

**Capacities to Manage Role Changes in Natural Resource Management: How
the '4Rs' tool can contribute to it, with special emphasis on forest
management in Africa**

by
Olivier Dubois

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Executive Summary

There is an increasing agreement that sustainable use and management of natural resources require more collaboration between primary stakeholders, i.e. the State, the Private Sector and Civil Society. This stance can be found in several initiatives and, increasingly, in policy documents. However, the political dimension of such an approach implies the need to address issues pertaining to power differences at the resource level. The political dimension of NRM, when acknowledged, is often weakly dealt with by development agencies, mainly due to the lack of tools to assess stakeholders' roles and power, and lack of capacity to manage role changes in forestry.

Defining and negotiating stakeholders' roles is needed prior to determining what their capacity needs are. This paper presents practical examples concerning the use of framework, whereby stakeholders' roles are defined by their respective '4Rs', i.e. their Rights, Responsibilities, Returns/ Revenues and Relationships. The framework has been tested under different circumstances, in different biomes, and involving different types of stakeholders. Experience shows that the '4Rs' framework can contribute to approaches aimed at improving collaboration in natural resource management: This framework helps teasing out issues pertaining to the sensitive and little-explored area of stakeholders' power.

1. Coming to terms with capacity

The context where farmers and small-scale natural resource users operate contains a significant dose of uncertainty, linked to changing policy, legal and institutional frameworks, changing market conditions and often erratic climatic events. This is combined with the need to account for various stakeholders (often) divergent interests. Therefore, one should use a working definition of capacity building which focuses on those capacities needed for local stakeholders (government agencies, communities and private operators) to adjust to changing ecological, socio-economic and institutional circumstances, including both adverse events and opportunities for livelihood improvement. The emphasis on changes means that both technical and institutional capacities of local stakeholders need to be strengthened, where:

- *Technical capacities* refer to *adequacy of resources* in terms of “hardware” (funds, equipment, material and infrastructure) and “software” (information, knowledge and skills). The major issue to be addressed is the adequacy of the resources: does the country (or department, community or other organisational unit) have enough qualified and experienced staff, money, infrastructure and equipment to do the job?; and
- *Institutional capacities (or governance capacities)* relate to the *enabling institutional environment*, which allows for a cost effective use of resource capacities. Here, the main issues are (Dia, 1996):
 - *commitment* of leadership;
 - *local ownership*;
 - *representativeness* and *legitimacy* of institutions;
 - *accountability* to clients;
 - *autonomy* of organisations;
 - the extent to which *incentives* encourage service and improve performance;
 - *enforceability* of rules.

It is now agreed that, up to recently, institutional capacities present more reason for concern than technical capacities in developing countries, and that the emphasis placed so far by donor agencies on the latter did not bring about the expected results. The scant success of such an approach stems from the fact that development-cooperation was mainly conceived as a technical task, with little attention paid to the conflicting demands from different stakeholders over development and environmental resources; hence to matters pertaining to authority, power, negotiation and politics. This is not to say that technical capacities should be overlooked. However, they will be significantly enhanced if they are used in an appropriate institutional environment.

Changing and uncertain circumstances mean that stakeholders' roles in natural resource management (NRM) are often in the process of being or will soon have to be negotiated. As a result

- Capacity to manage role changes must be added to the definition of capacity building provided above. A simple definition of capacity could then become “the capacity to manage changing circumstances and roles in relation to land husbandry and natural resource management”;
- An operational definition of the rather vague term of roles then becomes crucial. In other words, answer questions such as who has and should have the right and responsibility to do what, followed by who should benefit and pay for use/management/conservation, and finding the right balance between these things. However, the most important factor local stakeholders' arrangements is the quality of relationships. This is not easy to assess in a constructive way. One

possible way to address this question is through the use of a tool aimed to define stakeholders' roles via their respective '4Rs', i.e.

- ❖ the balance of Rights, Responsibilities and Returns/Revenues, both within and between stakeholder groups;
 - ❖ The characteristics of stakeholders' mutual relationships, in terms of quality, degree of formality/informality and type of dependency.
- Finally, capacity needs should be assessed on the basis of stakeholders' new roles in the context of NRM. This implies that only once these roles have been negotiated and agreed upon by local stakeholders.

The need for partnerships between different stakeholder groups also implies that one must address the issues of power disparity between these groups, and the capacities to deal with it. Indeed the sustainability of participatory processes has often to do with the local power game/power disparity. Hence the importance of assessing and managing power issues for participatory processes to be successful. The problem with assessing power is twofold:

- You can't assess it directly, i.e. no use in telling the mightier party that is too powerful
- Power disparity is often assessed ex post, i.e. as an outcome of an agreement, when one notices the losing and winning parties.

