

Guidelines for Participatory Planning:
A Manual for Caribbean Natural Resource
Managers and Planners



Caribbean Natural Resources Institute Guidelines Series

Guidelines for Participatory Planning:
A Manual for Caribbean Natural
Resource Managers and Planners
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Executive summary

Participation is a necessary strategy for fostering sustainable development, but effective participatory planning requires methods and skills to accompany the rhetoric. This document introduces resource managers, planners, administrators and facilitators to participatory planning and to some of the methods that have proven effective in the Caribbean.

Sustainable development is a process of social and economic advancement that allows for the improvement of the quality of life for all while maintaining and enhancing the natural resources upon which life depends. Because problems of unsustainable resource use often require complex negotiations and trade-offs, processes that include the full participation of stakeholders tend to have the best and most enduring results.

Participation can improve management by:

- incorporating stakeholder knowledge, skills, perspectives, and opinions;
- increasing compliance and support through stakeholder involvement in decision-making;
- providing a forum for identifying and negotiating conflicts; and
- contributing to local empowerment, especially when the sharing of management responsibility is involved.

However, perceptions of what participation entails vary widely, and official resistance remains widespread. While it is up to planners and managers to determine what form is most appropriate for any given situation, basic characteristics of effective participatory processes include:

- the early, active and continual involvement of all stakeholders;
- the incorporation of the views and opinions of individuals as well as stakeholder groups;
- provision of information to allow stakeholders to form opinions and make decisions;
- accommodation for the inequities in power among stakeholders;
- respect for the process and the decisions that are reached.

Participatory planning is only successful when it involves stakeholders in defining the objectives, rules and structures for the process. Other prerequisites include organizational structures that foster stakeholder involvement in management; supportive policy frameworks; and well-informed participants, who are committed to the process, agree with its design, and accept its outcomes.

The steps in a participatory process are similar to conventional approaches to planning, and include problem identification, definition of goals and objectives, collection and analysis of information, identification of options, formulation of plans and decisions, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The main difference is that stakeholders are involved in most of the steps, using participatory methods. Negotiation among stakeholders is a key element in the identification of options and formulation of decisions. Another difference is that participatory processes are not linear. Action can take place at any stage of the process, as one of its purposes is to provoke change. Also, participatory processes always begin with the identification and analysis of stakeholders. These two steps aim at providing a basic understanding of the social and institutional context.

Stakeholder identification is most complete when it is based on the functions of the resource being managed, and aims at answering questions such as: who uses the resource and in what ways? who benefits and who does not? who wishes to benefit but is unable to do so? who would be affected by a change in management? By definition stakeholder identification cannot be fully participatory, but those leading the process should involve participants in identifying new stakeholders, thus widening the circle of participation.

There are many methods for stakeholder analysis, but the key to all is the selection of questions to provide information relevant and necessary to the process. Such questions should look at the current and future interests of stakeholders in the use of the resource; the social and economic impacts of their current, past, or future use; the relations between them; and the areas of agreement and conflict. While stakeholder analyses do not need to be participatory, those involving stakeholders allow parties to negotiate solutions to problems and conflicts that arise through the analysis.

Stakeholder involvement is not automatic and must be secured through a range of strategies and mechanisms. The first is mobilization, which often requires breaking through barriers of distrust to establish the legitimacy of the process in the eyes of stakeholders. Facilitators are responsible for assuring that all stakeholders have the same opportunity and ability to participate. This requires overcoming imbalances caused by factors including educational level, gender, race, ethnicity, social class, political affiliation, language and position in the community. Facilitators also must assure that participants have the kinds and amounts of information they need, in forms they can use. In some cases, this may require an initial period of awareness building to sensitize stakeholders to the underlying context. A combination of scientific and popular knowledge can lead to a more complete understanding of issues, as well as increase mutual respect by giving value to the knowledge of all stakeholders.

Communication needs to be integrated into all facets of participatory planning rather than tacked on as a separate component. It should be tailored to its specific audience; use language that is widely understood and media appropriate to the audience and to the message being conveyed; and be inclusive and welcoming rather than exclusive and intimidating, sensitive to gender, and open to the exchange of information and expression of different points of view.

Conflict among stakeholders, often caused by a change in a management regime, is the primary reason for and focus of many participatory processes. When dealt with skilfully, conflicts can reveal issues that are hindering effective management and catalyse positive change. Conflict over the management of natural resources is rooted in power inequities, and while the disputes it engenders can be resolved, conflict itself is deep-seated and mutable, and must be managed over time. This is one of the unavoidable responsibilities of natural resource managers.

Participatory planning does not end with the implementation of decisions, but is an ongoing process that requires institutional arrangements and incentives to sustain stakeholder participation. While the costs of participatory planning should not be greater than those of conventional planning processes, they do differ in kind, including expenses related to mobilization, facilitation, and communications.

Introduction



Participation has been universally accepted as a necessary strategy for fostering sustainable development. Unfortunately, taken out of its proper context, it can become a hackneyed buzzword used by international organizations, governments, and NGOs to indicate that people are somehow being involved in planning and decision-making. Political correctness now requires its almost habitual inclusion in official pronouncements and project documents. But achieving effective participation in planning processes requires methods and skills to accompany the rhetoric.

These participatory planning guidelines were developed by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) in response to a growing demand from Caribbean resource managers for guidance and information on participatory approaches to natural resource management. The guidelines are aimed at natural resource managers, planners, administrators, and others who are involved in the design or facilitation of participatory processes.

This document presents an introduction to the subject of participatory planning and shares some of the methods that have been used effectively in the Caribbean. It also provides advice and tips based on CANARI's own experience in participatory planning in many countries of the region. By their nature, participatory planning processes are context-specific, and these guidelines therefore do not offer step-by-step guidance or advocate a particular approach. Nor are they meant to be an exhaustive review of the subject, and users are encouraged to consult the sources listed in the bibliography for further information.

1. Natural resource management and sustainable development

Caribbean challenges to sustainable development

Traditional forms of natural resource use in the region include artisanal fishing; the harvesting of marine life including seaweeds, sea urchins, and corals; and the cutting of timber for charcoal and fuelwood. Many of these activities have been carried out at unsustainable levels, resulting in a decrease of stocks over time.

Sustainable development objectives are also threatened when traditional users come into conflict with the interests of newer economic sectors. Competition between trap fishers and the dive tourism industry has been particularly bitter in many countries of the region, and the advent of tourism has often closed access to resources traditionally exploited by local people.

Population pressure is another challenge for sustainable development when demand for housing and agricultural land results in conversion of natural ecosystems to built or severely altered environments.

What is meant by sustainable development?

The most common definition of sustainable development is from the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: “development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). A definition that better incorporates the element of improvement that the word “development” implies might be *a process of social and economic advancement that allows for the improvement of the quality of life for all while maintaining and enhancing the natural resources upon which life depends*. Such a process is extremely challenging, as it requires a transformation of the political culture as well as simultaneous attention to social, environmental, and economic objectives. Since these are sometimes incompatible with one another, difficult decisions and trade-offs may be required.

