Economic resources

How is the organisation sustained? Does it have any economic assets of its own? Are there membership fees? Are there income-generating activities? If some members regularly spend time on delegated tasks, are they compensated? If so, does compensation take the form of wages or a share in the proceeds?

As mentioned, a social institution is something more than a body and a set of rules. It is akin to an internalised state of normality in doing things, including expectations and routine reflexes (in particular the sense of shared responsibility in managing natural resources), social norms (the habit of discussing decisions with various stakeholders, and accepting the value of different points of view) and the use of specific terms and concepts in everyday life (such as co-management, but also entitlements, equity, linking of benefits and responsibilities, etc.). In other words, agreeing on an NRM plan and setting up a multi-stakeholder board are crucial but not sufficient steps towards institutionalising a co-management regime. This will be achieved only when— besides and beyond the rules— behaviours and ideas become spontaneously pluralist and respectful of a variety of entitlements and concerns in society.

3.8 Legitimising and publicising the co-management plans, agreements and organisations

The end of the negotiation process is marked by a meeting in which the results of the participatory process are made known to the relevant community or public. The meeting is usually held in the presence of authorities with more extensive powers than those who participated in the negotiations. The institutional actors review the common vision of the desired future, the components of a strategy designed to move from the present situation to the common vision, the co-management plans for the natural resources, the agreements set up for each component of the strategy and the organisations and rules developed to accompany implementation. For each agreement involving an NRM plan or any other major initiative or project, someone also describes the follow-up protocol (results anticipated, progress indicators, responsible individuals and/or organisations, etc.).

This meeting is an excellent opportunity to acknowledge the work of the negotiators and institutional actors and, in general, to celebrate the new hope generated for the entire stakeholder community. At this meeting, the institutional actors can also publicly vow to respect and "collectively guarantee" the co-management plans and agreements, which are presented for all to see, for example by exhibiting copies.

It is important to note that the co-management plans, agreements and organisations are reconfirmed and celebrated here, but not ritualised and rendered sacrosanct, as it should be the case for the common vision of the desired future agreed upon by all institutional actors. On the contrary, plans, agreements and organisations are to be monitored, evaluated and *modified* in line with their performance, results and eventual impacts.

Results of the negotiation phase

The negotiation phase generally has some or all of the following outputs:

- A vision of the desired future produced jointly by all the actors concerned. The vision is legitimated by an appropriate socio-cultural ritual that renders it sacrosanct.
- An analysis of the situation/ issues/ problems at stake and a strategy to achieve the common vision, sub-divided into components with clear objectives.
- Negotiated co-management plans and agreements among the institutional actors on specific courses of action (objectives and activities) for each component of the strategy. The plans specify the sharing of functions, entitlements and responsibilities in natural resource management among the institutional actors at stake. The agreements deal with a variety of socio-economic issues relating to the co-management plans, and are often designed to complement one another. Plans and agreements are collectively guaranteed by the partners in the process, are specified in some detail (e.g., via simple logical frameworks) and often have a contractual form.
- One or more CM organisations, with corresponding functions and rules, expressing the plurality of entitlements recognised in society and in charge of the activities and follow-up of the co-management plans and agreements.
- The co-management plans, agreements and organisations are publicised and made socially legitimate by some public event, but are not ritualised and, in fact, are expected to change with time in response to lessons “learned by doing”.
- Follow-up protocols to monitor and learn from the co-management plans and agreements (including indicators, methods, organisations responsible, a time schedule, etc.).
- A shared experience in participatory analysis, planning and decision-making for a variety of institutional actors concerned with natural resource management.

Example Box 8

A "double speed" management organisation

The Waza National Park, situated in the Extreme North Province of Cameroon, was created some decades ago. Following the national legislation, the residents of the villages situated inside the park's territory were relocated outside, right at the park's borders. These communities never resigned themselves to the decision, in particular regarding the prohibition of collecting natural resources necessary for their own livelihood. Throughout the years they continued to claim fishing rights on the ponds excavated and managed by their ancestors inside the park, the right of harvesting certain plant products (for instance gum Arabic) from within the park, the right to take their animals to graze inside the park in times of drought, etc. The ensuing conflicts between communities and park management brought the Waza Logone project, implemented by the IUCN and financed by the Dutch Development Agency, to initiate a co-management process to secure the natural resources of the park via agreements among the different stakeholders.

The process of negotiating among stakeholders facilitated by the IUCN brought about the establishment of a multi-stakeholder management structure, with the aim of approving the conventions regulating the management of the Waza park and its periphery. Noticeably, the definition of the terms of the mandate of the structure encountered the strong reluctance of the park conservation service. After several months spent in search of a suitable compromise, the parties agreed on a "double speed mandate": a consulting role regarding the management of the park itself (whose mandate stays with the conservation service), and a full management role regarding the periphery zone. With this double role in mind, the structure was named the Consultative/Management Committee of the Waza National Park and its Periphery.

The Consultative/Management Committee of the Waza National Park and its Periphery was legalised by the Minister of Environment and Forests of Cameroon with a decision pertaining to its internal organisation and functioning rules. The structure includes members possessing full rights and members with consultative powers only.

The members with full rights are:
- 4 representatives from the Park Conservation Service
- 1 representative from the Provincial Delegation of Environment and Forests
- 3 representatives of the Central Service of the Environment and Forests Ministry
- 5 representatives of the men from the settled communities in the park's periphery
- 5 representatives of the women from the settled communities in the park's periphery
- 2 representatives of cattle-rearing nomads (a man and a woman) and 1 representative of transhumant cattle-rearing people usually interested in the pasture of Waza Park and its periphery.
- 2 representatives of youths (a man and a woman) from the settled communities in the park's periphery.

The members with consultative powers only are:
- the mayors of the interested rural municipalities (Waza, Zina, Petté),
- the head authorities of the relevant Districts (Waza, Zina, Ngodeni, Fadaré, Kossa),
- a representative of the Scientific Council for the Waza park
- three representatives of the Waza Logone project
- a representative of the Management Committee of the Waza-Logone Plain (another multi-party management structure in the same province, also promoted by the Waza Logone project).

4. The learning-by-doing phase

Starting point for learning by doing

- Several institutional actors (stakeholders) have participated in the negotiation process.
- The institutional actors have produced and ritualised a common vision of the future they desire.
- The institutional actors have also identified a strategy to achieve that vision, including key components and objectives for each component.
- For each strategic component, the institutional actors have agreed on a course of action, and have produced relevant co-management plans and agreement(s).
- For each plan and each agreement, the institutional actors have identified expected results and impacts, as well as indicators and procedures to monitor and evaluate them (follow-up protocol).
- The institutional actors have agreed on organisations and 77rules to implement and remain in charge of the co-management plans and agreements.
- The relevant communities are aware of the co-management plans, agreements, organisations and rules that have been collectively produced, and consider them legitimate.

4.1 Setting to work the co-management plans, agreements and organisations

As soon as possible after the public celebration of the end of negotiations, the co-management plans for the natural resources and the agreements that complement them as part of the same strategy are implemented. The organisations and rules agreed on by all institutional actors are also set up and enforced. This allows the partners to capitalise on the momentum of the negotiation phase.

A committee and/or specific individual should be in charge and made accountable for each component of the strategy, co-management plan or main activity, reporting to the institutional actors (and/or to the organisations set in place by them) on on-going progress.

Compliance with the plans, agreements and rules is essential to the effectiveness of the whole CM process. If some actors violate the rules or do not accomplish what they agreed to do, others are soon likely to follow suit. To prevent this, the co-management plans and agreements need to specify who is responsible for enforcement, what means are at their disposal and what regular checks they are to carry out.

4.2 Clarifying the entitlements and responsibilities of the institutional actors

*'**accountability**' —
the clear and transparent assumption of responsibilities, the capacity and willingness to respond about one's own actions (or inactions) and the acceptance of relevant consequences*

In the course of implementing activities, diverging interpretations of the co-management plans and agreements may surface. For the more formal agreements, contract law and environmental law will provide some basic reference. For the less formal agreements it is important to foresee in advance who will assist the parties to clarify entitlements and responsibilities and to mediate in the event of conflicts. In this sense, an important concept and principle to apply is that of "accountability". It is also important that the process is not entrapped in some rigid and bureaucratic enforcement system. Co-management feeds on the passion and creativity of the groups and individuals involved, and on their ability to manage human relations in an informal and convivial manner. Flexibility and good human relations may go a long way towards solving even complex and thorny controversies.

It often becomes clear during implementation that the effectiveness of an agreed course of action depends on specific changes in the country's policies and laws. These changes can be pursued, as far as possible, by the institutional actors (different actors may be able to use different pathways towards the desired changes).

4.3 Collecting data and information as described in the follow-up protocols

In the negotiation phase, follow-up protocols are prepared for the co-management plans and agreement to be implemented, and individuals are identified to apply them. The protocols make explicit the results each activity is expected to obtain, what indicators will be used to assess them and what changes each indicator is expected to reveal. The indicators will likely refer to the status and quality of the natural resources in the NRM units as well as to the social and economic objectives of the accompanying agreements. Besides monitoring results, however, the *process* of co-management itself deserves to be monitored. To do so, a variety of qualitative indicators are useful (see some examples listed later in this section). All indicators should be monitored regularly and the measured data and collected information should be made accessible to the institutional actors and general public. Unplanned collection of unexpected information may also be extremely useful.

