



INNOVATIVE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, INC.  
*Bringing people, ideas and actions together in sustainable ways*

**Emerging Coalitions and Sustainable Development in the Commons: Developing Frameworks and Tools for Negotiating Development Space in the New Millennium**

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## Overview<sup>1</sup>

Negotiated development space currently is not a *quid pro quo* for stakeholders to the commons. Identification of development priorities and actions that are the product of multi-stakeholder negotiations is far more often than not lacking in the commons. This lack results in accentuation of “management vacuums”. These vacuums either exacerbate pre-existing resource mining in open-access situations, or accelerate the breakdown of local institutions that may have served as *de facto* resource management bodies in many colonial and post-independence developing country scenarios. In the absence of management structures, local or otherwise, open-access situations with unsustainable rates of resource extraction come to prevail. These are anathema to sustainable development.<sup>2</sup>

Intersectoral partnering is emerging as an increasingly important development strategy in response to current development trends. These trends include a decline in international development funding, a devolution of national government power to local entities, heightened involvement of the private sector in social issues, and an increasing number of civil society actors.<sup>3</sup> The challenge to partnering today, is that methods for achieving intersectoral partnerships involving multiple stakeholders are still at a very early stage of development.

This paper presents work that has recently been initiated by Innovative Resources Management (IRM) together with The Mediation Institute (TMI), HAZMED and other partners<sup>4</sup>. Its objective is the development of a consensus framework methodology (CFM) for intersectoral partnerships and coalition building in environment and development sector activities. The framework seeks to build, via a consensus-based process among a broad representative array of stakeholders, an operational model that could represent a first step to a new development paradigm premised on horizontal collaboration in the fullest, versus either bottom-up or top-down planning and implementation. It is distinguished from other frameworks such as the World Bank’s “Comprehensive Development Framework” (CDF) in that it does not need to pass through government to identify representative stakeholders and priority issues for any consultative, or consensus seeking process.<sup>5</sup> With the CFM, any group can, in theory, take the lead in seeking a consensus agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Strasser, Senior Facilitator at HAZMED Inc. and Christin Hutchinson, Program Manager of IRM kindly reviewed and provided critical feedback of this paper. Christine Pendzich, Environmental Facilitator, provided early substantive input. Diane Russell, Environment Advisor, USAID/Congo provided conceptual critique on frameworks. All faults with the paper are Michael Brown’s responsibility alone.

<sup>2</sup> For simplification, I am folding biodiversity conservation under sustainable development hereafter, unless treated separately.

<sup>3</sup> Charles, Chanya L., Stephanie McNulty, John A Pennell 1998, “Partnering for Results - A User’s Guide to Intersectoral Partnering. Prepared for the USAID Mission Director’s Conference. United States Agency for International Development. Washington, D.C.

<sup>4</sup> Innovative Resources Management, Inc. (IRM) is a 501(c) 3 non-governmental organization, and The Mediation Institute (TMI) is a 501(c) 3 dispute resolution firm. HAZMED is a Federal 8(a) woman-owned environmental engineering and information technology consulting firm.

<sup>5</sup> See the World Bank’s website for a number of papers describing the CDF including <http://www.worldbank.org/cdf/overview.htm> for an overview of the CDF, and <http://www.worldbank.org/cdf/progressreport.htm> for a progress report on implementation.

This paper is premised on the notion that appropriate forms of management are preferable to open-access in most developing country situations, and that identification of appropriate forms can only result from multi-stakeholder negotiation. A further premise is that recent changes in the geopolitical landscape that nascent democratization and decentralization processes offer peoples in many developing countries are creating new “development space”. The impact of economic globalization and global communications networks on opening up opportunities for marginalized peoples are also just beginning to be understood.

Within this space, opportunities are emerging for analyzing how power relations are either consolidating or breaking down between different stakeholder groups to common pool resources (CPRs). More importantly, I argue, opportunities exist for forging new modes of social organization and accompanying tools to minimize risk for all stakeholders committed to sustainable development agendas. I believe that with these new tools, coalition formation will be facilitated. In so doing, it will hopefully eliminate the need for the “everyday forms of peasant resistance”<sup>6</sup>, as new tools will offer less powerful groups the opportunity to participate and contribute positively to social change processes. Options based on procedure and participatory process have not always been seen by impoverished stakeholders to be either within their reach, or viable.

That said, as a forthcoming paper on coalitions and alliances in the field of biodiversity conservation illustrates<sup>7</sup>, alliances or coalitions are by no means easy to build. Nor does their existence guarantee success. We are all still at the early stages of building processes and tools that offer hope to all who are genuinely concerned about creating the conditions that will enable sustainable development to be realized.