In the Caribbean the discourse on sustainable development has concentrated on environmental concerns and has not sufficiently addressed a broader agenda that includes issues of governance and social and economic development. The barriers to progress on sustainable development in the region include:

- disparities in the distribution of income and wealth;
- a net loss of human capital;
- the exploitation of natural resources by transnational corporations;
- fragmentation of national development processes along sectoral lines;

-
- the impact of global trade liberalization policies on the agricultural and industrial sectors of the region; and
 - an increasing alienation of people from the political process.

Managing resources for sustainable development

For centuries, Caribbean economies have been almost entirely based on intensive and often unsustainable exploitation of natural resources (Pantin 1994). Despite the increased attention to environmental protection over the past twenty years or so, the expansion of the tourism industry and economic development programmes geared toward increasing foreign exchange have only increased the rate of exploitation of natural resources. The pattern of unsustainable use has resulted in serious impacts, both environmental (collapse of near shore fisheries, coastal erosion, pollution, loss of critical habitats) and human (increased rates of poverty, population congestion and dislocation, loss of property to flooding and landslides, conflicts of use), with associated economic losses.

In the context of sustainable development, effective resource management protects the natural resource base while allowing and supporting a range of human uses that can improve the quality of life, particularly of people who may have few alternatives for their livelihood.

Stakeholder:

The individuals, groups and organizations that are involved in, or may be affected by, a change in the conditions governing the management and use of a resource, area, or sector.

The term stakeholder is now commonly used to refer to those with an interest in the management of an area or resource, whether as a resource user, manager, local resident, or as someone affected by the use of the resource or area by others. Each interest can be represented by sometimes overlapping groups of stakeholders. In order for natural resource management to contribute to sustainable development, the interests of stakeholders must be taken into account. There are a number of ways in which the planning process can do this. However, because complex negotiations and trade-offs are often required to address issues of overexploitation and competition for the use of resources, processes that include the full participation of stakeholders tend to have the best and most enduring results.

2. Overview of participatory planning



What is meant by participation?

Stakeholder participation is now accepted as essential in all aspects of development and environmental management. The purposes and objectives of participation can be defined as follows:

- to contribute to improved management by incorporating the knowledge and skills of all stakeholders;
- to increase the likelihood of stakeholder compliance and support through involvement in decision-making;
- to incorporate a wide range of perspectives and ideas, resulting in improved management decisions and actions;
- to provide a forum for identifying conflicts between users and negotiating solutions to them;
- to contribute to stakeholder empowerment and local institutional development, especially when the sharing of management responsibility is involved.

Perceptions of what participation entails vary widely, and a vast range of approaches have been employed. Typologies have been developed to describe the most common forms of participation. A widely used typology (Bass et al. 1995) is reproduced in Table I. As the table indicates, much of what is referred to as participation, both in theory and in practice, fails to achieve many of the objectives noted above. The challenge for policy-makers, planners and managers is to define the form of participation that is the most appropriate to a given situation.

Table I
Typology of participation: how people participate in development programmes and projects

Type	Characteristics
1. Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a pretence, with 'people's' representatives on official boards but who are unelected and have no power
2. Passive participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate by contributing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash, or other material incentives. [People] are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end.
5. Functional participation	Participation is seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals.
6. Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures and practices.
7. Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilization can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.

Source: Bass et al. 1995

When is the participatory approach not appropriate?

There are occasions when resource management issues must be addressed urgently, but key stakeholders are not in an immediate position to participate fully and knowledgeably in decision-making. This may be because the issues are of a complex technical nature, requiring protracted processes of education and awareness-building, or because stakeholders, through a lack of formal education or for other reasons, lack the skills required to participate meaningfully. In these cases, efforts at participatory planning can be counterproductive and result in a backlash against participation. In situations where full participation is not possible, however, transparency regarding the process used and the decisions made is critical, and the process should aim at building a foundation for increased participation in the future.

While stakeholder participation is fundamental to sustainable development, it is nonetheless possible to wear people down with too much participation and associated demands on their time. More powerful interests can even overuse participation as a strategy to divert stakeholders' attention from certain issues or cause them to lose interest in the process. Too much reliance on participation may also lead to complete inertia, due to the time and other costs involved and practical difficulties such as transportation and reaching a quorum (Dalal-Clayton and Bass 2002).

In the Caribbean, the promotion of participatory approaches is largely a reaction to the failure of the traditional approach of regulation and enforcement, but many government agencies continue to fear that stakeholder participation will result in a loss of their authority and control, and so may try to minimize their commitment to the outcomes of participatory processes. This can result in the raising of expectations followed by disillusionment, unless discussions with stakeholders establish, clearly and from the start, the level of input into decisions stakeholders can expect to have.

Characteristics of participatory planning processes

Effective participatory processes are characterized by the active, informed, and equitable participation of all interested stakeholders. There is no single model for an ideal process; it can be as simple or as complex as the problems being addressed. These can range from fairly straightforward conflicts between stakeholders for access to a resource, to the need to develop new policies or institutional arrangements for managing natural resources, to a crisis or imminent threat from a new development

Setting the stage

In a participatory process to address management issues at a waterfall used as a tourism site in the Dominican Republic, the facilitators first needed to overcome local stakeholders' deep-seated distrust of the government agencies involved in the process as well as of the NGO facilitator. In addition, the lack of organizational structures among the beneficiaries, inadequate knowledge of the legal status of the area, and insufficient entrepreneurial experience originally limited the participation of local stakeholders. A lengthy process of education and capacity-building was required, eventually resulting in the establishment of an effectively functioning management regime. (Lamelas 2001)

or escalating human impact. The number and range of stakeholders, the time frame, the complexity and contentiousness of the issues, the size and boundaries of the area, and other factors all need to be considered in designing the process.

Planning processes can be described as participatory when they include:

- the involvement of all stakeholders, from early in the process and continually throughout it, with provision for the entry of new stakeholders that may emerge during the process;
- the incorporation of the diverse views and opinions of the individuals within stakeholder groups;
- provision of information, in forms that are appropriate for all participants, to allow stakeholders to understand the issues being addressed, form opinions and make decisions;
- recognition and accommodation for the inequities among stakeholder groups and among individuals, in order to assure that those that are more powerful do not dominate or manipulate processes;
- respect for the process and the decisions that are reached: participatory planning cannot manipulate participation to arrive at a predetermined conclusion or even to start from a predetermined point.

The most effective processes start from the earliest stages of planning, and involve stakeholders in the identification of problems, the definition of a vision, and the setting of objectives. Where stakeholders are brought in after these steps have been taken without their input, it is difficult to

Participatory planning and forest management

The Government of Jamaica involves stakeholders in forest management through Local Forest Management Committees that assist in the development of local forest management plans. These committees are provided for under the 1996 Forest Act and their role is defined in the Forest Policy prepared in 2001. (Geoghegan and Bennett 2003)

Grenada's 1999 Forest Policy was developed through a participatory process involving a wide range of stakeholders, which resulted in a new vision of the role of forests in national development. To implement the Policy, the Forestry and National Parks Department has redefined its mission as "to facilitate the participation of institutional, community and individual partners in the sustainable management and wise use of Grenada's forest resources". To achieve this mission, the Department has been restructured and is developing new approaches and modes of operation. (Bass 2000)

secure or maintain their participation, as the objectives of the process may be ones that are of little interest, or even damaging, to them.