One possible way forward is to assess power indirectly, via proxies such as stakeholders' roles. This brings us back to the need to clearly define roles, and of the possible use of the '4Rs' in that respect. They can usefully complement dependency and other factors, such as education, wealth, locally recognised authority and "whose knowledge counts" - as used by Colfer (1995) to determine stakeholders' power deficit.

2. Making sense of the Forest "Battlefield": Different pressures and stakes in Forest Management

When looking at how the status of forests has evolved over the last decade or so, one has to admit that despite vast amounts of energy, money and time being invested in improving people's participation, organising international meetings, improving existing policies, etc, the amount of forests being sustainably managed has not significantly increased.

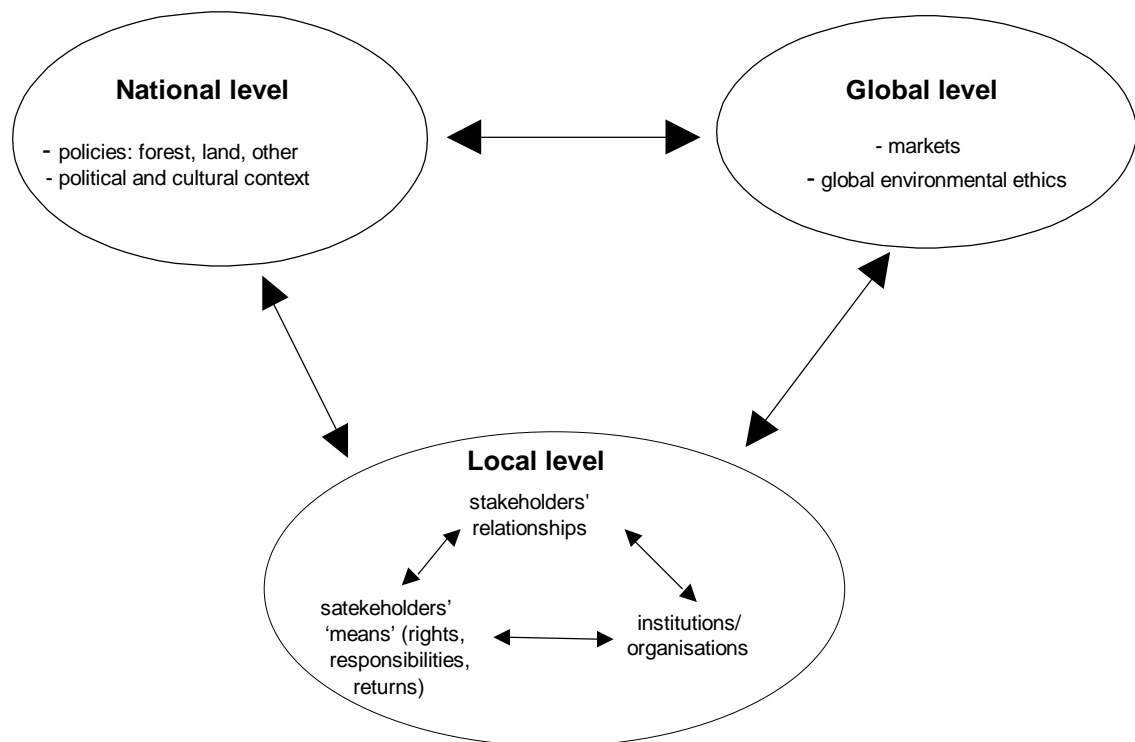
One major factor associated with this rather gloomy picture lies in the partial paradigm shift in forestry over the past 10-15 years, from state control to increasing involvement of private operators and civil society, and the difficulties associated with this transition.

This has resulted in more and diversified pressures on forest authorities, at local, national and even international levels. Moreover, the realisation that forestry should be geared to people's livelihoods as well as to trees has forced forest management to expand beyond forests and encompass other types of land uses.

Inevitably as players increase, conflicts spiral, especially until capacities are developed to deal with them. There is a need to address the sensitive issues of shared decision-making, and power relationships come into play. This forces forest management to take a political stance, and to encompass the complex linkages between politics, market, policies, institutions and capacities.

