



**Participatory
approaches to
research and
development in
IIED: Learning
from experience**

Contents

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AFRICAP	Capacity Development for Sustainable Forestry in Africa
CWM	Community Wildlife Management
DANIDA	Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development – UK
EE	Evaluating Eden
EEP	Environmental Economics Programme
ENRICH-EC	European Network for Research in Global Change
FLU	Forestry and Land Use Programme
IDS	Institute for Development Studies – UK
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
MARP	Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative
NR	Natural Resources
NSSD	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
PAVE	Participatory Approaches to Veterinary Epidemiology
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTW	Policy That Works
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SARL	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Authority

Foreword

This report of the Participation Review is a result of an iterative process which took over a year. We would like to thank the twelve members of IIED staff who discussed their projects with us: Andy Catley, Barry Dalal-Clayton, Oliver Dubois, Maryanne Grieg-Gran, Bara Gueye, Ced Hesse, James Mayers, Diana Mitlin, Michel Pimbert, Dilys Roe, Krystyna Swiderska and Cecelia Tacoli. We are grateful to everyone in IIED who contributed their time and attended meetings to discuss the Review. Special thanks are due to Steve Bass, Nigel Cross, Michel Pimbert and John Thompson who provided us with advice and support throughout the process. Finally, thanks to Simon Ferrigno, who coordinated the production process and David Lewis, as the only ‘outsider’ who commented on an earlier draft of this report.

The Review was an enjoyable piece of work and allowed us to learn much more about IIED’s projects and working methods, across the different programmes. Although the Review is primarily aimed at internal learning, we think it provides some general lessons for organisations which try and use participatory approaches and methods. In particular, it illustrates the complexities involved in ‘practising what we preach’ and reminds us how difficult it is to keep to the values that underpin ‘participation’ in a demanding and competitive environment.

Our key finding and recommendations, which are elaborated in the final section of this report, cover the following areas:

- The need to be clearer about the concept of participation and more specific about who participates, in what, how and to what end

- The requisites for a ‘co-learning’ approach to collaborative research
- The importance of partners’ values and the development of trust, as well as their expertise and position to influence decision-making, for positive research outcomes
- The factors which support methodological innovation and reflection
- Trade-offs in the use of participatory methods and approaches
- The importance of information and communication
- The constraints in promoting learning in an organisation

Learning entails reflection on past experience and a willingness to confront and deal with problems and weaknesses. It requires time, resources and a commitment to staff development. In many ways, learning processes within organisations can run counter to incentive structures, which usually provide rewards for ‘quality products’ but which may obscure the quality of processes. It requires a degree of courage and a commitment to democratic values on the part of an organisation to carry out a review of this sort, which focuses on process and identifies shortcomings as well as celebrating successes. As reviewers, we feel that the publication of this report is a testimony to the willingness of IIED to expose its weaknesses as well its strengths, and we hope that it will encourage other similar organisations to do the same. We also hope that the report contributes to making us more transparent to our partners.

Nazneen Kanji

Laura Greenwood

October 2001

1. Why have a ‘participation review’?

IIED has been involved in developing participatory approaches to research and development for over ten years and its contribution is recognised internationally. Its work has been integral to the development of participatory methodologies and it has had an important role in information dissemination and advocacy for more participatory forms of natural resource management and urban development. IIED’s best selling publication is *A Trainer’s Guide to Participatory Learning and Action. PLA Notes*, which acts as a vehicle for international exchange on participatory methods, continues to meet an important demand from practitioners.

Participatory approaches and methods have become more widespread, with the result that conceptual and methodological problems and issues have inevitably arisen through this process. The term ‘participation’ is now used by a range of development institutions with differing objectives, values and approaches, which has made its use and application even more diverse. This review presents an opportunity for IIED staff to assess, drawing from a range of on-going work in IIED projects, whether we can still think of IIED in terms of being a ‘centre of excellence for participatory approaches and processes’. Over and above this question, the Review aims to promote staff learning from the experience of 12 selected projects, from the perspective of good practice in participatory approaches and methods, and examine how this can be drawn upon to further the impact and success of future IIED activities.

The idea for this Participation Review arose out of a proposal to have an ‘Internal Learning Group’ on participation, for which a concept note was developed and approved by the Programme Strategy Group. However, attendance at a meeting called to form the group and select activities

was limited. Given the pressures on staff time, it was decided to give the endeavour one practical focus, this Review, to promote internal learning. The Natural Resources Project, funded by SIDA, provided the context and resources to take this work forward. Within the NR project, developing a learning process was seen as the first step to developing an IIED NR strategy and several learning themes were identified, including participation. Additional funds were provided by the DANIDA/SIDA Capacity Exchange Initiative, which made it possible to include projects from all programmes within IIED, carry out a more extensive Review and enable greater involvement of staff in the process and recommendations.

As a first step, a 'driver' was identified, Nazneen Kanji (recently recruited SARL Research Associate), who worked in collaboration with Laura Greenwood (Editor of *PLA Notes*). At the concept note stage, two areas of focus for the Review were suggested: one was 'external' – a range of research projects using participatory approaches and methods, and the other was 'internal' – looking at participation in IIED's organisational procedures and culture. In the one meeting convened, staff were interested in both. However, it was decided with senior management to restrict the participation review to the use of participatory tools and methods in research projects. Other groups and reviews were going to address the internal issues (Monitoring and Evaluation Group, Management Review). In addition, issues arising with partners in collaborative research are being addressed in current work on a Code of Conduct for Collaborative Research. Although we did not address internal organisational issues of participation, it was impossible not to talk about the relationship between IIED researchers and partners. Indeed, this is the relationship that preoccupies staff on a daily basis and participatory methods with research subjects are quite often promoted and assessed at a distance. This relates to IIED's positioning in the collaborative research cycle where IIED staff usually only facilitate research partners to carry out fieldwork. In sum, while this Review centres on the use of participatory methods and tools used in the various projects, it also includes a discussion of IIED-partner relationships, both against a background of current shifts and debates on participation.