Although rooted in democracy, participatory planning processes are in many ways not democratic. They are based on structures and rules that are determined by those organizing the process, and that are often different from what many of the stakeholders are accustomed to. If these structures and rules are unacceptable to those stakeholders, the process will fail. Participatory planning processes therefore cannot be isolated from the social and cultural context in which they take place, and the methods used must be appropriate to that context.

As a tool for social change, participatory planning also has its limits. While it can be effective in gaining the involvement of poor and otherwise marginalized stakeholders, it should not be expected to bring instant and magical remedies to the profound inequities and deficiencies that exist in human societies.

Requirements for effective participation

Organizational capacity

A commitment to participation requires organizations to create new types of relationships with other stakeholders, and to develop the skills and approaches needed to do so. For government resource management agencies, this can mean structural and cultural changes in order to move their focus from enforcement and control to facilitation and support.

Committed and well-informed participants

There are a number of ways in which stakeholders can and do influence resource management

decisions outside of the structured participatory planning processes discussed here. These range from appealing to political representatives for support, to public relations campaigns and use of the media, to calling in favours or offering bribes. While only the most powerless stakeholders have few such alternatives, obviously the more economically or politically powerful the stakeholder group, the greater the influence it can wield. These stakeholders may feel they have little to gain from their involvement in a participatory planning process that treats all stakeholders equitably, and they may therefore even try to co-opt or circumvent it. The powerless may also undermine participatory processes by absenting themselves if they feel they have more to lose than gain from getting involved. The issue can be further complicated by the inherently political nature of participatory processes and the high likelihood of political interference.

In order to achieve the involvement of all stakeholders, participatory planning processes require commitment by the responsible parties to implementing the recommendations that emerge from it. Processes that are fully transparent, with frequent and widespread reporting of results, are also less likely to be ignored or circumvented.

Effective participation also requires that participants all have a good understanding of the issues being addressed. A sometimes lengthy process of education is required to assure this, with information tailored to the needs and abilities of different stakeholders.

Once committed, stakeholders must accept that win-win outcomes exist more in theory than in practice, and that planning processes, especially those involving allocation of the use of natural resources, are likely to require trade-offs and compromises. While insisting on equity, all stakeholders must be prepared to give up some individual returns for increased benefits for others and protection of the resource.

Enabling policies

Most policies regarding natural resource management in the Caribbean continue to support centralized, state-led, systems of management that were introduced in the colonial era. Although over the past few years some countries have introduced policies that encourage participatory planning, this remains far from the norm.

Enabling policy frameworks must provide for coordination among all the agencies that have jurisdiction or responsibility over the resource, and for decentralization and devolution of authority whenever appropriate. One

constraint to effective participatory planning, and to the implementation of decisions that are made, is the lack of systems and mechanisms to bring the diversity of stakeholders together into one commonly accepted decision-making forum, and to ensure that collective decisions are legally binding.

Agreement on the process

The structure and methods of participatory planning processes require careful design. All participants in the process must agree on that design and must understand the rationale for it.



3. Steps in a participatory planning process

Any stakeholder (e.g., management agency, NGO, resource user, community group, researcher, donor agency) can initiate a participatory planning exercise. The initiative can come in response to a conflict or a crisis resulting from resource use, or simply from a realization that there are management issues requiring attention. It is at this stage that the initiator should decide whether the planning process will be participatory and if so, how it will be managed.

A participatory planning process is, in many respects, very similar to the conventional approach to planning, which typically includes the following elements:

- problem identification,
- definition of goals and objectives,
- collection of information on which to base decisions,
- analysis of information and identification of options,
- formulation of decisions and plans for implementing them,
- implementation,
- monitoring and evaluation.

As shown in Figure 1, however, unlike conventional planning processes, participatory processes are not linear, because the process itself creates changes (in perceptions, relations, practices, and outcomes) that contribute to the achievement of its objectives and impact on its design and implementation. Inherent in the concept of participatory planning, therefore, is the idea that action can take place at any stage in the process. One of its purposes is to change conditions, and thus to provoke action.

Participatory planning processes begin with the identification of stakeholders and the analysis of their expectations, rights and responsibilities and of the power dynamics between them. These initial steps are described in detail in the next chapter. All participatory processes also involve the mobilization and sensitization of stakeholders, and these issues are discussed in Chapter 5. Other elements of a participatory planning process include the following:

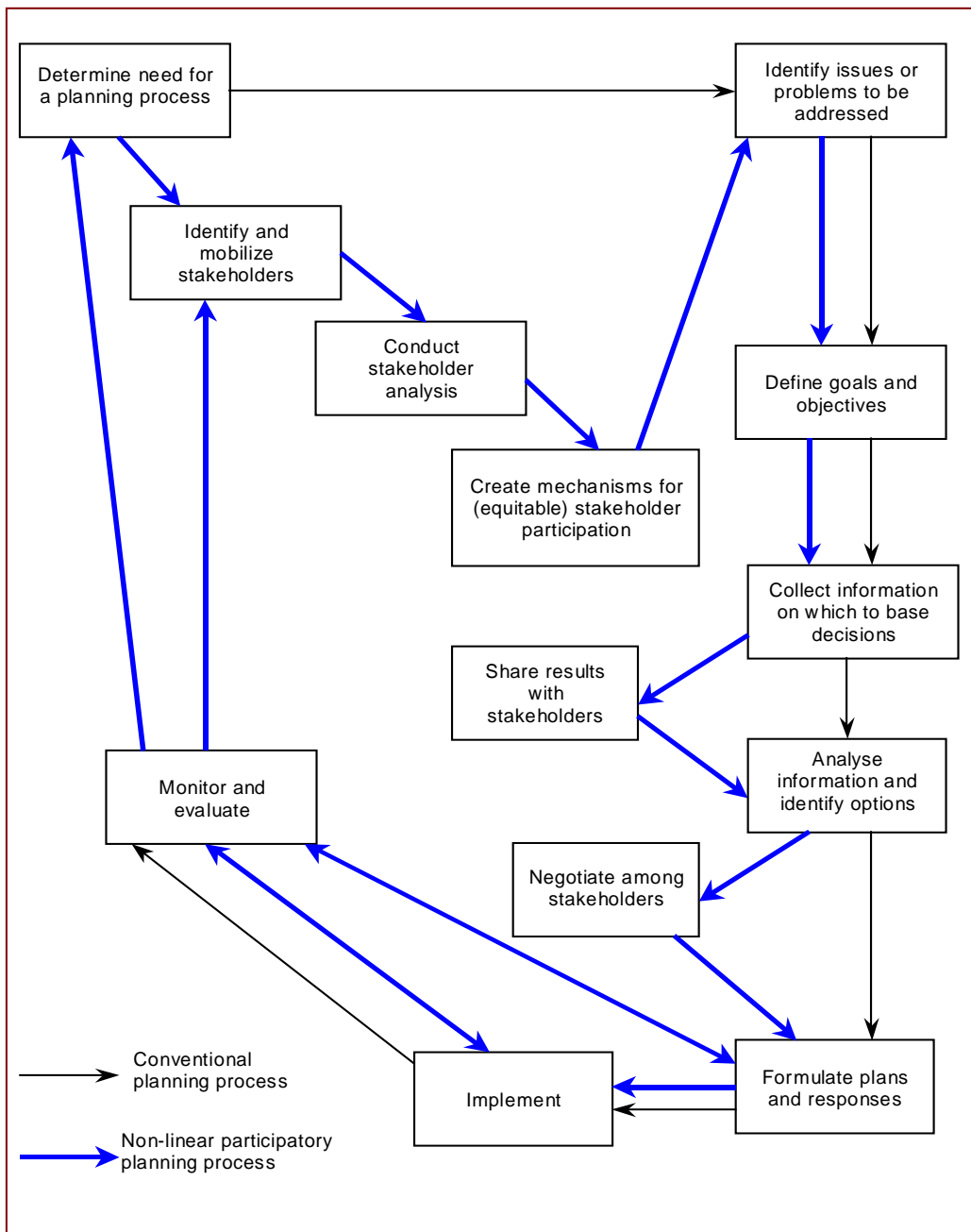


Figure 1. Comparison of conventional and participatory planning processes.

Definition of the process to be used to arrive at decisions and solutions. The process to be followed has to be legitimate and acceptable to all. It is necessary to ensure, for example, that all relevant stakeholders are a part of the process and that their positions and stakes are represented by spokespersons designated and accepted by them. The process should be culturally, socially, and politically appropriate. It must also be transparent in that all parties are aware of all steps in the process and are involved in decision-making as appropriate. Finally, a consensus should be reached at the start on the objectives for each stage of the negotiating process.

Identification of problems, issues, and needs. This is the first main step in a conventional planning process. In a participatory process, these analyses involve all stakeholders.

Collection of information on which to base decisions. A wide range of tools can be used to collect information needed for participatory planning processes, including those described in the literature as participatory rural appraisal and rapid rural appraisal, as well as scientific methods such as biological and socio-economic surveys, impact assessment studies, and literature reviews. Much attention has been given in recent years to the development of methods for participatory data collection, and this has even in many cases been seen as a form of participatory planning. In fact, while some types of participatory research can help stakeholders to better understand the issues they are addressing, effective participatory planning processes do not require that stakeholders be involved in all aspects of data collection, some of which can be more effectively done by professionals. It is however important that stakeholders endorse the methods used and accept the data collected by any method as valid and sufficient for decision-making.

Analysis. Where conflict is involved, research and technical assistance may be needed to understand the various manifestations of the conflict (symptoms) and why the problem occurs (causes). A natural resource conflict may manifest itself in a user group's failure to comply with regulations governing the use of the resource or area, for example. In such an instance, it would be important to understand such things as whether all or only some of the group members are not complying, if the non-compliant members were originally involved in the development of the regulations, and if social and economic conditions have changed outside of the area and affected behaviour and decision-making among group members.

Identification of options. In this critical step in a participatory process, participants use the results of their analyses to define priorities and to identify the options available to them, taking into account the costs and benefits associated with each. One of the added benefits of these participatory appraisals is that they build the confidence and ability of all participants, notably the powerless, to become involved in decision-making and management.

Negotiation. It is often useful to design negotiation processes in stages and achieve results for each step before advancing to the next phase. These processes most effectively begin by identifying areas of agreement and building a common vision from these. It often helps to work next on the resolution of simple issues before attempting to resolve more complex ones. This makes it possible for the negotiating parties to focus on the issues that can be relatively easily resolved and demonstrates that it is actually possible to reach agreements. At this stage the participation of a skilled, neutral facilitator can be quite valuable.

Formulation of decisions and agreements. Negotiation should result in the development of:

- decisions on what is to be done,
- strategies for how to go about the task,
- agreements on the conditions and responsibilities for implementing the decisions made,
- institutional arrangements for executing those agreements,
- arrangements for monitoring the process and its results.

4. Stakeholder identification and analysis



While often viewed as a single step in the planning process, experience shows the need to distinguish between stakeholder *identification* and *analysis*, as two separate activities. Without the careful design of these important initial steps, participatory processes are at best ineffective and at worst detrimental to the needs of the people and the natural resources they intend to serve.

Stakeholder identification and analysis provide a basic understanding of the social and institutional context in which the planning process will take place, while contributing to the analysis of the management issues that will be addressed. More specifically, they provide early, indispensable information about:

- the individuals, groups and institutions that will be affected by and should benefit from the planning initiative;
- the people who could influence, and contribute to, the planning process;
- the ways in which different stakeholders interact with the resource and with one another;
- the conflicts that exist or may arise and therefore require management; and
- the capacity that needs to be built to enable the relevant stakeholders to participate in decision-making and management (Grimble and Chan 1995).

Stakeholder identification

The primary aim of stakeholder identification is simply to name all those who could and should have a stake and a part in the planning and

management process. Experience in the Caribbean and in many other parts of the world has shown that planning processes can have unexpected and undesirable outcomes when they fail to include some stakeholders. These failures and omissions are not surprising, when one considers the complexity of natural resource use and governance systems: within these systems, the seasonal or geographically distant resource users, the illegal harvesters and the migrant or displaced workers can easily be missed. Power relations in Caribbean societies will also always give prominence to some stakeholders and their needs, often at the expense of women, poor people and marginal social and economic sectors.

The lessons learned from a number of natural resource management processes in the Caribbean suggest that processes of stakeholder identification are most complete and effective when they are based on the functions of the resource, instead of attempting to simply list the user groups and other stakeholders. In practice, taking each function of the resources or the areas under management (e.g. land for agriculture, watersheds, recreation or tourism), a stakeholder identification exercise requires answers to the following questions:

- Who uses the resource and in what ways?
- Who benefits and who does not?
- Who wishes to benefit but is unable to do so?
- Who would be affected by a change in the status, form or outputs of management?

By answering these questions, it is possible to draw a list of stakeholders that not only includes the obvious and prominent ones, but also the marginal, the occasional and the powerless. This is why stakeholder identification is such a critical part of the participatory planning process, because it is a precondition of inclusion in the process itself.

The methods available to answer these questions include field observations, literature reviews, interviews with key informants, and informal discussions, making use of both scientific and popular knowledge. In this phase of the planning process, facilitators and other participants need to remain alert to the fact that some stakeholders are more vocal than others, and that power relations usually prevent the weak and the powerless from speaking out, especially in formal situations and processes. At every step along the way, they should ask themselves: who is being excluded, who else matters, who have I missed?

Stakeholder analysis for watershed management

As part of a process of institutional restructuring, Grenada's Forestry Department is conducting participatory assessments of each of its programme areas, starting with a stakeholder analysis. The analysis framework for the one dealing with water and watershed management includes the following questions:

- What are the benefits derived by each of the stakeholders?
- How are these benefits distributed within and between stakeholder groupings?
- What are the future benefits that stakeholders would like from the resource?
- What are the positive and negative impacts that current uses and practices have on the resource? On other users?
- Are stakeholders organized? What are the formal organizations and the informal institutions to which the stakeholders belong?
- What roles do stakeholders currently play in management, formally and informally?
- What roles would the stakeholders like to play in management in the future? Under what conditions?