Unequal power relations within kinship, age or gender based groups has been, and remains, a major constraint to effective management of CPRs and to sustainable development generally. So too, inequalities at an institutional level based on authority, financial resources, status, etc., often create barriers to communication.<sup>8</sup> These within-group and cross-group differences also pose challenges for creation of frameworks that promote collaboration, and creation of new management perspectives needed to underpin development that will be sustainable. Despite democratization and decentralization trends, the incentives for resource-rich stakeholders to share negotiation space with less endowed stakeholder groups remain in many cases to be clarified. And where the will to change ways is becoming apparent in many cases at the governmental and private sector levels, standardized procedures and tools for promoting collaborative planning in complex situations to take advantage new perspectives and understandings is still rudimentary.

All these many challenges considered, I argue nonetheless that in both the conservation and

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<sup>6</sup> See Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven: Yale University for a social science perspective on why historically the poor had little alternative but to resort to militant resistance to promote social change.

<sup>7</sup> See Margoluis, Richard, 2000. “In Good Company: Effective Alliances for Conservation”. Biodiversity Support Program, analysis and Adaptive Management Program. World Wildlife fund. Washington, D.C.

<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Diane Russell for reinforcing this point.

sustainable development realms, consortiums, alliances and coalitions<sup>9</sup> that include different stakeholders and institutions will be increasingly seen as fundamental to achieving both conservation and development agendas. I also believe that incentive structures for government, multi-nationals and the private sector to seek common ground with less powerful stakeholder groups over CPRs will, for a variety of reasons, also become more pronounced in the coming years. This is based on changing contextual realities in the commons, along with our own nascent work program.

These new alliances must be the product of intra- and inter-stakeholder negotiation processes. That said, much action-research remains to sort out roles and responsibilities, along with sequencing and integration of programming on the ground. Even more fundamental, the problem of marginalized groups who lack skills to adequately participate in any negotiation process must be addressed.

The absence of negotiated development space is posited to be both a cause, as well as an effect, of open-access situations. This is a constraint to development and conservation programming, as that which is identified through either top-down or bottom-up planning processes often proves unfeasible for a variety of reasons. These reasons include lack of local buy-in, lack of technical or institutional capacity, incorrect assumptions about enabling conditions, or limitations in scale which preclude broad based impact. Often the issue in the commons has less in fact to do with *sustainability*, than with appropriate and feasible development to begin with.

I argue further that sustainable development can only occur in the commons by:

- Approaching development through a horizontal planning and implementation model leading to coalition formation, versus either a bottom-up or top-down model
- Developing consensus-based frameworks and mechanisms linking multiple stakeholders, which are systematically improved upon through an iterative action-research agenda
- Engendering donor leverage over recipient national government partners to open up development processes in the commons to negotiated partnerships in, ideally, all programming phases.

The paper also introduces experiences with a multifaceted approach developed under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE) that can be used for engendering participation in the commons. This approach is referred to as *participatory mapping* (PM), though it encompasses a number of components and activities beyond mapping per se. I suggest that in numerous development and conservation scenarios involving broad landscapes and high stakes conservation and development agendas, strategic linkage of the CFM and PM will offer enormous potential to promote sustainable development objectives in the commons.

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<sup>9</sup> There is terminological imprecision in the literature in the use of these words. I opt for ‘coalitions’ to refer to broad-based, multistakeholder groupings with operational agendas.

## I. The Conceptual Underpinnings for the Shift to Consensus Based Frameworks

In 1990, Ostrom<sup>10</sup> wrote the following:

What is needed is further theoretical development that can help identify variables that must be included in any effort to explain and predict when appropriators using smaller-scale CPRs are more likely to self-organize and effectively govern their own CPRs, and when they are more likely to fail.

When individuals who have high discount rates and little mutual trust act independently, without the capacity to communicate, to enter into binding agreements, and to arrange for monitoring and enforcing mechanisms, they are not likely to choose jointly beneficial strategies unless such strategies happen to be their dominant strategies.

At present, there are overlays of contradictory, if not conflicting variables, or forces, that complicates managing resources in the commons. Jointly, they constrain the best efforts of appropriators to organize and judiciously govern CPRs. These overlays consist of:

1. Policy frameworks that abrogate traditional ownership and use rights from the *de fact* 4 stewards of natural resources
2. The incapacity of states to effectively manage resources
3. The erosion of formerly functional multipurpose rural institutions, which contribute to resource management in the commons
4. The arrival of an array of private sector actors with multiple messages and programs, seeking control over common area resources.