*'**monitoring**' —
the regular recording and analysis of selected information on a given phenomenon or activity*

In order to learn by doing it is not only important to collect data and information, but also to have a constructive attitude. If mistakes are regarded as opportunities for learning and if people are rewarded for identifying problems and promoting innovative solutions, learning by doing is strongly encouraged. On the other hand, it is important that innovations, and in particular innovations regarding NRM plans agreed on by all institutional actors, are not introduced without careful analysis and authorisation.

4.4 Identifying the main factors with an impact on natural resources and stakeholders, and experimenting with innovations

A great deal of learning takes place while the co-management plans and agreements are being implemented and the NRM organisations are tried out on the ground. This may include the gathering of data and information not even mentioned in the follow-up protocol. Such data and information should be documented and analysed, to understand in detail the main factors that have an impact on the natural resources and the stakeholders. This should be in the sense of both negative impacts and positive influences and accrued benefits. The factors identified shall be brought to the attention of the responsible CM organisations in the monitoring, evaluation and review meetings.

While the co-management plans and agreements are being implemented, the people with access to the natural resources generally develop a heightened sense of responsibility and legitimacy of their role. This may encourage them to refine NRM rules and apply more efficient and complex technical solutions. In addition, the area in which the co-management plans and agreements are enforced may grow in size (e.g. when new communities wish to sign the plans and agreements) and/or new actors (e.g. a federation of village associations) arrive on the scene. In such cases the organisations in charge of natural resource management will have to experiment— judiciously— with innovation. Judicious innovation, a key component of learning-by-doing, is facilitated by flexible management plans and budgets.

4.5 Evaluating co-management plans, agreements and organisations

Throughout implementation, meetings are held at regular intervals to evaluate the results of the co-management plans and agreements. If the activities and the financial and human commitments are particularly substantial, the evaluation should be both internal (participatory) and external (independent), and the results of these evaluations should be compared and analysed together. Various participatory methods can be used, including methods that may already be known by the institutional actors who have participated so far, such as the SWOT analysis (see Annex 1).

> ***'evaluation'* —**
> *result evaluation is the measuring of progress with respect to some original objectives, assessing whether they have been attained and/or whether they are still pertinent. Impact evaluation is the measuring of the intended and unintended, positive and negative consequences of an initiative.*

In a participatory evaluation process, the institutional actors ask themselves whether the co-management plans and agreements succeeded in progressing towards their own objectives as well as the agreed common vision, and thus whether the hypotheses on which the work was based are correct. They also ask themselves whether the context conditions have changed, whether lessons have been learned from experience and whether the process is on the right track (using CM process indicators). Most importantly, they examine the environmental and social results and impacts achieved in relation to those expected.

On the basis of these discussions, the institutional actors decide whether the co-management plans and agreements have to be modified and, if so, what modifications are needed and who should carry them out. If necessary, the process reverts to a phase of negotiation— although generally at a faster pace than the first time. It is also useful to have an Emergency Plan for situations in which fast intervention is needed.

Examples of *process* indicators for co-management

- knowledge and understanding of the institutional actors about the CM process, co-management plans, agreements, organisations and rules; about the CM objectives and schedule of events; about the management entitlements and responsibilities assigned to each concerned actor; etc.;
- existence of regular mechanisms for exchange and dissemination of NRM information as well as platforms to communicate and negotiate co-management plans and agreements;
- actors' ease of access to communication and negotiation platforms (are some actors discriminated against?);
- availability of facilitators to assist during meetings, mediate conflicts and help institutional actors to communicate among themselves;
- active participation of the institutional actors in the preparation of co-management plans and agreements (presence at meetings, effective expression and defence of the respective interests and concerns, willingness to take on responsibilities, etc.);
- existence of co-management plans and agreements linking various institutional actors (either oral or written, formal or informal);
- specific definition of the functions, entitlements and responsibilities of each institutional actor in the co-management plans;
- existence of CM organisations (with executive, advisory, decision making or mixed roles) expressing a plurality of NRM entitlements in the context at stake;
- institutional actors adhering to and complying with their agreed entitlements and responsibilities;
- institutional actors satisfied with the co-management plans, agreements and organisations;
- availability of competent personnel to clarify entitlements and responsibilities and mediate in the event of conflicts among the institutional actors during implementation of the plans and agreements;
- institutional actors committed to and active in promoting political and legal changes that facilitate the implementation of the co-management plans and agreements;
- in time, plans and agreements extended in both geographical scope and complexity;
- in time, the co-management plans, agreements and organisations progressively "institutionalised" in society.

Results of the learning-by-doing phase

The learning-by-doing phase generally has some or all of the following outputs:

- Co-management plans and agreements implemented and enforced
- CM organisations and rules in operation, and new values and behaviours slowly becoming part of social normality (institutionalisation)
- On-going clarification and adjustment of the entitlements and responsibilities of the institutional actors
- Data and information collected, analysed and made available as described in the follow-up protocol on the results of the NRM plans and related agreements, as well as on the CM process itself
- Experience with some judicious NRM innovation
- Positive and negative impacts of activities, and lessons learned in the process, monitored, analysed and evaluated
- Activities, plans and agreements modified on the basis of on-going monitoring and evaluation, as necessary

5. The co-management process: a summary view

a point of departure

- assessing the need for co-management and the process feasibility
- assessing the available human and financial resources
- establishing a Start-up Team

phase I: organising for the partnership

- gathering information and tools (such as maps) on the main ecological and social issues at stake
- identifying in a preliminary way the NRM unit(s) and institutional actors at stake
- launching and maintaining social communication initiatives on co-management in the local context
- contacting the institutional actors, facilitating appraisal exercises and continuing with them the ecological, social and stakeholder analyses
- helping the institutional actors to organise and identify their own representatives, as necessary
- organising the first meeting of institutional actors and proposing a set of rules and procedures for the negotiation phase, including explicit equity considerations

phase II: negotiating plans and agreements

- agreeing on the negotiation rules and procedures
- developing a common vision of the desired future for the NRM unit(s) at stake
- ritualising the agreed common vision
- reviewing the current socio-ecological situation and trends
- agreeing upon a strategy towards the common vision
- negotiating specific co-management plans and agreements for each component of the strategy (including clarifying what will be done by whom and with what means; mediating conflicts; establishing zoning arrangements and the sharing of NRM functions, rights and responsibilities among stakeholders; agreeing on follow-up protocols).
- agreeing upon CM organisations and initiatives to "institutionalise" CM
- legitimising and publicising the co-management plans, agreements and organisations

phase III: learning by doing

- applying and implementing the co-management plans, agreements and organisations
- clarifying the entitlements and responsibilities of the institutional actors, as necessary
- collecting data and information on results and process, as specified in the follow-up protocols
- identifying the main factors impacting upon natural resources and stakeholders; experimenting judiciously with innovations
- organising review meetings at regular intervals to evaluate results and lessons learned; modifying the co-management plans, agreements and organisations, as necessary

6. Lessons learned and tips for action

Lessons and tips for all phases and seasons

- Remember that social dynamics have their own rhythm and cannot be forced. Developing an effective and equitable co-management regime in most contexts involves profound political and cultural change, which, most of all, needs *time*.

- Understand the cultural and traditional roots of the activities to be implemented and rely on them, possibly by developing a syncretic approach (e.g. *ad-hoc* fusion of traditional and modern NRM practices).

> ***'syncretic approach'—***
> *the development and use of a more or less consolidated synthesis of knowledge and practices of different historical and cultural origin*

- Stress the *complementarity* of the capacities of different institutional actors, and of the roles they can play for the sound management of natural resources and socio-economic development.

- Identify and bring to the fore the benefits derived from the *ecological functions* performed by the natural environment (e.g. maintenance of local climate, forests retaining and slowly releasing water, regenerating soil, etc.), which may not be well known or appreciated by all. If recognised, such functions represent effective incentives for sustainable resource management.

- Recognise and highlight the value of *non-economic benefits* accruing to individuals involved in the participatory process (e.g., social standing and prestige, experience, personal contacts).

- Recognise and highlight the value of *economic benefits* potentially accruing to communities and individuals involved in the participatory process (e.g. via sustainable productive activities, Community Investment Funds, etc.).

- Disseminate information on the *positive process outcomes* to be derived from co-management and the negotiated plans and agreements (e.g. enhanced local authority and responsibility in NRM; enhanced sustainability of local environment; promotion of a more mature and responsible society; experience with participatory practices; etc.).

Lessons and tips for the preparatory phase

- Ensure clarity of purpose in the preparatory phase and methodological confidence and skills in the Start-up Team: people practice well only what they understand and feel comfortable with.

- Pay great attention to issues of language, in terms of both idioms used and coherence and cultural significance of messages conveyed. On the one hand, the people supposed to take a role in the CM process should be able to express themselves in their own idioms. This may introduce the need for translations fairly often in the process. On the other hand, the Start-up Team should be careful regarding concepts, words, the "name of the process", titles, stories, examples, descriptions of the starting point for the local situation, description of the common vision of the desired future and all sorts of messages in non-verbal language (e.g., attitudes, clothing, eating and drinking habits, transportation, housing, sitting and seating arrangements).

- Invest in social communication even before launching the process. Use a variety of local media (traditional and modern) to promote discussion of the NRM situation and related socio-economic conditions; make sure that people understand what CM is all about, including its potential advantages and problems.

- Insist that all institutional actors hold internal discussions on their interests, concerns and entitlements, and that they are all well organised and prepared to express themselves in the negotiation meetings. Local community people, who are not often used to the ways of outsiders, deserve special attention and assistance.