Mahir (1997) compares forests to 'battlefields which social actors are struggling to manage and make sense of'. This battlefield is tentatively illustrated in diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Making sense of the Forest "Battlefield": Different stakes and pressures in forest management



Source: Mahir, 1997

Several points emerge from this diagram, i.e.:

- Policy implementation, institutions and stakeholders' roles in forest management are all embedded in the local political and cultural context;
- Policies address the issue of *what* is needed at the resource level, but;
- It is the interactions between the means, institutions and relationships that determine *how* policies are to be implemented. This is therefore the level where capacity development should be given priority;
- The argument about forest management usually concerns stakeholders' 'means' (rights, responsibilities, and returns) and institutions, but;
- Progress often hinges on the quality of local stakeholders' relationships, local politics and culture, and the influence of outside pressures;
- Development assistance agencies experience difficulties in dealing with such realities because:
 - on the actual main driving factors of progress - politics, culture, relation although they can directly influence the substance of the argument, institutions, and, to a lesser extent, outside forces;
 - their effective influence ships and outside forces - is often more indirect and therefore must span a significant period of time¹. This influence occurs via cumulative influence from projects concerning the substance of the argument and institutions, e.g.:

¹ Donors can sometimes attempt to influence these factors more drastically, e.g. by rewriting policies in Papua New Guinea and Cameroon. However, such hasty moves are seldom effectively implemented.

- platforms for dialogue such as the national working groups on certification in Cameroon, Gabon and Ghana;
- critical mass of challenges to existing practices, such as informal community-based or local partnership initiatives; leading to the realisation of the need to change 'the rules of the game'.

3. Introducing the '4Rs'

The challenge is to transform the forest from a battlefield into a shared asset, capable of meeting divergent interests.

There is a growing *consensus* amongst key decision-makers about *what* is needed to make the transition to more sustainable forest management, i.e. forestry which will ensure the security of forest-related goods and services at household, national and global levels. This transition is likely to involve an iterative process of continuous trial and improvement.

However, reconciling different interests requires skills with which forest authorities are ill-equipped by themselves. The process would require action, not by governments alone, but also by the market and civil society bodies. What is lacking are instruments to operationalise the transition to sustainable forest management (SFM). Consequently, at present, forest management often amounts to managing confusion; which, as in all battlefields, suits the mighty parties, but is unsustainable in the long run.

To evolve sustainable patterns of forest resource use, where various interests can be satisfied, and where existing good practice and poor management can be recognised, *stakeholder's roles need also to evolve*. Hence the need for processes by which mutual learning, exploration of options, and negotiation of roles can take place.

Clarifying stakeholders' roles in forestry is a prerequisite to defining capacity needs. This is where the '4Rs' tool has proved useful as it defines stakeholders' roles through their '4Rs', i.e. *the balance of their Rights, Responsibilities, Revenues/Returns from the resource, and Relationships*.

In Africa in particular, there is an imbalance between the '4Rs' of the primary stakeholders². This limits local capacity to accommodate the transition to sustainable forest management (SFM):

The State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has too many responsibilities relative to its means - usually has ownership rights over forest resources - often receives inadequate returns from forest resource use - relationships with the local communities and the private sector are usually uneasy and depend on local, often covert arrangements. Mutual distrust is common amongst these stakeholders.
The Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is given concession rights to exploit the resources - is not responsible for the long term objectives of the natural resources, i.e. those related to resources as a public good - although it has some means to manage the resource - the level of returns is not clear and constitutes a controversial issue. The private sector claims it is too low to finance sustainable forest

² Primary stakeholders are those who have a direct stake in the use of forest resources. NGOs are thereby considered to be secondary stakeholders. This does not belittle their essential role in facilitating processes aimed at better management of the forest.

- management; yet other stakeholders believe it is high, especially when compared to the price paid for the right to exploit the resource.
- often has opportunistic relationships with local communities

- Local communities
- usually have no or few formal/legal responsibilities
 - have no significant official rights besides user rights. Customary rights are often more important than formal rules
 - in theory, need permits to obtain tangible financial returns from the resources; such returns are usually small.

This situation creates an imbalance in power relationships and conflicts of interests, which, in turn, makes it difficult to achieve good relationships between stakeholders and clarity concerning their roles. As a result, what prevails is a *patchwork of local arrangements* and *quasi open access to land and forest resources*.

In such a context, the use of the '4Rs' framework has helped in teasing out issues and highlighting leverage points in relation to collaboration between stakeholders.

The capacities needed to manage role changes are likely to be better assessed once roles are clarified and agreed through the establishment of a neutral forum or several fora for mutual learning and negotiation. They might include:

- capacities for learning,
- capacities to explore options and achieve constructive negotiation, and
- capacities to develop the institutional environment to enable such processes to occur.

4. Examples of practical use of the '4Rs' in Africa

4.1. Use of the '4Rs' to analyse situations and diagnose problems.

All the national working groups have used the '4Rs' framework to analyse situations and diagnose problems. For instance, Tables 1 and 2 illustrate such uses in one case in Zambia.