In the context of the conflicting forces cited, predicting when under what conditions appropriators are likely to self-organize is still as relevant in 2000 as it was in 1990. Predicting when individuals are likely to seek agreements and facilitating mechanisms for CPR management is, I argue, considerably more relevant today than in 1990. This, based on conclusions from anecdotal evidence over the past ten years including the following:

- ❑ top-down planning in development still predominates, all bottom-up rhetoric aside
- ❑ the philosophically well-intentioned donor and non-governmental organization push for bottom-up planning is proving, by and large, operationally unattainable in many CPR management situations
- ❑ persistence in promoting bottom-up rhetoric perpetuates development stagnation in the commons
- ❑ only negotiated, multi-stakeholder horizontal planning and implementation will prove effective in addressing most complex CPR situations.

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<sup>10</sup> See Elinor Ostrom, 1990, *Governing the Commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge University Press.

There has been little analysis to identify the steps and variables that facilitate groups entering into agreements. We assert, however, that this will be a major area in which increasingly, serious research will need to be devoted. Until there are frameworks and procedures that bring stakeholders together to negotiate agreements which to a certain extent are “standardized”, yet flexible, we feel there will be little progress made in sustainable resource management of common pool resources.

The collaborative effort we envision involves the following steps:

- ❑ facilitating intra-group cooperation to identify *a* stakeholder position across a range of issues that can be representative in more complex negotiations
- ❑ determining what ingredients will sustain this internal stakeholder group cooperation
- ❑ determining how consensus positions can be reached within stakeholder groups that involve complex tradeoffs and internal negotiation
- ❑ determining how a constructive multi-stakeholder negotiation process over a range of issues can emerge
- ❑ reaching consensus, *if feasible*, on specific issues across stakeholder groups
- ❑ building on successes to create precedents for collaborative planning and management

While this process is somewhat developed in the United States and Europe<sup>11</sup>, the absence of effective judicial and legislative systems in many developing countries constrains the short-term application of consensus-based methods that prove challenging even in countries where the overall environment is enabling. 5

The partners in CFM development have concluded that it will only be through systematically structured and applied processes that promote dialogue, consultation and the emergence of multi-stakeholder working groups, alliances and coalitions, that sustainability objectives have any chance of being met in the commons.

## II. The Consensus Framework Methodology (CFM)

### Overview of Need

As measured by sustainability of actual results, the effectiveness of developing country environmental and development programs has been tenuous. While planning has been largely “top-down” and expert-driven, results on broad scales leading to poverty reduction and environmental benefits continue to prove elusive. Lack of operational frameworks and mechanisms to systematically facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and project planning across sectors remains a serious impediment to sustainable results. Inappropriate and/or unfeasible programming litters the landscape and worse, continues to be promoted by development agencies.

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<sup>11</sup> For one of the more successful examples of a protracted process involving multiple stakeholder groups with common pool resource implications, see Alan Strasser’s account of “The Pine Street Barge Canal NPL Site: Community-Based Consensus Group Reaches Settlement on Remedy and Additional Projects”, VHB Siteworks, Vol. 1, No. 5, October/November 1998) for description of what the Environmental Protection Agency called “a national model from community based decision making”.

## CFM Work Approach and Premises

The CFM addresses a number of important issues currently facing the public and private sectors as well as civil society in terms of reaching agreements on feasible and desirable development goals. The CFM is premised on the principle that collaborative and multi-stakeholder partnerships are possible in many complex settings involving multiple development variables, and therefore includes a suite of tools and procedures that have been validated in diverse development settings worldwide. These tools, however, have never before been brought together and integrated. This is one factor that makes the CFM unique. While many can identify with aspects of the CFM and therefore believe they are already doing it, it is the CFM's multi-stakeholder operational structure that sets it apart from current development and conservation programming.

### What does the CFM add to existing participatory approaches?

A number of current participatory methodologies promote social sustainability in development and conservation initiatives. These include participatory rural appraisal (PRA), rapid rural appraisal (RRA), and the methods employed by the World Commission on Dams (WCD). Together, they have taken a critical step forward in laying a solid conceptual foundation for involving all stakeholders in the identification, design, implementation, and evaluation of development initiatives. These methodologies have been used particularly in developing country contexts. They do not, however, systematically address the many social, cultural, and economic issues pertaining to feasibility that often introduce insurmountable obstacles to the realization of development goals so that specific objectives can be achieved. The latter include what types of decision-making processes, if any, are best suited to facilitate consensus building. While the WCD has clearly taken this the furthest and therein offers both a model and justification for aspects of the CFM, it is not a tool *per se*, and its sectoral and institutional specificity limit the extent of its applicability beyond dam-related settings.

