

## SECTION 2



## SECTION 2

# COLLABORATION AND CONFLICT



This section is about using collaboration as a basis for managing resources and anticipating and handling conflicts. Understanding the fundamentals of collaboration is essential to supporting stakeholders who are negotiating agreements on forest use and management. This section examines collaboration and its relationships to community-based forest management and managing differences among interest groups. More specifically, it:

- ◆ describes how conflict has given rise to trends of collaborative management and how collaboration can itself be a source of conflict;
- ◆ identifies important elements of a collaborative process for both community-based forestry and managing conflict;
- ◆ outlines a process for managing “live” conflicts based on a collaborative approach.

### 2.1 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT

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At the centre of community-based forest management is collaborative management (also referred to as “co-management”). The term “collaborative management” is used broadly, and encompasses a range of activities including participatory forest management, community or social forestry, joint forest management and integrated conservation and development projects (Fisher, 1995).

Collaborative management is applied to management over State, private or customary lands and forests, and to shared management of protected areas.

The collaborative management approach has two main objectives:

- ◆ managing the use of forests and forest products through negotiating a mutually agreeable set of principles and practices among stakeholders;
- ◆ establishing processes of sharing power among stakeholders when making decisions over a resource (Ingles, Musch and Qwist-Hoffman, 1999).

In addition to these objectives, there are also certain assumptions that are shared, if not always made explicit:

- ◆ the strengthening of communities requires increasing local control of resource use and decision-making;
- ◆ increased involvement of local stakeholders will result in more sustainable livelihoods;
- ◆ the legitimacy of diverse values is recognized;
- ◆ development and conservation are not necessarily antagonistic (Fisher, 1995).

In reference to this last assumption, collaborative management recognizes environmental values and the need to use and manage resources in order to ensure ecological sustainability. Linked to this belief is the notion that it is possible to find ways of achieving economic goals without sacrificing environmental standards.

Collaborative management is being tested throughout the world. No single model has emerged or is likely to emerge. Different historical conditions, social and political settings, needs and demands give rise to a diversity of partnership arrangements. These different partnership arrangements are characterized by various degrees of responsibility and power sharing (Fisher, 1995).

### **2.1.1 From conflict to collaboration and back again**

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A major catalyst for global trends towards collaborative community-based forest management has been the eruption of conflict when local demands for self-governance challenge centralized government forest management systems. Additionally, in most countries, forestry has been shifting from a narrow focus on timber production towards management that provides for multiple uses, products and values. In this shift of orientation, the top-down planning approaches of the past, which often

relied solely on professional and government expertise and opinion, have become inadequate. Wider and more meaningful stakeholder involvement is required at all levels of decision-making in order to address issues in which there are multiple and divergent views on forest use, access and control.

Collaborative management agreements offer substantial promise for dealing proactively with differences among indigenous peoples, local communities, other stakeholders and State agencies involved in forest use. Differences and conflicts will arise, but a collaborative planning and management process can establish mechanisms that anticipate and manage them more effectively.

Collaborative forest management can be seen as returning greater control to local communities and formally recognizing their management authority. It has most often been initiated by the actions of external change agents, such as national governments, international agencies and NGOs, in response to increasing tensions among local stakeholders. Increasingly, communities are demanding collaborative management as part of grassroots political movements. No matter how collaboration is initiated or developed, conflict is inevitably encountered.

### ***Pre-existing conflict***

Conflicts can have a long history of impact within a given area prior to the initiation of collaborative management activities. This can be because of evolving power relations and rivalries between or among villages, or longstanding poor interactions between local groups and external agencies. There may be a legacy of hostile interactions, suspicions, alliances and failed attempts to reconcile differences.

Such pre-existing conflicts may involve resource competition, scarcity, the inequitable distribution of benefits from forest products, poor involvement of key users in decision-making, and so on. Very often it is these specific issues that have led to a policy change or management intervention prescribing greater collaboration. Throughout the world, collaborative management has been largely initiated in response to conflict and crisis situations.

Other conflicts may also be present, arising quite independently from specific resource or management issues. For example, deep-seated differences in belief systems among culturally or ethnically diverse groups may

exist, preventing these groups from working together in community fora or addressing shared resource issues.

Initiating collaborative management requires that conflicts be identified and addressed. Experience has shown that ignoring differences may eventually lead to conflicts undermining or hindering progress in collaborative management.