Table 1: A summary of the Rights, Responsibilities and Revenues in Lukolongo

Stakeholders	Responsibility	Rights	Revenues
Farmers	Custodians to land	Use rights to forest resources Cultivation of the land	Income from agricultural products
Charcoal producers and traders	None	Wood harvesting and trading	Income from forest products
Curio-makers/Pitsawyers	None	Wood harvesting and trading	Income from forest products
Forestry Service.	Forest management Forest law enforcement	Collection of revenue from forest taxes (low)	Revenue from forest taxes (low)
ECAZ (an NGO)	Facilitator of development	To facilitate local development	Indirectly, creation of employment

Source: Makano et al, 1997

Based on Table 1 a strength and weakness analysis would show notably a clear imbalance between the private operators' responsibilities and their rights and benefits.

Table 2: Stakeholders' Relationships in Lukolongo

	Farmers	Charcoal producers	Curio-makers	Fishermen	Forestry Dept.	ECAZ
Farmers						
Charcoal Producers	Good					
Curio-makers	Good	Fair				
Fishermen	Good	Good	Good			
Forestry Dept.	Fairly good	Poor	Poor	Fair		
ECAZ	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good	

Source: Adapted from Makano et al, 1997

Table 2 highlights the usually poor state of the relationships between the State and the other stakeholders.

(ii) *Use of the '4Rs' to assess/compare policies*

Table 3, taken from work carried out in Zambia, shows one possible use of the '4Rs' framework to compare different policy statements and assess their coherence.

Table 3: Policy statements and Legislative Provisions in relation to the "4Rs"

Legislation and Policy statements	Provisions in relation to the "4Rs"			
	Responsibilities	Rights	Revenues	Relationships with local people
Forest Act	Government	Government	Government and local people	Poor
Wildlife Act	Government and local people	Government	Government and local people	Good
NEAP	Government and local people	Government	Government and local people	?
Water Act	Government	Government	Government and local people	?
Energy	Government	Government	Government and local people	Poor
Land Act	Government and chiefs	Government and chiefs	Government and local people	Poor
Local Gvnmt. and Housing Act	Government and Landlords	Government and Landlords	Government and local people	?

Source: Makano et al, 1997

A strength and weakness analysis of policies on the basis of Table 3 would clearly show that:

- there is a lack of harmonisation of the different regulations in terms of rights and responsibilities;
- in the case of revenues, there is harmony between the different policies. However, in this case, the policy statements do not correspond to reality, as almost no revenues return to the local level from the Central Treasury;
- the quality of relationships are seldom mentioned in policy statements. More generally speaking, they are also more difficult to assess than the other 'Rs'.

(iii) *The use of the '4Rs' framework in negotiation processes*

The following example is taken from a negotiation and planning exercise that took place in 2000 in the context of the DFID-funded Mt Cameroon Project in Cameroon. Through a two days workshop, participants from the major local stakeholder groups assessed their current and future '4Rs' in relation to community forestry activities. '3Rs' were assessed separately from stakeholders' relationships.

*** Negotiating stakeholders' '3Rs' (Rights, Responsibilities and Revenues/Returns)**

As regards the '3Rs', the participants added one characteristic compared to Table 4, i.e. the relative "weight" of each 'R' for each stakeholder group, as illustrated in Table X4 for half of the stakeholders. These scores allowed for the development of Table 5. This Table shows that the main beneficiaries of forest resources are illegal users; while those with most responsibilities and formal rights benefit very little.

On that basis, participants determined what the community forest should be in five years time, hence what the desired '3Rs' should be to that end. The Table produced formed the basis of the negotiation on what should be planned to achieve what had been agreed in the Table related to future '3Rs'.

Table 4: Current Rights, responsibilities and revenues table for 9 of 18 forest stakeholder groups

Stakeholder	Rights	Score	Responsibility	Score	Benefit	Score
Charcoal Burners	Part access	2	Registered with OC (Operations Committee)	2	Direct income	4
Timber Exploiters	Part Access	0.5	None	0	Direct income – timber	4
Firewood collectors	None	0	None	0	Direct income, resource	4.5
CDC (a parastatal plantation company)	Rightful leasehold owners	5	Ensure proper land management	1	None	0
Chiefs	Authorise access to all resources	3	Custodians; Monitor	2	Fees; Gifts	1
Farmers	Access to land Participation/decision making	2	Implement land use plan (Tree planting); Registration	1	Crop sales; Crop consumption	5
MINEF (Ministry of Forestry)	Supervision; Management	4	Control exploitation; Collect govt taxes Community forest procedure	2	Auction sales revenues; Exploitation fees	3.5
BBNRC (local management committee)	Management Authority; Negotiate on behalf of the community; Sanction	3	Implement LUP; Monitoring and control; Establish community forest	3	Allowances; Training; Gifts; Informant fees	2
Traditional Doctors	User right; Participation	1	-	0	Consultation fees; Treatment; Herbs sales	5