The CFM specifically addresses the need for highly diverse stakeholders to not only *participate* in designing development initiatives, it also strives to *reach working consensus* on development goals, thereby raising all parties' *motivation to actually make development occur regardless of the sector*. This makes CFM an effective risk management tool for governmental and corporate entities that require accurate appraisal of the feasibility of high profile projects at the outset.<sup>12</sup> For example, in the "stakeholder analysis phase"<sup>13</sup> the CFM will analyze the issues, the best parties to effectively represent those issues, and suggest a process, among the many tools available, that can be utilized to achieve a consensus, or other decision deemed desirable. A brief description of the tools, beyond PRAs and other proven consultative models include the use of dispute resolution techniques utilizing third-party neutrals.

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<sup>12</sup> IRM and its partners in the CFM believe that perceived risk management benefits will ultimately determine the success of the CFM. See Liberatore, Angela, 1999, *The Management of Uncertainty: Learning from Chernobyl*. Gordon and Breach Publishers, Amsterdam, for one of the more powerful cases for why CFM type tools are increasingly needed to manage risk.

<sup>13</sup> Also called "convening" by many U.S. practitioners.

## What is the CFM?

The CFM is a participatory approach to the identification, design, implementation, and evaluation of development projects that focuses on building appropriate multi-sectoral partnerships and coalitions to achieve sustainable development goals. In the process, conflict can be avoided or mitigated.<sup>14</sup>

The CFM is based largely on the principles and premises of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), as developed in the United States and Canada but increasingly applied around the world during the last ten years<sup>15</sup>. With democratization and decentralization processes becoming ever more relevant globally, we feel that the scope for adaptation of ADR principles may be broadening. When these principles are merged with best practices developed over the past thirty years from the international development arena, particularly in the area of ‘social sustainability’<sup>16</sup>, we feel that the resulting tool offers potential to be powerful. This section focuses particularly on ADR elements that are combined with development best practices in the CFM.

Despite the cultural and political differences between developed and developing countries, the experience of the United States is quite relevant to international situations for at least three reasons. First, the use of a range of consultative processes by U.S. agencies, augmented by the use of third-party neutrals (e.g., mediators and facilitators) has established a detailed history of best practices and associated pitfalls. Second, the U.S. system is arguably the most sophisticated model, and has been utilized in an impressive array of contentious multi-party disputes. Third, the U.S. Congress has passed two pieces of legislation that endorse the use of consultative and consensus-based processes.<sup>17</sup>

As Philip J. Harter, one of the pioneers in the theory and practice of U.S. consultative processes, has observed: “consultations and negotiations between agencies and affected interests are an essential ingredient of the administrative process if not democracy itself.”<sup>18</sup> Consultation processes, described by the U.S. Attorney General in 1947 as “nothing new”, have been officially established since the passage of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). In the United States, consultative processes are augmented by the use of third party neutral dispute resolution experts. As a result, agency decision making processes, such as notice and comment rulemaking (e.g.,

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<sup>14</sup> See Figure 1 for where the CFM fits in on a continuum of participatory approaches to development planning.

<sup>15</sup> The Inter-American Bank has been working on the use of ADR to address conflicts in coastal zone management situations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>16</sup> See G. Borrini-Feyerabend, *Beyond Fences: Seeking Social Sustainability in Conservation*, Vols. 1&2, 1997, IUCN, United Kingdom, for the repertoire of tools and methods that can be integrated with ADR strategies and tools as described in this paper.

<sup>17</sup> The Negotiated Rulemaking Act is codified at 5 U.S.C. secs. 561-570. The Administrative Dispute Resolution Act is codified at 5 U.S.C. secs. 571-583.

<sup>18</sup> Philip J. Harter, Fear of Commitment: An Affliction of Adolescents, *Duke Law Journal*, Vol. 46 page 1389 (1997) (Describing the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) by government agencies and arguing that consensus processes can promote sophisticated agreements that would be unobtainable through pure “consultative” approaches).



policy) and site-specific decisions (e.g., pollution permitting), can be facilitated by using ADR techniques. Since the typical processes can be easily delayed or blocked when controversial issues arise, ADR techniques have proven valuable to environmental agencies in the U.S. that have used these techniques for over 25 years. These best practices have resulted in the passage of two major federal laws that promote consultation and consensus in agency decision-making. These include the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act and the Negotiated Rulemaking Act.<sup>19 20</sup> Hence while many NGOs and multilaterals are continually attempting to craft new development models, none to our knowledge are capitalizing on this extraordinary body of knowledge.