2. Review approach and methods

This section outlines the steps taken to organise this Review, as well as the approach and methods developed to carry it out. It deliberately includes the problems we faced in organising the work, in an Institute where people face numerous demands and time pressures, in common with many similar organisations.

Our initial idea was to have a focal person in each programme who could, with their group, select two projects for review and be a key contact throughout the Review process. The criteria for project selection were:

- Uses participatory approaches and methods or has a research focus on participation
- Provides interesting lessons on participation

This approach was not successful with little feedback from staff to several e-mail messages. It was therefore decided to change the strategy. With John Thompson's support (SARL Programme Director who has long worked on participation), projects were selected from each programme, with an attempt to get a spread of those working at different levels. This then produced reactions from programmes, some of which changed the selection. Although programmes were asked to consider choosing one more 'successful' project and one more problematic, 'failures' may have been omitted in the effort to contribute to good practice. The final selection is given in the table below. Appendix 1 contains project summaries and contacts.

Table 1: Selection of Projects for the Review		
	Projects using participatory approaches and methods	Projects with a focus on participation
Policy and policy processes	National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD)	Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Protection
	Policy That Works for Forests and People (PTW)	
	Rural – Urban Linkages	
	Housing Finance	Evaluating Eden – Community Wildlife Management (CWM)
	Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel	
Institutional focus		Institutionalising Participation
		Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative (MARP)
Methodological focus	Participatory Approaches to Veterinary Epidemiology (PAVE)	AFRICAP: 4Rs
	Hidden Harvest	

These categories are not mutually exclusive and many projects work across levels. However, the primary focus of the project was used for differentiation.

Another important point to make is that most projects reviewed not only have a research focus but also include information/communication or institutional development. Others have a key objective of promoting 'stakeholder engagement' and coalition building. They tend to have elements of the four overlapping platforms or 'methodologies', which the IIED strategy for 2001-2002 identifies as critical for achieving our institutional objectives:

- Research
- Information/communications
- Stakeholder engagement
- Institutional development/capacity services

Although most of the projects selected are research-oriented, the NSSD project is one that focuses on stakeholder engagement for integrated policy development while MARP's focus is direct

capacity building and institutionalisation. Similarly, the Human Settlements programme's work on Housing Finance has a research component, a servicing/capacity building role for the network Shack Dwellers International and an information component through *HiFi News*, its regular publication/newsletter. 'Projects' which focus on information include the regular production of *PLA Notes*, the *Gatekeeper* series, *Haramata* and the journal *Environment and Urbanization*. It has not been possible to include publications in this Review, as it would have entailed the development of a different methodology.

We will return to these four categories when we discuss the methods and tools used in projects, since participatory methods include, but go beyond, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) for projects at different levels.

A semi-structured interview guide (Appendix 2) was prepared for a key member of staff involved in each project. It consisted of a series of open questions as well as an exercise to map levels of participation among research partners and subjects according to a typology of participation. The typology was based on earlier work within IIED (Pretty, Guijt, Thompson, Scoones 1995) and on work by Andrea Cornwall at IDS which, in turn, draws on Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (1971). The types of participation range from:

- '*compliance*' where tasks with incentives are assigned but the agenda and process is directed by outsiders
- '*consultation*' where local opinions are sought, outsiders analyse and decide the course of action
- '*cooperation*' where local people work with outsiders to determine priorities; the responsibility to direct the process lies with outsiders
- '*co-learning*' where local people and outsiders share knowledge, create new understanding and work together to form action plans
- '*collective action*' where local people set their own agenda and mobilise to carry it out in the absence of outsiders

The typology was used to map the participation of research partners and research subjects in the research cycle¹. The tool had to be used for single case studies rather than whole projects, as the process varied so much, particularly within multi-country research projects.

This mapping tool had its limitations:

- It could not usually be used to map the participation of research subjects since IIED staff are usually at some distance from this process.
- It mapped participation at set points and therefore could not take into account other points nor adequately reflect projects which used a more iterative process. As one researcher put it: 'there was continuous redefinition with partners through the research process, which is difficult to represent with this tool'.

In general terms, the fact that certain projects were selected obviously limits the Review somewhat. In particular, it gives the analysis a project focus that reflects the subject of analysis rather

¹ For a useful set of principles uniting different approaches to participation, see Appendix 3

than the totality of IIED's work. For example, IIED's regular publications involve a very different kind of participation from the activities considered here, but they are an important part of what we bring to long-term collaborative partnerships. Despite these constraints, the Review does provide an overview of staff perceptions of the type of participation taking place at particular points in their research projects.

This report is based on the information collected using the above methods, but also includes an overview of definitions and debates around participation. It begins by discussing some of the wider issues and questions that provide the context for this participation review. It moves on to provide a critical appraisal of IIED's experience with the use of participatory approaches and methods. In the approach we have taken to the Review, which has involved interviews and discussions with staff, we hope to promote some reflection and learning on both conceptual and methodological aspects of participation for us all.

This document has been prepared with two phases of internal consultation. Firstly, it incorporates feedback from staff interviewed on the findings and their suggested recommendations on how we can address current problems and challenges. Secondly, it includes feedback from an IIED-wide meeting held to discuss the report.

3. Conceptual shifts and debates

3.1 The different interpretations of participation

The dictionary definition of participation is simply to have a part or a share in something. The range of current definitions has evolved in development thinking since the 1970s. As an earlier in-house presentation on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (Abbot and Guijt, 1999) points out, definitions of participation range from assisting people to exercise their democratic rights to a means of obtaining views from different stakeholders. The former definition tends to refer to a process where less powerful groups in society are **involved in decision-making** at different levels. It tends to be associated with the aim of 'empowerment' to transform society and achieve a more equitable access to and distribution of resources. In this view, participation has a strong normative claim; it can be seen as a basic human right and an end in itself. On the other hand, the latter definition refers to a set of **methods and tools to elicit views** of different stakeholders in research, policy and planning processes at different levels. The arguments in favour of such stakeholder involvement are that it leads to more effective interventions, since it takes different views into account and builds a broader, more inclusive platform for action.