The responsibility for stakeholder identification rests primarily with the person or organization initiating a planning process. While stakeholder identification cannot be a fully participatory exercise, since its purpose is precisely to determine who should participate, there can be benefits to be gained from *self-selection*, i.e. involving some of the participants in broadening the scope of participation by asking them to identify other stakeholders. In this way, stakeholder identification can become a mechanism to incorporate new participants progressively and to widen the circle of participation, with the aim of making it truly inclusive.

Stakeholder analysis

Once stakeholders have been identified, the next step is to analyse their interests. There are many methods for stakeholder analysis (see Chevalier 2001 for an exhaustive review), and the method selected should be defined by the specific intent and purpose of the planning exercise, as well as by the preliminary assessment of the management issues being addressed. For example, a planning exercise that focuses on the management of a degraded reef will necessarily focus on the uses and users of that reef, aiming at the analysis of the sources and causes of social conflicts and negative environmental impacts.

One of the dangers associated with stakeholder analysis is that of looking at issues and questions that are not directly relevant and applicable to the management process, and wasting precious time and goodwill as a result. The best ways to avoid this problem is to use well-defined

questions. Typically, a stakeholder analysis exercise will aim at answering questions such as:

- What are the current and future interests of the various stakeholders in the use and management of the resource; how do they use the resource and what benefits do they derive?
- What are their past and current sources of power, rights and responsibilities, both formal and informal; what are the networks and institutions of which they are part?
- What are the social and environmental impacts, both positive and negative, of their past and current uses of and relationships with the resource?
- How ready and willing are they to participate in and contribute to management, and what are the potential areas of agreement and shared interest upon which consensus and collaboration can be developed?

There are many instances when it is preferable to conduct a stakeholder analysis as a technical exercise, without direct involvement from the various stakeholders. This is particularly true when there are acute conflicts or significant patterns of inequity among stakeholders, and where the analysis is therefore needed to help guide the facilitators through a phased and sensitive process of conflict management and empowerment.

In most cases, however, it is beneficial to involve stakeholders, thus making stakeholder analysis an instrument of negotiation and conflict management. A participatory stakeholder analysis exercise allows the various parties to hear and understand each other's interests and expectations. Experience shows that considerable progress can be made in resolving conflicts when stakeholders agree to hear the views and expectations of others, and when they move from stating their individual positions to seeking an overview of the positions of all stakeholders. A participatory stakeholder analysis provides such an opportunity.

As the indispensable foundation of a participatory process, stakeholder identification and analysis must be taken very seriously, even if they appear to take large amounts of time and resources. A complete identification of stakeholders and a good analysis of their interests, impacts, roles, responsibilities and expectations are the best guarantees of meaningful planning processes that deliver credible and appropriate outcomes.

5. Strategies and mechanisms for stakeholder involvement

Community mobilization

The activities carried out in order to stimulate a group of people living or working together to address a specific problem or achieve a specific objective.

Stakeholder mobilization

Participatory planning processes can require significant investments in their early stages in the effective mobilization of all relevant stakeholders. The purpose of such mobilization is to assure that all potential participants in the process are informed of what is happening, are aware of the factors that prompted the process, recognize the legitimacy of the people and organizations that have taken the initiative, and are

encouraged to become involved. A wide range of information and animation techniques is available to support this mobilization process, some of which are described in Chapter 6.

There may be an inherent distrust of government and of outsiders among many groups of stakeholders, and initiatives that present an image of imposing from outside are likely to have difficulty mobilizing interest and involvement. Working through respected local organizations, which know the dynamics of a community and have their own methods for mobilization in place, is often very effective. It is important to beware, however, that initial perceptions regarding the status of individuals and organizations may on closer inspection be skewed towards those that hold economic, political or other forms of power.

Facilitation

The process of assisting interested parties to reach a decision on a course of action or to resolve a conflict.

The role of facilitation

In many instances, participatory planning processes call for skilful and neutral facilitation. The role of facilitators is largely to assure that stakeholder participation is fair and equitable. Many participatory planning processes are spoilt by poor facilitation.

While the responsibility for initiating and leading a participatory process will often fall on a local organization, a NGO, or a government management agency, it is important for these organizations to recognize that they are participants in the conflicts that they seek to manage, that their interests are often perceived as contrary to those of other stakeholders, and that there are moments in the process when their facilitation is not appropriate.

Finding the right approach to facilitation

Sometimes legitimacy can be achieved by the collaboration of several facilitators. In planning for the Soufriere Marine Management Area in St. Lucia, the process was a joint initiative of three partners. These included the Department of Fisheries, which brought to the process its legal mandate and authority as well as its technical competence; the Soufriere Regional Development Foundation, a community organization that had local and national legitimacy, political linkages and a demonstrated ability to implement development projects; and the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, a technical organization that was perceived as independent, bringing facilitation expertise and experience to the process. (Renard 2001)

One option that has been employed successfully in a number of cases is the use of an external, independent facilitator. Such facilitation brings legitimacy to a process and its outputs, and it brings quality and professional expertise to the various steps and actions involved. It is however necessary for facilitators to be vigilant, and to avoid creating or re-creating patterns of dependency. Another option is that of sharing the role of facilitator among several of the parties involved, as was done in the example in the box at left. Because of the inherent biases of all the parties, this option also has its dangers and needs to be designed with care. What is most critical is that the method of facilitation be accepted by all stakeholders involved in the process.

A facilitator must be sensitive to the differences among stakeholders and skilled in the use of a range of tools for communication and consensus-building. These tools need not be elaborate, and it is important to guard against reducing facilitation to a bag of tricks by relying too heavily on exercises and games. The real keys to good facilitation are providing conditions in which stakeholders are comfortable to state their opinions and air their concerns; listening carefully to what is being said; synthesizing the information; and communicating it back in ways that lead the group towards decisions and agreements.

Levelling the playing field

In any given situation, not all stakeholders will have the same opportunity and ability to participate. An individual's participation in planning processes is affected by a number of personal, social, and cultural factors that have little to do with the actual issues being addressed. These factors include the following:

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- *Education*: High rates of illiteracy and low levels of education persist in many countries of the region, particularly in rural areas and among older members of society. Planning processes that rely heavily on written documents or complex presentations for information and communication may leave important stakeholders behind. On the other hand, oversimplification and meagre information can delegitimise planning processes in the eyes of some stakeholders as well as authorities.
 - *Gender*: In a participatory forum, the balance between men and women and the roles each have been assigned can affect the way in which they participate, both positively and negatively. Poor women are the primary victims of environmental degradation and economic deprivation, but women's issues and concerns are generally less likely to be considered than men's and representatives of many stakeholder groups are more likely to be males. Although women play a more prominent role in public life in Caribbean countries than in many other regions of the world, women still tend to be less forthcoming in fora that are dominated by men. Women and men also tend to have different demands on their time, which limit their ability to participate in different ways. In designing and scheduling activities, it may therefore be necessary to take account of these gendered constraints.
 - *Race, ethnicity, religion, social class and political affiliation* often determine how Caribbean societies are structured and are factors that can cause or exacerbate conflicts and manipulate popular processes. Those of the same group as the persons leading a participatory process may be perceived as having greater power in the process than others. These factors are often reinforced by economic factors, with some groups tending to have greater economic power than others. Facilitators need to be aware of these realities and of the fact that their own race, class, ethnicity, religion or politics can have an impact on how they are perceived and thus on the process itself.
 - *Language*: Because many Caribbean societies are bi- or multi-lingual, the language used in participatory processes gives power to those most fluent in it. The tendency is for the language, accent and mode of speech of the political and economic elite to be used, further weakening the position of those who speak differently or are more comfortable speaking a local language or dialect.