Agencies utilize three basic techniques to consult with the interest groups that are likely to be affected by a decision. First, agencies use information exchanges, such as town meetings to learn about issues. These are “one-way” exchanges as agencies typically do not state their positions. No agreement is sought in such forums. A more detailed process is dialogue, also known as advisory groups. While some of these groups are officially convened by law under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), more often these groups are informal in nature and attempt to scope out and define issues in a two-way dialogue. Consensus decisions have the explicit goal of crafting a binding and lasting agreement. The two main types of issues that have been successfully negotiated through consensus processes are policy/regulations and site-specific issues. Unlike the other processes, each party has a ‘veto’ over the final decision, including the agency. These processes are most effective on highly contentious, technical multi-party disputes.

Specifically, ADR comprises a set of strategies and approaches for addressing conflicts. Key strategies (which some might label ‘tools’) include the following:

- ❑ Negotiation
- ❑ Conciliation
- ❑ Mediation
- ❑ Facilitation
- ❑ Consensus

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The remainder of this section provides a synopsis of each of these strategies.

## **NEGOTIATION**

This is at the heart of the CFM. It consists of structured dialogue between two or more parties regarding their differing perspectives on, and interests in, a development issue. Major issues to discuss include:

- **Credibility.** How can negotiations be credible, or even be operationalized, when the parties involved are separated by wide disparities in economic or political resources, by culture or by

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<sup>19</sup> The Negotiated Rulemaking Act is codified at 5 U.S.C. secs. 561-570. The Administrative Dispute Resolution Act is codified at 5 U.S.C. secs. 571-583.

<sup>20</sup> See Fear of Commitment, *supra* note 11, Appendix B (providing chart summarizing federal agency use of negotiated rulemaking including results of efforts).

differing languages (totally different languages or sub-dialects, or just totally different meanings for what appear to be the same words).

- Negotiation stages. This involves identifying stakeholders, issues and possible designs for the process of negotiating (“convening,”<sup>21</sup>); setting the “rules of the game”; defining the agenda, developing options for solutions, developing criteria by which acceptable options will be selected; coming to agreement; writing up agreement and monitoring/follow-up system; implementation.
- Jumpstarting a negotiation.

## CONCILIATION

At times, conflicts polarize to the point where key stakeholders refuse to communicate with each other directly. A third party – individual or organization – may be invited to help open channels of communication. The neutral party will work to help each side clarify its position and relay views in an acceptable manner to other parties involved. In international arenas, the Oslo conciliation process involving Israel and the Palestinians that facilitated resumption of Middle East talks is a prime example of conciliation in the diplomatic arena. One could imagine that conciliation techniques could, in theory, be used in development contexts involving disaffected local populations and mining or oil companies, for example, in any number of current situations around the world.

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## MEDIATION

A neutral party’s assistance, as requested and accepted by all sides in a controversy, in helping to achieve a negotiated settlement. This is characterized by the following:

- Mediators do not make any decisions. They only offer process suggestions.
- The types of suggestions mediators offer:
  - ✓ Help in the design of a negotiation, often through convening;
  - ✓ help in developing and gaining acceptance of ground rules;
  - ✓ may help to obtain financial or information resources that enable less powerful parties to participate;
  - ✓ help in leveling the playing field;
  - ✓ may actually facilitate the negotiation sessions;
  - ✓ may help in drafting agreements.

Mediators are most effective when stakeholders have come to an impasse over issues. Mediators succeed when they get dialogue going, and facilitate reaching an agreement.

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<sup>21</sup> The critical best practice of “convening” has been endorsed by the U.S. Congress in the Negotiated Rulemaking Act, 5 U.S.C. secs. 561-570. Hence, it is a model process that can be adapted to different cultural and political contexts to help predict outcomes and the most appropriate process to employ.

## FACILITATION

Facilitation involves enabling steps to launch dialogue and different types of processes that culminate in some form of increased information, knowledge and goodwill that lead to agreements. It is as much art as science, and is worth its weight in gold when undertaken effectively.