In the view of one member of staff, some IIED programmes have emphasised the development of methodologies since the early 1990s while others have been more concerned with policy processes and institutional arrangements for transparency and accountability – which are closely associated with the current focus on governance and citizenship rights as a central issue for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Certainly, IIED staff and projects reflect a range

of interpretations and areas of focus regarding participation. For example, the Institutionalising Participation project, by its very objectives, is more concerned with governance issues; the NSSD project is more concerned with involving a wider range of stakeholders to build ownership of policies so that they will be implemented at national and international levels. Projects such as PAVE are specifically concerned with innovative methodologies and bringing together scientific and local knowledge.

3.2 Trends in 'participatory development'

Jo Abbot and Irena Guijt provided an overview of chronological shifts in their in-house training in 1999. They characterise these shifts as beginning with a recognition of the need for participation in the 1970s and early 1980s to a 'boom period' in the 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, we have seen an era of 'must have' participation and towards the end of the 1990s into this decade, a set of paradoxes and new challenges have emerged.

The main phases can be characterised as follows:

- **The need for participation.** The frustration over ineffective 'expert' research and planning in the 1970s/early 1980s led to a search for alternative methods for data collection and planning which incorporated local people's perspectives, skills and priorities. The overview recognises a parallel process of politically driven and poverty focused activism with the development of principles to guide empowerment for poverty reduction.
- **The boom period of the 1980s/early 1990s,** particularly in methods for 'Participatory Rural Appraisal' (PRA). There was much experimentation with new methods and principles, which created a bewildering array of approaches and acronyms. The focus was on understanding insider/local knowledge as a balance to the dominance of outsider/western scientific knowledge.
- **The participation imperative** of the 1990s, with participation becoming the new normative practice, lots of 'manuals' and participation as a conditionality for funding.
- **Emerging paradoxes** towards the end of the 1990s with standardised approaches contradicting original aims for flexible and context-specific approaches. A more technical rather than empowerment-oriented use of methods with superficial knowledge of empowerment principles emerged.

This brief synopsis may be usefully complemented by a recent paper on participation (Cornwall, 2000), which attempts to link the shifts in perspective with changes in wider approaches to development. In the 1970s, participation was associated with a basic needs approach to development which signalled a shift from top-down, technocratic and economic interventions towards popular involvement, human resources and basic human needs as critical to development processes. The full range of arguments for participation was explored at this time including efficiency and effectiveness, self-determination and mutual learning. As Cornwall argues, some of the definitions of participation in the 1970s are being echoed or reinvented today.

A UNRISD research programme on popular participation in the late 1970s defined participation as "the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control." (Pearse and Stiefel, 1979, cited in Cornwall, 2000:21)

The current definition from DFID echoes this thinking, reflecting the organisation's recent focus on rights-based approaches to development:

"Participation: enabling people to realize their rights to participate in, and access information relating to, the decision-making processes which affect their lives. Democratic institutions and access to information about governments' policies and performance are necessary to enable people to participate in the decisions which affect their lives. They also need to be able to form organisations, such as unions, women's groups or citizens' monitoring groups, to represent their collective interests." (DFID, 2000: 24)

Cornwall argues that until the mid-1980s, there was a distinction between mainstream approaches to 'participatory development' and alternative 'people's self-development' inspired by the work of Freire. Whereas the former is seen as a means to involve people in activities initiated by the state and development agencies, the second was seen as a process of collective action which could lead to more self-reliant development and the capacity to negotiate on new terms with those in power, including the state.

As the global economic context changed and neo-liberal economic reform took hold in the 1980s, communities, particularly poor communities, were seen as active participants in implementation and increasingly, cost recovery and co-management schemes. Cornwall characterises this shift: from 'do it *by* yourself' to 'do it *for* yourself'. Some of the research on the impact of structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s/early 1990s is critical of this shift, which cut public expenditure on basic and social services and can be argued to transfer costs to those sections of society which are least able to bear them. Participation, in this wider context, seems to lose its redistributive and transformatory potential.

With the rolling back of the state in the 1980s there was fresh interest in NGOs as smaller-scale organisations, which were better placed to operationalise participation. The exponential growth of NGOs and their expanding roles in service provision has been well documented elsewhere. As we moved through the 1990s, however, the fresh interest in the concept of civil society has invested NGOs with yet another role, that of assisting democratisation by monitoring the controlling tendencies of the state. In any case, as Cornwall (2000) puts it, in the new discourse, 'economic liberalization, freedom of association and democratic governance are seen as inextricably intertwined'.

All mainstream institutions now use the language of 'participation' and 'empowerment', associated with more radical 'bottom-up' development in the 1970s. Sellamna, 1999, in an ODI working paper, argues that the increasing reference to civil society in the participation movement may ensure greater links with political science and a clearer message as to the political agenda of this movement. On the other hand, it is argued that issues of arbitration between conflictual interests and choices are not confronted by many proponents of participation. This is not to say that the current emphasis on partnerships and stakeholder engagement do not provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups to empower themselves. However, there perhaps needs to be greater acknowledgement of unequal power relations and conflicts in such relationships. It may even be argued that in some parts of the world, economic and political liberalisation work in opposite directions, so that inequalities and levels of material poverty might prevent people from taking up or making use of political spaces that are opened up by these approaches.

