Multi-Actor Platform
Design Guide

CoRe

FES
FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

CGIAR RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Policies, Institutions, and Markets
Led by IFPRI

MULTI-ACTOR PLATFORM
DESIGN GUIDE

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Note: This Guide includes material excerpted and adapted from: Ratner, B.D., and W.E. Smith. 2014. Collaborating for Resilience: A Practitioner's Guide. Penang, Malaysia: Collaborating for Resilience; and Ratner, B.D. 2013. Collaborative Governance Assessment. Guidance Note. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through a longstanding partnership, Collaborating for Resilience (CoRe) has worked with the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) to accelerate local governance innovation and collective action in rural India. The goal of this partnership is to restore the health of local ecosystems, revitalize the productivity of degraded landscapes and, ultimately, strengthen the resilience of rural communities. As part of the ambitious Promise of Commons initiative, CoRe was asked to develop a suite of field-tested institutional design models or "templates" adapted to the most common sets of obstacles and opportunities encountered in strengthening local governance.

This Design Guide is the result of this collective undertaking. A workshop held at the FES coordination office in Anand, Gujarat, in April 2018 identified common challenges among FES field teams working to build and strengthen multi-actor platforms. In October 2019, the field teams gathered again to develop the content of the Design Guide in a participatory fashion. Subsequently it was field-tested and further enriched with new field experiences.

We wish to thank workshop participants who have contributed to the development of this Guide:

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A companion presentation to aid training and capacity building is available at www.coresilience.org/resources

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Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Interactions of government officers with communities during a Gram Sabha (Village Meeting) in Kalaspur village, Odisha, India

INTRODUCTION

The most important challenges that rural communities face—from jobs to health and education to environmental management—can't effectively be addressed by any one actor alone. They require **collaboration** among government, civil society, community, and private sector actors. They require linking actors across scales, from the village to the district and often higher levels, where financing or policy or legal and regulatory support may be needed. Because the solutions aren't simple, and they come with costs, there's often a need to explore many possible solutions, debate these, and eventually align the actions of different groups to achieve shared goals.

This Design Guide focuses on one proven model to address such challenges—an institutional innovation called a **multi-actor platform (MAP)**. The Guide is intended for practitioners from civil society, government and development agencies to better understand the options for designing, implementing and strengthening MAPs.

What is a multi-actor platform?

A multi-actor platform is an approach to local governance. It has four distinguishing characteristics. It must:

Address a challenge of public importance and concern. It may be narrowly defined, focused for example on children's health, youth employment, or reforestation. Or it may be broader in scope, addressing a combination of challenges within a defined geographic region.

Convene groups representing different sectors of society. This includes government, community and civil society (such as NGOs and professional associations). Often it includes representation from the private sector as well, both small-scale (such as cooperatives and small enterprises) as well as large-scale companies and industry associations.

Link actors across scales of decision-making. It provides a forum for dialogue and debate that brings together representatives from different localities and agencies with different levels of geographic mandate.

Represent a sustained effort over time. A single meeting or event does not constitute a MAP. Instead, a MAP is typically envisioned to endure for months and years, addressing a purpose of public concern that requires ongoing attention.

MAPs may develop from the local level, such as a federation of villages within a local watershed, to the national level or even beyond that and include actors from several countries. For this Guide, our focus is on MAPs at the intermediate, sub-national scale. Typically, that means a landscape, above the collection of villages but below the state or province, though it may also cross administrative boundaries. This intermediate level is often characterized by critical "governance gaps"—where there is a strong need for more responsive, inclusive and equitable decision-making.

MAPs have been organized successfully in many countries to share information, build dialogue over future options, and catalyze action to address challenges in a wide range of sectors. A MAP can go by many names, such as "multi-stakeholder platform," "multi-stakeholder forum," or "collaborative planning process." No matter where your MAP is, or what name you use, a solid foundation in basic principles of multi-stakeholder collaboration will improve your chances of success.

Key principles

This section summarizes the key principles of the MAP approach[1] applied in this Guide.

The essential beginning point for a MAP is a **common purpose**. This has to be big enough to appeal to all the groups and actors that need to be involved. And it has to respond to a **pressing need**, so that people will be motivated to participate.

In a shared watershed, for example, the immediate goals of different actors may be in sharp contrast, or even in conflict. Herders may be seeking more grazing land. Small-scale farmers may be seeking more regular water supply for their crops. Forest users may be looking to ensure access to fuelwood. Large-scale agroindustry operators may be seeking more land to consolidate to boost production. Mining companies may be seeking exploitation rights for resources below the soil. Government officials may be primarily concerned with economic growth or job creation.

As illustrated in *Figure 1*, on the next page, a systems perspective requires moving from the perspective of individual group goals to broader, **shared values** that bridge multiple groups, like fairness and equity.

[1] This Guide introduces an approach to building and strengthening MAPs that is grounded in an organizing framework called Collaborating for Resilience. For a more detailed reference on the approach, please refer to Ratner, B.D. and W.E. Smith (2014), Collaborating for Resilience: A Practitioner's Guide.

At times, it may also mean identifying **shared ideals** that all can agree upon, like a healthy environment for all. The convening purpose for a MAP—the purpose that brings different groups to the table—can be a combination of more immediate goals and more general values or ideals.

So, in a given region, the urgency that motivates different groups to act might be a crisis over water availability, or youth migration, or an opportunity such as an investment fund for public works. For MAP organizers, the aim is to channel that sense of urgency towards a shared **purpose** that will sustain the motivation of diverse groups over time.

Perhaps it is focused on equitable and sustainable livelihoods, or youth opportunities, or community health and welfare. The common purpose can be refined and adapted over time. The test is that whether it continues to motivate key groups to stay engagement.

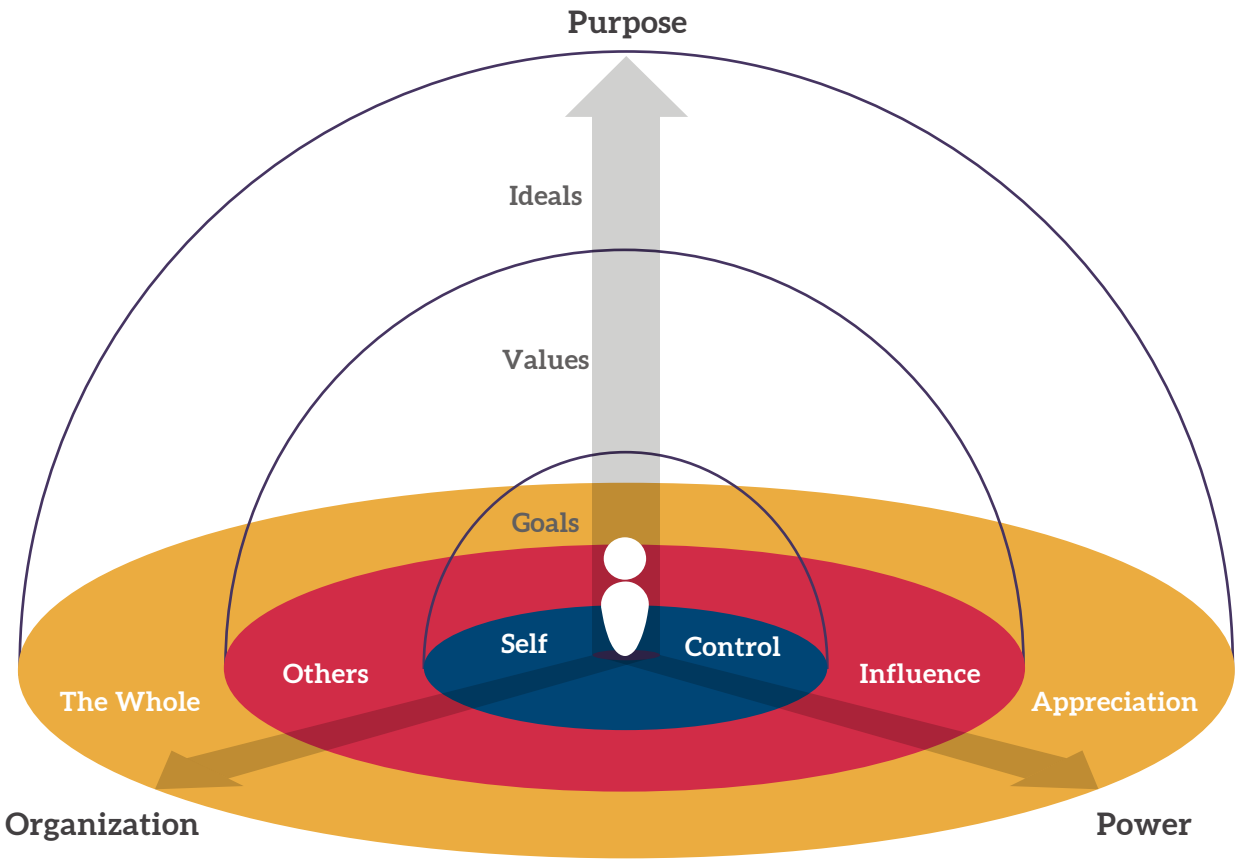


Figure 1. The appreciation-influence-control model of social systems.
Source: Ratner and Smith (2014), Collaborating for Resilience: A Practitioner's Guide.

But whose participation is essential? How do you know if you have the right **people** involved? Ask, do they represent the whole system—all the key players who are affected by and are needed to influence the purpose we're aiming for? Have we got the right government officials representing all the key agencies needed? Upstream and downstream communities? Private landowners or businesses that have an important influence on resource management decisions? Are there key religious or ethnic divisions that we need to account for? Key political groupings? Are we engaging men and women? Young and old? Poor and wealthy? Are there outside groups, such as the media, that may play an influential role?