## CONSENSUS

Consensus involves the effort to develop agreement over all major issues among all parties, or stakeholders, most affected by a decision (e.g. governmental) through a mediation process. In the U.S. experience, consensus agreements create certainty and closure demanded by the private sector, governments, and NGOs engaged in complex technical multi-party negotiations. In fact, while some NGOs may be concerned that negotiating on environmental, health, and safety issues will lead to a “sell out,” these fears are often not supported on closer inspection. Consensus decisions in the U.S. experience have proven, perhaps ironically, to often be technically sound, and acceptable to all parties. They are, in fact, typically *more* environmentally stringent than standards set by agencies themselves.<sup>22</sup> This seeming paradox is due to the fact that consensus processes enable sophisticated tradeoffs to be made; consequently, a corporation will agree to reduce emissions or employ mitigation measures if its reporting requirements set by the government are reduced.

One reason why Innovative Resources Management and its partners feel strongly about the potential for consensus based procedures in developing country contexts, is that there is oftentimes strong precedent established for these methods locally. In many traditional societies, very powerful models of consensus building often already exist. This is particularly true in acephalous societies such as Somali pastoral nomadic society or Papua New Guinean clan based societies. But it also is true, to a large extent, in societies where chieftaincies operate as well, and where societies are becoming increasingly more hybrid mixes of so-called ‘traditional’ mixed with new organizational forms. In a range of these ‘hybrid’ contexts, consensus based forms of decision making often retain considerable legitimacy, especially again among many so-called indigenous peoples.

There are both pros and cons to consensus building. The former includes obtaining a strong buy-in from all participants, and therefore improving chances of success in actual project implementation. It also helps in building a ‘team effort’ and in generating creative solutions to complex problems. The downside is that it requires considerable time and patience. While

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<sup>22</sup> Alan Strasser, The Pine Street Barge Canal NPL Site: Community-Based Consensus Group Reaches Settlement on Remedy and Additional Projects, @ *VHB Siteworks*, Vol. 1, Number 5 (October/November 1998) (describing the first-of-its-kind in the nation case to employ consensus-based mediation at a Superfund site to settle cleanup and redevelopment issues and arguing for using a similar process in other brownfields sites).

consensus may not be either applicable or achievable in every setting (particularly those requiring rapid response and action), for large, multi-stakeholder, potentially contentious initiatives ranging from dams, to pipelines to newly gazetted national parks, consensus based methods may offer great promise over top-down methods currently employed.

### **III. A complementary tool to operationalize the CFM on the ground: Participatory Mapping (PM)**

The Center for Support Native Lands has been utilizing participatory mapping as the primary tool to promote indigenous peoples' use rights and ownership claims to common lands in Latin

America over the past five years.<sup>23</sup> Innovative Resources Management has been using the same mapping methods in Central Africa since 1999. The methods have proven extremely powerful in mobilizing communities to take conservation action, and in enabling communities to develop tools to renegotiate common area management. When linked to institutional analysis, incentive identification, and forest resource inventorying (see Figure 2) the package (called 'Participatory Mapping', or PM) is proving effective in decentralized, low resource-input contexts where local participation is maximized toward the objective of biodiversity conservation.<sup>24</sup> While IRM has yet to link PM to the CFM, we feel that this offers much potential for negotiating developm 11 space among stakeholders to different CPRs in the new millennium. We will discuss this fu in the next section of the paper, after covering the basic elements of the PM process as regards biodiversity conservation in particular.

Where biodiversity conservation is concerned, the efficacy of different institutions for specific common pool resource management tasks is still being tested. Community-based institutions, for example, may be highly effective in some areas for management of particular resources, while in other cases, if capacities are weak, they may not be. Even for large, well-endowed northern NGOs, resource management efficacy as measured by performance based indicators leaves something to be desired.<sup>25</sup> To address the challenges, some have posited that multiple overlapping institutions present the best scenario for achieving conservation results.<sup>26</sup> The PM approach offers a tool to bring multiple institutions to the table through a bottom-up driven process at landscape levels.

Under the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), IRM has been developing this highly participatory approach to forest management which, we believe, establishes conditions at the community level

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<sup>23</sup> The Center for the Support of Native Lands is based in Arlington, Virginia. They are compiling a book on their experiences over the last decade in participatory mapping (PM). They can be reached at [nativlan@access.digex.net](mailto:nativlan@access.digex.net). IRM's approach to PM is based on CNL's actual mapping methods, but extends the methods further to create a 'package' that includes institutional analysis, inventorying and product development.

<sup>24</sup> Innovative Resources Management is in the process of posting participatory maps onto its website – see [www.irmgt.com](http://www.irmgt.com). Click on Papers/ Participatory Mapping.