3.3 Some key points for IIED

3.3.1 How does IIED use the term participation?

IIED, or perhaps more accurately SARLs and the Resource Centre, have developed the concept of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), as a generic term to encompass the broadening out of participatory approaches and tools, moving away from the rural locale where PRA was developed, to reflect their use in other contexts and sectors. PLA is defined as 'the (full) participation of people

in the processes of learning about their needs, visions and capabilities, and in the action required to address and develop them' (PLA Notes, 1999). Although other definitions of participation have probably been used in IIED projects, this is a wide definition which lacks the 'organisation of interests' and institutional base which other current definitions emphasise. In addition, it has been questioned whether 'full' participation is feasible or desirable. For example, Cornwall (2000) argues for 'optimal' rather than full participation. Cohen and Uphoff (1980) called for 'clarity through specificity' – choices about **who participates, in what and how** should be made more explicit and issues of representation and legitimacy directly addressed.

These issues and questions are not new for IIED and are raised in different ways in many project documents and publications. To take just one example, the publication 'Participatory Valuation of Wild Resources: an Overview of the Hidden Harvest Methodology' has a section at the end which questions whether 'full' participation is desirable, and lists a number of costs and trade-offs of using participatory research methods. A more recent project, 'Access to Genetic Resources' is currently in the process of developing recommendations on effective participation in this field.

However, the issues perhaps need to be more systematically addressed across the institute and *we should be more careful, rigorous and transparent with our use of concepts and terms*. For example, the overview publication of 'Evaluating Eden: Exploring the myths and realities of community-based wildlife management' contains a typology of Australian case studies which includes:

- indigenous community wildlife management (CWM)
- co-management projects
- participatory projects
- 'top down' projects
- government programmes facilitating indigenous CWM

In this case, 'participatory' denotes 'consultative'. A more nuanced use of the term 'participation', perhaps even avoiding its unqualified use, might promote the 'clarity through specificity' which participation researchers and practitioners have called for.

3.3.2 Whose participation?

Terms such as 'the poor', primary stakeholders and partners tend to homogenise groups and hide very real differences in interests and identities. Earlier work in IIED (Guijt and Shah, 1998) has shown how women can be excluded from many so-called 'participatory' interventions, although it is equally important that women are also not treated as a homogeneous group and that other inequalities in particular societies are recognised. Even when participatory tools allow for the disaggregation of views and interests, the 'consensus-based' plans, 'participatory poverty assessments' and strategies which emerge do tend to beg the question of whose voices and interests come through. (See for example Whitehead and Lockwood, 1999 and Kanji, 2001)

Questions for IIED:

- Are questions of difference appropriately integrated into IIED's analysis of issues in poverty reduction and sustainable development?
- Are we looking critically at whose voices are heard and whose interests are represented?

3.3.3 Do we assess opportunities for participation in different areas and sectors?

While the most recent shifts to governance and citizenship rights might present new opportunities to institutionalise participation, there is a huge gap between analysis and action on the ground. In addition, although social and political participation may be argued to be converging (Gaventa and Valderrama, 2000), there are particular areas, which may be more complex and technical and/or where there are powerful vested interests, which remain extremely difficult to democratise. Economic policy making falls in this category and as one IIED researcher pointed out, more work needs to be done to convince economists, in general, of the value of participatory and even just qualitative research. As the 'Access to Genetic Resources' project revealed, the information to engage with the technical issues in this field is not always available to organisations which represent local communities. In addition, as the report (Tobin, 2000) on participation in the formulation of Peru's Law on Traditional Knowledge Protection puts it: "...to secure the involvement of indigenous people in decision-making, it is necessary to identify the extent to which proffered opportunities to participate, signify a real possibility to significantly affect the outcome of a process." In other words, we have to be clear about the limits of 'invited participation' in particular contexts and sectors.

Questions for IIED:

- Are we promoting participatory approaches across 'difficult' areas (particularly in sectors outside service provision) and how effective have these been?

3.3.4 Are we addressing critical questions and shifts?

A recent workshop (April 2000) held at IDS entitled 'Pathways to Participation' brought together scholars, researchers and practitioners from North and South and crystallised some of the broad shifts in the scope and focus of 'participation' as well as providing a critical appraisal. A number of IIED research staff participated in this workshop and along with others raised some key questions:

- Is there an overestimation of the power of participatory tools and techniques?
- Do practitioners (and researchers?) deal with conflict raised by using participatory tools? Are issues of power really addressed?
- Have we shown that participation impacts positively on the living conditions of poor communities?
- Is Participatory Action Research sometimes a substitute for good social research?
- Are participatory processes outsider driven and do they take into account differences in cosmologies and cultures?
- Is the emancipatory potential of participation being neutralised because we are not clear about the values of social justice and equity?

Some of the key shifts in the scope and focus of participation include:

- From projects to policy processes and institutionalisation
- From local to national and international decision-making
- From promotion to assessment – monitoring the quality and understanding the impact of participation
- From a focus on methods to a more critical analysis of concepts

These shifts are notable in the range of projects in which IIED is involved. However, we could perhaps do more as an Institute to systematically assess the quality of participation in different contexts and engage in a more critical analysis of concepts within individual projects. An excellent example of this critical analysis is the publication 'Whither Participation? Experience from Francophone Africa' by Bara Gueye (1999) which takes an in-depth look at the progress and challenges of participatory development in that regional context, and raises many issues which are of global relevance.

Questions for IIED:

- Has IIED shifted its use of participatory techniques to deal with a situation in which powerful and exploitative interests see benefits in participation that were not there before?
- Should we more regularly and systematically draw out lessons from project experience?
- Should they be more readily accessible to a wider audience?

4. Participation in collaborative research

This section analyses the relationships between IIED staff and research partners at different points in the research process. It starts by presenting the results of a mapping exercise of the participation of research partners in the research cycle. Different stages in a project cycle are then discussed and key issues and learning points are identified. Finally, we look at some factors which IIED staff feel are important in relation to partners, for positive project outcomes.