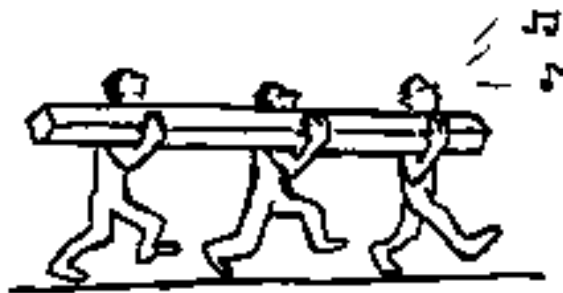
***Conflict resulting from weakness in collaborative management processes and structures***

Collaboration itself necessarily involves change. The objectives of collaborative approaches to management often require:

- ◆ the examination and transfer of power and authority;
- ◆ the provision of secure access and tenure to local people;
- ◆ the review, recognition and, often, formalization of traditional roles;
- ◆ modified roles for scientists and technical advisers;
- ◆ revisions to policy and law;
- ◆ changes in existing institutions or the establishment of new institutions;
- ◆ changes in use patterns and livelihoods, and often the introduction of new alternative sources of income generation.

Both the *perceived* and the *real* impacts of these activities can easily lead to situations of conflict.

Given this situation, the introduction of collaborative management as part of a policy change or programme intervention requires that adequate attention be given to the conceptual framework and processes that build collaboration among stakeholders. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Too often, external agents, for example forestry staff, conservation managers or policy-makers, just assume that local stakeholders will collaborate – voluntarily, skilfully and effectively – in whatever form deemed necessary for the desired change.



The reality is, of course, quite different. Conflict rather than consensus is likely to be the defining feature of the situations that community forestry addresses (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1997). Collaboration is much more difficult to achieve. Forest management issues involve many subgroups of stakeholders with quite different interests and aspirations. Society and natural environments are dynamic, and levels of tension rise and fall with changing patterns of human use.

Without adequate participation or sufficient resources or time for developing an appropriate collaborative framework, emerging conflicts are inevitable. Although there is no single model of collaborative management, the lack of an appropriate framework for shared decision-making on management rights and responsibilities can lead to the complete halting of an initiative.

However, even when the best processes for planning and managing collaborative forest initiatives are in place, conflicts will still emerge. Just as with more centralized systems of management, there will be times when collaborative management works well and others when it looks as though things are collapsing. The expected difference, however, is that in a programme where the key elements of collaborative management have been well developed (for example, where effective systems of monitoring, anticipating conflicts and managing disputes are present) conflict can help draw attention to emerging weaknesses and help to fine-tune and improve collaborative processes, structures or institutions (see Box 2.1).





### BOX 2.1 DHUNGESHORI COMMUNITY FOREST USER GROUP

Case study 2 in Section 8.5 describes a number of conflicts faced by the Dhungeshori Community Forest User Group (CFUG) in Nepal. These conflicts were varied and included boundary disputes with local farmers and another CFUG, problems of misused money and challenges in leadership.

Although, at the time, these conflicts placed considerable strain on the Dhungeshori CFUG, the group was able to manage the disputes successfully. The case study indicates a number of important contributing factors to this outcome, such as the Community Forestry Programme's establishment of venues for airing grievances and issues, and the engagement of all sectors of the community as participants in the conflict itself. The CFUG's commitment and effectiveness were strengthened in the process, through increased awareness of stakeholders and their rights, responsibilities and benefits in managing the forest.

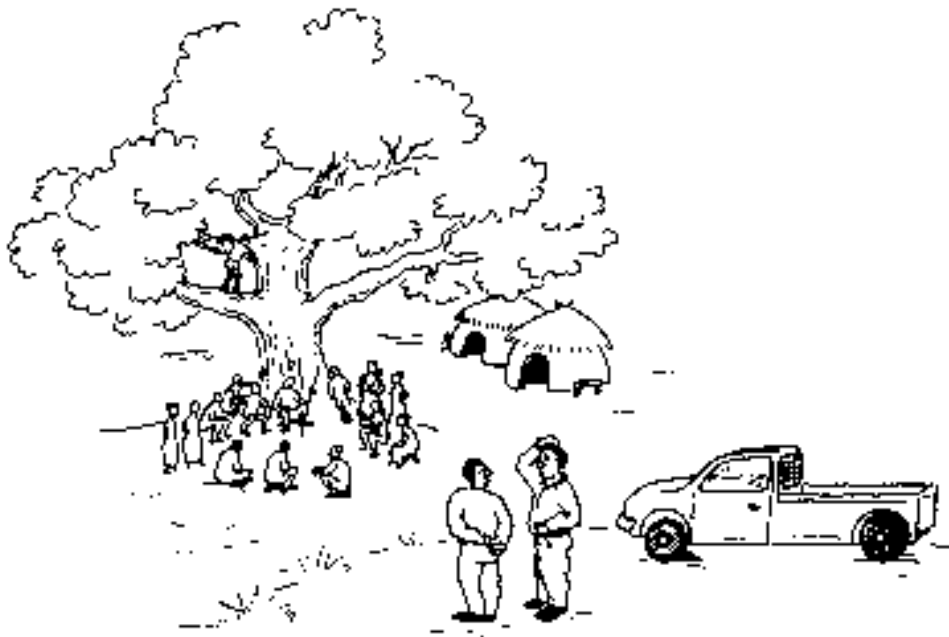
#### ***Conflict resulting from the unanticipated success of collaborative management***