While meetings among stakeholders tend to be the most common format for participatory planning processes, some stakeholders can be reached and

contribute more effectively through other means, such as one-on-one or informal small group discussions or written submissions. When larger meetings are employed, there are a number of issues to consider. For example, while one group may be comfortable meeting in an air-conditioned conference room, others may find this environment intimidating to a degree that affects their willingness to participate. The times of meetings, their level of formality, the number of people involved, the way in which the room is arranged, even the food that is served, are all factors that will affect, positively or negatively, the level and quality of participation of different groups.

In consultative processes, managers and facilitators must take care to recognize dissident and marginal voices. Skilled facilitators know that new and creative ideas seldom come from majority opinion: they come from individuals and groups that have decided to tread on new ground, even at the risk of being marginalized. They are also aware that in any given group, one set of people tends to dominate discussions, and they will know how to involve and listen to those who are less forthcoming.

Sharing information

Stakeholders can only participate effectively in planning processes when they have the information needed to develop proposals and make decisions. Information can come in many forms, and these forms are not equally accessible to all stakeholders. It is the job of the facilitator to assure that all stakeholders have the information they need to participate fully, in forms that they can use. In some cases, a broader and longer-term process of awareness building is also needed in order to sensitize stakeholders to the underlying context of conservation and sustainable development in which management occurs. This step needs to occur before the planning process can actually begin.

The major sources of information required for management are research and monitoring (scientific knowledge) and popular knowledge, which derives from the observations and assessments of local persons over time. Popular knowledge and scientific knowledge are two different knowledge systems, which are both significant, even if the data they generate are different. When information from these different knowledge systems is shared and combined, it can lead to a more complete understanding of the issues, as well as to increased mutual respect among stakeholders.

Participatory information gathering and analysis can also contribute to a shared understanding of issues and needs. The participatory preparation of maps indicating the locations of resources, issues, and conflicts has been used effectively in many planning processes. This is a widely used tool for developing participatory Geographic Information Systems (P-GIS), which can incorporate data collected from conventional participatory rural appraisal and rapid rural appraisal methods. When stakeholders do not all have map-reading skills, the exercise can be carried out in the field, with participants noting the locations of resources or stresses, and a facilitator entering them on a map. This and other useful techniques for participatory data collection and analysis are well described in the literature on participatory rural appraisal (e.g., Pretty *et al.* 1995; Pretty and Voduhê 1997).

Another effective exercise in participatory information gathering is “institutional landscaping”, in which participants identify the main actors in the issue being addressed, and map out their relationships with one another and with the resource. (See example in Figure 2.) This exercise will often bring to light stakeholders, conflicts, or alliances that had previously been overlooked, as well as revealing the way different stakeholders perceive the landscape in which they function and the other actors involved.

Sustaining participation

Given the constant and often rapid pace of change, planning cannot end with the implementation of decisions, but must be an ongoing process. Responding to change requires flexible structures that involve all actors in management and decision-making. Institutional arrangements and incentives that assure stakeholder involvement are therefore needed to sustain participation. Incentives may include direct compensation for people’s time and effort, but rewards such as opportunities for acquiring new skills through training, recognition in the community, and the ability to influence decisions in ways that are favourable to an individual or group have also served as effective incentives.