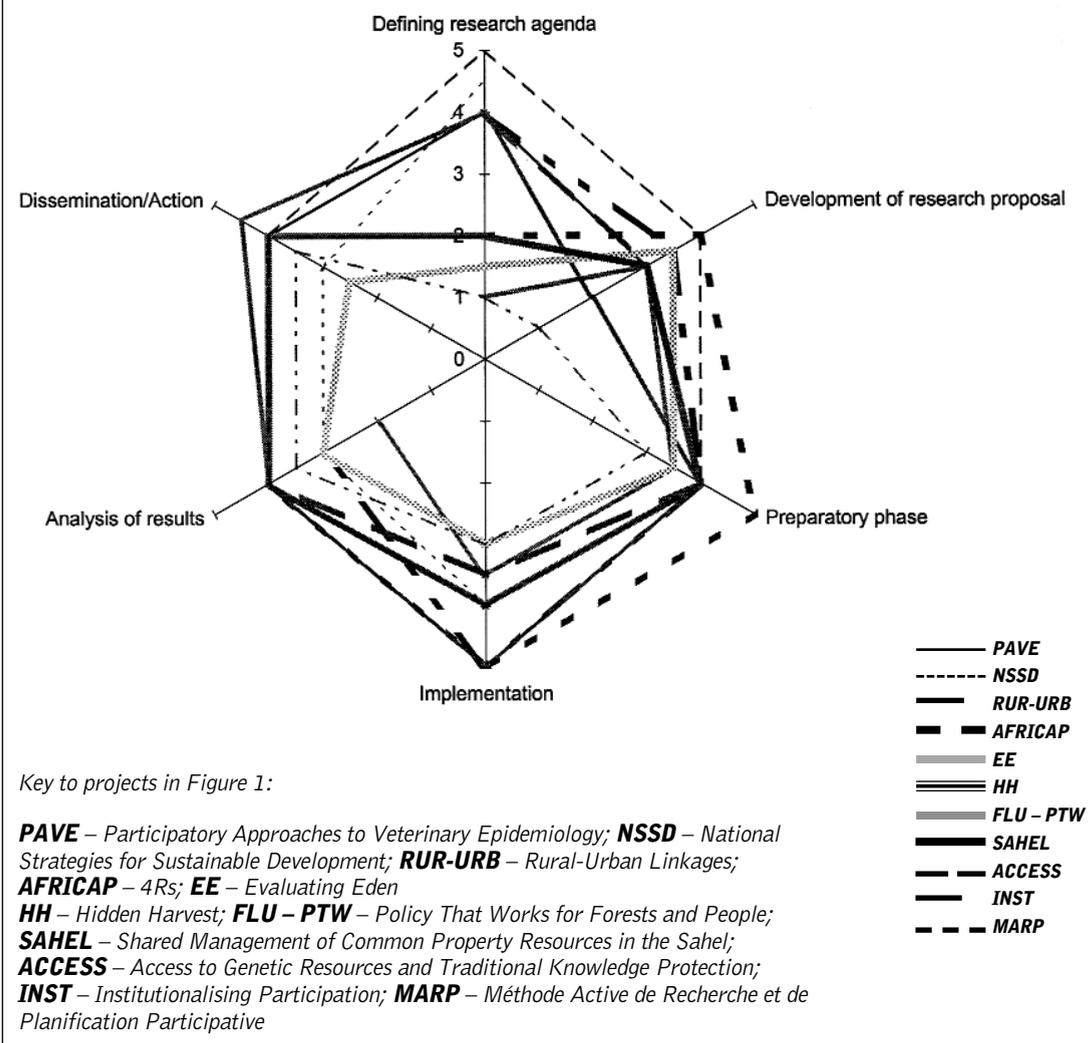
The composite map or web of projects reviewed (Figure 1) shows a wide variation in levels of partner participation between projects². In general, it is clear that IIED staff aim for a 'co-learning' approach where IIED staff and partners 'work together to share knowledge and develop new understanding and action plans'. The composite web also shows that in general, IIED staff do involve partners from an early stage in the research process although the earliest stage of defining the research agenda does have the widest range of levels of participation.

4.1 The genesis and development of project proposals in IIED

4.1.1 'IIED as a think tank'

Most projects in IIED begin with individual member/s of staff developing an idea of what needs to be addressed, based on past experience and knowledge of the key issues in a particular field.

² Please see page 6 for more details on the typology used for the mapping process and appendix 4 for more details of the mapping tool

Figure 1: Mapping participation through the research cycle with Research Partners

This starting point can be greatly influenced by work with Southern partners. In FLU, for example, it was a history of working on forestry and land use policy at the national level, and a recognition of the need to go beyond policy 'wish lists' and government policy statements that led to the project Policy That Works for Forests and People (PTW). The objective was to work with policyholders and those who determine policy implementation on the ground. The potential for action on sustainable forestry in a given time and context was a key criterion in the selection of case studies. A similar concern spawned the National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD) project with a focus on involving a wide range of stakeholders in the development of strategies to increase the likelihood of implementation. In some projects, a new area of research

has been identified and new staff recruited to develop the programme, as in the case of the 'Rural-Urban Linkages' project. In yet others, emerging issues have been identified, such as the problem of 'institutionalising participation' in agriculture and natural resource management; the need to examine new ways of organising housing finance to benefit low-income groups in low-income areas; and in the 'Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge Protection' project, the need to prevent unauthorised use of such knowledge and resources so that local and indigenous communities can receive benefits from their commercial use by outsiders.

