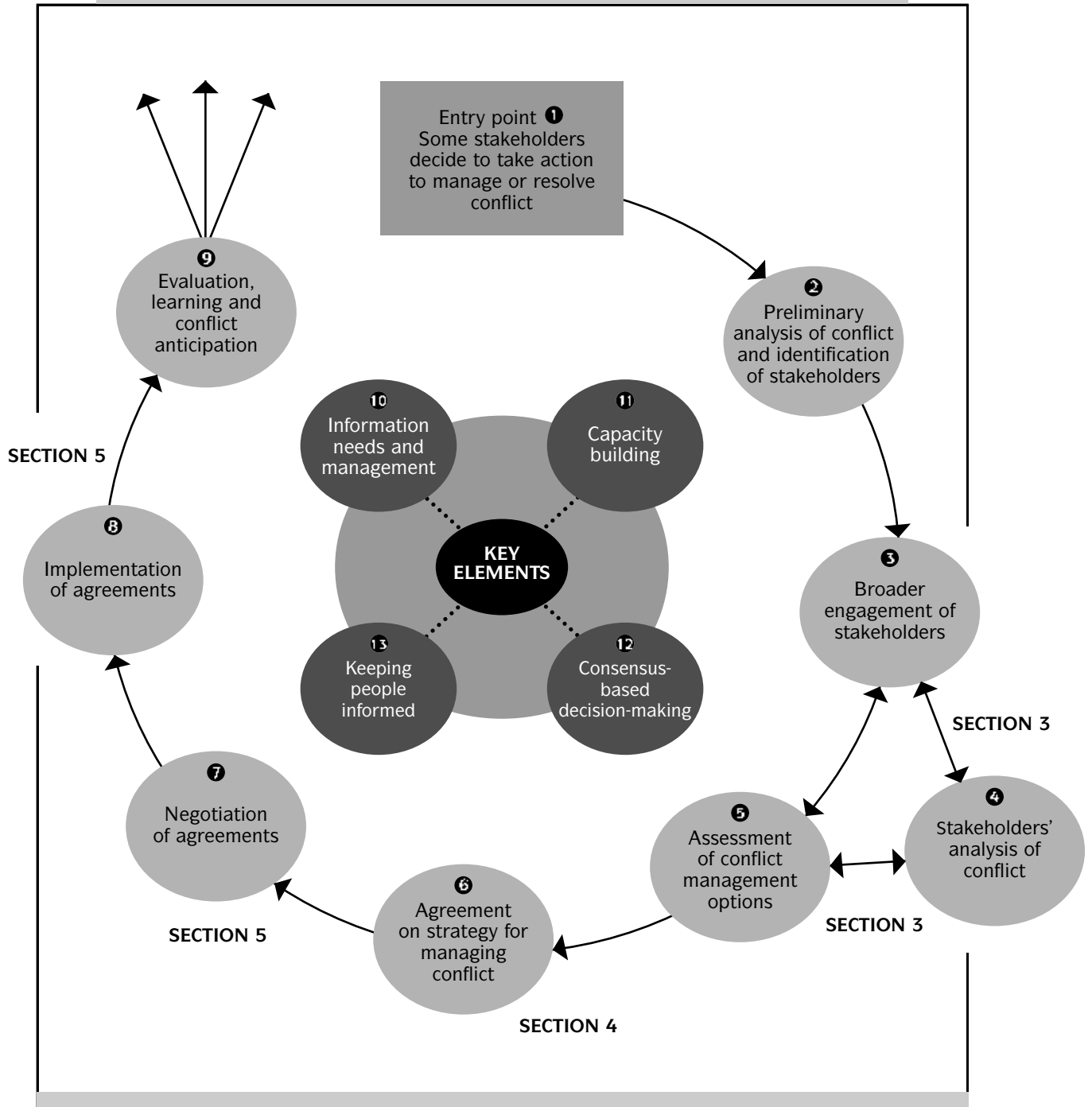


THE MAP OF THE PROCESS

KEY STEPS IN A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO MANAGING CONFLICT IN COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT

- 1. Entry Point** - A process for managing a conflict may be initiated by any of the stakeholders. Those who are directly involved in the dispute might initiate it, for example, the villagers arguing over forest access or use. Or, those who are more distant or external to the conflict might start it; for example, a non-government organisation that is working in community development in the area but whose programs are indirectly affected by the dispute.

Remember that stakeholders can act on the conflict at any stage (latent, emerging or manifest). The time and approach to handling it may be very different depending on at which stage it is.