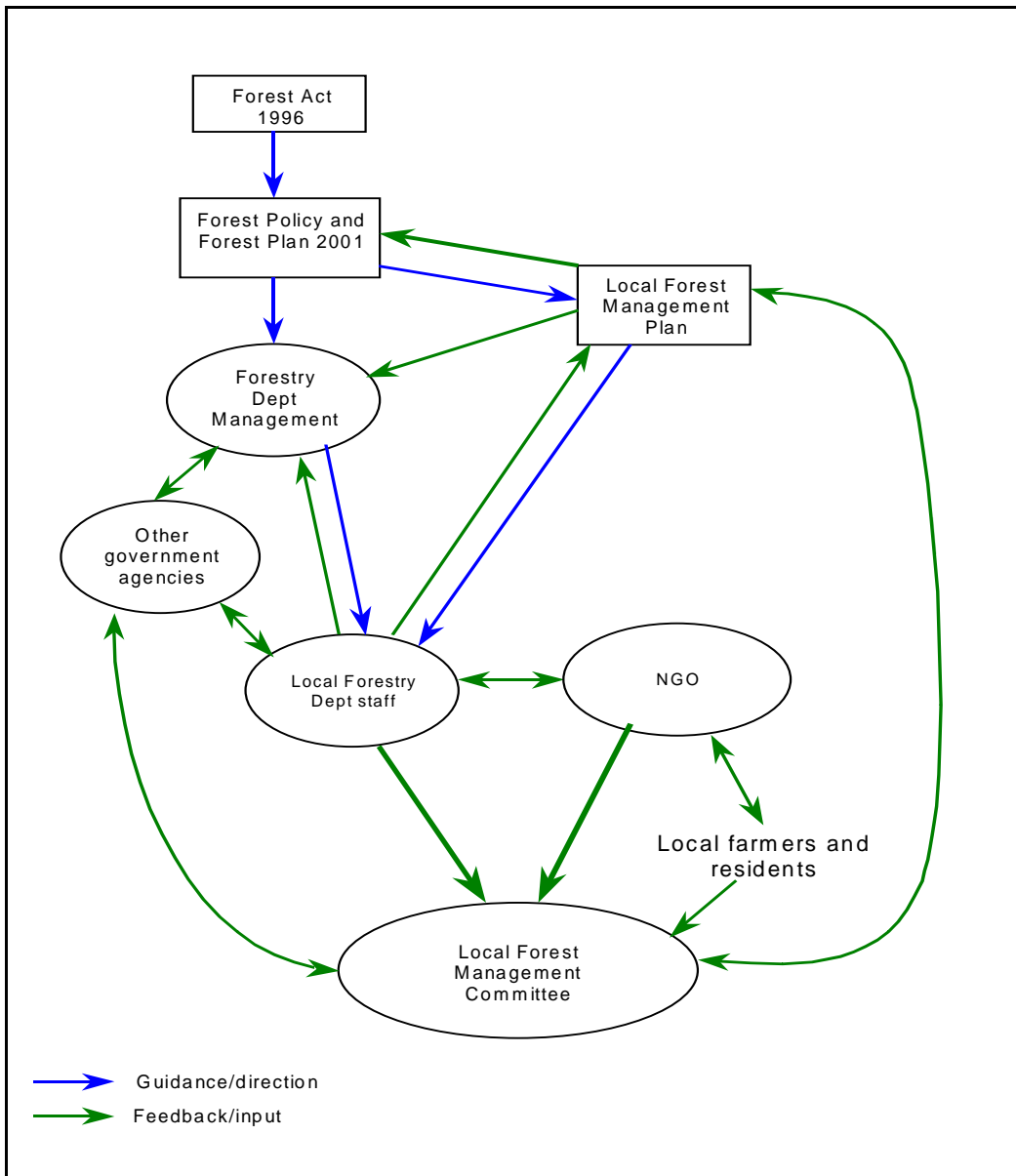


Figure 2: Example of an institutional landscape from Jamaica

Costing participatory planning processes

While the costs involved in participatory planning may be no greater than those of conventional planning processes, they do tend to differ in kind. Costs that may need to be taken into account include the following:

- compilation of background information and dissemination to all stakeholders, in appropriate forms (see Chapter 6);
- specialist skills, which may include community mobilization, facilitation, communications, education and sociology depending on the context and needs;
- costs to the lead organization in staff time (including the sometimes lengthy time required to mobilize stakeholders and gain trust), communication, meetings, and travel;
- reimbursement of participant costs, including travel, meals, and in some cases time lost from jobs or other income-generating activities.

6. Effective communication



Participatory planning processes are premised on the transfer and sharing of knowledge and information between and among stakeholders and management partners. Each party brings different knowledge bases (scientific, popular, traditional, experiential) to the process and each requires specific information to effectively fulfil its role. The planning phase of project development serves several purposes; these include identifying and negotiating project objectives and anticipated outcomes, building consensus and support for the intervention, and gathering data about the resource and its uses and users. At the centre of all of these activities is an exchange of knowledge and information.

Rationale for effective communication

Within the context of participatory natural resource management, effective communication can:

- encourage participation, by demonstrating the value of playing a part in the planning and management process, and illustrating the benefits that can be gained. This is particularly critical because the Caribbean does not have strong traditions of participation, and because people are often pessimistic, or even cynical, about the outcomes of planning processes, especially those initiated by government agencies. Communication thus contributes to effective mobilization;
- provide a mechanism for the articulation of concerns held by various stakeholders about issues affecting them, which they consider important. Concerns may be the result of changing conditions related to the

The social context of language

Caribbean societies tend to be multilingual, with people having varying degrees of facility and comfort in a range of idioms and languages, including both creoles and standard forms of European languages. In natural resource management planning processes, stakeholders are likely to reflect this diversity, and effective communication requires that all stakeholders be able to both voice their own concerns and perspectives and hear those of others in the language or idiom in which they are most comfortable. Many planning processes in the region have failed to engage critical stakeholders because meetings and discussions were conducted in the “official” language of the country or in the language of the conveners without provision for the languages of others (see Fiske 1992 for one example).

use of a resource or to problems and conflicts that have emerged. It may be necessary to revise the planning agenda to incorporate such new needs and concerns. The articulation of concerns can also highlight gaps in existing knowledge and consequently point to information requirements;

- help integrate stakeholders into decision-making and management by presenting and gathering information relating to the effective and sustainable use of the area or natural resource and on specific management techniques that can be employed, and by channelling existing popular knowledge into management;
- build stakeholders’ self-esteem and confidence through the use of information that they provide, resulting in increased willingness and readiness to participate;
- establish credibility and build widespread support for specific initiatives by providing a base of information that increases local understanding among general populations, not just among principal stakeholder groups;
- focus attention on a participatory process, and thus create a greater demand for its outcome.

Requirements for effective communication

Communication occurs at several different levels and can employ a range of media. Effective communication requires ensuring that all voices can be heard and are valued, and all messages understood. From the perspective of a facilitator of a participatory planning process, communication should:

- be targeted at and tailored to specific audiences;

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- use language and symbols that are commonly understood and accepted;
 - use media appropriate to the target audience, and to their ability to interpret (level of education, literacy etc.);
 - use media appropriate to the message being conveyed. Different media rely on different senses. For example, a visually strong message presented through words will not be as effective as one presented through a visual medium;
 - be inclusive, rather than exclusive. This can refer, for example, to something as basic as convening meetings in settings where none of the actors feel intimidated and conducting them a style and idiom that foster a dialogue among all participants;
 - be sensitive to gender. Language and images should reflect the needs, concerns, and even existence of female and male stakeholders;
 - facilitate an exchange of information between sender and receiver and provide space for the expression of different points of view;
 - be intentional, in other words, communication should be planned and built into processes rather than tacked on as an afterthought or conceived of in narrow terms as public relations or community mobilization.

7. Conflict management

The premise of participatory processes is that there is the possibility of achieving consensus among participants about objectives and required actions. Arriving at such consensus can be difficult because participants often have different and sometimes conflicting interests and objectives. In many respects, participatory processes are processes of negotiation that aim at resolving and managing existing and potential conflicts (between and among resource users, between resource uses, or between resource management objectives and strategies).

Characteristics of natural resource conflicts

The following table, adapted from Borrini-Feyerabend (1997) identifies four characteristics of conservation area conflicts, which generally apply to natural resource management conflicts.

Table 2
Characteristics of conservation area conflicts

They involve several stakeholders.	Conflicts often revolve around the loss of benefits of access or use. One or more stakeholder group is usually perceived as gaining at the expense of other groups.
They are often influenced by factors and conditions external to the management area.	This requires managers to look beyond the physical boundaries of the area to fully understand the roots of conflicts and address them effectively. These external factors can be political, such as a change in government; legislative, such as the introduction of new laws and regulations that affect practices inside or outside of the management area; economic, such as a local recession; or environmental, resulting from the degradation of resources in areas connected to the ecosystem of the management area.
They involve scientific and socio-cultural phenomena.	Scientific data collected over time are not always available to support management decisions, particularly at the start of interventions. There may also be clashes between scientific knowledge and popular knowledge, particularly when those who possess the former ignore or undervalue the latter.
The process of identifying solutions to conflicts is often constrained by a lack of financial resources.	The universe of solutions available for addressing conflicts is sometimes limited by financial resources, which can make it difficult to obtain goods and services that might aid in the resolution process.

Approaches for addressing disputes

There are different methods for bringing diverse interests together to settle a dispute. The following four methods can be used in resolving disputes related to the use of natural resources:

Self-negotiation: This process may be formal or informal. The parties in a dispute voluntarily and without a facilitator discuss their differences to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

Facilitation: Parties in a dispute interact and communicate directly and seek solutions themselves, but with the help of one or more facilitators.

Mediation: Disputing parties voluntarily allow a neutral party to control and direct a process of reaching agreement. There is generally no direct contact between the parties in the dispute.

Arbitration: Stakeholders present their case to an independent party who has the authority to impose a solution. The arbitrator seeks the views of all parties, tests solutions and options, and formulates a solution that is as acceptable as possible to all.