In sum, IIED functions as a 'think tank' and the identification of important and relevant research issues depends on staff being abreast of current debates in the international arena. However, to prevent the tendency to uncritically adopt issues which may be currently 'fashionable' in the environment and development funding arena, or those that have largely academic significance, it is arguably the past research experience that IIED relies on that is critical. In other words, IIED staff's involvement in research projects should give them an understanding of national and local perspectives and contexts to 'vet' concepts and terms which are generated (sometimes at an alarming pace and with varying degrees of rigour) at an international level. One of the questions this Review poses is whether the kind of involvement IIED staff have in research projects is sufficient to give the organisation this critical perspective. We will come back to this when IIED's role in the research process is described.

4.1.2 'Variable approaches to project development'

Although the initial research ideas almost always originate within IIED, the organisation's stated commitment to collaborative research means that partners are usually involved at an early stage in the research planning process. The extent of partner participation and the time that is allowed for this process varies considerably. In a few cases, (for example MARP and Institutionalising Participation) the research agenda itself is defined or redefined by or with research partners. In most cases, funding is secured for a broad proposal and IIED selects research partners, usually based on previous joint work or on contacts. Country visits by IIED staff and workshops with partners tend to form the basis for the development of research plans. The degree of control which IIED exercises in the development of the full research proposal seems to vary greatly, possibly depending on the nature of the project and commitments to funders as well as personal values and approaches. In many projects, research partners from different countries attend an international workshop, which addresses the conceptual framework and methodology of the project as well as drawing up action plans for the different country case studies, for example, the 'Institutionalising Participation' project, NSSD, FLU Policy That Works. However, if the framework is not clearly agreed, partners can develop case studies outside the project remit, as in the case of Evaluating Eden, which can create problems. In regionally focused projects, workshops are usually held in the region (e.g. Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel, MARP and PAVE). In yet others, IIED maintains the international coordination role and partners meet on a regional or country basis (Evaluating Eden, AFRICAP, and Access to Genetic Resources, Rural-Urban Linkages in Africa).

4.1.3 A greater role for partners in project development?

An issue that arises here is whether we need to think about the extent to which country partners feel part of and have some creative input into international, multi-country projects. Does this vary according to the opportunities they have for joint input into the proposal, meeting researchers from other countries, and when these opportunities occur? Can we do more to ensure that these

opportunities occur in an appropriate and timely manner in projects across the Institute? Might this contribute to stronger partner ownership and the quality of outputs?

4.2 The implementation of research projects

4.2.1 Variable approaches to implementation

Most research projects are actually implemented by IIED's partners, with highly variable degrees of input by IIED staff. IIED's role can be one of research coordination, with a completely 'hands off' approach to implementation. IIED staff only get involved when the studies are written up. Although there may be an occasional field visit, the work is firmly in the hands of local researchers. This is the case for the FLU AFRICAP project, Rural-Urban Linkages, and particular regions in Evaluating Eden and in the Housing Finance project. In some cases, this is seen as the 'best' way of working; in others it is explicitly because there is a high level of trust between IIED staff and partners. The role of IIED staff in these cases seems to be one of research coordination and facilitation.

In many cases, however, a different approach is adopted where there is more direct involvement of IIED staff in the fieldwork. This depends partly on the nature of the project and what implementation actually entails. Projects which are primarily concerned with stakeholder engagement or wider consultative processes, such as NSSD, tend to involve IIED staff, at least in national level workshops. Similarly, direct capacity building work involved in the MARP programme in West Africa entails more direct involvement of IIED Senegal's staff. However, even in projects with a research focus, some IIED staff work alongside local researchers providing inputs on research methods or experimenting together with innovative methods. This seems to be the case with the Sahel co-management of natural resources project, PAVE, at least one of the case studies of the FLU Policy that Works project in Costa Rica and in some case studies in the Access to Genetic Resources project. In these examples, 'co-learning' seems a more accurate way to describe the experience than in other projects. As the IIED researcher on PAVE says, 'learning by doing' is fundamental both in his own knowledge and in making contributions to the project, which has a methodological focus. Where the role is essentially one of coordination, as another IIED researcher put it: the co-learning may only start when the reports arrive from research partners.

4.2.2 A greater role for IIED staff in project implementation?

It can be argued that direct involvement in fieldwork at community level and/or with stakeholder organisations may give IIED researchers a greater awareness of issues of difference and inequalities related to class, caste, ethnicity, gender and age. It can provide a greater appreciation of issues of 'representation' and inequalities in power between different 'stakeholders'. The issue that arises here is whether some IIED researcher participation at the implementation phase is desirable in order to 'ground truth' findings and analysis, as a 'reality check' to assumptions and current discourse. This is perhaps particularly important for less experienced researchers who have not spent much time working or living in the countries where research is carried out. Involvement in fieldwork also provides opportunities for IIED staff learning and methodological innovation with partners, which is discussed in section 5. While the increased involvement of IIED staff in fieldwork has cost implications, the returns may outweigh these in terms of sharper, more grounded analysis, closer relationships with partners and better reports, publications and information dissemination at local as well as international levels. In this way, the 'co-learning' objectives and values that so many IIED staff express may yield better results.

4.3 The analysis and dissemination of research findings

4.3.1 IIED's accountability to donors can cause conflict with partners

It is often IIED's role to pull together findings from different case studies, making a comparative international analysis and also preparing reports for funders. It is at this stage that IIED staff are often under pressure to ensure a timely product of acceptable quality to the funding agencies. If the product submitted by partners is weak, it can sometimes result in IIED staff having to substantially re-write reports. This has occurred for particular cases in the multi-country studies such as FLU Policy That Works, NSSD, Rural-Urban Linkages and AFRICAP. In other projects, an overall report has entailed expanding and strengthening the analysis made in the case studies. Some of the projects reviewed here are still in progress and have not yet reached this stage.

This phase in the research process is most likely to be conflictual between IIED staff and partners. IIED staff are often caught between wanting to be flexible and maintain good relationships and feeling pressure to take control, since IIED is ultimately accountable to donors for final products. In at least one case (in this group of selected projects) partners had to be threatened with a stoppage of funds in order to get a report which was long overdue.