<sup>25</sup> See Margoluis, *Ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> Russell, Diane 1999, "Strengthening Central african Institutions for Natural Resource Management in CARPE 2: A Concept Paper", citing Elinor Ostrom, 1998, (reference not provided).

that can lead to more effective forest management in Congo Basin landscapes. Appropriateness of scale depends on the conservation and development challenge. While the map scale has varied from 1:15,000 to 1:30,000, smaller scales are possible to gain breadth across landscapes. This technology, premised on communities jointly identifying where resources occur across landscapes, enables communities to more objectively portray and discuss resource occurrence, and *de facto* use patterns. This is crucial to any multi-stakeholder negotiated land use planning process such as those potentially offered through changes to existing forestry legislation in developing countries.<sup>27</sup>

The maps currently do not illustrate boundaries between resource user groups. This allows for institutional relations across landscapes to be adduced during multi-stakeholder sessions in which the maps are used. This will facilitate looking at landscapes as “webs” of human and biophysical resources over which multiple institutions may have overlapping claims to resources and their management.<sup>28</sup>

The mapping work focuses on the interface between institutions and resources. Institutions can be examined at different levels in light of their authority, enforcement capacity, and decision-making structures. By juxtaposing the web of institutions against the type of resources to be managed, we can see where there are structural weaknesses, as well as gaps in authority and enforcement capacity.

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The Innovative Resources Management approach to forest management consists of four core areas that must be addressed as a precondition to any local management of common pool forest resources:

- ❑ objective assessment of institutional capacities of local forest resource management systems
- ❑ participatory sampling of the forest resource base over which communities feel they have use rights and potential management responsibility
- ❑ participatory mapping of the forest estate within which they use or manage resources
- ❑ identification of potential economic or other types of incentives that could stimulate forest and biodiversity conservation.

The approach is based on five levels of activities (See Figure 1), and builds on lessons learned from rapid and participatory rural appraisal, co-management, community forestry and other participatory methodologies. To be successful, the approach must be applied in an integrated fashion. So too, hands-on mobilization must be linked to wider policy reform activities to be successful.

We believe the approach addresses the issue of improving communication between stakeholders enables stakeholders to move towards negotiated agreements for resource management, and will lead to effective monitoring and enforcing mechanisms. In short, initial results indicate that there

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<sup>27</sup> See MINEF/Action 1997. *Manuel des procédures d'attributions et des normes de gestion des forêts communautaires*. Ministry of Water and Forests, Government of Cameroon. Yaounde.

may be opportunities for communities, together with other stakeholders in the Congo Basin, to move toward jointly beneficial strategies. Most importantly, for this move to happen momentum is required. At least one group must perceive that the status quo is no longer viable, and must therefore push forward for social change. While not guaranteeing that this move will be sufficient, it is clear that it is a necessary component to any change.

This approach integrates institutional analysis of natural resources management, identifies potentially feasible natural product development options, conducts participatory resource inventorying, and maps communities' vision of where natural resources and resource use occurs. The latter vision, once mapped and geo-referenced, is called participatory mapping. Within CARPE, many have come to label the entire package approach as "participatory mapping". While inconvenient in some ways, we will stick with the convention established here.

#### **IV. Strategic Integration of Key Elements – The CFM linked to PM**

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Coordination and integration of actors and tools is sorely lacking in the commons. For integration to occur, frameworks must exist that incorporate actors, tools, principles and adaptive management mechanisms to enable integration of key elements. This is particularly vital, as structures for both downward and upward accountability in developing country common pool resource areas are often lacking.

While it appears, to take just one common area's example, that decentralized forest management has been occurring in India and Mali, the devolution of powers tends to be fairly circumscribed, with central governments retaining control even in the context of decentralization initiatives<sup>29</sup>. I feel that absent frameworks that bridge actors and tools to "development principles" and laws, it is difficult to see how anything but *ad hoc* progress will be made on common pool resource issues in these and other similar situations.

As discussed in this paper, Innovative Resources Management Inc. together with the Mediation Institute, HAZMED Inc, and others in developing countries including the Independent Commission for Peoples Rights and Development in India, and the Conseil Malgache des ONGs de Developpement et l'Environnement (COMODE) are working collectively to put frameworks in place as the next key step to tackling common pool resource management issues.

We envision that the CFM and PM will offer the greatest potential to be linked in commons' area resource management if the following two conditions are met:

- A philosophical and political willingness exists on the part of stakeholders to commit to both consensus-based and highly participatory processes to reduce the probability of conflict and unsustainable development.