If it's not yet possible to engage all the key actors, perhaps it's necessary to begin with a more restricted purpose first, then expand over time. If there's a good fit between people and purpose, you have the first elements for progress *(Figure 2)*.

The next element is **process**. Perhaps typical government planning processes are hierarchical, excluding real influence from many of the people who are most knowledgeable about the local issues and possibilities for change. Perhaps community organizing is disconnected from government decision making. Perhaps both tend to exclude women and youth, or other groups. Gathering the right people doesn't ensure equitable participation.

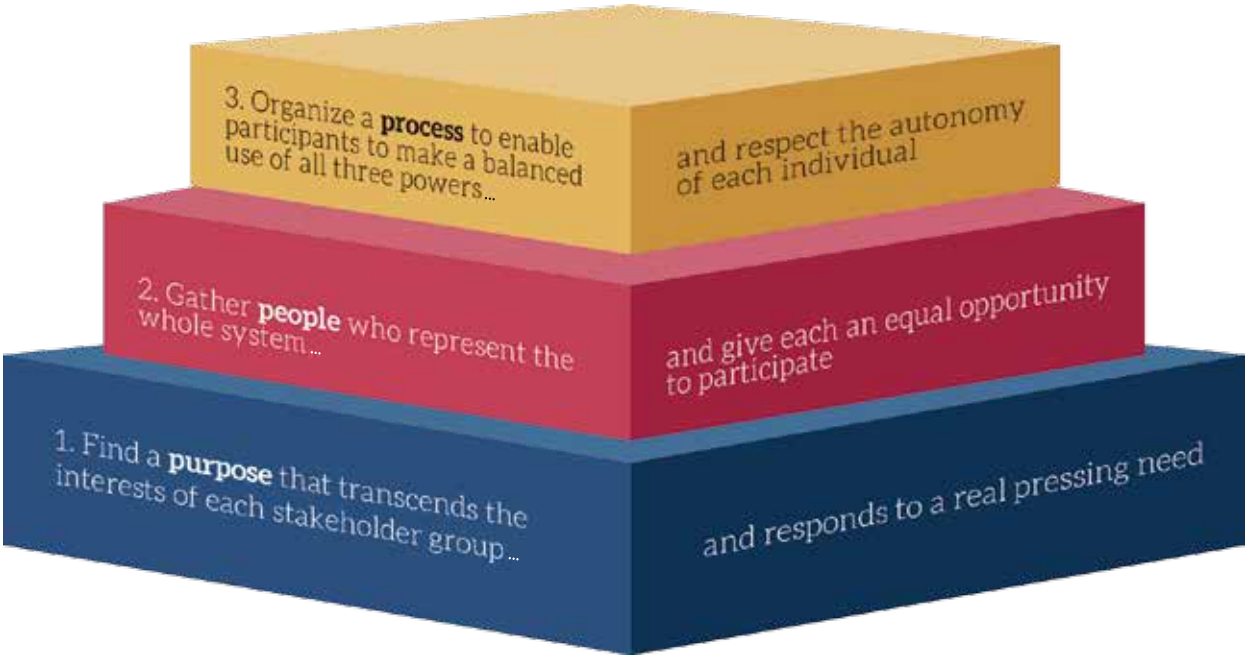


Figure 2. Creating the conditions for transformation.
Source: Ratner and Smith (2014), Collaborating for Resilience: A Practitioner's Guide.

In a nutshell, the process aims to assist diverse, multi-stakeholder groups in addressing seven key questions *(Figure 3)*.

These questions are grouped into three phases:

- **Listening.** Active listening to deepen awareness of the problem, the possibilities and the perspectives of different groups.
- **Dialogue.** Sharing and debating competing points of view to ensure a full understanding of the forces at play.
- **Choice.** Narrowing in on the particular realm of actions within an individual's or group's control.

What kind of design features influence the ability of a MAP to engender authentic, open **listening** among diverse actors, then productive **dialogue**, and finally inspired **choice**, decisions that enables action to achieve the collective purpose?

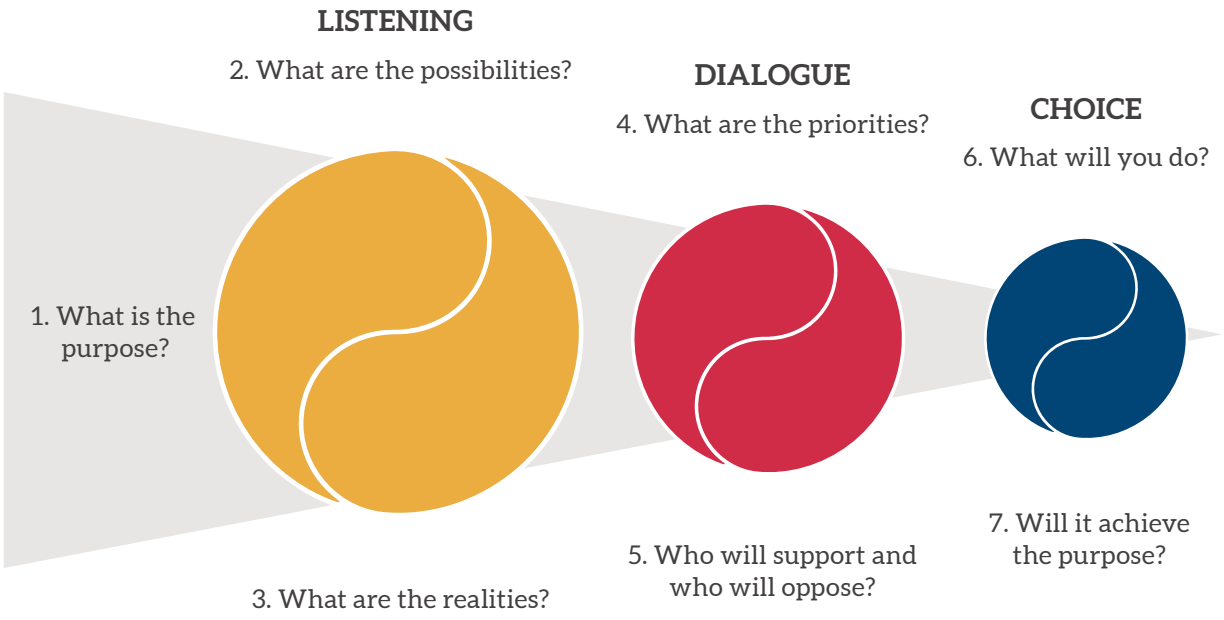
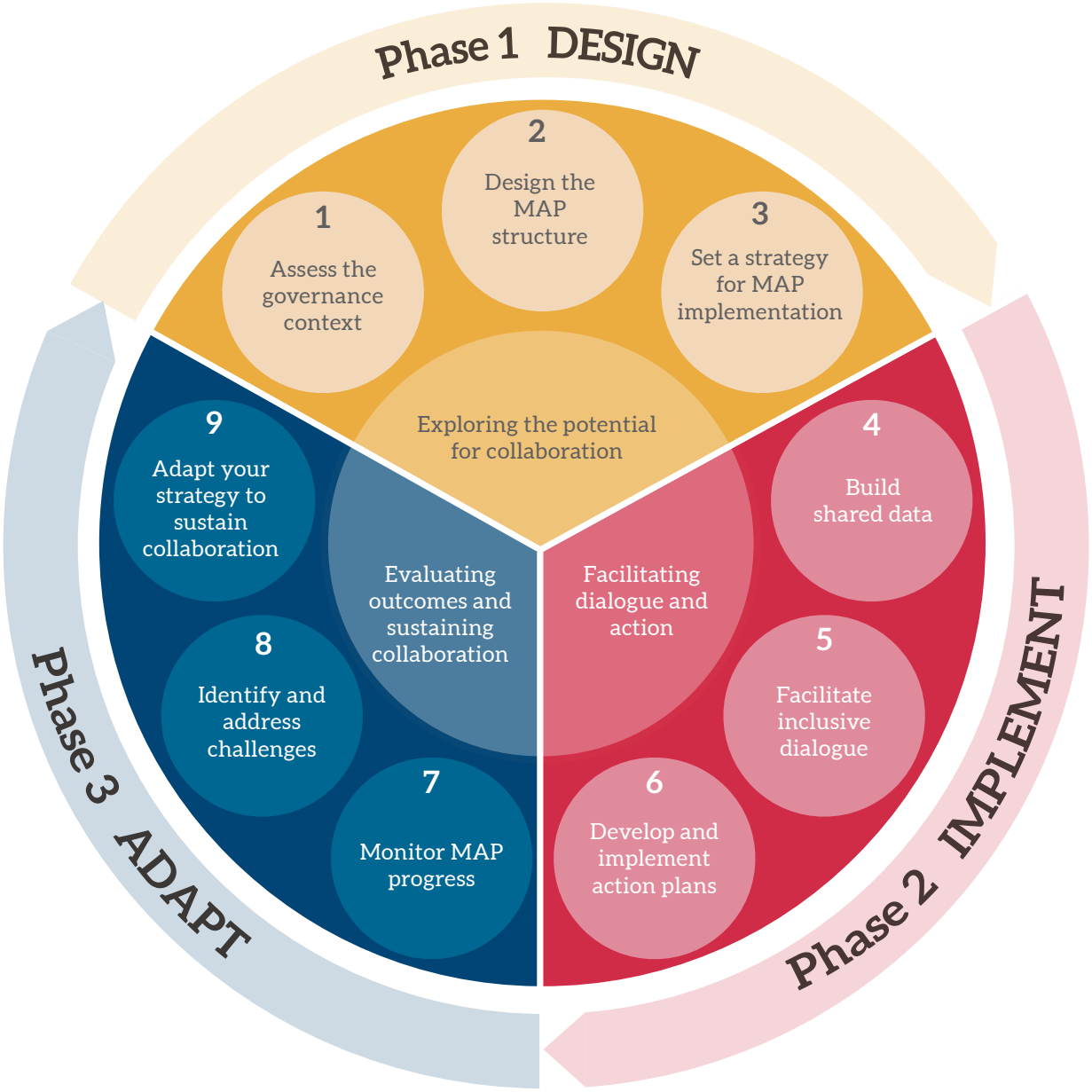


Figure 3. Seven framing questions.
Source: Ratner and Smith (2014), Collaborating for Resilience: A Practitioner's Guide.