(Source: Teckwe and Percy, 2000)

Table 5: Ranking of actors according to respective '3Rs' weights

Rank	Greatest rights	Most responsibilities	Most benefits
1	CDC	MCP	Farmers / fishermen
2	MINEF	BBNRM	Firewood harvesters / traditional doctors
3	MCP	MINEF / chiefs / elites / charcoal burners / LUC	Timber harvesters / charcoal makers
4	BBNRM / Chiefs		

[CDC - Cameroon Development Corporation; MINEF - Ministry of Water and Forests; LUC - Limbe Urban Council]

Source: Teckwe and Percy, 2000

* Stakeholders' relationships

Next, participants assessed the relationships between stakeholder groups on the basis of their "quality", i.e. excellent, fair, poor and absent. This highlighted areas of problems; which allowed for targeted recommendations on how to improve relationships and the determination of entry points for developing new ones (e.g. one stakeholder group which gets on well with two other groups that have problematic relations was used as mediator between these two groups).

When using the '4Rs' to negotiate, it might be useful to assess three types of situations, i.e.

- the '4Rs' according to the *policies*;
- the '4Rs' according to *reality*;
- the desired '4Rs' for the *future*.

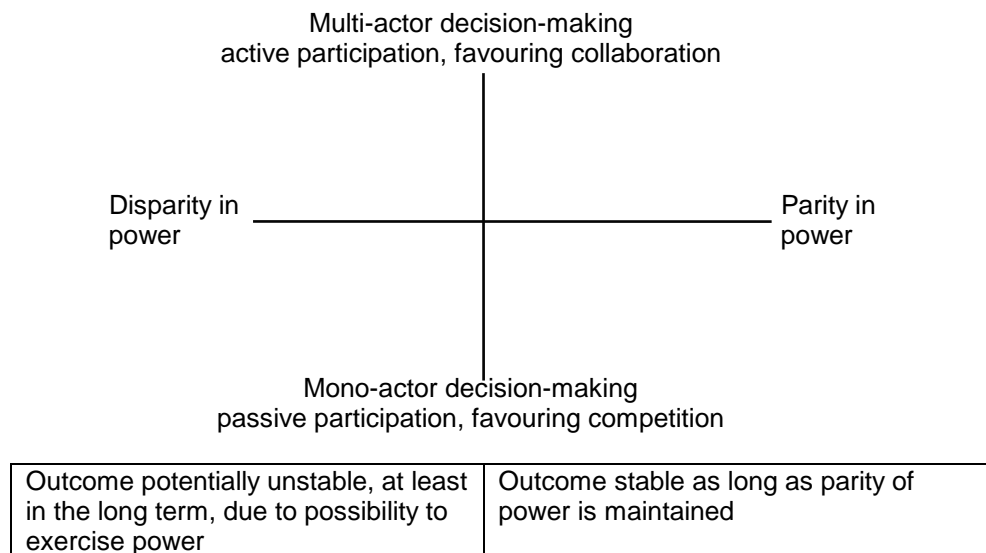
It is recommended to start with the desired future state, as a more likely point of agreement; and subsequently discuss how the reality should change to reach that stage.

Given that negotiations on the '4Rs' indirectly imply potential changes in local power structures, they are likely to raise high expectations. It is therefore recommended to use this framework in negotiation only if it can be followed by effective change in the '4Rs', even on a pilot basis.

(vi) Assessing stakeholders' relationships and power

Since the early 70s or so, it has become more and more apparent that unilateral decision-making by administrative authorities often fail to meet the challenge of development in reconciling different interests and providing multiple goods and services. For many years, participation was seen as a key mechanism to improve performance in that respect. However, more often than not, the amount and intensity of conflicts did not significantly subside with the use of participation, nor did agreements become more durable. It has become gradually apparent that participation alone is not sufficient. due to strong limitations. The major one relates to the emphasis placed on the communication aspect of participation, and the array of methods that go with it. Despite being all about establishing rapport, for which good communication is key, participation has usually failed in addressing some other key aspects of relationships, and in particular *issues of conflicts and power*. Experience indeed shows that *issues of power matter often more than active involvement in decision-making in reaching durable agreements over policies and their implementation*. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