A sometimes forgotten component of collaborative management programmes is anticipating success and considering conflicts that may arise from successful management outcomes. Effective community-based forest management often results in increased local capacities, such as:

- ◆ strengthened local organizations;
- ◆ the establishment of supportive networks;
- ◆ partnerships with more powerful groups;
- ◆ increased knowledge about human rights and legal mechanisms;
- ◆ improved access to needed information;
- ◆ development of local skills – including those for problem analysis, planning and organizational and financial management;
- ◆ improved self-confidence.

Enhanced awareness and capacity can motivate local people to challenge broader and underlying inequities, social structures and policies.

Similarly, the enactment of new policies that result in structural changes, such as the decentralization or democratization of decision-making, allows for wider stakeholder participation, which can result in conflict. At the site level, officers responsible for implementation may resist such policy changes, thereby causing conflicts to erupt when informed local communities become vocal in asserting their rights. It is therefore necessary to plan for the implications of policy reforms, ensuring that key individuals and organizations support implementation and have the capacity to carry it out.



Ironically, another unanticipated consequence of effective forest management is that improved care and use of the resource can generate conflict among interest groups as they struggle over the control of the improved asset. For example, replanting schemes that provide additional fuelwood may raise new questions about the distribution of the resource among families. Where management actions have been effective, collaboration can give way to competition as groups reinterpret their interest in the resource.



### **2.1.2 Managing conflict: one of a number of processes that support collaborative management**

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Collaborative management involves a number of processes that help establish and maintain a mutually agreeable set of principles and practices for the management of forest resources. Conflict management is one of these processes. The importance of conflict management within a collaborative management framework varies from situation to situation, depending on the degree or scale of existing or potential conflict.

The strength of collaborative management strategies will have a significant impact on the frequency, size and scale of the conflicts that arise and the overall success of activities undertaken to manage them. Elements of collaborative management strategies include:

- ◆ the approach to addressing historical concerns and attitudes;
- ◆ ways of involving stakeholders or building solid working relationships;
- ◆ processes of sharing information and exploring options;
- ◆ sharing decision-making;
- ◆ gaining feedback on changing situations.

Understanding conflict is vital to supporting participatory frameworks for forest management. Understanding is also critical to nurturing an atmosphere in which differences among stakeholders are openly expressed and channelled into creative solutions. For collaborative forest management to be effective, processes and structures must anticipate and respond to differences among stakeholders.

Many conflicts are created in forest conservation and sustainable livelihood schemes because of an overemphasis on achieving immediate and predetermined management outcomes, as opposed to establishing a strong collaborative process that will create sustainable results.

Conflict anticipation and management are therefore critical ingredients of collaborative forest management. It would be meaningless to view these approaches as standing by themselves. They are not to be treated as separate activities, but rather should be fully integrated into a broad frame-

work of collaborative management, building on processes that lead to mutual gain. This requires us to:

- ◆ encourage and support the best possible participatory processes for planning and implementing a policy or management intervention;
- ◆ establish effective mechanisms for addressing latent, emerging and manifest conflicts as we become aware of them within the larger planning and management process.

## 2.2 ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT COLLABORATION

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The discussion in Section 2.1 highlighted the need to consider carefully what makes collaboration attractive to multiple stakeholders and what is required to make forest collaborative management effective.

### 2.2.1 What is collaboration?

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True collaboration is a process in which two or more stakeholders with different interests in a common problem explore and work through their differences together searching for solutions of mutual gain (Gray, 1989). Under some circumstances, local stakeholders are pressured or manipulated into cooperation. This is not collaboration, but coercion, which creates an environment in which conflict will inevitably emerge.