- 2. Preliminary Analysis of Conflict** - The initiating stakeholders undertake this analysis of conflict to determine who needs to be involved, and the scale and boundaries of the conflict. This sets out an initial strategy for addressing the conflict that they then modify and develop with the input of other stakeholders.
- 3. Broader Engagement of Stakeholders** - Attempts are made to engage the other stakeholders identified in the preliminary conflict analysis. Obtaining their interest and willingness to participate may require one or more actions, including shuttle mediation, raising public awareness about the conflict management effort, sharing with them the preliminary analysis of the conflict, etc.
- 4. Stakeholder Analysis of Conflict** - Individual stakeholder groups need to carry out their own analysis of the conflict. The level of detail of this analysis and timeframe will vary depending on the intensity, scale and stage of the conflict. This analysis may identify other key stakeholders or stakeholder groups to involve and engaging stakeholders in Participatory Action Research on key issues, etc.
- 5. Assessment of Conflict Management Options** - The analysis of conflict assists the stakeholders to assess, weigh and expand the various options available for managing or intensifying the conflict. Stakeholders evaluate then select what they believe is the best response and strategy for achieving their interests. Stakeholder actions could

include – withdrawal, use of force, accommodating other groups interests, compromise, or collaboration. Doing nothing and taking a ‘wait and see’ approach may also be a chosen strategy.

In deciding on the most suitable set of actions stakeholders consider their options in terms of possible outcomes or impacts, the likely choices of other stakeholders, power imbalances and differences in stakeholder capacity.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) that engages all key stakeholders can be an excellent and non-threatening first stage of taking action to build collaboration. PAR allows stakeholders to jointly explore key issues identified by individual groups in the early stages of conflict analysis and builds shared responsibility in finding solutions to these issues, actions required for implementation and the needs and concerns of stakeholders who come into the process later.

Stakeholders also need to consider the context in which they will act – the appropriateness of using customary approaches to managing conflict, available legal or administrative measures, or the desirability of using existing institutions to mediate or facilitate discussions between groups, etc.

- 6. Agreement on Strategy for Managing Conflict** – If a collaborative approach to managing conflict is a preferred option for some stakeholders it will require agreement and support from all parties before it can be initiated.

As stakeholders enter into a collaborative process, they must agree on the guidelines for this process and what actions and capacities are required to support it. If they have not already done so, they will need to decide whether or not to use a third party, including the role and responsibilities of that third party

- 7. Negotiation of Agreements** - Stakeholders negotiate agreements based on the individual and shared needs and interests they have identified. They seek mutual gain agreements. Often agreements are made progressively and incrementally. As one agreement is implemented successfully it demonstrates commitment of the parties, this then provides greater trust upon which to build further agreements.

With each agreement, stakeholders decide how they will implement and monitor it. In the process of negotiations and in deciding how they

will implement and monitor that agreement, other stakeholders may be identified that need to be included in managing the conflict. Similarly stakeholders may discover new information needs and take action to obtain this information before they can make further agreements.

8. **Implementation of Agreements** - The stakeholders implement and monitor agreements as they are made. Agreements are continually monitored, informing the various parties if they should continue to proceed or modify their strategy or decisions.
9. **Evaluation, Learning and Conflict Anticipation** - Stakeholders evaluate the outcomes and impacts of conflict and the process of managing it. This can occur at pre-determined points specifically set for evaluating the conflict. This may also occur at points within the broader and overall collaborative management process (for example within an evaluation of a forestry programme or as part of a policy review). These evaluations aim to increase stakeholder learning and identify necessary changes to support improved collaboration in community-based forestry.

By evaluating outcomes, stakeholders can determine how to improve methods and systems for anticipating further conflict. Setting achievable benchmarks or tasks by which to judge progress is an effective way to maintain the motivation of stakeholders. When agreements encounter difficulty or fail, stakeholders may need to revisit the agreements, obtain missing information, identify additional stakeholders, or identify other solutions in support of collaborative management. A conflict management process can therefore be an iterative or continuous cycle that adapts to new questions and changing needs.

KEY ELEMENTS SUPPORTING THE PROCESS

10. **Information Needs and Management** -The availability, management and acceptance of information are significant issues in collaborative approaches to managing conflict. Information plays a pivotal role in understanding conflict and the details of interests, clarifying shared goals and assessing the feasibility of solutions. The process outlined

must allow time for stakeholders to check for and explicitly address information needs and issues. Stakeholders must agree to the information needs, the sources of valid information, and how information will be exchanged and disseminated.

- 11. Capacity-Building** – Building sustainable solutions for managing conflict requires evaluating not only the *interests* of stakeholders but also their *capacity to participate effectively in the process*. Participants must evaluate this capacity at various stages. Developing capacity can vary in scale and focus from strengthening institutions and organisations to centring on the needs of specific individuals. Addressing conflict embraces a range of capacities – knowledge, skills, attitudes, organisational structures and logistical support. This is the same set of capacities required for effective participatory forest management and community development.
- 12. Consensus-based Decision Making** – Consensus building aims to generate agreements and outcomes that are acceptable to all stakeholders with a minimum of compromise. The intention is to find win-win solutions. In this process stakeholders are encouraged to identify and then meet underlying needs of all parties and be creative in the solutions they explore. Acknowledging the perceptions of others, ensuring good communications, building rapport and trust, and striving to continually widen options are key ingredients in this process.
- 13. Keeping People Informed** – Discussions between stakeholders are often carried out by representatives of key groups. An important part of the conflict management process is establishing reliable communication between stakeholder representatives and their constituency so that all who are involved and impacted by the conflict are informed and able to provide meaningful input.