- Improve communication among the institutional actors. Facilitate informal direct contacts between individuals belonging to different groups and conveying different interests and concerns to the negotiation table. For instance, it may be useful to share transportation or housing facilities, or to eat together for a few days on the occasion of a workshop.

- Ask all the institutional actors to say which other actors ought to be invited to the negotiation meetings. Ask all institutional actors what, for them, constitutes a legitimate claim to manage natural resources. Produce and discuss a list of "roots of entitlements" in the local context.

- Always maintain a clear distinction between the Start-up Team and political parties (political parties usually thrive on conflict rather than on collaboration).

Lessons and tips for the central phase of negotiation

- The Start-up Team has to be as transparent as possible, for example, about who their members are and why, what resource allocation they have, etc.

- If you circulate preliminary reports, such as a short report on the NRM context prior to the meetings, clearly state that the reports are not final, on the contrary, everyone can discuss them, correct them and add their contribution.

- Reassure everyone that no "solution" will be imposed on any of the institutional actors and that the process will take place at a comfortable pace.

- Professional facilitators? Yes, but also as trainers of local people, who will then have a chance to act as facilitators in sub-committees, working groups, etc.

- Consider carefully the desirability of observers at negotiation meetings: in some cases they may have a negative influence on the process (some negotiators may take a populist stand for the sake of the audience). In other cases, closed meetings cause the excluded to distrust the process. The decision on whether the meetings should be open or closed needs to be carefully evaluated vis-à-vis the specific context. In fact, the decision to allow close meetings should be taken by the institutional actors themselves, rather than by their representatives.

- Make sure that the representatives of the institutional actors have a solid mandate and are not just self-appointed. Encourage them to consult with the groups they represent whenever necessary, and give them enough time to do so.

- Use as many visual aids as possible: maps, videos, photos, etc. Make the discussion as concrete as possible. Conduct field trips during negotiations. Give plenty of opportunities and time for the local communities to show what constitutes a problem for them, and to express their views on solutions.

- Give all the institutional actors enough time to think and to voice their ideas; problems need to come out and people need to be listened to! Stimulate people to think and express themselves by asking specific questions, to which all should reply.

- When negotiating access to resources, use imaginative ways of promoting effective compromises (e.g. uses based on limited permits, leasing, security of access even in the absence of a cadastre, detailed conditions of use, zoning, etc.).

- Appoint sub-committees and working groups to deal with specific issues.

- Ask the institutional actors several times, even on a one-to-one basis, whether all main obstacles and problems have been dealt with.

- Probe in depth the feasibility of agreed activities and the availability of means to implement them.

- Involve the authorities *personally*, via meetings, public events, etc.

- If one of the institutional actors exerts pressure on the others in the form of corruption, coercion or violence, the negotiation is no longer valid. The situation may be resolved with higher authorities taking a stand or through internal dissociation within the group exerting pressure (possibly not all the members of that group agree with certain methods).

Lessons and tips for learning by doing

- Find someone to be the "champion" of every major task or area of responsibility

- Promote voluntary contributions and offer plenty of social gratification in return.

- Make sure that *all* those working for the CM initiative are recognised and appreciated.

- Remember that any important NR management activity and / or change therein should be closely monitored.

- Learn from mistakes, transform them into sources of knowledge, and tell "stories" of what has been learned along the way.

- If community animators are to be employed, make sure that the communities themselves choose them and support and reward them adequately for their front-line work. This should be done through community-based funding mechanisms and not direct pay from outsiders. Community-based funding strengthens the animators' allegiance to their own communities while direct pay may even infringe upon it. The compensation of animators through community mechanisms also ensures better transparency and trust.

- Maintain a network of relations with colleagues working in other locations and countries, yet facing similar problems (as in the case of the Co-management Network in the Congo Basin).

Annex 1.
Participatory methods and tools for co-management

(modified from Borrini-Feyerabend, 1997, and Barton et al., 1998)

Street or village theatre (and film shows)

Street or village theatre is a method of social communication that promotes public information and discussion of specific issues or problems. Basically, it prompts the attention and interest of people by telling a story, and needs the contribution of local storytellers, theatre groups, clowns, dancers and / or puppet artists. The show usually capitalises on attractive imagery, music and humour to raise people's awareness of an issue affecting them. The audience can be encouraged to join in and play a part in the show. The show can be filmed or recorded for radio broadcasting, and thus be made available to a wider audience.
At times, a live theatre piece cannot be produced. In those cases, consider substituting it with a film describing how the issues and problems at stake affect the life of local people.
The show (or film) should be entertaining and stimulate people to think, participate and discuss among themselves. It should strive to illustrate several points of view on a given subject and avoid passing on a "pre-cooked message." When humour is used, it should not be at the expense of one institutional actor in particular, as this could compromise the chances of dialogue and communication in the co-management process.

How is it done?

With the Start-up Team, identify a co-management problem or issue that needs local attention and action. Meet with local entertainers to discuss how the issue or problem could be illustrated by a story or told through a play, dance or some other local form of entertainment. If none of this is feasible, consider a film.
Support the production of a show (or a film), and have it tested with a small local audience for interest and effectiveness.
Present the show at local gatherings, such as a festival or market day. Some presentations can also be taken to schools or to the streets. At the end of the show (or film), encourage the audience to discuss the main issue or problem among themselves. Let them know that there are groups and initiatives willing to do something about it, and that they are welcome to offer their advice and contributions. Say specifically who is doing what and how people can contribute.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ an entertaining and non–threatening way of promoting the discussion of an issue / problem
+ based on local customs, traditions and culture and therefore readily understood and accepted
+ does not usually require large capital investment
+ does not usually depend on technology that can break down
+ can be highly credible and persuasive where folk media has a strong tradition

– requires skilful local artists
– may be difficult to organize and requires a close working relationship with local media artists

Community radio programmes

Community radio programmes are excellent means of social communication, to inform people and stimulate their discussion and debate. They can be produced at the local, district or regional level. The content of the programmes may vary from formal documentaries to discussion forums, from plays and storytelling to talk shows where local people participate directly or "phone-in" and express their views on the air.

Effective programmes are made by mobile radio production teams, who interact with a range of people and record a variety of material in the local language and in various locations. Increasingly, even in the remotest corners of the world one can occasionally find community tele-centres, equipped with telephone, radio, word processors, e-mail and access to the Internet. Such centres can also organise themselves for local radio programming and broadcasting. Experimentation is currently under way to broadcast directly from the Internet to local low-power radios.

Decision-makers and politicians usually like to participate in radio programmes, and they can be asked to respond to the issues and problems raised by the public. This may promote some effective action or at least increased accountability on the part of the politicians.

How is it done?

Identify a radio station willing to host a programme on the subject of interest and establish an agreement with it, possibly on a regular basis and at a popular listening time. Alternatively, set up a new (even low-power) emitter in the local area. Have some individuals trained in the techniques of preparing a radio programme, including interviewing. If a documentary approach is to be used, prepare a story line and, as much as possible, involve local people in designing the programme.

For interviewing, select local people who can present a range of experiences and perspectives and express themselves clearly. For discussion programmes, make sure that a variety of local groups and points of view are represented.

Edit the tapes so that they offer a coherent picture of the issues confronting the community and the co-management initiative. Offer plenty of questions to stimulate the audience to think.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ Can inform many people over a wide area within a short time
+ Can lead to more transparency and accountability
+ Can strengthen the sense of community and of shared experience
+ If aired on a regular basis, radio programmes can be invaluable as a forum for discussion around the co-management initiative
+ Tapes can be copied and distributed to organizations and schools to use as a focus for group discussion; they can also be distributed to local transport vehicles to generate on-the-road discussions

– Relies on people having access to radios or to telephones (for talk shows)
– Cost and time involved in preparing documentary programmes are considerable
– Use of recording and editing equipment requires technical knowledge
– Can only be used for raising awareness, not as a substitute for face-to-face discussions with the affected community and other stakeholders.

Land-use Mapping

A group of people collectively draws a map of a community, a territory or an area at stake. The map shows the geographical distribution of environmental, demographic, social and economic features as seen by the participants in the exercise. Land uses, borders and key resources and problems are then highlighted. The participants draw the map on a flipchart or on the ground, plotting features with symbols that are understood and accepted by all members of the group, regardless of literacy (see the picture on the cover of this book). Purchased maps, aerial photographs or basic drawings on paper or on the ground can also be used as a basis for the exercise. Land-use mapping is useful for providing an overview (or “snapshot”) of the local situation. It can also serve as a good starting point for environmental and social assessment.

How is it done?

Discuss the purpose of the exercise with the participants. Agree on the subject and limits (borders) of the map and on the graphic symbols to be used; participants choose their own symbols.

Ask one of the participants to be the main person responsible for drawing or plotting symbols according to the suggestions of the group, but leave everyone free to participate.

In fact, promote participation by posing questions to several individuals; allow the group to discuss different opinions and views.

Once the map is finalized, ask participants to interpret the overall picture; if appropriate, suggest that they locate on the map the main problems in the area, as they see them. Ask also to locate on the map available resources, and explain what could be done to solve the problems.

The map is community property; leave the original in the community and make copies or take pictures of it if other uses are foreseen.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ Mapping and the associated discussions quickly provide a broad overview of the situation.
+ They encourage interactive communication
+ They help people to see links, patterns and inter-relationships in their territory
+ Individuals who are illiterate can also participate

– Mapping must be complemented by information generated by other participatory assessment tools to avoid subjectivity and superficiality
– Some cultures may have difficulties in understanding graphic representations

Historical Mapping

Historical mapping uses a series of land-use mapping exercises to portray the demographic, social and natural resource situation of a community or territory at different moments of its history. Usually, three maps are drawn, showing the situation as it existed one generation ago, at the present time, and as it is expected after one generation to come. Demographic information can be plotted as household symbols or circles to represent 10 or 100 residents. Other symbols can be used for natural resources, types of crops, pasture areas, infrastructures, social services, etc.