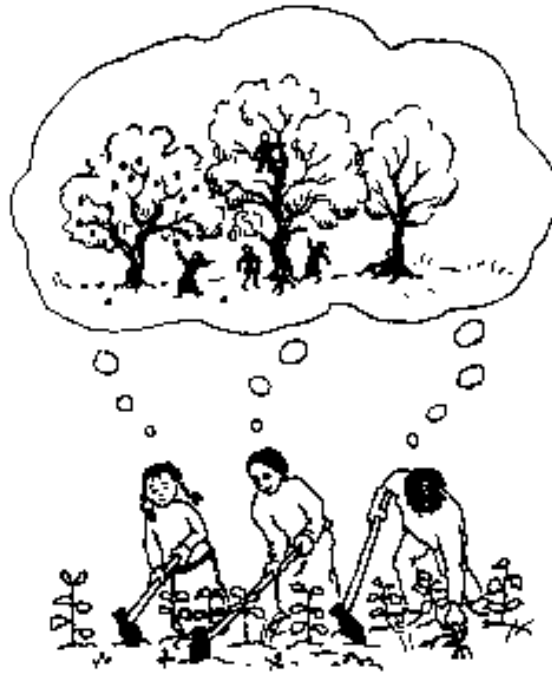
### 2.2.2 What motivates people to collaborate?

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In community-based forest management there is a challenge to build and nurture a process of collaboration in all stages of designing and implementing an initiative. Similarly, supporting a process for collaborative conflict management requires an understanding of what motivates stakeholders to participate.

Research in this area has shown that, for stakeholders to be willing to work together in managing a forest or to participate in managing a conflict, they need to believe that:

- ◆ collaboration will produce positive outcomes;
- ◆ other options for achieving solutions will not serve their interests;
- ◆ it is possible to reach fair agreements in resource management among multiple stakeholders;
- ◆ there is capacity among the stakeholders to participate in collaborative management;
- ◆ other key stakeholders will agree to collaborate (Gray, 1989).



A process that supports sustainable forest management will facilitate stakeholder understanding of, and commitment to, collaboration. The process will be designed to recognize stakeholders' incentives for working together to build understanding and commitment. Establishing an enabling environment for collaboration takes time, resources and the necessary mechanisms for bringing people together. Unfortunately, in practice, these prerequisites are too often inadequately considered.

A group's commitment to collaborate hinges on the perception that agreement among stakeholders will provide positive outcomes for its members. Positive outcomes include:

- ◆ material benefits;
- ◆ recognition of tenure and use rights;
- ◆ enhanced cultural identity;
- ◆ achievement of immediate and long-term interests.

One example of a positive outcome, and a strong incentive to collaborate, is the need to build or maintain key relationships and alliances. There can be powerful cultural norms operating at the local level to bring people together to overcome differences. The web of social relations within a community can oblige disputing parties to work towards a resolution, especially when they are encouraged to do so by family members, neighbours, community leaders or government officials. A challenge to planning and management is to facilitate and nurture a culture of collaboration. An important element in this is identifying the interdependency of stakeholders in order to achieve outcomes that all parties value.

**TRAINER'S NOTE # 5****STARTING COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES**

It is helpful to emphasize in training that existing conflicts affect decisions about when to introduce collaboration.

**Where there are no overt conflicts**, there may be a greater willingness to collaborate, particularly if the problem is *shared* and more or less *unilaterally affects all groups*. For example, a situation in which a forest agency, a village community and an NGO acknowledge forest degradation, and all feel the unacceptable impacts on their individual needs, may provide a strong incentive for all groups to collaborate on actions for forest regeneration.

**Where conflict is “live” or seen already to exist among stakeholders**, finding incentives to collaborate may be more difficult. Opposing stakeholders may fail to define a common problem, lack a perception of shared interest or believe that other methods for resolving conflict are preferable. Determining the likely difficulty of stakeholder collaboration is part of analysing conflict (Section 3) and reviewing workable strategies to address it (Section 4).

*Training activities #3 to #6* assist the understanding of what collaboration is and what factors support and encourage its development. These activities also provide insights into the difficulties encountered in initiating collaboration.

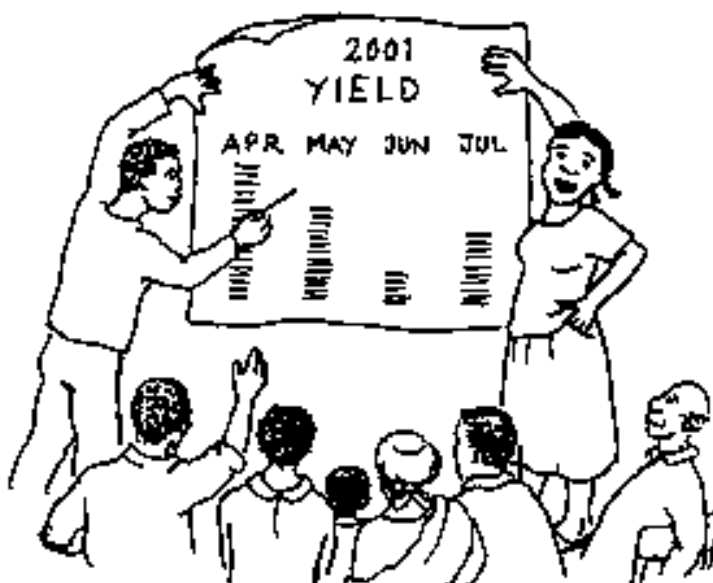
### 2.2.3 What are the key building blocks of an effective collaborative process?