4.3.2 More attention to planning dissemination and 'influencing strategies'

Dissemination and action at country level is often left to partners, but the degree of IIED funding and support is highly variable. A number of projects include 'end-of-project' workshops with various stakeholders to discuss findings and their implications for action. However, if there is a funding crisis, as in the case of the Evaluating Eden project, the dissemination activities can 'drop off the end', being viewed as a lower priority activity. This raises serious implications for learning, improving practice and influencing policy. Some projects reported unexpected spin-offs in the way of networks and on-going activities, for example Evaluating Eden and FLU PTW. The AFRICAP project developed the 4Rs framework which is being used in a number of countries for on-going work. Other projects evolve into second generation or follow-up projects (e.g. MARP).

Dissemination of the findings at the international level is often carried out through IIED publications, books and peer review journals. In the AFRICAP project, one of the learning points 'with hindsight' was that more resources should have been allocated for follow-up workshops, advocacy work, the dissemination of IIED/project publications and workshops to share experiences across countries. In another project (Hidden Harvest), where economic and participatory valuations of wild resources were carried out, it was suggested that more time should have been allocated to feeding back and discussing quantitative findings with communities.

Most projects are not formally evaluated. MARP was evaluated (externally and with an internal self-evaluation) which served to redirect the capacity building work towards institutionalisation. This was because organisational practice was highlighted as being a key factor for effecting change. In the case of the FLU PTW project, country teams were asked to assess the impact of the project. They have submitted reports which will be analysed by FLU and lessons for IIED drawn out. In the case of the NSSD project, IIED may be involved in proposals to monitor compliance and whether the international targets are being met.

The findings on dissemination relate to the current debate in IIED on the need to pay more attention to different forms of information and communication, at the level of individual research projects, programmes and the Institute as a whole. This needs to be better planned and budgeted for at the start of projects as well as demanding a more comprehensive overall strategy which

more systematically links research and information. IIED staff and partners should discuss 'influencing strategies' as part of project planning and development.

4.4 IIED's partners and their influence on project outcomes

4.4.1 Partners' position to influence, approaches and values are important

IIED works with a range of institutions and individuals in carrying out research programmes and projects. In most projects, there is a mix of non-governmental organisations and research institutions. There is perhaps an assumption in the choice of partners that NGOs are more likely to work well with communities and have a 'bottom-up' approach or use a participatory development framework. A few projects involve government staff as researchers, although government at different levels is involved as a key stakeholder in most projects. For example, in the forestry AFR-ICAP project, government staff were deliberately selected as 'focal points' for the country teams, to encourage institutionalisation and impact on policy. In the MARP project, however, government was not included in the early stages because it was thought that they would be hostile to participatory approaches. With hindsight, the IIED researcher would have included them earlier to have a greater impact on policy.

The approach and values of research partners were often central in staff assessments of levels of 'participation' and indeed, in the practical positive outcomes of the projects. The selection of partners is often an informal and ad hoc process, building on past contacts and existing networks, sometimes with key individuals rather than institutions. Some staff see the existence of these networks as a major strength of IIED. Others see it as a problem in that 'new blood' is not systematically included, connections with institutions are broken when individuals leave and it is not clear who to approach and how, when new countries or new areas of work are involved. In the latter case, this is particularly difficult if IIED is under pressure to select partners and set up projects quickly. Factors such as the values and approaches used by partners, which are important in selection, are obviously difficult to include in databases that IIED has set up. The work in progress on IIED codes of conduct suggests a greater investment in building longer-term institutional relationships with a limited number of key partners.

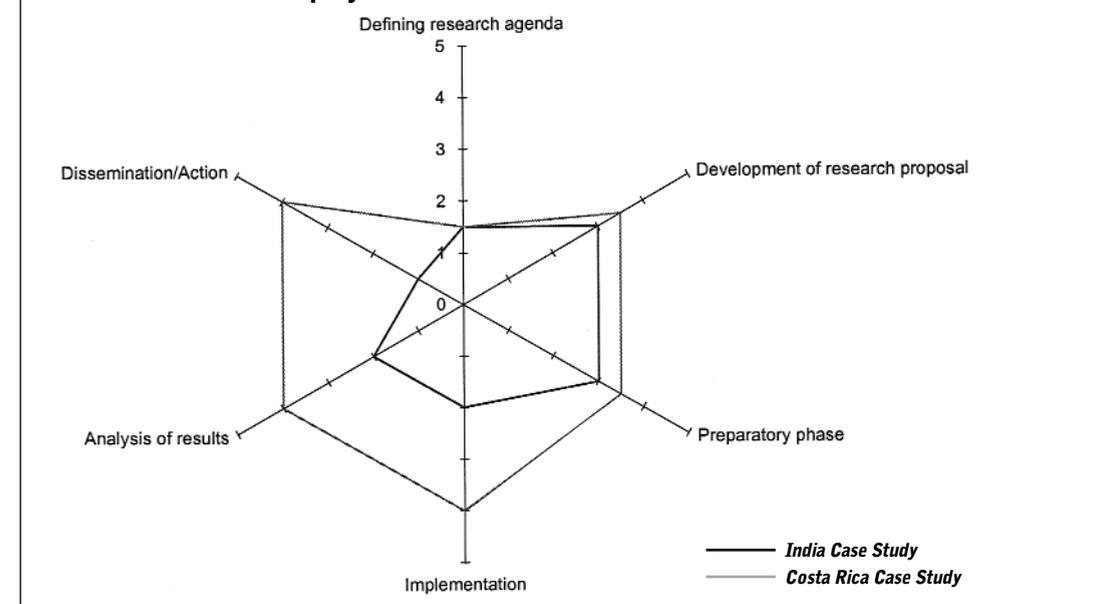
In terms of partners, several factors emerged in discussions as being important for positive research outcomes:

- Partners' expertise and experience in the particular field
- Partners' positioning to influence decision-making at different levels
- Levels of trust in IIED-partner relations
- Partners' values and approaches

The final point regarding partners' values and approaches was not given equal emphasis by all the staff interviewed. However, it tended to emerge in discussions of outcomes and follow-up, as an important factor in determining the level to which the project process and findings were used as a tool for promoting positive change in favour of impoverished and less powerful groups in society. Figure 2 shows how country case studies within one project, FLU PTW, can vary according to the approaches of partners.