Historical mapping can be extremely helpful in introducing the time dimension in participatory appraisal and planning. It can provide visual evidence of changes that have occurred and expected trends. In this way, people can easily identify determinants of environmental and socio-economic problems and options for moving towards their desired future.

How is it done?

The participants draw a map of the current demographic, socio-economic and environmental situation. With the help and advice of community elders, the same exercise is repeated to show the situation as it was approximately twenty years ago.
The current and past maps are then compared, often via a brainstorming session, to identify collectively major changes and their root causes.
Based on the list of changes and causes, a prospective map can be drawn by the participants to show their expectations of the situation that will exist in the community in 20–30 years, if current trends are maintained.
The future map can be analysed to explore differences between what is projected and what a desirable future would be. The discussion can progress to identify potential ways to address the identified problems. If need be, a map corresponding to the vision of the community (see the "guided vision exercise" in this chapter) can be drawn as a planning and visualising tool.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ the technique can be very expedient when summarising the results of a comprehensive participatory appraisal
+ it may make the participants more aware of the fact that most positive and negative changes in environment and development are shaped by historical, people-related actions
+ it can help to identify medium- or long-term solutions to the problems affecting the community
– the exercise is sometimes long and complex; more than one session with the group may be needed to get through the whole sequence of mapping and discussion
– sensitive issues from the past may be raised, including conflicts within the community and between the community and outsiders

Transect walks and diagrams

One way for a Start-up Team to help a stakeholder group identify and reflect upon some key feature of their environment and lifestyle is to take an observational walk together, i.e., a walk paying attention to people, activities, resources, environmental features, etc. Observational walks may be taken in a meandering way, following a particular feature of the landscape or the interests of the observer(s). The walks can also be structured as a transect, i.e., a straight line cutting across the terrain in a given direction. Walks of these kinds help to verify the information provided on maps, both through direct observation and in discussions with people met along the way. Ideally the walk is organized for a small group, so as to maximize the opportunities for interactions.
There are several types of transects, among which two broad categories are social and environmental transects. The social category usually concentrates on number and distribution of households, housing types, infrastructures, social services, administrative boundaries, economic activities, literacy levels, work skills, etc. It may also focus on one specific aspect of local life, such as public health, and thus picture incidence of particular diseases, health risk factors, etc. The environmental category focuses on natural resources and land-use features, such as forests, rangeland, barren land and erosion phenomena, streams and other bodies of

water, extension of cultivated land, types of soil and crops. A typical transect includes a combination of social and land-use information.

How is it done?

The Start-up Team agrees with the relevant interest group who will take part in the transect walk and discusses with them the purpose of the exercise. During the walk the participants take notes about the relevant features observed, seek clarifications from people encountered along the way and discuss with them problems and opportunities in informal and convivial ways.
After the walk, the Team and the participants discuss the collected notes and draw a transect diagram together. Under the diagram, related to specific sections of the territory or area at stake, they note environmental and social features, as well as problems and opportunities specific to each sector/ area.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ transect walks are a highly participatory and relaxed technique
+ they enhance local knowledge and can be used very effectively in low-literacy communities
+ they are very useful in validating findings of participatory mapping exercises
+ the diagrams illustrate quite concisely a variety of local features and issues
– the walks and the drawing and analysis of the transects take some time (usually several hours)
– drawing good transect diagrams requires some graphic skills.

Trend analysis

Trend analysis is used as part of an individual or group interview and consists of an in-depth discussion of specific issues or phenomena (e.g. tree cover on the hills, fish productivity in the lake, jobs in the region). Has the phenomenon evolved with time? How is it likely to evolve in the future? Is the evolution desirable? If not, what could be done about it? For large areas, such as a region or country, trend-related data are often available, but for small areas, such as a village, it is unlikely that such data exist, especially data covering a long period of time. Thus, information showing a pattern of change needs to be obtained locally. The main purpose of trend analysis is to assess changes over time, and to raise the awareness of people about phenomena that accumulate slowly (e.g. soil degradation, population dynamics).

How is it done?

The participants in the exercise select the topic /subject to assess and identify one or more accurate indicators. For instance, if the subject is community well being the facilitator could ask the participants what constitutes a good life for them. They may list household income, transport facilities, numbers of livestock, access to services such as education and health care, etc. If the subject is the management of the watershed they may list: water flow in the valley, water pollution, vegetation cover, instances of serious gully erosion, etc.

The facilitator then asks the participants to say where they think they are now in relation to each indicator, where they were 5-10-20 years ago, where they think they will be in 5-10-20 years. Together with them, draw a graph of the trend for each indicator, or use some symbolic graph, such as adjacent piles of little stones on the ground (more stones mean that the indicator goes up). Once the trends are clear, the facilitator asks the participants to discuss them ("What is happening? Why? Is that good or bad? Good for whom and bad for whom? Should something be done about it? What? What would be happening then?").

Strengths and weaknesses

+ creates an awareness of potentially negative and positive trends in the community, including the environmental impacts of activities
+ group interaction enriches the quality and quantity of information provided
+ different points of view existing in the community can surface and be compared
+ allows a comparison of trends of different indicators and, possibly, an estimate of the relationships between them
+ cheap to use and can be adapted to the materials available (e.g. the graph can be drawn on the ground using leaves or stones as symbols and numbers)
– relies on memory and subjective judgement, although group interaction can control that to some extent
– it is quite a complex tool, requiring the active participation of local people

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a basic idea-gathering technique employed in group exercises. It is based on a freewheeling offering of ideas that starts with an open-ended and somehow provocative question put forward by the facilitator. Opening statements and questions should be general and non-leading, i.e., should not stress or overemphasize a particular point of view that can bias the participants.

It should be clear that brainstorming is a free and non-committal way of exploring views and options, i.e., no one commits herself or himself to something by suggesting a potential solution or issue to explore. Brainstorming can elicit multiple ideas on a given issue/ problem, and the group discussion that usually follows can help group members explore and compare a variety of possible solutions.

How is it done?

The issue to be discussed is introduced by the facilitator; the key question is posed aloud and written on the blackboard or on a flipchart. Participants are asked to provide short answers, comments or ideas (no speeches at this stage!).

An important point to stress at the beginning is that "all ideas are good ideas;" if some people do not agree with someone else's point, they should give what they think is a better idea. The facilitator should accept only additional contributions during brainstorming, not disagreements or arguments, which should be deferred to the discussion afterwards. The facilitator should also encourage fresh ideas rather than the repetitions of earlier items.

Each participant is allowed to express his/her view. Over-talkative participants need to be gently calmed down, and silent participants can be asked explicitly for their views and ideas.

The facilitator picks the basic point out of participant statements and ensures that it is written (or portrayed with a picture) on the blackboard or flipchart; the appropriateness of the summary is checked with the participants concerned.
The brainstorming exercise should be kept relatively short: 15–30 minutes is usually sufficient to obtain most of the ideas on a specific topic without tiring the participants. At times one may use several periods of brainstorming for related issues, such as “key problems in the area” and “key community resources”.
Review the results with the participant group. Remove duplicated items and cluster groups of similar ideas. Highlight differences of opinion and discuss these until a list of clearly described ideas is achieved. Record (or summarise) the results of the brainstorming session and keep them for future reference.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ a properly conducted brainstorming session facilitates participation by all group members in the idea-building process
+ people are stimulated to think on hearing the views of others.
+ a large number of ideas and solutions can be generated quickly
+ it is a good introduction for more structured and focused exercises

– experience in dealing with group dynamics and good mediation and summarising skills are needed for the facilitator to keep the discussion on track
– if not properly managed, conflicts and uneasiness within the group may limit the brainstorming results.

Structured brainstorming

Structured brainstorming (also called Nominal Group Technique or NGT) is an exercise to facilitate thinking “as a group”. The exercise needs a skilful facilitator, who begins the meeting by posing a clear question to the group (e.g. “what are the key obstacles ahead on our path towards the future we desire?”). In the normal brainstorming people reply to the question and interactively. In structured brainstorming everyone is given time to think and to note down his or her main replies on cards. The cards are then presented, discussed and grouped to represent the collective reflection of the participants.

How is it done?

The facilitator presents the participants with a clear question upon which to reflect. The question is written on a flip chart or board for everyone to see. Each participant has some cards (half the size of a letter sheet is usually good; coloured paper adds to the visual appeal) and felt pens. The participants write down the answers/ issues/ actions they think are relevant to answer the question. These should be written as a simple sentence or few words (ask them to write large, all-caps letters, to be seen from afar, possibly not more than five words per card). The participants can use as many cards as they wish.

Each participant comes to the front of the group, and reads out and explains what he/she has recorded on the card(s). Each card is then pinned or taped on the wall. The first person spreads her/his cards out. Subsequent people are asked to add their cards close to the ones most similar to theirs or, if a totally new item is suggested, to start another cluster on the wall.

When all the people have presented their ideas and placed them on the wall, there will be various clusters of items: some with many cards, some with only one or two. The facilitator then asks the participants to consider whether they need to rearrange the cards among the clusters; if they do, they should discuss the moves and agree as a group. The participants may also decide to remove some cards or cluster(s). Even those who originally proposed the items may change their mind once they have heard other ideas.

