

CBNRM Net

The Community-Based Natural Resource Management Network

Item: South Asia, overview May 1998

This Item contains a broad overview of CBNRM for Francophone Africa. The overview is adapted from the findings of a regional working group at the International CBNRM Workshop (Washington D.C. 10-14 May 1998), consisting of participants largely from that region (see the workshop website, section Regional Working Groups, for details).

Principal resource types

The Regional Working Group was asked to identify the principal resource types in their region. The resource types are (listed in the order given):

- Forests,
- Soils, and
- Water.

Special regional context and characteristics

The Regional Working Group was asked to identify special regional contexts and characteristics in their region. The regional contexts and characteristics are (listed in the order given):

- High population density,
- Highly degraded natural resources,
- Unstable political environment,
- Weak democratic institutions, and
- Non-complementary sectoral policies.

Major messages

The Regional Working Group was asked to identify the major messages they wanted to give the CBNRM community in terms of how they assessed the situation in their region. The major messages are (listed in the order given):

- CBNRM involves more than just incentives that emphasize individual and material aspects. It also depends on shared values (democratic, cultural, ecological, economic and social) and commitment to equity issues (including age, caste, class and gender),
- Natural resources are complex systems. Simple demand-driven approaches are not tenable. There is a role for external catalysts to raise awareness and empower communities to prioritize NRM activities and demand their rights to manage local resources, and
- CBNRM should build upon indigenous knowledge and institutions. It should also add value to them and seek to mainstream them.

Key policy issues

The Regional Working Group was asked to identify the key policy issues they wanted to give to the CBNRM community in terms of how they assessed the situation in their region. The key policy issues are (listed in the order given):

- CBNRM requires an initial investment in building social capital that addresses, for example, gender and equity. This requires appropriate attention to social catalyzing, organizing and mobilization aspects, and
- Policies inevitably evolve, however, policy formulation and implementation must build trust by involving stakeholders,
- Need overarching policy framework that integrates sectoral concerns and incorporates approaches to community management and development, and
- Need to balance environmental protection goals with economic development and sustainable resource utilization.

Strategies

The Regional Working Group was asked to identify strategies that addressed the key policy issues identified earlier. The strategies are (listed in the order given):

- Training in strengthening the capacity of agencies (including donors, governments and NGOs) for empowerment,
- There needs to be a recognition that communities have latent capacity which is best strengthened through the implementation of CBNRM activities (learning by doing),
- This requires identifying, recognizing and strengthening local cultural values and institutions,
- Policies must be simple and made transparent through information dissemination campaigns,
- Identify common CBNRM principles and apply them to different sectors, for example, irrigation, forestry, soil and water conservation, and
- Financial and economic incentives need to be used to balance environmental protection goals with resource utilization needs.

Actions

The Regional Working Group was asked to identify actions, directed at the workshop participants, and to be implemented upon returning home. The actions are (listed in the order given):

- Reading workshop Plenaries and Case Studies,
- Organize a follow-up regional workshop to widen awareness and broaden the support base for design and implementation of CBNRM policies and programs, and
- Follow-up with recommendations to the World Bank.

Recommendations

The Regional Working Group was asked to identify recommendations directed at: (i) governments and other public agencies, and (ii) the World Bank and other donors. The recommendations are (listed in the order given):

(A) Governments and other public agencies

- Governments have a responsibility to promote transparent and participatory policy development and project formulation, and
- Consultation with stakeholders should occur at multiple levels,
- There should be sufficient provision in CBNRM to strengthen social capital, and
- Develop appropriate mechanisms (including working groups at multiple levels) and incentives (including disbursement rules) to encourage participatory monitoring.

(B) World Bank and other donors

- Incorporate CBNRM in Country Assistance Strategies (not just a rural development focus),
- Conditionalities for project implementation must be consistent with CBNRM strategies,
- Project formulation and sector work should be participatory and involve stakeholders through multi-level consultation,
- Disbursement of project funds tied to adequate participatory monitoring of social, environment and economic impacts,
- Promote cross-learning between donors, governments and the World Bank, and
- Implement the World Bank's existing decentralized fiscal arrangements and procedures that give fiscal authority to communities and allow for community cost-sharing for NRM activities.