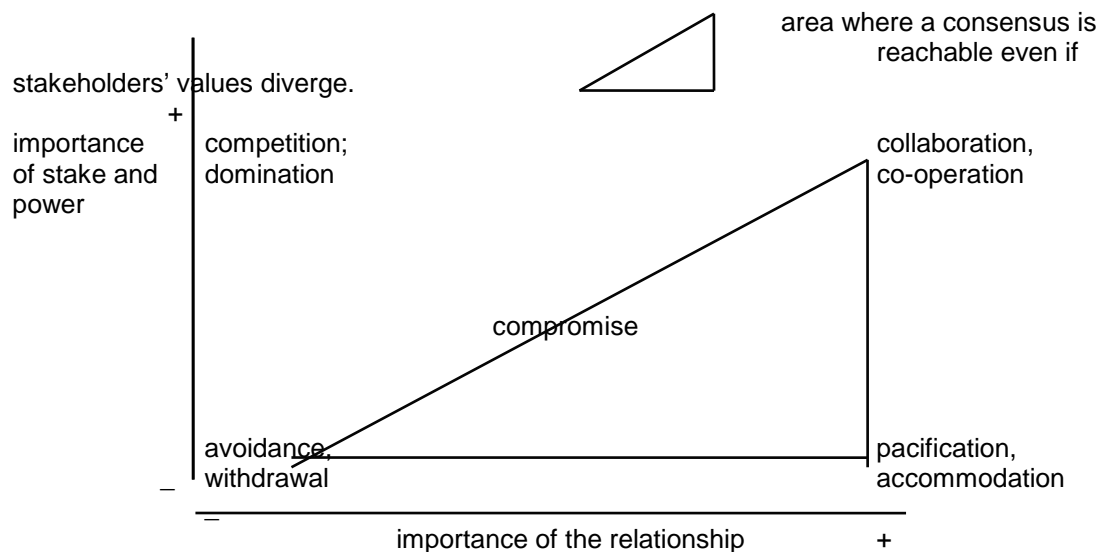
Figure 2: Linking participation and power to the quality of outcome in policy agreements



Source: Adapted from Sidaway, 1997

Therefore, to be more efficient, participation has had to move from a means of communication to a negotiation process. But then, one has to bear in mind that negotiation may not always be the best participation strategy, especially for weaker groups. This relates to the complex linkages between stakeholders' relationships and power, which is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Interactions between power and relationships in negotiation strategies



Source: Vodoz, 1994

Two key points emerge from Figure 3:

- Collaboration between stakeholders is usually not reachable if the importance of relationships matters less than:
 - the stakes;
 - the importance of keeping power, which is likely to happen where power differences are high;
 - a combination of the above.
- Under such circumstances, *negotiation should not be used as a form of active participation before bargaining powers are levelled off*, as it might result in competition with the weaker parties losing out. Time must be therefore given to address issues of power differences. This gives the possibility to address both context and actors' related constraints.

5. Lessons learned

5.1. Issues

More often than not, the forest authority is unable to handle its new role as facilitator of shared forest management, due either to its weak presence in the resource area, or to its inclination and capacity to perform tasks linked to its previous responsibilities - especially control tasks - rather than its new ones (e.g. technical assistance). Therefore, in those areas, informal arrangements and uncontrolled access to the resources prevail.

In some instances, practices have preceded policies, and local communities have taken over and set up informal rules, especially concerning access to the resource. Examples of such initiatives concern arrangements between slash-and-burn farmers and charcoal-makers in Zambia, or patrolling of forest boundaries by community rangers in Senegal. Populations and local interest groups have accepted more responsibilities as long as, in parallel, they have gained more rights and revenues. There is therefore a condition for local initiatives to emerge, i.e. the '*letting go*' by local forest authorities, either passively, *in absentia*, or more formally through agreements. Where they are operational, locally-derived mechanisms to enforce local '4Rs' seem to be of greater significance in forest cover than commonly attributed factors such as population density (e.g. in Zambia).

Yet, such mechanisms are often significantly hampered by their illegality when it comes to counteracting powerful outside interests, sometimes backed by local governments (e.g. in Cameroon).

Moreover, the current balance between the '4Rs', both within and between stakeholders' groups, often does not provide enough resilience to local interest groups: the more rights to and revenues you get from the forest, the more likely you will be able to counteract outside pressures, and local interest groups are often poorly endowed in that respect.

Finally, local stakeholders, be they government, private or communities, often lack information on the formal '4Rs'. This is often compounded by the rapid turn-over of regulations (e.g. in Senegal the Forestry Code passed in 1994 - and its Application Decree of 1995 - have been replaced by a new Code in 1997).

However, one should not revert to the other extreme of the pendulum and provide full '4Rs' to communities without a 'referee' role for the government bodies - centralised or decentralised - to reduce the risk of local 'despotism' (e.g. often the case in Niger, due to the official recognition but also strong political clout of traditional authorities).