The facilitator agrees with the participants on a title or paragraph to summarize all the aspects and ideas noted in each cluster.

If a rank order is needed among the clusters, follow up with a ranking exercise. More commonly, the large group of participants is broken down into smaller groups, each to discuss in depth one of the various clusters identified. The smaller groups then report on their findings, and a general discussion allows the exercise to be concluded.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ The exercise helps participants group their individual opinions as a collective product
+ Everyone is asked, and expected, to contribute, and the technique helps them paying greater attention to the ideas of others
+ The technique is constructive and adds an important visual element to issues and ideas for action
+ A record of the key ideas is produced during the technique, comprising the cards, the summary statements and the reports from the small groups
– Literacy is needed to participate in the exercise
– A skilful facilitator is essential, as is a balanced stakeholder participation, to avoid the dominance of some interest groups

Guided visioning

Guided visioning is an imaginary journey into the future. It is done with a group of people willing to develop together a detailed image of a desirable future for a given community, territory or set of natural resources. The exercise encourages the participants to think freely and boldly, unconstrained by what is in place today or by all the obstacles and problems that may present themselves in the face of change. In most planning exercises, a group may miss a vision of what "could be" because the discussion remains focused on immediate interests and existing constraints. Engaging in a deliberate exercise of imagining a world "fit for our children" helps people overcome a focus on personal and short-term interests and the apathy that may derive from existing stumbling blocks. These blocks may be there, but they will never be overcome without some bold and far-reaching inspiration.

The facilitator should stress that people may indeed come up with some "wishful thinking" and that this is exactly what the exercise is intended to produce: a vision of the future which may or may not be entirely attainable in the lifetime of the participants, but may be approached, and in all cases is desirable for future generations. The facilitator should also mention that more concrete exercises will be developed later, which, in contrast, will focus only on attainable and measurable targets.

How is it done?

In a comfortable setting (not a town hall; possibly sitting under a tree), participants are asked to relax, and close their eyes. They are told they are going on a journey into the future, perhaps 20 or 30 years from now, when their "ideal" community (or territory, etc.) exists. Make sure that people refer to the same area (clarify the boundaries). They should visualise the absolutely perfect and ideal community (or territory, etc.) they wish their children to inherit and live in.

The participants go through the exercise individually, without speaking, while the facilitator accompanies them possibly by reading a prepared text describing a walk through the community or territory at stake and/ or asking open questions on what specific components look like. The participants are not supposed to answer the questions aloud, but just visualise an answer for themselves. Typical questions might be about their homes, the forest, the coastal area, the agricultural fields, the river, the village main square. "What do they look like? Do you see people around? What are they doing?" The facilitator never suggests what the participants are supposed to see. He/she merely sets the stage for the participants to visualize the features in their ideal environment. Questions are posed at suitable intervals, so that people have time to visualise features in their mind.

When the virtual walk is complete, the participants are asked to open their eyes, stretch and reflect on all they have seen and write down, or review and record in their mind, the first ten images they recall from their imaginary walk.

The facilitator then goes around the group asking each participant to describe one of the images they have recorded on paper or in their mind. Each is noted on a flip chart or board. This continues until all the images are recorded.

The facilitator summarizes the images into a vision statement for the participants to amend, add to, etc. until a consensus is reached. He/she may also ask a participant to start mapping the ideal community or territory on a flip chart on the basis of the images provided by the various participants; other participants add to this picture and/or draw other pictures.

The pictures may then be discussed and subdivided into categories (e.g. working environment, housing, protected natural areas). These categories may help in identifying the key components and objectives of a strategy geared to achieving the common vision of the desired future.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ Is an effective tool for communities wishing to develop a shared vision of their collective future
+ Puts present differences in perspective, diffuses conflicts and encourages participants to see beyond their pressing concerns
+ Is an interactive and non-confrontational process
+ Builds cooperative alliances where communities can work together towards common objectives
+ Is fun

– Conflicts may emerge if people's images are very diverse
– A great deal relies on the quality of facilitation, the capacity to elicit a rich vision and the meeting's atmosphere (relaxed but still serious and positive)

Problem-causes-effects tree

Building a tree of causes and effects is a simple and widely comprehensible visual technique to analyse a problem and orient a group toward actions based on that analysis. The technique starts with a consensus on the problem to investigate. A facilitator for this exercise will need to remember that definitions and linkages of problems-causes-and-effects may be interpreted in several ways. The "problem" for a development professional (e.g., soil erosion) could be a "cause" for a community member (e.g., of the problem of declining yields) and an "effect" for a scientific researcher (e.g., of the problem of deforestation and cultivation on steep slopes). This method is suited also for non-literate people, although special attention to graphic symbols may be needed to make the exercise meaningful to them.

How is it done?

Once the participants have clarified which problem they wish to explore, the facilitator draws a large sketch of a tree on a flipchart, showing its trunk, roots and branches. The issue or problem is then written (or represented graphically, if participants are non-literate) on a card, and the card is pinned on the trunk. The facilitator explains that the roots represent the causes of the problem and the branches its consequences. A brainstorming session is then carried out among the participants to express their perceptions about the causes of the problem and its consequences. These are also written or graphically represented on cards and placed at the tree's roots and at the tips of the branches.

During the exercise, a re-negotiation may take place within the group about what is – really – the problem at stake. If this happens, the cards can be changed or moved around by the facilitator. The facilitator may help by asking questions to deepen the analysis and by keeping the discussion centred on concerns, topics and language well understood by all the participants.
Once the diagram is completed, the discussion can move on to explore possible 'solutions' to deal with the causes and consequences of the problem. The purpose is to raise participant awareness that different levels of solutions can be identified to deal with any single problem. This can also help participants to understand that the final decision about what to do may involve a trade-off between higher effectiveness (which usually comes from attacking the very root causes of the problem) and easier or faster generation of specific results (which may alleviate or control some effects and consequences of the problem on daily life, even if it does not tackle the problem itself). People may also start proposing concrete *actions* to achieve the solutions. Those could be written on different coloured cards and also pinned on the diagrams.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ the method has a strong visual component, it can be effective also with non-literate people
+ the discussion of possible solutions may help sensitise participants to the fact that most problems are quite complex and can be solved only through a combination of approaches and the collaboration of various social actors

- the method can degenerate into a theoretical discussion of "what constitutes a problem?"
- the method may make people painfully aware of the complexity of issues, and discourage them from action.

Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats/limitations (SWOT)

SWOT analysis is a powerful tool for group assessment of an issue of concern, in particular interventions or services. It is based on a structured brainstorming session aimed at eliciting group perceptions of the positive factors (strengths), the negative factors (weaknesses), the possible improvements (opportunities) and the constraints (threats and limitations) related to a given issue.

SWOT analysis is especially useful for evaluating activities carried out in the community. It can be focused on services provided by external agencies, as well as used for self-evaluation of the interest group's own performance.

How is it done?

A four-column matrix is drafted on the blackboard or on a flipchart and the four evaluation categories are explained to participants. It is helpful to phrase the four categories as key questions, to which participants can respond; the issue of concern is written on top of the matrix (if it is the only one to be considered), or on the side, if several items will be SWOT-analysed.

The facilitator starts the brainstorming by asking the group a key question about strengths; responses from the group are jotted down on the relevant column of the matrix. When all points of strength are represented, the group also identifies weaknesses, opportunities and limitations.

At times, participants have different opinions or express contradictory statements. In such cases, the facilitator can ask further questions to deepen the arguments, but a consensus among the group members is not necessary. Contrasting views can be listed on the same column in the matrix. At times, however, it emerges that, in order to assess a certain point, more information needs to be gathered. In such a case the exercise may be continued on a different day.

Strengths and weaknesses

+ the technique stresses consideration of different sides (positive and negative) of the issues. It therefore helps to set the basis for negotiations and trade-offs and promotes understanding of other people's views
+ SWOT analysis is a good means to discuss an issue in detail within a group and to prepare the group to discuss with outsiders
+ SWOT analysis can promote group creativeness. It helps to link perceptions of things as they are with realistic expectations about how things could be
+ "strengths" and "weaknesses" tend to be descriptive and easy for respondents to identify

– "opportunities" and "threats" (i.e., limitations, constraints or barriers) are more analytical concepts and are usually harder to elicit
– sensitive topics and differences of opinion may arise during the discussion.
– some group members may attempt to dominate the discussion
– the facilitator needs good synthesising skills.

Annex 2. Example of the "common vision of the desired future" of a rural community

The following is a summary of the personal visions of a variety of community residents and stakeholders, as could be written by a process facilitator. The description is in the present tense, but looks at a period 15-25 years from now. Notice that the description is ambitious and positive and it has *not* been kept "low-key" because of present-day socio-economic constraints. It also contains many visual elements.

Mbuya, twenty years from now, is a proud and rich community, a place where people have found a way to work for the common good. Families find a good income, health care and schools for their children. The elderly lead a dignified life and are respected by everyone. The young people prefer to stay than to migrate away. Women have steadily increased their social standing, and many now hold positions of prestige and responsibility in the community, such as heading businesses and public committees.

In Mbuya, people live and work in peace. There is hardly any crime. When outsiders pose a danger, they are quickly identified and rendered harmless. You always see a lot of people around, young and old, and the atmosphere is busy and pleasant. There is a regular-size football field, very much used by the local youth. In the weekend people enjoy themselves with music and dancing until late at night.