A process for building collaboration in forest management relies on a number of key components and principles of engagement (see Table 2.1). These same components and principles provide the building blocks to community-based approaches to managing and resolving conflict.

Key elements in collaborative forest planning and management include (adapted from Worah, Svendsen and Ongleo, 1999):

1. shared analysis of the situation;
2. stakeholder negotiations and agreements;
3. building capacity for change;
4. partnerships and alliances for implementation;
5. establishing and maintaining processes of collaborative learning;
6. establishing and supporting mechanisms for managing conflict.

**1. Shared analysis of the situation with stakeholders.** A foundation for ongoing stakeholder participation is the shared collection and analysis of information about the situation. Shared analysis can provide appropriate and timely information for decisions on management actions (including changing policy, negotiating management agreements, designing livelihoods, monitoring). This activity needs to be repeated at various points in



decision-making. Shared analysis builds on local understanding of the current situation and problems. It blends traditional and modern knowledge systems to optimize possible solutions.

Ideally, all stakeholders, particularly local and forest-dependent communities, are involved in determining information needs and designing information collection systems to guide research. A shared analysis of problems can mitigate or prevent major areas of disagreement in later negotiations on management issues. Sometimes constraints on time and financial resources prevent this from being undertaken as thoroughly as the situation requires. In such situations, the cause of the limitations should be examined and creative solutions sought. This activity is crucial to the process of collaboration. Shortcutting the process almost always means increasing difficulties later.

**2. Stakeholder negotiations and agreements.** The negotiations that take place among stakeholders can be the most crucial aspect affecting the achievement or failure of intervention objectives. Negotiations should lay out the interests, expectations, needs and priorities, strengths and weaknesses of individual stakeholder groups. In community-based natural resource management, an effective process of stakeholder exchange and consensus building does not stop at the point at which an agreement is reached. Instead, it is an ongoing process that evolves and adapts to changing external and internal factors.

*Participatory stakeholder identification and analysis* sets the stage for effective agreements. The voluntary act of negotiation and obtaining the necessary informed agreements requires that the relevant stakeholder groups understand:

- ◆ their own dependency and interests with respect to specific resources or resource issues;
- ◆ other stakeholders and their interests;
- ◆ how resource issues affect stakeholders differently;
- ◆ interdependence among stakeholders;
- ◆ the relative contributions and strengths of each stakeholder.

Stakeholder analysis provides insights into the complex and sometimes unequal relations among different resource user groups with respect to influence, access to resources and information. Used in the design and implementation of both policy and management strategies such analysis

assists us in identifying and anticipating potential conflict. Stakeholder analysis also informs us of capacity building requirements and other needs of weaker and less powerful groups. Stakeholder analysis is critical to identifying existing and potential alliances among groups that can be used to influence outcomes and support compliance with negotiated agreements.

### 3. Building capacity for change.

For stakeholders to be engaged more equitably in the planning, objective setting and implementation of forest management, they must have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and resources needed to carry out these roles. Stakeholder self-assessment of needs should form the foundation of capacity building programmes, and should



be planned from the beginning. Providing adequate resources for institutional development and other activities that strengthen a group's ability to participate in the negotiation process is crucial. This is required for supporting the long-term sustainability of any initiative or process.

**4. Partnerships and alliances for implementation.** Developing broad constituencies, partnerships and alliances for improving the implementation of activities is critical to the success of collaborative management regimes. The strengths of the different stakeholder groups should be recognized and built on. Such alliances and partnerships can help reduce power disparities and inequities among stakeholders, as less powerful groups can draw moral, material and political strength from their networks.

**5. Collaborative learning.** Systems of monitoring and evaluation are designed collaboratively using locally appropriate methods. Such systems provide a capacity for monitoring impacts, embracing error, learning together, building knowledge and distilling lessons in support of future decision-making. All of these circumstances underline the necessity of creating processes that include stakeholders' involvement in establishing what should be monitored, selecting indicators, collecting and analysing data, jointly evaluating and recommending change. These activities provide a foundation for detecting conflicts before they escalate into serious situations

Partnerships, learning and action are intertwined. Such collaboration will help to ensure that information regarding relevant policies and practices will be both accessible and understandable in local contexts.