The answer depends on the context we're working in, and it requires a degree of learning and adaptation as the process evolves. The next sections of this Guide are structured to address the steps of effective MAP design and adaptive implementation:

- **Phase 1: Design.** Assess the governance context in which you are working, and design your MAP to fit the context and increase your chances of success.
- **Phase 2: Implement.** Implement and strengthen your MAP through a process of sustained, inclusive dialogue and action planning.
- **Phase 3: Adapt.** Monitor progress, assess challenges, learn and adapt your MAP strategy to sustain collaborative action.



How to use this Guide

This Guide is intended for practitioners facing practical questions:

- What are the "design choices" I might encounter, and how do I make these choices?
- How do I go about organizing and facilitating MAP implementation?
- What are the most common obstacles or challenges I might confront along the way, and how can I respond to these effectively?

The structure of the Guide addresses each of these questions in turn. Like any approach to governance that must grapple with difficult decisions of public importance, these are messy processes. So, there are no fixed answers or single solution that will apply in all contexts.

Our purpose instead is to equip the user of this Guide with a robust framework to reflect and to make well-informed choices in MAP design and implementation.

While the Guide can be read individually, it's most effective to use in a group — a MAP implementation team — working through the nine steps and applying the exercises found in the accompanying deck of Training Slides and Exercises. In this way, you can follow a systematic approach to **design**, **implement**, and **adapt** your MAP.

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

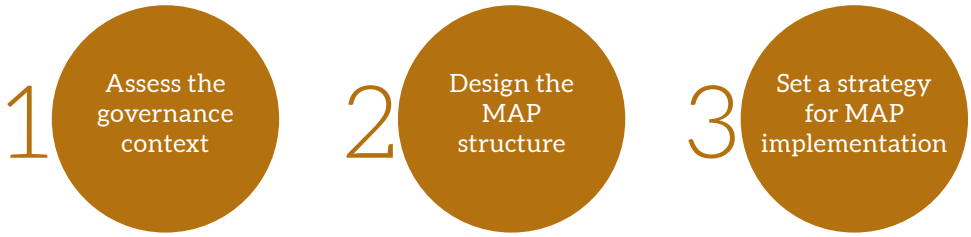
Community Forest Rights claim preparation meeting held in Odisha, India

1. DESIGN YOUR MAP

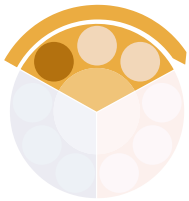
Remember, your **MAP should be designed with a specific purpose in mind.** As more actors engage and influence the process during MAP implementation, that purpose is very likely to evolve. To achieve a good design, start by clarifying your **purpose**. The team that is convened to undertake MAP design should already represent many of the key actors involved.

Gathering the right **people** to take part in the design is critical to ensuring a good diversity of perspectives.

The steps outlined below are all meant to be undertaken in relation to that orienting purpose, and collaboratively, with the people who will subsequently implement the process. These key steps of design are:



Step 1. Assess the governance context



Governance, broadly speaking, is about **how decisions are made on matters of public importance.** Understanding the governance context, and promoting improvements in governance where possible, is critical to achieving progress with regards to equitable resource allocation, access to markets, improvement of public services such as health and education, women's empowerment, and other factors that affect poverty, food security, and livelihood resilience.

Many development interventions fail because they don't address governance obstacles or take advantage of governance opportunities. When local actors express concerns about conflicting agendas, power, and politics beyond the local scale, disconnected efforts, unclear division of responsibilities, or poor responsiveness to local needs on the part of government, private sector, or civil society groups, these point to governance issues that need to be assessed.

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Interaction with government officers and Gram Panchayat staff during monitoring visit in Karnataka, India

Overcoming these obstacles requires processes that enable diverse stakeholders to build mutual understanding of the obstacles and opportunities in their governance context, explore options for influencing change, and take actions that help achieve collective priorities.

Even within a single country, there are often large differences in the governance context by sub-national region, state or district. The key to good MAP design is to select an approach that is a good **"fit" with the needs of your local governance context.**

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Gram Panchayat Organization Development planning process in Dibburhalli village, Karnataka, India with community members and Gram Panchayat staff

A helpful place to begin is a simple 2x2 matrix of different common scenarios. In the example below *(Figure 4)*, we're focused on landscape restoration as a primary objective. So, we define two dimensions that indicate the most significant differences in the local governance context, which influence the prospects for collective action to restore degraded landscapes. These are:

Government commitment to commons tenure. Are supportive policies and legislation in place? Have local authorities instituted clear guidelines to implement these policy directions? To what degree is their public interest litigation to assert and defend commons tenure rights? How responsive are local officials in actively implementing the policy guidelines and enabling community tenure rights?

Local influence in governance decision-making. How strong are community-level institutions? To what degree are communities engaged proactively in defining their priorities and advocating these in local planning processes? How present are civil society organizations, and what range of issues do they address? How responsive are state agencies to local priorities?

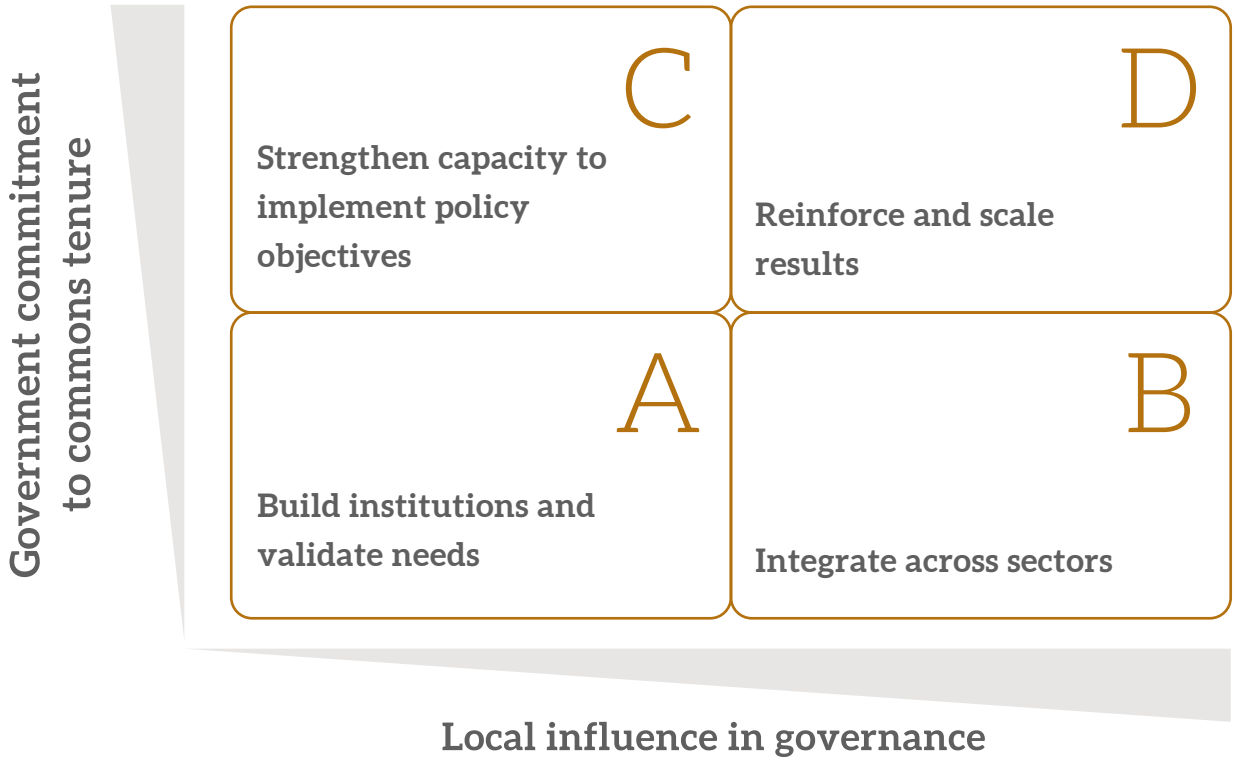


Figure 4. Assessing the governance context for commons restoration efforts.

Assessing how your district measures up—low or high on each of these dimensions—leads you to one of the four quadrants in the matrix. Each quadrant is characterized by a different **governance challenge.** In this case:

Low local influence and low government commitment: ***Build institutions and validate needs.*** This is the most difficult starting point. Institutions need to be built that can gradually strengthen local influence in governance processes. And, at the same time, we need to validate the needs of local communities in the eyes of local government, to generate a greater level of understanding of and commitment to commons tenure.

High local influence but low government commitment: ***Integrate across sectors.*** In this scenario, the challenge is to build upon the areas where local influence in decision-making is already well-established, for example in infrastructure planning, and extend this influence into areas that align with the central purpose of your MAP, such as land use planning and reforestation. This means integrating across different sectors such as health, education and economic development to increase the attention towards, and eventual support for, landscape restoration efforts.

High government commitment but low local influence: ***Strengthen capacity to implement policy objectives.*** In this scenario, the challenge is to move from commitment to capacity to implement. This means working together more effectively, linking government authorities at different levels, representative community institutions, and perhaps engaging diverse civil society organizations and the private sector as well. In addition to the separate capacities of each actor, the ability to work together effectively is a critical capacity of the whole "system" that needs to be reinforced.