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<sup>29</sup> See Agrawal, Arun and Jesse Ribot, Forthcoming, "Accountability in Decentralization: A Framework with South Asian and West African Examples". Journal of Developing Areas; and Parker, Andrew, 1995, "Decentralization: The Way forward for Rural Development?" World Bank. Washington, DC.

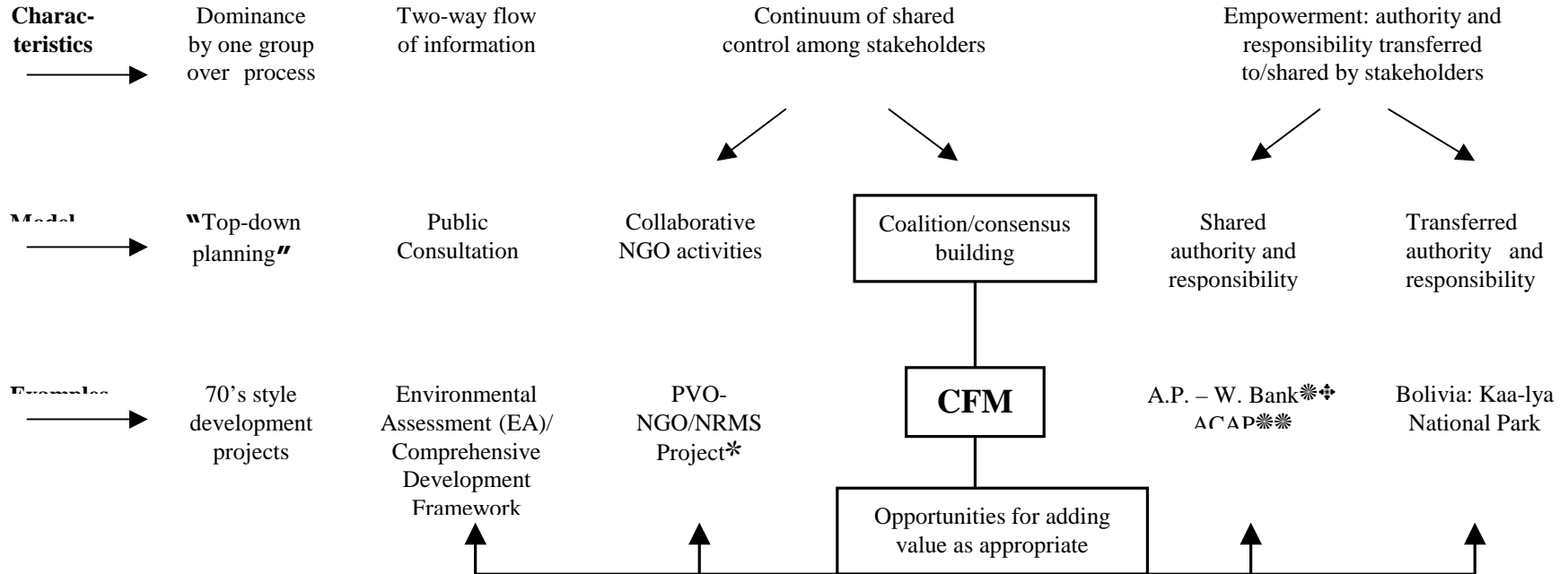
- Leadership among private sector, donors, and government is comparable to Non-governmental Organization and civil society counterparts.

The CFM, and/or improved versions upon it will hopefully be used in the new millennium to (1) reach decisions about what development agendas should broadly look like (2) reach decisions about how specific initiatives should, or should not, be implemented based on appropriateness and feasibility criteria.

Participatory mapping will be used to empower local, often marginal groups, to portray their common property resources to inform any development or conservation efforts. This will feed into identification of appropriate and feasible actions on the ground.

It is my opinion that if the two approaches could be linked – CFM and PM -- far more sane and equitable development and conservation scenarios will be reached in the commons than is currently the case. It also is possible that the CFM will need to go through a number of iterations before it can be labeled a ‘model methodology’ for reaching consensus in development planning. This should not preclude efforts to promote its testing in the short-term. For this, Innovative Resources Management and its partners in CFM development will need help from like-minded colleagues to help move this agenda forward. <sup>14</sup>

# CFM on the “collaboration continuum”



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\* Andra Pradesh/World Bank Joint Forestry Project

\*\* Annapurna Conservation Area Project

❖ India Eco-Development Project



**Figure 2: The Innovative Resources Management Model for Decentralized Natural Resource Management in the Congo Basin**