**6. Effective mechanisms for managing conflict.** From the beginning, the design and implementation of any initiative must incorporate mechanisms for anticipating and managing conflict. The case studies in Section 8 show how these mechanisms can be as simple as regular committee meetings at which to discuss growing tensions, or as complex as formal systems of review and mediation. Collaborative planning processes must be thorough and practical in assessing risks and proposing mechanisms to reduce or mitigate them. Such mechanisms ensure that stakeholders deal with potential or emerging conflicts constructively in order to reduce the chances of their escalation. In some contexts, there will be real challenges to doing this; for example, when necessary mechanisms cannot easily be put in place owing to legislative, policy or cultural constraints.

**TRAINER'S NOTE # 6****ACKNOWLEDGING AND WORKING WITH DIFFERENCES**

In community-based forest management the objective is not to design a process that aims to mitigate conflict completely. Conflict can be a positive and necessary force to level the playing field prior to the more equitable engagement of local stakeholders. Planning and management frameworks should build on the principle that there are real differences among stakeholders in terms of their interests, influence and capacity. The goal is to deal with these differences effectively. Mechanisms must be in place to put forward the differences and address them explicitly and transparently.

*Training activity #7* is a useful aid to exploring the process of conflict management. This activity introduces participants to the various steps involved in managing conflict, encouraging them to consider in what order to take them. An effective process highlights the need to check repeatedly the fundamentals, such as stakeholder involvement and power, capacity building and information needs.




 <b>TABLE 2.1 GUIDELINES FOR A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS</b>	
Guideline	Key elements
<p>1. Establish and maintain a transparent process of collaboration based on mutual respect, shared goals and joint learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Makes explicit the relationship between the process and formal decision-making.</li> <li>◆ Collaboration is not co-opting or manipulating weaker or opposing stakeholders to an agreement.</li> <li>◆ Requires openness and honesty of objectives, interests and expectations by all stakeholders.</li> <li>◆ Requires the recognition that errors and misunderstandings are likely to occur, and that these are to be learned from, rather than ignored or hidden.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Make participants responsible for ensuring the success of the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Allows participants to define the issues.</li> <li>◆ Focuses on stakeholders' interests.</li> <li>◆ Facilitates stakeholder ownership and commitment.</li> <li>◆ Builds a common sense of purpose.</li> <li>◆ Demonstrates that local stakeholder interests influence the decision-making process.</li> <li>◆ Views all stakeholders as resource persons.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Emphasize constructing and maintaining effective working relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Earns and builds trust throughout the process (through listening, sharing information, joint learning, transparency of agendas and being realistic).</li> <li>◆ Relationship building takes time.</li> <li>◆ Public fora and other opportunities exist to foster dialogue and negotiation among all stakeholders.</li> </ul>

Table 2.1 continued

Guideline	Key elements
4. Be inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Stakeholder involvement should reflect the diversity of perspectives and demographics.</li> <li>◆ Stakeholder commitment requires their active participation in all facets of decision-making, including process design, objective setting, implementation, monitoring and review.</li> <li>◆ Provides multiple fora for different levels of participation.</li> </ul>
5. Build on traditional or local knowledge systems and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Uses systems that are familiar and tested in the particular environmental and social setting.</li> <li>◆ Supports cultural identity.</li> <li>◆ Supports traditional or local institutions and authority.</li> <li>◆ Is logistically possible.</li> <li>◆ Builds needed local confidence.</li> </ul>
6. Respect and accommodate cultural and other diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Differing perspectives are acknowledged, respected and explored.</li> <li>◆ Recognizes and respects local rights, knowledge and values (both economic and non-economic) regarding the natural resource.</li> <li>◆ Adopts participatory processes for natural resource and conflict management that include all local resource users and interests and that empower indigenous peoples, women, the poor and other disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>◆ Encourages the management of forests and other natural resources for multiple uses to meet the needs and values of diverse users. This gives priority to communities and people directly dependent on these resources.</li> </ul>