The houses have good roofs. Many are freshly painted and have gardens with flowers. There is a special parking area for lorries, with resting and restaurant facilities for the drivers. In town, people move around mostly by bicycle and taxi motorbike. There are lots of shops and small restaurants everywhere, and plenty of posters announcing events and gatherings. Seemingly, Mbuya is rich in local associations and sport clubs.

In the heart of town, roads are lined with trees. There are two squares: a larger one, extremely lively at market days, and a smaller one, a pleasant space where public ceremonies and festivities are usually held. You can spot the building of the public administration, several churches and mosques, private and state clinics and three schools.

Mbuya's cultural heritage is well appreciated and attracts national and even international tourists, who like participating in local ceremonies and festivities. Local music, songs and dances are renowned. Mbuya craftspeople take part in national exhibitions with woodcarvings, bamboo musical instruments and hand-woven silk textiles.

Many young people from Mbuya have access to higher-level education in the capital or in other main cities, but most of them come back to work in their native town. Some of them have established a community telecenter, with international telephone, word processing, access to Internet and a lively community radio.

The sacred forest in the hills has remained unchanged over hundreds of years, and provides refuge for a variety of animals and plants that the people– elderly and young alike– know well. Timber, poles, vines, medicinal plants, silk cocoons and honey are extracted from the non-sacred forests. People hunt wild animals in the occasion of traditional ceremonies. Most of the flat land is used for agriculture and a combination of traditional and modern technologies ensures that the farmers reap good harvests of rice, sugarcane, fruits and vegetables.

(continues…)

(vision continues…)

There are local enterprises for processing and canning the produce. The community is connected to the regional capital by a tarmac road, and you can find Mbuya's products sold there, as well as in other places in the country. Mbuya's commercial enterprises are lively, and known for their capacity to deliver and for keeping to their word.

Everyone in Mbuya has access to electricity and clean tap water. Drainage and sanitation facilities are working well, and rubbish is regularly collected and taken to disposal. The administrative authorities are proud of having provided these services, which promote public health and sustain the local economy.

The donor agency that supported the development of the community, twenty years ago, has long moved operations to another area. The agency's staff come to visit as welcome guests during local festivities.

The above vision may have been developed by a group of stakeholders including, for instance, local government administrators, the Council of the Elders, representatives of the farmers, woodcutters, shopkeepers, artisans, young people, the health department, the forestry department, the agricultural extension, the Mbuya's Women Association, a local NGO concerned with the protection of nature, a local NGO concerned with children's health, the main donor agency in the area, business representatives who come regularly to Mbuya during market days, religious authorities, etc.

The above vision can be transformed into a broad social contract, for instance a charter of principles including a variety of commitments, such as:

…all institutional actors will co-operate to achieve a healthy and productive environment, in which all citizens can live in safety…

…the Council of Elders will strive to keep the local traditions alive and respected…

… Mbuya's community will use the forest resources (including precious timber, medicinal plants and game) in a sustainable manner…

…the peasant households will agree on a fair share of water resources and on common activities for protecting soil and preventing flooding…

…the local administration will sustain local development (transport infrastructures, market connections, training)…

…the health agency, local NGOs and administration will work together to set up a healthy living and working environment in the community...

… Mbuya's Women Association will help women to develop businesses and take on a variety of social responsibilities…

…the forestry department will help local residents protect their sacred forest from outside exploiters …

…the business community will invest locally to create food-processing industries, and will offer jobs to local people…

…the donor agency will facilitate the negotiation of co-management plans and agreements and support the establishment of a Community Investment Fund…

Annex 3. Example of a strategy (components and objectives) to achieve the common vision

To achieve the common, long-term vision identified in Mbuya, the stakeholders need to agree on a strategy. Below is a possible example, subdivided in a number of components (action areas). Some broad objectives are listed for each component, as well as some hints on how these objectives could be achieved. In order to take action, detailed natural resource management plans and complementary socio-economic agreements will later be developed.

strategic component 1: governance

- engage everyone for the development of the community (maintain a general discussion/ negotiation forum on the problems and opportunities in Mbuya, open to all);
- prevent and mediate the conflicts that might arise during the implementation of the strategy (set up a committee of wise men and women, old and young, to act as advisors, mediators and arbiters)
- revitalise the traditional rules for the protection of the sacred forest and for forest management in general, including game hunting (engage and strengthen the Council of Elders);
- improve personal and material safety (have regular planning meetings between the administration and the Council of Elders; set up neighbourhood mutual help groups).

strategic component 2: managing natural resources under communal property

- strictly protect and preserve the sacred forest according to tradition, prevent there any timber exploitation or game and plant extraction (follow the rules proclaimed by the Council of Elders; have the forestry department declare a community protected area; appoint local forest guards);
- manage the non-sacred forests under communal property for the sustainable benefit of the entire community (make sure that user associations regulate game hunting, monitor medicinal plants, maintain original variety of trees, exploit non-timber products, strictly protect the trees that host and feed the silk worms, etc.);
- manage water equitably and wisely (farmers' groups to establish water sharing rules).

strategic component 3: managing household-owned natural resources

- secure the access to cultivable land (set up a legal cadastre or a *de facto* preliminary cadastre);
- prevent destructive flooding (farmer groups to clarify the local water dynamics and build terraces, channels and water-retaining structures to prevent soil erosion and destructive flooding of the fields);
- prevent the excessive and damaging use of pesticides (farmer groups to share knowledge on cultivation methods, seed varieties, non-chemical control of pests).

strategic component 4: the local economy

- sustain local productive enterprises (set up a Community Investment Fund with the initial help of the donor agency, also in partnership with government agencies; establish a local committee in charge, have women strongly represented in the committee);
- promote local agriculture (via farmers' collective buying and selling of produce; administrators' help to sell local produce in the national market);

- promote local industries (via improved transport infrastructure, local tax incentives);
- revitalise traditional crafts with important commercial potential (such as hand-weaving of silk, bamboo musical instruments);
- ensure that phone connections with the regional and national capital are dependable and efficient (cooperation between local administration and national and private phone companies).

strategic component 5: health and society

- improve public health (via a system to improve and regularly monitor water quality, provision of tap water first at collective points and then in all the homes, vaccination campaigns, public and private sanitation facilities, regular collection and disposal of rubbish, community groups for specific initiatives, local epidemiological studies, road-accident prevention initiatives);
- improve the social standing of women in the community (provide training for women in a variety of skills, including commercial and administrative skills; engage women in social responsibilities);
- dedicate an area of communal land to youth activities and sports, including a regular-size football field (cooperation among local administration, sport clubs and local youth);
- set up special support services for newly arrived immigrants (cooperation between the Council of Elders and the local administration);
- set up a service to promote youth employment, and a service to assist the elderly (cooperation between local administration and NGOs).

strategic component 6: cultural heritage

- revive the traditional ceremonies and festivals (engage and strengthen the Council of Elders);
- engage children in activities that value and preserve local culture and traditions (improve pre-school and primary education programmes, include meetings with the Council of Elders and the environmental NGO about the value of the sacred forest for the whole community);
- establish an incentive programme for local artists and craftspeople (collaboration between the administration and local associations);
- improve the town's general appearance (up-keeping of public places and buildings, running effective clean-ups after market days, providing incentives to improve private houses).

strategic component 7: public infrastructure

- improve and cover with tarmac the road connecting Mbuya to the regional capital;
- build and maintain water supply facilities to serve all the population;
- establish a sanitation scheme for the community, including effective drainage facilities.

Annex 4. Learning by Doing – the experience of the Co-management Project in the Congo Basin

Collaborative management has become an option championed by the majority of social actors interested in conservation and sustainable development in the Congo Basin. Questions remain, however, on "how to go about it". The project *Co-management for Nature Conservation in Unstable Socio-political Conditions: Learning by Doing in the Congo Basin* has been trying to answer such questions since 1998. The project is operated by the IUCN Regional Office for Central Africa and financially and technically supported by GTZ. The project also benefits from the technical support of the IUCN Collaborative Management Working Group (CMWG).

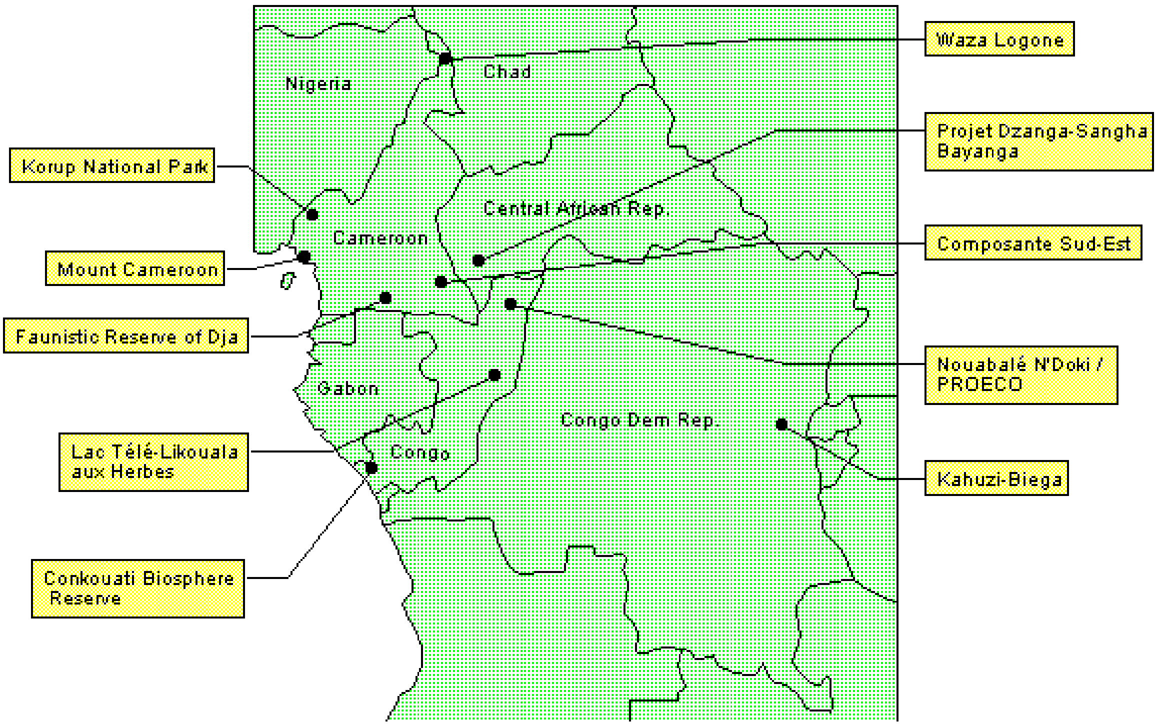


Fig: Map of the co-management observation sites in the Congo Basin

During its first two years of implementation, the project aimed at rendering the co-management of natural resources a better understood, better appreciated and more viable option for the management of natural resources and protected areas in the Congo Basin. To this end, two key axes of intervention have been pursued, namely:

- improving co-management performance and local capacity in a dozen projects locally supported by the GTZ and the IUCN. These initially included six projects supported by the GTZ in Cameroon (Korup, Mount Cameroon, South-Eastern component of the GEF project), the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kahuzi Biega), Congo Brazzaville (Nouabalé N'Doki / Proeco) and the Central African Republic (Dzangha – Sangha) and four

projects supported by the IUCN in Cameroon (Waza-Logone and Dja), and Congo Brazzaville (Conkouati and Lac Télé) ;
- collecting lessons learned, with a view to using the resulting know-how in the region (and elsewhere) and translating learning into methods, tools and policy recommendations.

Below you will find an assessment of the activities implemented by the project, the results obtained and the initial lessons learned.

Activities

The project choose as main approach the stimulation of self-sustainable processes, and the project coordinator helped generating situations through which project staff and local actors "learned by doing" in co-management. Responding to the conditions in the participating sites, two main initiatives were launched: networking among participating sites and collective learning. In support to these, a Co-management Resource Centre was established, comprising a collection of pertinent documents (e.g., available resources, copies of signed agreements, etc.).

Networking among participating sites

The co-management project is based on a network of field initiatives, each representing a specific "observation site" from which to draw co-management lessons. The sites, in turn, benefit from technical assistance (training and tailored technical support) and the exchanges of experience brought about by the project.

At the start of the co-management project, the staff and partners of the observation sites were not particularly enthusiastic, perceiving their participation in the project activities mostly as additional work on an already busy schedule. In fact, the project had to encourage the involvement of social actors from the observation sites. Soon, however, the actors discovered for themselves the benefits of their participation in project activities. They saw that the co-management project offered a package of resources (information, training, exchanges of experience, tailored technical support) that could greatly help them enhance their capacity to promote and sustain participatory management processes.

The first general meeting attended by the delegates of the participating sites (including project staff and local partners, such as NGO staff, rural leaders, forest administration officials, etc.) allowed to identify common problems, begin to look for solutions together and develop a joint vision about what co-management entails. The group also defined some objectives for joint work and gave itself a name: Co-management Network for Natural Resources in the Congo Basin ("Réseau Cogestion des Ressources Naturelles dans le Bassin du Congo"). Furthermore, it was agreed to use the term "sites of learning" to designate the different sites linked to the network.

The team spirit born of the first general meeting became stronger with the passing of time (a training workshop and a forum for the exchange of experience were organised every six months), also as a result of the personal ties established among the group members and of the opportunities to develop together new knowledge and skills. At the end of the first two years of the process, the network decided to ensure its own perpetuation and autonomy vis-à-vis the co-management project. It also developed a role-sharing model, by which the coordination of the network rotates amongst the various sites of learning. In all of this, the co-management project continues to provide a facilitating role.

Collective learning

Group learning appeared to be the best approach to enhancing the capacity of the project staff and local partners from the participating sites. A whole range of methods and tools was utilised: training workshops, exchanges of experience, tailored technical support, dissemination of information, exchange visits, and so on.

The training workshops and the exchanges of experience are the pivotal elements of collective learning. In the workshop, the presentation of the experience of each site with regard to a specific issue of process step in co-management is generally followed by the collective discussion of its strengths and weaknesses, the identification of potential approaches and tools (also with the help of resource persons) and small-group sessions on future perspectives and plans. This work sequence greatly succeeded in motivating the participants to learn and discover together.

The first workshop allowed the participants to develop a common vision of collaborative management and a common language to describe it. The participants also expressed their willingness to translate their vision into reality in their respective project sites and their desire to acquire relevant methods and tools. In particular, they expressed the need to enhance their capacities:

- to manage a mosaic of NRM units (national parks next to nature reserves, communal forests, community forests, forest and mining concessions, ethnically heterogeneous villages, etc.);
- to identify the concerned institutional actors, raise their awareness about the benefits of co-management and mobilise their participation (especially of the weakest players, but also of the strongest ones, who do not come readily to the negotiating table);
- to ensure maximum communication and transparent information on natural resource management among all stakeholders;
- to manage conflicts among the various stakeholders (including new conflicts generated by the management partnerships) and to establish viable and efficient management agreements;
- to ensure that the parties concerned come to the joint negotiating table with a comparable degree of social respect (which is not the case for some stakeholders in the Congo Basin, such as the Baka people);
- to secure sustainable benefits for local populations as an alternative to the non-sustainable exploitation of natural resources;
- to elaborate new agreements and social regulations to manage natural resources, making maximum use of local knowledge and creativity;
- to identify, improve, if necessary even rebuild, but above all legitimise participatory management structures at various levels;
- to monitor the co-management process (monitoring indicators) and maintain a learning by doing approach;
- to maintain the participatory management process in the long term (perseverance and stability of project staff and government institutions, long-term financing by donors);
- to eliminate the dependence of the co-management structures on external project assistance;

- to establish a clear legal framework for participatory management in each country (beyond a handful of regulations governing the mere redistribution of benefits derived from the exploitation of natural resources).

A first response to these expressed needs for capacity building (knowledge, skills, attitudes and punctual technical support) was provided during the second workshop, which focused on the approaches and tools required for negotiating management agreements. The third workshop, geared to monitoring the process of natural-resource management, empowered participants to learn from their own experience. A review of the first lessons learned was conducted at each site of learning and presented during the fourth workshop. The fifth workshop focused on the methods and tools to facilitate social communication in a co- management process.

The sites of learning were also supported in a number of other ways: on-site technical missions, dissemination of information among sites, and facilitation of contacts and partnerships between sites and regional institutions. Technical assistance was provided upon request, as agreed at the network's first workshop, either on site or from the Yaoundé-based coordination of the co-management project. The co-management project has also tested the technical support "inter-sites", by which actors who acquired a certain level of experience share it directly with others in a sort of consultancy mission.

Results

Since its inception, the co-management project monitored both its own process as well as its results. The latter comprise: the network of learning sites, the learning process itself and the broad transformation of the milieu in the Congo Basin.

The network of learning sites

The co-management project operates through a network of learning sites. Indeed, the direct beneficiaries (project staff and partners in the learning sites) demonstrated a strong enthusiasm and a sense of ownership with respect to both the project and the network. This is confirmed by various observations. At a workshop in Mamfe (June 1999) Christian Chatelain, the CMWG member then in charge of technical support, noted in his report that "the participants did not just come to listen or participate, but show that this project belongs to them, that they are benefiting from it and that they wish to keep it running for a long time". In fact, the participants in that workshop discussed how the co-management project could to be continued after the two years initially funded by GTZ, and decided to send two "delegates" to the project steering committee. Since then, the network participated in all steering committee meetings and actively helped organise and run the phase II planning workshop. Contacts between the on-site project actors and the project coordination have also progressively intensified.

Identifying common problems and seeking solutions together during the training workshops also helped strengthening the network's team spirit. Indeed, the various learning sites expressed strong feelings of identification with the Réseau Cogestion. In the occasion of the Buea workshop, in December 1999, they took measures to prevent the disbanding of the network in case the co-management project would come to an end. This included a clear separation between the network and the project. For instance, in the course of the year 2000, the network is being run by the Korup learning site, and the project plays only a minimal support role.

Beside the contacts at the time of the training workshops, inter-personal contacts among project staff and partners from the learning sites have multiplied in various occasions, including meetings to discuss specific problems and achievements, the establishment of regional sub-networks (e.g. for the projects Dia and PROFORNAT in South - east Cameroon), exchange visits, and inter-project support missions.

In summary, the network of learning sites works effectively, and the sites themselves express a strong sense of ownership for the co-management project.