In the context of natural resources in the Caribbean, conflict is very often caused by a change in management regimes. When a management intervention alters the implicit or explicit rules governing natural resource access or use, relations between those with an interest in the resource can also change. Where this change results in an actual or perceived net loss of benefits, conflict occurs. The establishment of a marine protected area, for example, can lead to conflict between the management agency and fishers, if they feel they have lost access to fishing grounds and gained little or nothing in return.

Conflicts in participatory planning processes

Although most people have been socialized to think of conflict as a negative condition, it can have a positive and constructive function in society. When dealt with in an appropriate manner, conflicts present opportunities for assessment and evaluation and can catalyse change. In the context of participatory management, particularly during the planning phase, conflict can help address issues that could hinder management at a later stage in the process. If not managed properly, however, conflict can be counterproductive and can undermine the resource management arrangement.

It is useful to talk about dealing with conflict in terms of management rather than of resolution because the conditions under which the management of a resource occurs are constantly changing and variables that can give rise to differences are continuously being introduced. The management of conflict implies putting mechanisms in place to deal with present and possible future disputes or differences. Such an approach

inherently acknowledges that conflict exists and will exist, and plans for it in general terms.

Power is never distributed evenly, and power differences are rooted in the structure of society. Unequal relationships between stakeholders go to the heart of conflicts over the management of natural resources. Relationships and their associated inherent conflicts are dynamic and need to be managed in ways that enable management objectives to be achieved. Often conflicts are not explicitly manifested but are evident, for example, in persisting animosity or even a physical confrontation between stakeholders. When conflicts do become apparent, these tangible manifestations, or disputes, can become the focus for attempts at resolution. However, to be effective, these efforts should address the underlying conflicts that provide the context for the dispute.

Conflict management is one of the unavoidable responsibilities of natural resource managers, who are often required to play a range of different roles in the process, from facilitator to negotiator to decision-maker. In instances where the management agency is one of the parties in conflict, it is the responsibility of the manager to identify a method for dispute resolution and conflict management that will be appropriate and acceptable to all involved. Effective communication is an essential tool for conflict management.

8. Putting the pieces together

Although it requires careful design and application, implementing a participatory planning process should not be a daunting task. The following case study from Trinidad shows how a group of concerned citizens was able to design and implement a highly effective process involving hundreds of people within a period of two months. In order to do so, they took short cuts, combined and reordered steps, and found ways to work around limitations.

A question of sustainable development

In June 2000, a group of citizens of the village of Toco, on the north-eastern tip of Trinidad, were amazed to discover that a large area of the village had been earmarked, through secret negotiations between the Government and a group of developers, for a major infrastructural project including a ferry port, oil bunkering facilities, marina, cruise ship terminal, and even a heliport. Much private land, including the heart of the village, was to be acquired through eminent domain. While it was widely agreed that the Toco area needed development opportunities, most residents wanted ones that would protect and enhance the area's many natural and cultural assets. The plan that was being negotiated did not seem to fit that mould.

Following a meeting with the developers that confirmed these concerns, the group called a press conference and invited the public to attend. At that meeting, over 100 members of the community came out in opposition to the port plan, and appointed a committee to organize a local response. Among the duties given to the committee was the preparation of an alternative development plan that would allow for the sustainable development of Toco and the surrounding northeast region and respect the interests and desires of the local population. At a subsequent meeting with political officials, the Minister of Works added his endorsement to the development of an alternative plan.

Why a participatory process?

The secretive way in which the Toco port plan was prepared and the gross inadequacy of the plan itself to meet the development needs of Toco meant that the counter-plan had to be developed with the full involvement of stakeholders, in order to demonstrate its greater legitimacy. A participatory process also offered an opportunity to create a shared vision of development for all the communities in the area. Such a vision could provide guidance for development not only in Toco but for the entire northeast of the country.

Steps in the process

The initial steps in the planning process were taken at the meeting that resulted in the establishment of the committee (which became known as Stakeholders Against Destruction, or SAD for Toco). The *need for a planning process* was agreed to at that meeting. The people at the meeting also conducted a spontaneous *stakeholder identification* process in order to select members of the committee from each perceived interest group. Those identified included the major local economic sectors, community organizations, churches, long-term residents, new residents, residents whose property was to be forcibly acquired, other landowners, and members of surrounding villages. While not fully systematic, this method had the advantage of giving legitimacy to both the stakeholder groups identified and to the selection of committee members.

While there was no formal *stakeholder analysis*, information on stakeholder expectations, rights, and responsibilities was gathered in several ways. Stakeholder expectations were identified during the first round of community consultations. Information on rights and responsibilities came from the consultation as well as from the Committee's review of relevant laws, policies, and other documents.

The *method* that was used to identify options, negotiate preferred alternatives, and develop the plan included the following steps:

- a first round of formal consultations at each of the affected villages;
- informal consultations wherever and whenever possible;
- incremental synthesis of the information coming from the consultations, done by SAD members in weekly meetings;
- development of a draft plan;
- a second round of community consultations to present and refine the draft plan;
- a presentation of the revised plan at a public meeting for all the communities covered by the plan, to seek local endorsement and present it to the political directorate;
- a final meeting in the capital city to present the plan to the country and get wider input.

Strategies and tools

Initial *stakeholder mobilization* was done largely through word of mouth and the staging of events that were meant to both mobilize and provide information; for example, the first meeting organized by SAD, which included a presentation by the developers followed by a critique by an environmental expert, attracted 500 people, including the Minister of Works. By the time the actual planning process began, the local population was well aware of the issues and ready to be involved. The committee employed media events such as a radio call-in programme to mobilize and seek the involvement of the larger Trinidadian community.

SAD placed substantial emphasis on the *acquisition and sharing of information*. It established a principle of “establish your facts before you act” and sought to acquire all available documentation relevant to development of the area, as well as the input of experts. This strategy was particularly effective in rebutting the claims and plans of the port developers, and did much to establish the legitimacy of the alternative planning process. Information was shared in a number of ways: through public meetings and presentations, press releases, and a newsletter that was e-mailed to a continuously expanded list of stakeholders, including many outside the immediate area.

Facilitation was provided by committee members with experience in community work. Although the facilitators were not neutral, they made a special effort to involve and listen to those with opposing views. This was particularly important because the views of most stakeholders were convergent, making it easy to marginalize those with different ideas, and also because the port development claimed many local supporters, who had an equal right to be heard. By involving them fully in the process, the facilitators were able to work with and through the apparent *conflict* towards a plan that finally received wide acceptance.

Sustaining participation

The process that was followed by SAD resulted in the Prime Minister cancelling the port development plans and the Minister of Works taking SAD’s alternative plan to Cabinet for consideration. SAD was then faced with the challenge of bringing the community together to implement the plan. In order to do so, it has focused heavily on capacity building as well as on the implementation of small projects in line with the development vision. By maintaining momentum in these ways, the group has also succeeded in sustaining participation in the development process.

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* These, as well as other documents related to participatory planning, are available in pdf format on CANARI's web site: <http://www.canari.org>.

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