Table 2.1 continued

Guideline	Key elements
7 Foster continual learning and adaptive management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Is an adaptive response to insufficient information, lack of certainty and limited ability to predict outcomes accurately.</li> <li>◆ Encourages participants to educate one another.</li> <li>◆ Requires caution; make assumptions and test them as you go.</li> <li>◆ Improves understanding and effectiveness over time.</li> <li>◆ Establishes a learning culture that includes clear communication channels among all relevant actors, with defined feedback and input opportunities related to conflict situations.</li> <li>◆ Requires an alert mind and openness to change and new ideas.</li> </ul>
8 Work on a wider scale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supports communities and relevant interest parties in building strategic alliances, coalitions, federations and networks at the local, national, regional and global levels.</li> <li>◆ Helps identify broader policies and actions that affect management intervention.</li> <li>◆ Develops a proactive strategy for influencing external threats such as coercion and force by powerful interest groups.</li> </ul>
<p><i>(Adapted from: Gray, 1989; PEC, 1999; Worah, Svendsen and Ongleo, 1999.)</i></p>	

A map outlining a conflict management process that builds on the key components of collaboration is provided with these training materials. Underlying and woven into this model are the guidelines in Table 2.1, which outline a suggested generic process. When following the map and guidelines, it is important to remember that every conflict management situation is unique and that it may, therefore, be necessary to include additional or fewer components.

## 2.3 CONSTRAINTS TO COLLABORATION

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Before encouraging and supporting collaborative approaches, it is useful to recognize situations that are not conducive to collaboration. Factors limiting collaboration may include (Ramirez, 1999; PEC, 1999):

- ◆ serious power differentials;
- ◆ basic ideological differences;
- ◆ constitutional or legal precedents;
- ◆ failure to identify a legitimate convenor;
- ◆ serious representational problems;
- ◆ feuds, violence and other historical factors;
- ◆ repeated failure of interventions;
- ◆ high costs of collaboration (for example, for transportation and meetings), which exclude balanced participation.

Many of these constraints can be addressed if the principles set out in Section 2.2 apply and the time and resources to enhance stakeholder communication and relationships are available.



### 2.3.1 Relationships of power

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One of the most critical factors in determining the likely success of collaboration is the difference in power among stakeholders. In these training materials we define the term power as “the capacity to achieve outcomes” (Ramirez, 1999). Collaboration requires greater time, resources, patience and understanding of stakeholders than other methods do.

Individuals and groups must therefore carefully consider the pros and cons of each possible method (conflict management, going to court, non-action, etc.) to decide whether conflict management is to their best advantage. There must be sufficient incentives for stakeholders to participate in a collaborative process.



#### TRAINER'S NOTE # 7

#### POWER AND INFLUENCE CAN EMERGE FROM MANY SOURCES

In training, participants should be encouraged to consider where stakeholders gain power and influence. Power can be derived from many sources, which are explored in *Training activity #15*. Some examples of power are:

- ◆ physical strength: endurance, violence;
- ◆ emotional strength: courage, leadership, commitment, integrity;
- ◆ control of resources: access, tenure, rights, money, material goods, socio-economic status, political institutions, human resources;
- ◆ control of information: technical, planning, economic, political;
- ◆ ability: capacity, skills;
- ◆ knowledge: access to traditional knowledge (insider and outsider);
- ◆ ability to coerce: threats, access to and use of media, family or political ties, mobilization of direct action;
- ◆ gender;
- ◆ age.

#### ***Collaboration operates on a model of power sharing***

Stakeholders who have mutually authorized each other to reach a decision eventually make decisions together. This does not mean that stronger parties must relinquish power, or that all resources are distributed equally. However, underlying collaboration is an agreement among stakeholders that they have approved one another's legitimacy and power to define problems and propose solutions (Gray, 1989).

Major inequities are a deterrent to collaboration. Powerful groups often take unilateral actions and refuse either to negotiate or to collaborate. They may also force weaker parties to agree to a decision.

Groups with little power have every right to be fearful about how they will succeed in multi-stakeholder negotiations. Weaker groups risk losing much from negotiations in which power differences are very acute. Negotiation is not an antidote to inequality. Unless weaker groups can locate and use points of leverage, negotiation is neither possible nor desirable (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987; Ramirez, 1999).



More powerful groups can use agreements to negotiate in order to:

- ◆ outnumber and outmanoeuvre marginal groups;
- ◆ consolidate their power base;
- ◆ legitimize themselves and their actions.

If power relationships among stakeholders are too highly skewed, issues may not be negotiated until other preconditions have been met. In negotiations, each group must protect its own interests. Without assistance, less powerful parties have trouble protecting their interest in the consensus building process (see Box 2.2).



#### TRAINER'S NOTE # 8

##### FINDING POWER

It is important to emphasize that power in negotiations and conflict management is dynamic. Weaker parties may be able to find “countervailing power” to attract other, more powerful parties to negotiations (Gray, 1989). Such power can come from many sources. The challenge for weaker, disenfranchised stakeholders is to find sources of power that they can tap into in order to gain legitimacy and access to mainstream discussions. It is helpful to be creative in seeking alternative ways of maximizing mutual gains.