Collective learning-by-doing

A few main achievements indicate the extent to which the collective learning process has progressed:

- There is now a common vision of what collaborative management is all about, including a common language, a good understanding of the various phases of the process and a clear sense of what is to be achieved;

- Approaches and tools to achieve such a vision are on hand and can be accessed through the workshops and the Co-management Resource Centre (they are also disseminated in the region);

- Participatory management processes are being implemented in the learning sites, and the processes are steered on the basis of lessons learned. At certain sites, new skills and know-how have been put to excellent use and the dialogue and negotiations among stakeholders led to very interesting results. Such results include:

  - √ a multi-party committee (advisory body for the park and management body for its peripheral zone) at Waza, in Norther Cameroun, legally recognised by order of the minister in charge of protected areas;
  - √ a multi-party management structure (Bomboko Forest Reserve Management Committee) at Mount Cameroon, legally recognised by order of the Prefect of Meme Department;
  - √ a cooperation agreement between a delegation of the Cameroon Ministry of Water and Forests , professional game keepers and the riparian population in the Lobéké main protection zone (Zone Essentielle de Protection), signed on June 8, 1999 in the presence of the Sub-prefect of Moloundou and the Chief of Salapoumbé District at the end of a stakeholder negotiation process facilitated by the project PROFORNAT;
  - √ a charter for the co-management of natural resources and detailed management agreements for the Conkouati reserve (Congo Brazzaville), signed by representatives of the local population, the regional administration and the authorities in charge of protected areas (May 1999);
  - √ a declaration of commitment to participate in developing a management plan for the reserve Nta-ali (Korup site), signed by the riparian village delegates and the representatives of the state services at the end of a stakeholder meeting (December 1998).

Besides the indicators of institutional achievements just mentioned, it is worth noting that at the learning sites the attitudes of local communities and officials in charge of conservation has greatly improved. At Conkouati, for example, the co-management process led to the emergence of new pressure groups for conservation. In June 1999, a number of local stakeholders succeeded in reversing a ministerial decision concerning forest exploitation in the eco-development zones. They reminded the forest administration officials that they were not the only ones to have a say in the management of the reserve's natural resources, at least not according to the contents of the charter they had all signed. In Waza Park, the conservation officials have accepted the principle of negotiating with the women of local communities the rules to govern extraction and use of some of the park's natural resources, such as gum Arabic, fish and straw.

The improved milieu in the Congo Basin

The co-management project has the mandate of promoting processes of participatory management of natural resources in the Congo Basin (and other regions). Is it succeeding to create a more favourable milieu for co-management? For instance, is the project accepted by other regional conservation initiatives? Has it been able to generate their interest? Has it been able to influence them?

The requests for cooperation made by various institutions constitute a good indicator of the level of the co-management project's acceptance in the region. As a result of these requests, inputs by the co-management project have prompted:

- two training sessions for the Conference on Dense and Humid Forests Ecosystems in Central Africa (CEFDHAC) based on theoretical understandings and experience gained at the learning sites. The two sessions dealt with good governance in the institutions managing forest ecosystems and on managing conflicts relating to the use of forest ecosystems;

- the gathering of information on Cameroon by the Centre Technique de Coopération Agricole et Rurale (ACP-UE)— information the Centre uses in support of policies for environmental protection and sound NRM;

- the integration of participatory management in training programmes of the Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts of Gabon, based on experience and lessons gained at the learning sites.

In addition, several institutions have expressed their willingness to cooperate with the co-management project. These include:

- the Centre International des Recherches Forestières (CIFOR), and in particular its research programme on adaptive management ;
- the forest network of the Conférence des Responsables de Recherche Agronomique in Africa (CORAF) ;
- the Programme Avenir des Peuples des Forêts Tropicales (APFT);
- the Central African Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) ;
- the Programme for the Conservation of Forest Eco-systems in Central Africa (ECOFAC) ;
- the WWF programme for Cameroon.

In other words, far from being considered an isolated or rival initiative, the co-management project is appreciated by other regional and national conservation programmes, which hope to take advantage of the services it can deliver.

Preliminary achievements of the GTZ/IUCN/CMWG Co-management Project in the Congo Basin — a schematic summary

Categories of achievement	Results obtained in the field
Knowledge	√ Effective understanding of key process steps of CM among the practitioners in the network; √ Methods and tools distilled as practical guidelines (document currently in press in three languages)
Attitudes	√ Enhanced confidence of practitioners in the CM process √ Enhanced mutual trust and willingness to dialogue among local stakeholders in the observation sites √ Aroused interest among key actors and institutions in the region, including willingness to start a CM training of trainers programme
Skills	Enhanced capacity of practitioners to √ identify, analyse and engage stakeholders in CM processes √ implement social communication initiatives and help stakeholders organize √ promote and facilitate negotiations √ monitor and evaluate results with stakeholders
Field results	√ organized stakeholders √ effective negotiation processes √ multi-party agreements √ pluralist management organizations √ an effective network of practitioners / field initiatives in the region

Initial lessons learned

The initial lessons learned by the co-management project are many and can be grouped into three areas: co-management methods and tools, feasibility conditions at various sites, and management of the project itself.

Co-management methods and tools

Various lessons on more or less effective methods and tools have been learned while implementing co-management processes at the various sites. Among those:

- **An effective co-management process takes good care of social communication concerns.** What do the various actors understand by “co-management”? What does it mean for them? The stakeholders need exhaustive information and full transparency on the steps of the CM process and the decision-making procedures. In this sense, many learning sites still show significant deficiencies. Indeed, easy-to-use, top-down methods such as “awareness-raising campaigns” and “expert consultant” approaches are very difficult to eradicate.

- The mobilizing effect of a co-management process is not only linked to the quality of the relevant communication and negotiation activities. Indeed, **many stakeholders become active only when they perceive that co-management brings about “new resources” for their benefit**. They appear to reconstruct or reinterpret the meaning of the messages and / or processes in terms of their on-going situation.

- The legal context for co-management is often vague and unclear. The existing laws do not generally foresee the establishment of any multi-party body for the management of natural resources. Yet the very processes nurtured at the learning sites exploited every nook and crane of the legal system and facilitated the emergence of new and legitimate institutional arrangements. For instance, to give multi-party institutions a legal character, the stakeholders have made use of the NGO law (as in Congo Brazzaville) or have had recourse to ministerial decrees or prefectorial decisions (as in Cameroon). In fact, the legal void does not seem to prevent the implementation of pilot co-management measures. On the contrary, **the lack of specific rules on the matter offers an opportunity to develop such rules on the basis of concrete experiences and field lessons**.

- Patrimonial mediation has proved an appropriate approach to facilitate the negotiation of management agreements. In the context of the Congo Basin, however, **the ritualization of long-term patrimonial objectives works only when done concomitantly with concrete agreements on short term aims**. The broken promises of political parties have made people cynical about pledges and rituals! The best approaches seem to leave out the more abstract considerations and focus on concrete action.

- The management authority developed in a multi-party negotiation process draws its legitimacy from pre-existing governments and traditional institutions, which it joins but it does not make disappear. Such an authority can only play its role if the actors who make it up can successfully negotiate a share of power from the pre-existing institutions. Because of this political dimension, the effectiveness of the new institutions depends on the quality of the negotiation process that generated it. In particular, **more and better attention should be paid to traditional NRM institutions at community level**. All of the

CM learning sites would benefit from a better integration of traditional NRM systems in the management agreements under negotiation.

- **The multi-party management bodies at the local community level or above should be rendered as much as possible autonomous**, in particular with respect to the financing of recurrent costs.

Feasibility conditions at various sites

It has become apparent that the conditions existing in the learning sites have a considerable influence on the evolution and outcome of the local co-management processes. Indeed, certain members in the Réseau Cogestion have not been supported by their project colleagues in their attempts to implement co-management initiatives. The reasons given focus mainly on the pre-existing projects strategic plans. Often, the members of the Réseau Cogestion are asked to fit project plans that do not at all foresee co-management approaches. This is compounded by the lack of relevant budgetary planning: in most projects, no budget is earmarked for co-management, even when financial resources have been set aside to promote community participation and environmental education. As a result, it can be argued that:

- as long as the co-management vision will remain restricted only to a few actors linked to the Réseau Cogestion, the financial, professional and moral support needed to implement effective co-management process will remain lacking;

- as long as the project plans in the learning sites will remain rigid, even those actors with direct links to the network will not have the opportunity or the scope to implement CM processes.

In other words, for co-management to succeed it is vital to begin with a clear agreement on the desirability of the approach on the part of the entire project team. It is also crucial to allocate from the beginning the necessary human and financial resources.

The management of the project

Two key lessons:

- a process-oriented approach enabled the project coordinator to retain a certain freedom and to adapt project management according to the beneficiaries' varying needs. This flexible approach has been possible thanks to the understanding and approval of the project steering committee;

- the involvement of the IUCN's Collaborative Management Working Group (CMWG) in the implementation of the co-management project and its commitment to the project itself have been instrumental for the success of the initiative. For the IUCN, the project represents a model example in the search for synergy between its Commissions and Secretariat.

With respect to the dynamics generated by the co-management project, it is now expedient to:

- consolidate the results obtained and ensure the sustainability of the collective learning process;
- strengthen the effects generated by the co-management project, to guarantee their positive impact on natural resources;
- build on the lessons learned.

With this in mind, it was recommended during the Phase II planning workshop (September 1999) to continue the project for a second biennium with a view to ensuring the effective application of the co-management approach for the sustainable management of natural resources in the region. On the basis of this objective and the needs identified during the planning workshop, the activities in the second phase of the project (2000-2001) revolve around three main strategic axes:

➢ collection and dissemination of resources, experiences and lessons learned on the co-management of natural resources, including the identification of unanswered questions;

➢ training of human resources on ways to ensure the success of the co-management approach and to promote social communication initiatives and the critical awareness of what is at stake with co-management;

➢ support to various forms of cooperation and institutional synergy, to integrate co-management into existing natural-resource management systems.

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