High local influence and high government commitment: ***Reinforce and scale results.*** This is the most favorable starting point but also the least common. The challenge is to reinforce strengths on each dimension and scale the results so that more people benefit (over a greater geographic area and over a longer time). Reinforcing is necessary because we need to protect against backsliding, deepening government commitment and institutionalizing good practices of local governance so these endure in the face of future threats and shocks. Scaling is necessary because one of the best ways to extend positive results is to share good practices across regions (horizontal scaling) and influence policies and support at higher administrative levels (vertical scaling).

Insights

Building scenarios to distinguish the governance context

How we characterize scenarios for MAP development depends on the overall purpose and focus of action. The objective is to define the most important dimensions that differentiate among different cases. This is a classic scenario building exercise, using two key dimensions to generate four possible scenarios.

If, for example, your focus is on water and sanitation for public health, then one dimension for scenario building may focus on the degree of local government commitment to investing in solutions that address this priority. Alternatively, if the level of government commitment is not a main differentiator, it may be the availability of public funding for water supply and sanitation services that better distinguishes among cases.

Once the two dimensions are selected and defined, you can develop scenarios for each of the quadrants that are suited more specifically to the purpose your MAP aims to address. Then you can follow the same process as outlined in the main text, which focuses on collective action to restore degraded landscapes.

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Community Forest Rights consultation meeting in Angul district, Odisha, India

In Practice

Judging the best-fit scenario for your MAP

What if it is difficult to judge which scenario is the closest fit to your local context? Comparisons to other districts can help to sharpen the distinctions and clarify your choice. By comparing across states and districts in India, field teams working under the Promise of Commons initiative were able to develop more specific indicators that can help to assess each dimension of the governance context.

	LOW	HIGH
Government commitment to commons tenure	• Lack of legislation to support community ownership and management of natural resources • Lack of policy or guidelines to operationalize legislation • Inadequate budgetary allocation • Low awareness among local officials and other key stakeholders • Information, education and communication (IEC) materials or government propagation mechanism missing	• Legislation in place addressing collective tenure issues in priority areas (forests, rangelands, etc.) • Guidelines and implementation structures in place • Adequate budgetary allocation • Effective capacity enhancement of Government officials and related stakeholders implemented • Adequate communication of scheme by government, ensuring "last mile" reach of information to local communities
Local influence in governance	• Lack of institutional mechanism at village level, or poor representation of all sections (especially vulnerable groups) in institutions • No Gram Sabha tradition, or lack of representation in Gram Sabha, especially of vulnerable groups • Landscape / cluster-level institutions missing or weak • Block level institutions undeveloped, or defunct • No continuity or follow-through after dialogue on key issues affecting people	• Strong institutional mechanism at village level with balanced representation of communities and established rules and regulations • Effective Gram Sabha with continuity of issues and participation (especially vulnerable groups) • Social audit and planning regularly conducted at Panchayat level, covering all issues and through participatory methods • Action plans on key issues developed and presented at appropriate level

Step 2. Design the MAP structure

After assessing the governance context, you will have selected a scenario that best fits your situation. The next step is to design the structure of your MAP. This entails a series of choices. When designing a MAP, choices should be made about each of these categories.

Issues: Will your MAP focus narrowly on a single issue first (such as forests, water, or animal health), a closely linked pair of issues, a broader landscape approach linking different resource sectors? Or will it take a very broad, inclusive approach, integrating across issues such as landscape management, health, jobs and education?

Sectors: Will your MAP focus on the links between local government and community, or will it engage multiple government agencies? Will it also include NGOs or civil society organizations? Will it take a comprehensive approach engaging all of these?

Levels: Will you build the MAP upwards from federations of villages, downwards from district or sub-district levels of local administration, upwards to scale to higher levels of administration, or some hybrid of these?

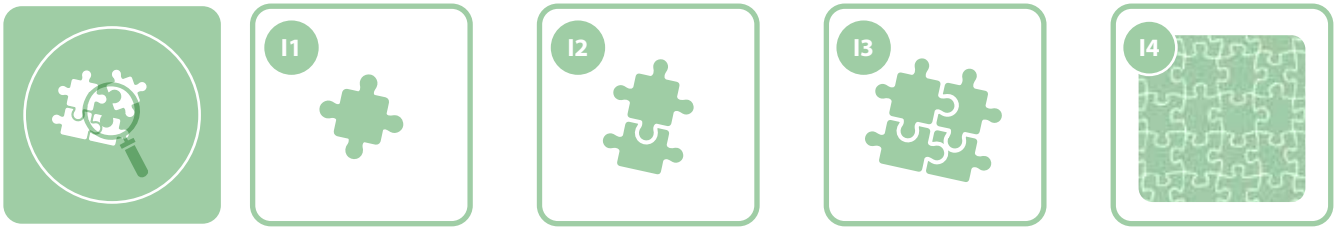
Commercial Engagement: Will your MAP aim to engage the commercial private sector (large businesses)? If yes, how will it do this? Will it focus on enabling government to better engage corporate actors to align with the purpose of the MAP? Or will it focus on local civil society organizations to make this link, or communities directly? Or will it rely upon an outside facilitator, such as an NGO, to support this link?

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Meeting of village leaders in Gujarat, India

MAP Design Menu

To help make these choices, we use a Design Menu that distinguishes four categories of design. Here you see four the categories of choices to design the structure of your MAP, along with the four most common options per category.



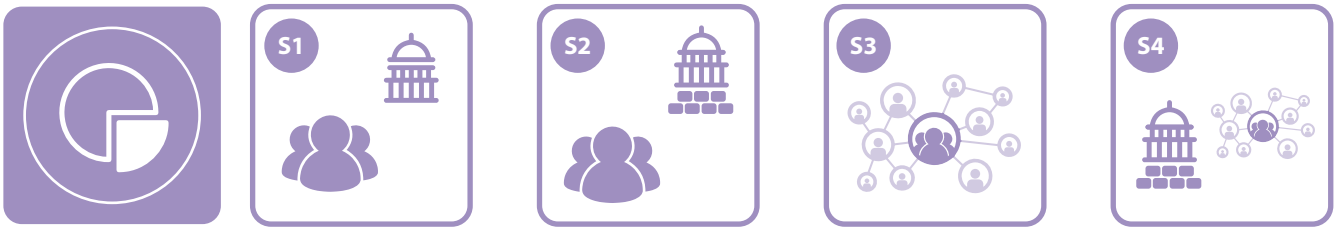
Issues

Single focus area

Two linked issues

Broader landscape issues

Intersectoral issues



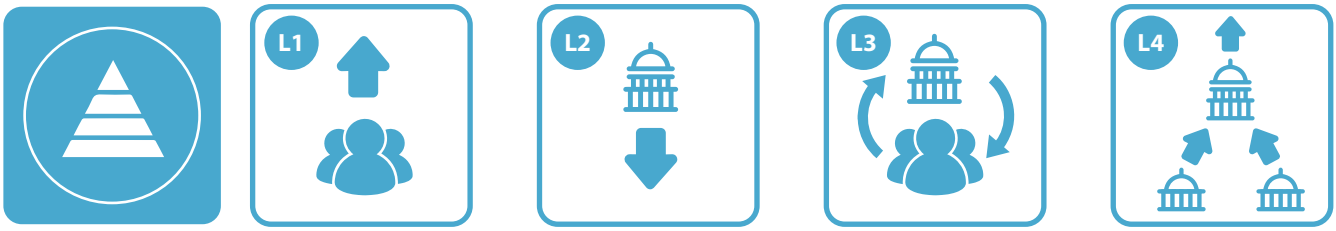
Sectors

Government and community

Multiple government agencies

Communities, NGOs and CSO networks

Comprehensive



Levels

Federation level up

Block level down

Top down and bottom up

Block and district level up

Commercial Engagement

Government engagement with commercial sector

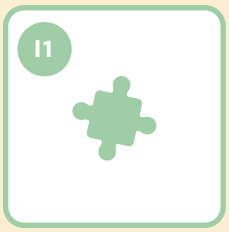
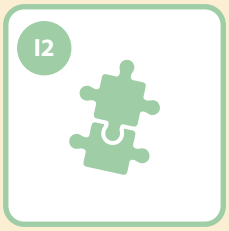
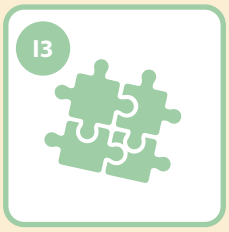
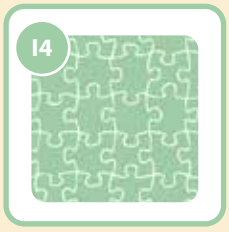
Civil society engagement with commercial sector

Community engagement with commercial sector

No engagement with commercial sector

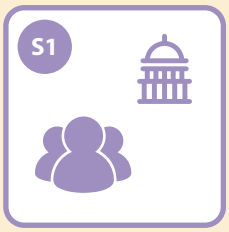
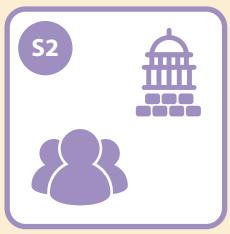
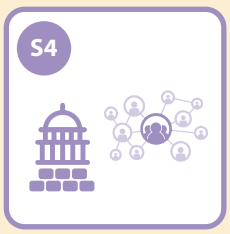
Issues

The tables over the next four pages present a description of each of the options in the Design Menu, along with the rationale detailing under what conditions this option may be suitable. Will you focus on a single issue to start, or two or more connected issues?