Power building tactics for less influential stakeholders include (adapted from PEC, 1999):

- ◆ strengthening local organizations;
- ◆ developing a common vision and goals;

- ◆ bringing forward “irrefutable” information;
- ◆ gaining broader legitimacy for their interests;
- ◆ introducing new actors (NGOs, media, technical experts);
- ◆ building new coalitions;
- ◆ working towards transparency;
- ◆ democratizing the process;
- ◆ creating opportunities for leadership;
- ◆ reinforcing local traditions;
- ◆ using available legal and institutional resources;
- ◆ educating people about their rights, responsibilities, obligations, limitations and accountability;
- ◆ using tools to analyse their negotiation strength and relative power through other non-collaborative measures (see BATNA in Section 4.4).



#### BOX 2.2 WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POWER AND AUTHORITY?

In conflict situations, stakeholders commonly ask questions about the relationship between power and authority. Although these terms are different, they are similar enough to be confusing. Authority is granted – formally or legally – through traditional laws or social groups. It sanctions, and in some cases provides, some level of power. Power is the ability to achieve an outcome, possibly derived independently of the approval of any group. It is useful to consider your own experiences and think of examples in which:

- ◆ you have authority but no power;
- ◆ you have power but no authority;
- ◆ you can derive power from authority;
- ◆ both power and authority can be abused.

## 2.4 SECTION SUMMARY

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Section 2 has introduced key principles of collaboration, outlining how they apply to both collaborative management and situations of conflict. The concepts presented in Section 2 will be useful in helping learners to understand where conflict is encountered in community-based forest management. The section also reinforced the need to invest the necessary time and resources into building an effective collaborative process for addressing and managing conflicts. The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of key points covered in this section. To support the introduction and discussion of concepts in training, refer to the training activities in Section 9.

**Collaborative management is at the centre of community-based approaches to forest management.** Fundamental to collaborative management is the negotiation of agreements among multiple stakeholders and the establishment of processes for sharing power. This more recent alternative approach to forest management offers promise for dealing effectively with multiple views on use, access and control. For many local communities, it provides formal recognition of their longstanding and de facto role in the management of forests.

**There is no single model of collaborative management.** Collaborative management is being developed and tested throughout the world under diverse historical, social, cultural and political conditions. External agents have commonly led the collaborative management approach, but grass-roots movements advocating self-governance and resource security are demanding it more frequently. As it is developed in a range of contexts, it often involves different types of partnerships with varying degrees of responsibilities. It is a dynamic and evolving process.

**Collaboration as a response to and reason for conflict.** Collaborative management has commonly been initiated in response to ongoing and persistent conflicts among stakeholders over issues of forest use and control. Practitioners involved in initiating or supporting a shift towards collaborative approaches should anticipate conflicts at the outset. Establishing partnerships and formalizing local management systems will also involve change. These changes can, in turn, give rise to new conflicts, particularly when collaborative processes are weak. Successful management outcomes can also be a source of conflict, if changes to or impacts on stakeholders' rights, responsibilities and relationships are not adequately considered and planned for.



**Conflict management is one of the essential processes of the collaborative management framework.** Conflict management needs to be undertaken within the sound framework of a larger collaborative management process. Without such a framework in place, conflicts can and will repeatedly arise from inherent planning and management weaknesses. Similarly, putting in place effective mechanisms to anticipate, address and monitor conflicts is essential to any collaborative efforts engaging disparate stakeholders.

**Community-based forest management requires identifying and building on people's motives for collaborating.** Practitioners involved in management cannot assume that people will want to collaborate, or that they have the skills to do so. Section 2 contains a number of guidelines that usually need to be met before people will agree to participate in a collaborative process. These guidelines apply equally to collaboration in both forest management and managing conflicts.

**Identifying the building blocks for effective collaborative management.** Section 2 presented a number of key elements for establishing or strengthening a collaborative process within community-based forest management. These are useful guidelines for a sound participatory process. They not only encourage stakeholder involvement, but also seek to ensure transparency of process, build capacity and support traditional and local knowledge and practices. These are essential aspects of building a process that will be sustainable.

**Understanding the limits to collaboration.** Stakeholders may not choose to collaborate. The reasons for not collaborating are wide-ranging, and may involve basic ideological differences, a prolonged history of failed interventions, major power differences among groups, and so forth. Those involved in a conflict management process based on collaboration need to be aware of any factors that could limit or undermine collaboration. In some situations, when these factors exist, weaker stakeholders may decide to seek other interventions to address conflict.

## 2.5 REFERENCES

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