Just increasing tenure rights is not sufficient to foster income generation from land and forest resources. Hence, beyond subsistence economy, more *secure rights to the forest must be accompanied by better access to market outlets*.

One frequent key fact concerning the '4Rs' is the usually uneasy relationship between the forest authority and the other parties, especially villagers. Distrust and opportunism prevail. Hence, simple values and factors that might not have seemed important before become essential under the new paradigm, i.e. *confidence-building, time and flexibility*.

Finally, the '4Rs' may lack importance when laws and formal rules are not respected, leading to the prevalence of ad-hoc and local arrangements. This raises the issue of the relevance of negotiations and formal agreements on the '4Rs' in places where formal rules are weakly enforced. Some might be tempted by a *laissez-faire* attitude. However this increases the risk of unfair and unsustainable local deals regarding the use of forests, as they depend a lot on the power structures at any given time.

5.2. Practical aspects

Table 6 summarises the main constraints encountered in administering the '4Rs' tool and suggestions on how to overcome these constraints.

Table 6: Main constraints in the use of the '4Rs' tool and suggestions on ways to overcome them

Main constraintss	Suggestions to overcome the constraints
<p>The tool tends to oversimplify the reality, especially at the expense of the diversity of uses of forest resources</p> <p>The '4Rs' tool is often difficult to use with rural populations, in particular due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The difficulty to visualise the '4Rs'; - In Africa, the difficulty regarding rights, due to the use of both formal and informal judicial systems - sometimes difficulties in translating the '4Rs' into local dialects; - The risk of introducing the '4Rs' in cultural environments not very familiar to those who administer the tool. <p>As a consequence of constraints A and B, the use of the '4Rs' tool requires time and skills</p> <p>The '4Rs' tool can provoke or reinforce conflicts through increased frustrations for weaker stakeholders and fears for stronger stakeholders</p> <p>The '4Rs' tool is not very performant in the identification of stakeholder groups to involve in the diagnosis and/or negotiation</p> <p>So far, the use of the '4Rs' tool has privileged incentives by focusing on positive 'Rs' (i.e. what is or should be), at the expense of negative aspects of the '4Rs' (i.e. what is not or should not be).</p> <p>Those administering the tool might feel that they own it, whereas the stakeholders should feel that have the ownership of the diagnosis and /or negotiation process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tool should be administered by a multidisciplinary team and one should bear in mind the essentially exploratory character of the '4Rs' tool - Do not initiate contact with illiterate stakeholder groups using this tool; - Translate the '4Rs' into locally accepted terms through a participatory exercise; - Do not attempt to necessarily rely on matrices to visualise the results of the exercise with rural populations; - Ensure common understanding of the meaning of each 'R' among all stakeholders; - When relevant (e.g. in Africa) separate the formal and traditional judicial systems when analysing and negotiating the '4Rs'; - If need be, analyse each 'R' separately, before assessing their balance - Consider sustainable management of forest resources as a process, and therefore factor enough time for diagnosis and negotiation in the planning of activities, as well as for regular possibilities to question and renegotiate the '4Rs' if need be - Favour issues and topics where negotiation seems more likely to result in consensual agreements; - If need be, start by working with smaller groups and with each stakeholder group separately, as a first step towards public negotiation - Do not force weaker groups to embark into a negotiation process before they have gained enough bargaining power - To that end, start by assessing stakeholders' relationships, as an indication of power disparity between stakeholder groups - Combine the '4Rs' tool with other tools used in stakeholder analysis, and in particular those most useful in identifying/selecting stakeholders (e.g. Venn Diagrams). - If need be, also assess 'negative Rs'. In particular, this should allow for a better assessment of what the stakeholders would loose if they would not negotiate their '4Rs'. - Promote ownership of the '4Rs' tool and especially the diagnosis and/or negotiation process by local stakeholders

6. Conclusions

The main conditions for success in managing natural resources activities mentioned above relate to adequate and clear access rights, strong local institutions, market opportunities, sufficient capacities, and often, long-term donor financial support. Such a combination is seldom found in a given location, and therefore benefits and sustainability of forest-based enterprises require time to materialise. The difficulty in achieving SFM has led some specialists to compare SFM to the “Nirvana” stage of forestry). This suggests that, while sustainable NRM should remain the ultimate goal, perhaps more “down-to-earth” workable objectives should be sought. This might provide a way to move beyond (a) rhetoric in much of the current forestry discourse, (b) worries about the sustainability of current CNRM schemes, and (c) disappointment in the face of the slow progress of local initiatives. In that sense, we propose to analyse the success of CNRM against the objectives of achieving:

- *less unsustainable* forest practices;
- *improved well-being* of rural populations;
- improved development, where development should be seen “*as local stakeholders*”³ *capacity to adapt to and manage change*” in the context of what Babin *et al* (1997) call “*co-viability*” between conservation and rural development.