	Description	Scenario	Rationale
 Single focus area	Building the MAP with a single focus area	A, C	Focusing on a single aspect may make sense when initiating a multi-actor process in a new area. Finding an issue of high priority among communities can form the focus of initial engagement in a particular area, even if it has other linkages. Further, focusing on multiple issues from the beginning might prove to be too complex to implement. Therefore, beginning with a single core issue, with the option to gradually transition to broader ones may be fruitful. The underlying assumption is that local institutions are not strong at the current stage.
 Two linked issues	Building the MAP with a focus on two closely linked issues	A, C	It may be that local priorities point to two closely-linked issues, such as soil fertility and surface water flows, or forest management and human-animal conflict. Working on such closely-linked issues in tandem may be the most realistic way to make progress. This can also be suitable when local institutions are not yet well developed.
 Broader landscape issues	Building the MAP with a focus on broader landscape level issues	B, D	Building the MAP with a focus on broader landscape level issues may be viable in the cases where the MAP's aim is to address issues that are rooted in inter-linkages between different natural resource systems. For example, protecting forests improves water availability, which also affects surface and groundwater management. Recognizing and prioritizing issues with such interlinkages is possible only when local institutions such as federations are strong.
 Intersectoral issues	Building the MAP with a focus on inter-sectoral issues	B, D	Building the MAP with a more systemic perspective on multiple related issues across different sectors can help stakeholders see how one issue affects others and where the most effective change points might be. This can help with prioritization and strategic planning. For example, if girls' access to education is a primary issue of local concern, it could be due to a lack of sanitary facilities. If sanitary facilities do not exist because of water scarcity, the MAP has an entry point to also address surface and groundwater management. Such an approach typically requires strong local institutions and good relationships established with multiple sectoral agencies.

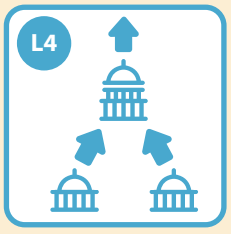
Sectors

Some MAPs focus on connecting local government and community, others engage multiple agencies, and still others engage many different types of stakeholders, such as NGOs and CSOs. How many sectors of society will your MAP engage?

	Description	Scenario	Rationale
 Government and community	Building the MAP with communities and a single government agency	A, C	Community engagement with a single government agency may make sense in cases where the focus of the MAP is on a single issue, or at a nascent stage. For example, if the issue is livestock health, then engagement should be with the Department of Animal Husbandry, or if water availability for irrigation is the issue then the MAP would prioritize engagement with the Department of Irrigation.
 Multiple government agencies	Building the MAP with communities and multiple government agencies	B, D	When working on multiple issues, it will likely be necessary to engage multiple government agencies. For example, working towards sustainable livelihood requires involvement of agriculture, irrigation, and animal husbandry departments. In addition, having multiple government agencies on board may be beneficial for scaling the strategy of multi-actor engagement to a wider audience and geography.
 Communities, NGOs and CSO networks	Building the MAP with communities, NGOs and civil society networks	A, B	Building a larger constituency helps to build capacity to address one or more complex issues. This is especially useful where communities require additional support because of power dynamics, capacity constraints, or lack of government commitment. Here, engagement of NGOs and civil society such as media, lawyers or educational institutes could help generate awareness, strengthen capacity, and build the larger constituency. In this approach, the collective of multiple actors can exert pressure jointly, helping to open the way to more constructive engagement with government authorities later.
 Comprehensive	Building the MAP with multiple actors (communities, NGOs, civil society) and one or more government agencies	B, C, D	Engaging with multiple actors at multiple levels may help to incorporate diverse and innovative perspectives to enable MAP participants to sharpen their understanding about new pathways for change. This broad approach also helps map all the important stakeholders in the system, their level of influence and their level of support or opposition to the cause. Strategically, this can be effective in pooling expertise of various kinds needed to achieve a complex objective. It is often necessary when addressing integrated landscape issues or inter-sectoral planning. Yet, this option also requires a good deal of skill and expertise on the part of MAP facilitators to manage the interconnected dialogue processes.

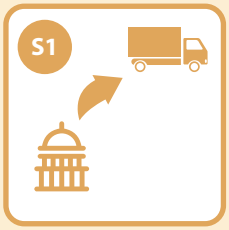
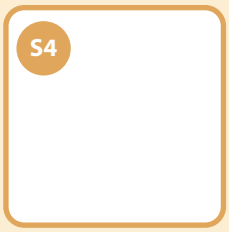
Levels

Across what levels of administration will you build your MAP? Will you work upwards from federations of villages? Downwards from the district or sub-district (block) level? Both top-down and bottom-up? Or will you aim to influence higher levels of administration?

	Description	Scenario	Rationale
 Federation level up	Building the MAP up from the village federation level	A, C	Village federations serve as a useful means to foster inter-village dialogue at the landscape level. In the initial phase of MAP building, they can be used as a base to initiate a process of wider engagement among multiple stakeholders. In situations where local influence in governance is low, starting at the village federation can raise awareness and more effectively advocate based upon local realities. Where government support is high, the bottom up approach can also help build capacity for implementation.
 Block level down	Building the MAP down from the block or district level	B, D	Working down from the block level can serve as an effective scaling strategy when neighboring blocks wish to adopt similar approaches. However, this typically assumes that village federations or similar local institutional networks with the capacity to influence the government are in place.
 Top down and bottom up	Working top down and bottom up together	A, C	When aiming to strengthen the stakeholder engagement with both the community and government, the MAP can act as an intermediary. For instance, a MAP that convenes at the block level may provide a mechanism to foster better communication between Panchayats and District administration. Where government commitment and local influence in governance are both low, this is often a preferred approach.
 Block and district level up	Building the MAP up from the block level	D	Building the MAP up from the block level could be beneficial in cases where a strong relationship with the block administration in one or more blocks already exists along with strong local institutions. This is especially relevant when there is a need to address issues at a higher geographic scale (such as upstream, downstream relationships crossing districts) or issues that require a shift in policies or regulations. It can also be an effective mechanism to share and replicate MAP experiences.

Commercial Engagement

Which stakeholders will engage with the commercial sector? Or will there be engagement with the commercial sector at all? This choice requires a deep understanding of the relationships between local stakeholders and powerful commercial sector actors.

	Description	Scenario	Rationale
 Government engagement with commercial sector	Building the MAP to strengthen government engagement with corporate actors	C, D	If government commitment to the priority issue is high, then it can make good sense to support government actors to implement existing policies or regulations. This is especially so if, for example, there is a lack of enforcement of illegal corporate behavior, such as encroachment on common lands or water pollution. Alternatively, when the government has entered into a public-private partnership, or is considering one, it may be critical to support government capacity to ensure benefits for local communities.
 Civil society engagement with commercial sector	Building the MAP to strengthen civil society engage-ment with corpo-rate actors	A, B	Strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to engage with corporations is often effective when there is an opportunity to encourage positive corporate behavior. For example, an NGO may assist corporations to sponsor scholarships promoting education for under-privileged children. Alternatively, when corporate action poses a risk to communities, they may prefer to have an NGO as an intermediary to help mediate potentially conflictual issues. This is especially suitable when communities do not yet have experience negotiating these relationships.
 Community engagement with commercial sector	Building the MAP to strengthen community engagement with corporate actors	B, D	In cases where community capacity has been built up to the extent that they can negotiate directly with external corporate actors, using the MAP as platform for such negotiation may be a viable option. This can potentially offer a degree of protection and support, particularly when appropriate government officials are also engaged alongside independent groups such as NGOs, universities, or media, helping communities access information and supporting follow-through on any agreements reached.
 No engagement with commercial sector	No corporate engagement	A, B	In earlier stages of MAP development, no corporate engagement in the process is the best option until the capacities of other actors, and the relationships among them, have strengthened. This may be especially relevant where there is a concern that early involvement of corporate actors would co-opt the process by shifting priorities or intimidating others. As capacities of other actors mature, the MAP can shift to another option for corporate engagement over time.

Insights

Debating the rationale for MAP design choices

While it may be tempting to arrive quickly at a set of MAP design choices, it's important to reflect and debate these as a team. Discussing the specific rationale behind each choice is essential, as well as considering the likely consequences of different design choices. Being clear about the rationale will make it easier to later judge how well the expectations meet the reality in practice, and when it's time to adjust the approach. Here, for example, is one team's rationale for their design choices:

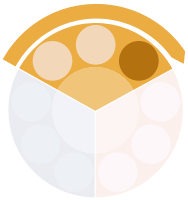
I2: Closely linked issues. Because our engagement in the area is still fairly new, we don't want to delve directly into too many issues from the beginning. We see an urgent demand to address livestock health and access to pasturelands, and because these issues are closely related, it makes sense to address them together. We feel it's important to win some initial successes and build people's confidence in the process before we try to take on new issues.

S3: Engage multiple actors. There are a few different NGOs active in the area, and a number of farmer cooperatives and a network of women's groups focused on maternal and child health. We feel these will be important actors in addressing the core purpose of the MAP. We also plan to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify other key actors and sharpen our understanding, including those who might support or oppose efforts to improve the livelihoods of pastoralists.

L3: Top down and bottom up approach together. In our district, federations of villages are already under development, with different levels of progress. There's a need to further strengthen these so that community representatives can more actively participate in block-level planning, bringing local priorities to the government. On the government side, while there's some appreciation for the need to make planning processes more inclusive, we also need to work on capacity to do this well.

C4: No corporate engagement. We feel it's too risky to try to involve corporate actors within the MAP at an early stage. In our region, there are mining interests and agro-industry investors who have already exercised a great deal of influence over local government decisions on land concessions and road building. We're cautious of those power dynamics, so we want to build capacity of other actors and confidence in the MAP so that we can strategize together how best to later engage the corporate actors.

Step 3. Set a strategy for MAP implementation



After debating and selecting design options for your next stage of MAP development, it's useful to consider several additional questions of strategy for implementation[2] :

- **Innovation:** *What makes your MAP different as a governance innovation?*
  In particular, in what ways will the MAP improve upon existing decision-making processes in the area?

- **Phasing:** *What will be the speed and sequence of your MAP rollout?*
  For example, there may be a need to invest in targeted capacity building of key actors before implementing certain elements of your plan.

- **Resourcing:** *How will your MAP secure the resources needed to sustain itself?*
  This requires thinking about the types of financial and other resources that are needed, and the sources – governmental, philanthropic, community and others.

If you combine your responses to the earlier questions of Purpose and Structure along with these additional questions of Innovation, Phasing, and Resourcing, then you are in a place to visualize your full MAP implementation strategy *(Figure 5)*.

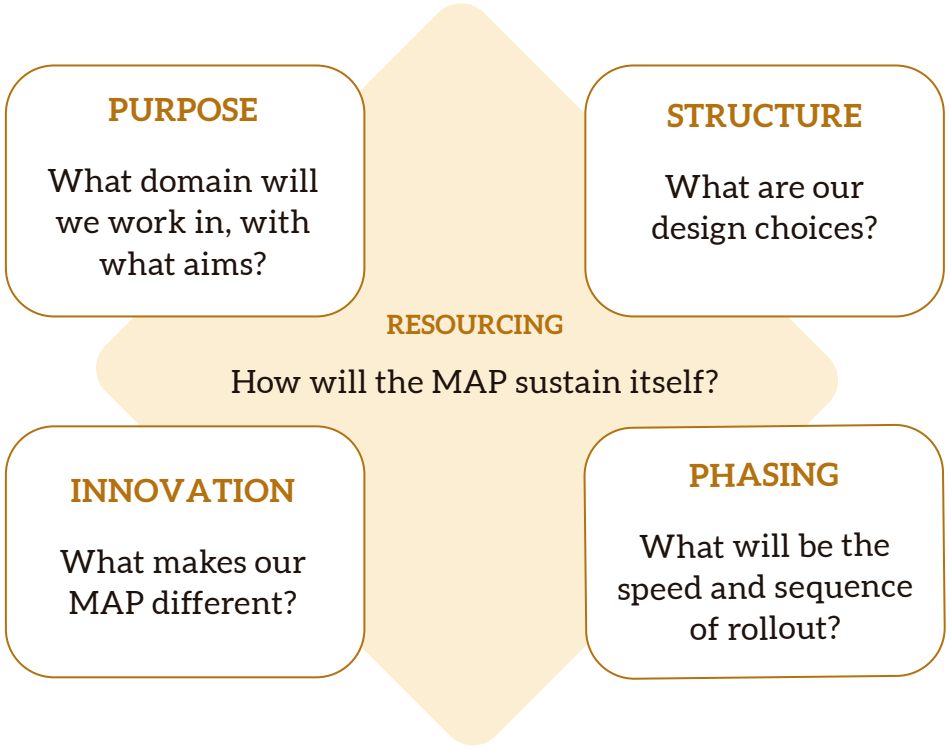


Figure 5. MAP implementation strategy.

[2] This draws upon the model of strategy in Hambrick, Donald C., and James W. Fredrickson. "Are you sure you have a strategy?." *Academy of Management Perspectives* 15, no. 4 (2001): 48-59.

The strategy for implementation is not something that will stay fixed, but it helps to discuss and debate your responses to these questions so that you arrive at an approach that the whole team understands and can commit to.

Your responses to these strategy questions should differ depending on the context. For example, if we consider the four key scenarios of governance context:

Low local influence and low government commitment: *Build institutions and validate needs.*

From this starting point, if there are not effective local planning processes in place, or if these processes generally exclude key actors, then innovations to aim for may target improvements in inclusion and responsiveness to local priorities. Because of the low initial starting point, it could be helpful to begin with significant awareness raising and capacity support. Starting small can also provide time to secure new resources.

High government commitment but low local influence: *Strengthen capacity to implement policy objectives.*

In this scenario, the key distinguishing factor to aim for may be the speed, reach, and overall effectiveness of policy implementation. If government's policy priorities and commitments are already closely aligned with community priorities, then a focus on linking local actors to greatly expand the capacity for implementation may yield relatively fast progress. Under these conditions, it may also be easier to tap government schemes to finance the MAP over the long term.

High local influence but low government commitment: *Integrate across sectors.*

In this scenario, the degree of integrated planning may be a key differentiator to aim for, including the benefits that result from this more integrated approach. Because there is already relatively high local influence in local governance, it may be possible to build up more quickly, engaging in dialogue to link new actors such as different administrative agencies, local universities or media. These may also open up new potential funding sources.

High local influence and high government commitment: *Reinforce and scale results.*

In this scenario, there are many good practices to build upon. A critical need therefore is to assess and document the positive elements of this local model, then to share those systematically so that partners in neighboring and more distant regions can adopt and adapt these approaches. It may be possible to scale the effort rapidly through strategies such as participatory video, exchange visits, and peer-training. Because local government units are unlikely to have the resources to invest in this kind of scaling, it could be important to look to philanthropies or government at higher levels.

2. IMPLEMENT YOUR MAP

Implementing your MAP is an iterative process. Indeed, by undertaking the design phase, you've already made significant progress. This section focuses on the next three critical steps in implementation:

4 Build shared data

5 Facilitate inclusive dialogue

6 Develop and implement action plans

Step 4. Build shared data

Developing a common source of shared information about the situation at hand can help to:

Refine and focus the purpose for the MAP that draws on different people's perspectives on the issue, in a way that can bring all key stakeholders together.

Build a network of people, ideas and relationships so that organizers can attract the widest possible set of resources to bear on the problem at hand.

Build trust by being very transparent in the initial consultation process, so that all participants feel their interests are understood and will be addressed.

Some of that information likely concerns the physical resources in the landscape such as groundwater levels and vegetative cover, or socioeconomic data addressing issues such as household poverty, literacy, and proximity to markets. At the outset, there may be a good deal of mistrust concerning the sources of data and their reliability. Leveraging technology such as geospatial data collection, ground-truthing, tablet-based surveys, and visualization can help to check and update the data. Getting different groups involved in generating and verifying data is also important to build shared confidence in the information. The aim is to develop a data-driven culture with technology as an aid in the process.

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Planning meeting between Kyarakhet, Richwada, Sakriya, and Chitrawas villages in Rajasthan, India

Insights

Linking geospatial data to your organizing approach

Data analysis can assist in determining how best to organize groups in a **nested process** of dialogue. In Kankadahad block, Dhenkanal district, Odisha, the MAP team collected data and divided the entire block into zones on the basis of contextual insights that stemmed from data analysis. For example, watershed catchments indicated areas that could more feasibly be **clustered** together in terms of common resource challenges, and road connectivity indicated which groups of villages might more easily travel to meet on a regular basis. In addition, information on political party affiliation suggested which groupings might more easily engage in joint issue prioritization and planning before convening at a wider geographic scale.

After forming these "zones" within the broader landscape, the team recognized that data on key trends was not easy to communicate simply in terms of numbers and charts. Developing **infographics** and presenting these on posters helped to visualize the key risks and opportunities and served as an important motivation for joint planning.

Stakeholder mapping is another key approach to gather critical information to assist in collaborative planning. After deciding the geographical area of the MAP, it's important to identify who are the stakeholders in that context, what are their main points of interest, and how each group can be engaged to support the purpose of the MAP. Likewise, we need to consider which groups are likely to offer support, which are likely to present obstacles, and how we might anticipate and address those obstacles.

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

National Remote Sensing Centre officials' on-ground verification of maps with community members

Insights

Using data to expand awareness and participation

Discussions based on shared data can help identify, refine, and prioritize key issues that communities would like to introduce into the subsequent dialogue process. Approaches include village meetings, **exposure visits,** and public **awareness campaigns** to generate stronger interest.

In many cases, particularly where existing government commitment to address community priorities is low, **regular interactions with government** authorities is important. Communication approaches include targeted meetings, short **briefing reports,** photo **presentations** and short **videos.**

Step 5. Facilitate inclusive dialogue

During data collection, stakeholder mapping and consultation, the initial group of organizers will identify other individuals who bring important new perspectives and networks of contacts among a different set of stakeholders. These people should be invited to take part in the MAP organizing team. The central responsibility of the **MAP organizing team** is to ensure an inclusive and productive dialogue process.

Broadly, the dialogue process should aim to follow a sequence of phases focused on **Listening, Dialogue,** and **Choice**, as summarized in the Introduction (see Figure 3).

It may be appropriate to hold a sequence of workshops covering the three phases first at local sites then move to a higher administrative or landscape level. A sequence of events over time may also be appropriate when the issue is particularly contentious or when organizers anticipate that participants will need additional interactions between phases of the process to build trust and prepare for collaboration. For teams new to the approach, it can also be useful to have a break in between each stage to assess and regroup.

Whatever the duration of each dialogue workshop, the design should allow for roughly equal amounts of time for each of the phases:

LISTENING: Building a shared awareness of the issues, the possibilities for the future, and the constraints and opportunities of the current situation.

DIALOGUE: Debating different possible courses of action to pursue a common purpose, including an assessment of the groups that may support or oppose such actions.

CHOICE: Deciding on an action plan comprised of commitments by individuals and multi-stakeholder teams, including a reflection on the degree to which these actions will achieve the common purpose.

Photo Credits: Foundation for Ecological Security

The essential task of facilitation is to establish the conditions for participants to answer the seven questions most effectively. In each of these phases there's a **different role for the facilitator and participants.** These roles change in each phase. To maintain a balance in power dynamics, it's helpful to be very clear about the **roles and responsibilities** of participants in each phase. Often that requires an explanation and explicit agreement, so that the process doesn't revert to old patterns of power and decision-making.