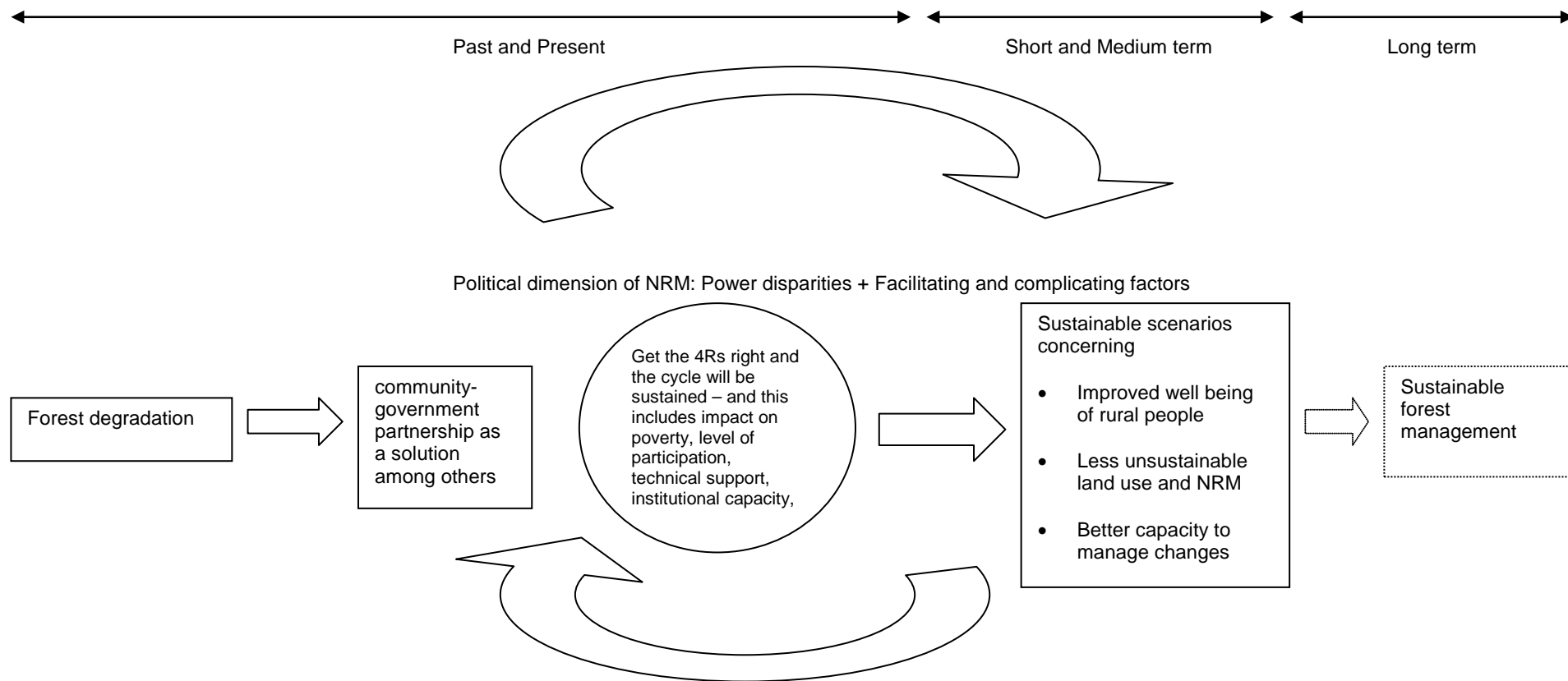
What we are looking for is what Anderson *et al* (1998) call “*sustainable scenarios*” in relation to the objectives mentioned above. Experience over the last decade has shown that this requires a stepwise and iterative process. Moreover, the criteria to assess performance should be defined locally because local circumstances keep changing, thus making these objectives “moving targets”.

A successful collaborative arrangement is (stating the obvious) one that works. The ‘4Rs’ are not set in stone. They evolve over time and hence so does their ideal mix. *Success in collaborative natural resource management (CNRM)* lies therefore in *maintaining a cycle where the ‘4Rs’ can be negotiated when deemed necessary by one major stakeholder, and that a mechanism to ensure this is available.*

This is illustrated in Figure 4.

³ In the context of collaborative arrangements, it is worth pointing out that this concerns not only community members, but also government staff and private operators.

Figure 4: Measuring “success” in CNRM



Success in CNRM is maintenance of the cycle.

Source : Dubois and Lowore, 2000

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