Phase	Role of facilitators	Role of participants
Listening	• Actively establish conditions in which all participants feel equal, are treated equally and have opportunity to express their appreciation of the situation **without being judged**	• Express your sense of the whole situation – potential and current reality. • Listen **without comment** to other participants as they express their appreciation of the situation.
Dialogue	• Create an environment for **open dialogue**, helping participants to explore the implications of different options.	• Speak to the issues you are passionate about. • Your job is to **discover and debate options** – not yet to decide which option is best.
Choice	• Ensure participants have the resources they need to **make decisions** and plan. • Encourage reflection back toward the orienting purpose	• Make **clear commitments** you can follow through on, and encourage others to do the same. • Discuss how each action contributes toward the overall purpose.

Figure 6. Roles of facilitators and participants in each phase.
Source: Ratner and Smith (2014), Collaborating for Resilience: A Practitioner's Guide.

Insights

Building capacity for effective participation

Ensuring that key actors — including typically marginalized groups—participate fully in dialogue and actively influence decisions often requires special preparation. Consider:

- Identifying and validating the skills of local representatives. While those in existing local leadership positions may be essential to implement new actions, sometimes the best participants in dialogue have different qualities. Consider youth leaders, influential members of women's groups, and others who are widely trusted in the community. Implementing gender equity rules may be necessary to achieve the right balance of representation.

- Involving influential supporters. It can be helpful to identify and engage government partners from related agencies or higher administrative levels, or civil society organizations with experience on neighboring issues or regions, to be "co-travellers" to accompany the process and help identify strategies to address key challenges. This may also help encourage local authorities to issue any required enabling orders.

- Linking to government capacity building efforts. Simple beginning points include obtaining the training calendar for government staff and offering presentations on planning tools used elsewhere. Sharing tools and techniques between organizations can improve community engagement and promote mutual learning and trust building among stakeholders.

Insights

Building authentic commitment through dialogue

The sequence of Listening, Dialogue and Choice is critical, because if you jump straightaway to making an action plan then you are likely to miss out on key perspectives and possible courses of action. You are also very likely to lose key actors whose support is necessary to achieve the collective goals.

So, start from the **Listening** phase. Listening here doesn't just mean literally listening, it also means observing and understanding. The idea is to establish an environment in which different groups can listen equally, and that doesn't happen by accident. If you bring the District head and a village representative into the room, normally you would have one who would be strong and loud and one who would be quiet and reserved. As a facilitator you try to make it equal. You have to take a very strong role because it's not common that people listen openly.

The **Dialogue** phase is where the facilitator is trying to make a space where it's okay to debate. If you don't have real debate then you will only have people being nice to each other and then they go home and only speak their true feelings outside, they're not going to really follow whatever is agreed upon. So, you work to establish an atmosphere where you can first develop a common understanding and get people to really listen to each other, then get to a point where people can do real debating.

The last phase is **Choice**. Action planning happens here. In this stage you're trying to create an environment where people can make decisions and plan how to get things going. You want to make sure that it links back to the original purpose. You want to be able to encourage people to make these clear commitments that they can follow through. We know from experience, if I tell you, "you should go do this," this involves exercising your authority, but it won't lead to a commitment.

People have to build their own sense of commitment, and that comes from when they understand the situation, they debate alternatives, and they can make choices on their own. It works because motivation is real, and they want to keep going. That is when the magic happens.

Step 6. Develop and implement action plans

The result of effective dialogue is an action plan that can be implemented by each participating group. Space is provided to develop plans of action, make explicit commitments and take first steps. The aim is for participants to choose their commitments without coercion, motivated by their specific appreciation of their unique areas of responsibility but now also informed by a broader set of needs and possibilities.

Note that it is **not necessary to merge the action plans** of individuals or groups into one overall action plan for the MAP. While such a summary may be helpful to present conclusions to others, within the planning process, it is important to respect the uniqueness of each particular commitment. In a situation of competition or conflict over natural resources and other elements of local livelihoods, asking participants to agree on a single overall action plan can often dilute the energy and commitment behind individual actions. It also risks making participants reluctant to put forward the actions they feel will be most impactful if they are concerned that only those that win the approval or consensus of the whole group will be supported.

A very **simple action plan** may address just three questions: What will you do? Who will do it? When will it be done?

WHAT	WHO	WHEN

A **more elaborate action plan** can address the elements of the multi-stakeholder change model more completely:

What will I control?	What I need to influence?	What we all must appreciate?
• **Activities** (What will be done?)	• **People** (Supporters /skeptics?)	• **Hidden opportunities** (Policy change/ Learning?)
• **Methods** (Where? When? How?)	• **Organizations** (Regulation/ financing?)	• **Relationships beyond our influence** (How will we assess these?)
• **Resources** (What's needed?)	• **Events** (Communication opportunities?	• **Knowledge constraints** (what do we not know?)

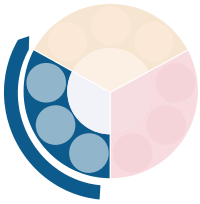
The MAP organizing team is often well-suited to play key roles that ensure **continuity of effort**, including:

- Sharing information and monitoring progress on implementation of the actions.
- Providing a forum for negotiating differences between stakeholders.
- Collecting new insights and bringing new ideas to encourage ongoing collaboration among the stakeholders or to reach out to new groups.
- In the next section, we present a structured set of steps to assist in learning about the successes and obstacles of MAP implementation, and to adapt the approach along the way to improve results.

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Women Farmers Producer Group's meeting on opportunities for women farmers under different government programs and ways forward

3. LEARN AND ADAPT TO CHALLENGES



Many multi-stakeholder dialogue or collaborative planning efforts quickly lose momentum after a main event or focused series of interactions because relatively few resources are devoted to follow-through. Yet, a major workshop is only as valuable as the actions it catalyzes and the outcomes these yield over time. Recognizing this, a good MAP process is designed as a cycle of reflection, action and learning. This section covers steps to:

Step 7. Monitor MAP progress

There are a variety of ways to monitor progress of your MAP. To aid in comparisons across multiple MAPs within an integrated program, it can be helpful to develop a simple scoring table that measures progress against key outcome areas identified in advance (see In Practice box, below).

Yet many of the most important outcomes that emerge will not necessarily be anticipated in advance. A simple, adaptable and yet powerful way to identify such outcomes is participatory self-evaluation. This is also an excellent way to build capacity of MAP team members and participants. The process can be led by MAP team members, or it can engage an outside facilitator, which also helps to introduce fresh perspectives and comparisons. This is a particular form of after-action review, which can become a regular part of internal reflection and organizational learning.[3] Some basic terms:

[3]This approach was developed with evaluation specialist Boru Douthwaite. For a description of after action reviews, see https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/after_action_review

- **MAP outcome:** An observable change in the behaviour (actions, activities, relationships, policies or practices) of individuals, groups, organizations or institutions that are influenced in a small or large way, directly or indirectly, intentionally or not, positively or negatively, by MAP activities. An outcome should describe:

- **Outcome harvesting:** An evaluation approach that starts with perceived outcomes and 'works backwards' to substantiate them and understand how MAP interventions contributed. Because we want to be able to validate and share lessons with others, it's also critical to identify sources of evidence that can substantiate the outcomes identified.

This approach requires distinct roles:

- **Facilitator:** The facilitator leads the self-evaluation exercise, ensuring balanced participation among participants, quality reflection, and focused progress to jointly produce the required outputs. The facilitator may be a member of the MAP implementation team or may be someone familiar with the process.

- **Participants:** Participants should comprise the whole MAP implementation team. They may also include close partners with deep knowledge of the MAP implementation and its outcomes.

- **Documentation lead:** The documentation lead ensures that the raw outputs of the participatory evaluation are revised and prepared for sharing as finished outputs, contributing to the broader learning and exchange of lessons. They should take part in the full exercise, either as participant or note-taker.

Key steps include tracing key events along an implementation timeline, identifying key outcomes, both planned and unexpected, developing outcome narratives, and identifying evidence to validate the outcomes identified.

In Practice

Scoring MAP development along agreed outcome areas

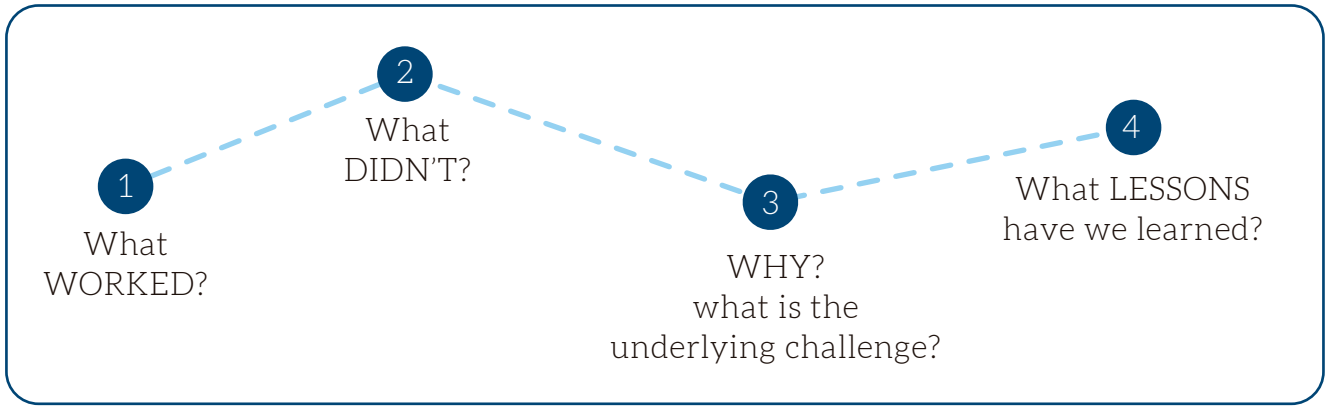
Sometimes indicators of MAP progress are identified in advance, which provides a quick and ready way to monitor stages in MAP development. For example, the following matrix provides a tool to score MAP development along five outcome areas developed for the Promise of Commons initiative:

Outcome	Preparatory Score-1	Basic Score-2	Medium Score-3	High Score-4
Multi-actor engagement	Process of stakeholder engagement begun	Stakeholders identified	Common issues and priorities identified and agreement reached to work collectively	Landscape level MAP formed and recognized by government authorities
Equitable decision-making	Rules for composition of MAP developed	Representation: MAP represents all relevant stakeholders in the landscape	Participation & equity: All members participate, are heard and can influence decision making	Accountability & transparency: Information and decision-making is transparent
Capacity for collective action	Team members oriented on MAP processes	Stakeholder training needs assessment completed	Training programs rolled out	Members have the knowledge and skills to realize MAP objectives
Integrated planning	MAP members agree to pursue integrated landscape / block level plan	Integrated landscape / block level planning process begun	Issues relating to different communities / geographies are identified, recorded and addressed	Landscape / block level conservation plans are developed and endorsed
Allocation of public funds to support MAP purpose	Annual plans derived from landscape level plans and submitted to appropriate authority	Plans approved by the government	Financial and administrative sanctions implemented to support the plan	Increased public funds leveraged to implement plans

Step 8: Identify and address challenges

Typically, a participatory reflection on outcomes achieved will also reveal that many things participants hoped for have not yet been realized. Identifying and reflecting on challenges encountered is a powerful way to re-assess and improve your MAP implementation strategy.

On the basis of experience, ask yourselves:



Often these questions can lead to new insights and lessons that are valuable to share with others who may confront similar challenges. If this reflection is done in a setting that brings together practitioners working on MAPs in different districts and regions, it can help to draw comparisons and sharpen the lessons.

One such comparative workshop yielded lessons on challenges such as: developing confidence in shared data; addressing power dynamics across different levels of government; linking MAP objectives to government priorities; navigating party political affiliations so these don't disrupt landscape-level planning; and reversing a decline in community engagement (see In Practice boxes, below).

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Village meeting for planning of conservation works on Commons in Rajasthan, India

In Practice

Working across administrative levels to address power dynamics

When local authorities are uncooperative or block local organizing efforts, sometimes engaging higher-level support can yield a breakthrough.

In Ananthapur district, Andhra Pradesh, local bodies called Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies (MACS) are licensed to distribute crop seeds to community members. In one instance, the MACS secured key approvals and permissions from the District Collector and the District Agriculture Department to host an event to distribute seeds. Announcements had been made and villagers were preparing.

Normally, such events had police presence to prevent quarrels between the gathered farmers, as had happened previously. At the last moment, however, the local police refused to provide security for this event and restricted the distribution of the seeds. A significant delay in procuring seeds would put the farmers' crops at risk.

To overcome this challenge, MACS members invited the local Member of State Legislative Assembly (MLA) to inaugurate the event, and he accepted. The presence of an MLA obliged the local police to ensure the overall security and smooth functioning of the gathering. With the support of the police as well as other local authorities, the event was a success.

Lessons learned:

- Authorities working at different levels and in different agencies often have very different rules, procedures and incentives. These official power dynamics may frustrate innovative partnerships.
- Analysis of the various authorities and their relationships can yield insights for creative solutions. When field practitioners have a reputation for work that is locally valued, they are also better placed to attract official support for their efforts.

In Practice

Using evidence to influence government investment priorities

Targeted dialogue with both municipal and state government can help redirect public investment priorities towards more efficient and community-driven development models.

The National Biofuel Policy (2009) identified biofuels as a means to stimulate rural development while generating environmental benefits. Subsequently, the Government of Rajasthan encouraged planting of non-edible oil seed crops, particularly jatropha *(Jatropha curcas)*, on designated "wastelands." In contrast, FES advocated a model of common land development emphasizing natural regeneration with native species along with other soil and moisture conservation activities. This model improves crop productivity and fodder cover for community use by increasing biomass. The FES team in Rajasthan therefore adopted an approach to build government interest in the natural regeneration model. They decided to plant jatropha along the boundary of the common lands in villages of Jahazpur (Bilwara District) while native grass, fodder, and fuelwood species were planted inside the common lands.

To influence the local government, the community invited block officials to observe how they preferred the natural regeneration model of common land development. These officials shared the progress with higher officials who also visited, noticing how native grass species contributed to the larger restoration process. Simultaneously, FES worked directly with state level officials to gain a wider acceptance of the model. Finally, as a result of these efforts, the state government issued an order to the district administration to incorporate work on commons restoration.

Lessons learned:

- Comprehensive advocacy efforts directed at both local and higher levels of administration can sometimes shift government priorities.
- Lower-level officials, with the ability to see field-level programs, can inform their superiors of effective alternative models for development.
- First-hand exposure to field innovations, combined with quality information on actions and results, can also help change the minds of higher officials.

In Practice

Reversing a decline in community engagement

A decline in community engagement can sometimes be reversed with a multi-actor process that focuses on shared priorities.

In Sayra (Gogunda block) in Udaipur district, Rajasthan, three villages managed a patch of forest land successfully for almost twelve years, collecting fuelwood and other non-timber forest products under a long-term lease granted by government. However, since the system of rotation patrolling to protect the forests had stopped, two of the villages started breaking the rules and began grazing their livestock in the forest land.

Members of the third village still wanted to protect the forest pastures. They approached FES, who suggested the villagers approach the Forest Department to settle the dispute. The Department set a date for a meeting with all the villages to decide the issue. So, the village members made their case with the other villages. They warned that since the rules were being broken and people were exploiting the resources, the Department could take the lease away. Realizing that their livelihoods would be affected, all three villages agreed to restore and protect the land.

On the day of the meeting, the community representing the three villages, along with FES, sat together with the Forest Department. The community presented their decisions and the newly formed bylaws to the Department. Thus, no government intervention was required. New trees were planted on the forest land to commemorate the day.

Lessons learned:

- The threat of government intervention and loss of privileges sometimes galvanizes communities who have not effectively managed their resources.
- Independent organizing can allow communities to present a unified consensus to local government officials, who are generally more responsive to a clear and agreed upon agenda.
- Government officials can sometimes be effective conflict mediators, particularly if this supports communities' own efforts to reach agreement.

Step 9. Adapt your strategy to sustain collaboration

You'll recall that, in setting action plans, it was key to address not only, "What will you do?" but also, stepping back at the collection of plans and commitments, "Will it achieve the purpose we've set out?"

Now, later in the cycle, after a period of implementation, we have an opportunity to ask, "To what degree have we achieved our purpose—and how should we adapt?"

More specifically:

- What are the practices that are working, and that we should **keep**, going forward?
- What **changes** to strategy should we adopt? What should we do differently?
- If we do this, what change in **future outcomes** can we expect?

This is an opportunity to **revisit your MAP implementation strategy** and improve upon it, on the basis of your experiences together. It may be that the governance context has changed, and design choices also need to be adjusted accordingly. It may be that, with certain achievements or setbacks, it's time to expand, or possibly reduce, the scope of the purpose for the MAP. It may be that capacities of key actors have improved, and it's time to shift roles.

This is an excellent time to consider steps that can be taken to increase **institutional sustainability – the resilience of the MAP itself to endure and adapt over time.** For example:

- If the MAP was promoted, supported, or convened initially by an NGO from outside the area, what are the opportunities to **transfer certain roles and responsibilities** to local actors?
- In particular, which government and community actors, or local civil society leaders, have emerged as **strong facilitators** of collective reflection, dialogue, and action planning?
- Who are the younger, **emerging leaders**? How can their skills be further strengthened?

Another critical way to support institutional sustainability and ongoing collaboration is to expand connections with related efforts, including those outside the local area. What are the opportunities to actively **celebrate and share** the successes and lessons learned?

Sharing the MAP experience with those in other regions also can serve as a powerful example to communities, local government units or civil society organizations who may be inspired to begin their own MAP journey.

Photo Credit: Foundation for Ecological Security

Meeting of the Women Farmers Producer Group in Odisha, India

CONCLUSION

This Design Guide is intended to help you and your teams to develop and support MAPs that endure over time, adapt to changing needs, and catalyze collaborative action. The structure of the Guide has traced the three phases that are essential to any effective MAP process, each addressing a basic question:

What are the "design choices" I might encounter, and how do I make these choices? (**DESIGN** phase – chapter 2)

How do I go about organizing and facilitating MAP implementation? (**IMPLEMENT** phase – chapter 3)

What are the most common obstacles or challenges I might confront along the way, and how can I respond to these effectively? (**ADAPT** phase – chapter 4)

As you pursue your MAP development, it's useful to reflect on the key principles introduced in chapter 1, which underpin the whole approach:

- Are we clear about the shared **purpose**—one which responds to a real, pressing need and bridges the interests of different actors?
- Have we convened the right **people**—representing the whole system, and offering each an equal opportunity to participate?
- How well does our **process** enable participants in the MAP to use their powers of appreciation, influence, and choice—respecting the individual agency of each person?

The work of designing, implementing and adapting your MAP to contribute to systems change is not easy. It requires sensitivity to understand the context in which you're working, creativity to design effective processes, and persistence to address the challenges that inevitably emerge.

But when it works well, a MAP is one of the most effective ways to launch collaborative actions that endure, because those who take part are not merely sharing information or making plans. They are also deepening their understanding, relationships of trust, and commitment to confront difficult challenges together. And that is the seed of transformation.

We hope that you will return to this Guide periodically as you adapt the steps to your particular context and priorities. And we invite you to share your own challenges, successes, and insights. These will help enrich this Guide in the future and contribute to an expanding community of practice.

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Collaborating for Resilience supports exchange of experience among practitioners, researchers and policy stakeholders working to build dialogue among groups competing over environmental resources, launch innovations that reduce the risk of social conflict, and strengthen institutions for equitable environmental governance.

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