Some staff were explicit about selecting partners who have an 'activist' approach, who seek to in-

Figure 2: Mapping partner participation in the research process: comparing case studies from the FLU PTW project



volve less powerful stakeholders in policy processes, programmes and institutions. These members of staff talked about choosing academics that were also 'activists' or selecting partners who were 'movers and shakers'. Others were less clear about choosing partners based on particular values, but in analysing outcomes of the research, pointed out that it was the countries which included such 'committed' partners which tended to do well on follow-up action and tangible in-country outcomes.

4.4.2 'The context and timing of research is critical for positive outcomes'

It clearly emerges from this review that the success of participatory approaches in influencing policies, programmes and institutions is highly dependent on the economic, social and political context, irrespective of partners' values and of methods used. In particular, IIED staff who have a strong focus on participation in their projects (such as MARP, Institutionalising Participation, Access to Genetic Resources and the FLU Policy that Works project) stressed the importance of history and political culture – and the degree to which democratic decision-making processes are acceptable and institutionalised. An understanding of the nature of civil society organisations as well as the relationship between civil society, government and the private sector in particular contexts is obviously important. These are essentially issues of governance, which even if not labelled as such, have long been recognised as critical in achieving economic, social and environmental policies, which promote poverty reduction and more equitable and sustainable development.

An important point raised in the Access to Genetic Resources project and the FLU PTW project was the importance of **timing** in policy research. The Access project acted as a catalyst for ongoing processes of consultation and policy engagement by indigenous organisations in Peru, where a two-month window of opportunity for consultation on a new law was extended and a country-wide consultation process with indigenous people was initiated, both as a result of the workshop, which was convened as part of the project.

4.4.3 Defining collaborative research: the importance of a code of conduct

Many of the issues raised here concerning relationships with research partners are more generally addressed in an IIED/ENRICH-EC workshop report (Toulmin et al, 1995) on 'Capacity Development in the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change: the Role of Collaborative Research'. In this report, a typology of collaborative research is presented (Scoones, 1995) which differentiates between contractual, consultative and collegiate research. It is argued that collegiate research is more likely to produce detailed case studies, local capacity strengthening, localised change and an advocacy focus as outputs whereas contractual research tends to result in overviews, publications and workshops. It points out that it is easier to fundraise for contractual and consultative research although quality and follow-up may be uncertain. In contrast, it is more difficult to fundraise for collegiate research since it is more difficult to define outputs at the start.

While there is no reason for IIED to focus on only one approach, we might want to revisit this typology and assess how much of our current work is primarily contractual, consultative or collegiate. Although IIED has often worked informally with partners, the recent insistence on contracts is important, as much to clarify expectations on all sides as it is for being a binding document. However, it is essential that these contracts should be flexible to suit different circumstances and that issues such as editorial responsibility and intellectual property rights, for example, are dealt with fairly and according to context, for both IIED and partners. The current work on drawing up an IIED 'code of conduct' provides an excellent opportunity to clarify our values, define 'partnerships' and promote transparency on all sides.

5. Participatory methods and tools

This section will concentrate on those participatory methods used in the 12 projects included in the review. It will illustrate that the type of participatory methodology used in the projects ranges from broader consultative methods to specifically community based ones, such as PRA, depending on the *nature* of the project. It will also show how the choice of methodology relates to the definitions of 'participation' as discussed earlier, i.e. participation as a process and participation as a tool to elicit information, which depends on the *objectives* of the project. Furthermore, to what extent participatory methods and tools are well used depends very much on the research partners who carry out the fieldwork and the extent to which IIED staff provide support for partners. This links to issues of partner selection and choice, also discussed earlier. In addition, we will present a critical perspective from one of the projects' research partners regarding the practice of PRA.

5.1 Definition and discussion of tools

5.1.1 Not just PRA!

First, it is important to stress that when we discuss participatory methods, we are not merely talking about the community focused and well-known Participatory Rural Appraisal, with which IIED is closely associated, particularly due to the *PLA Notes* series and *A Trainer's Guide to Participatory Learning and Action*. As much of the literature reviewing participatory processes illustrates, PRA is but one method amongst many (see Cornwall 2000, Röseberg 1996) and has come a long

way over the last ten years. However, PRA is only exemplified in a handful of the projects chosen for this review (e.g. Rural-Urban Linkages, Common Property Resources in the Sahel, PAVE, MARP) and in many cases, is used in conjunction with different tools, such as surveys and other quantitative methods. PRA may have been used by research partners in some, but not all, related case studies (e.g. Policy that Works – FLU; Evaluating Eden). With the case of the FLU PTW project, several country teams used PRA as one of several approaches to assess policy priorities at local level. A range of other participatory approaches to ‘fieldwork’ in the ‘corridors of power’ were also used at local, institutional and national levels. Some projects approach ‘participation’ in terms of broader consultative methods with stakeholders (such as the NSSD project, Access to Genetic Resources), more in the sphere of public participation; others use PRA as one of the tools in a broader framework (e.g. AFRICAP project and the 4Rs framework for negotiation); and yet others use PRA with more formal research techniques (e.g. Hidden Harvest – combining economic research techniques with PRA). Other processes, such as Participatory Action Research, are also present in some projects (e.g. Institutionalising Participation).

5.1.2 Choice of method links to project level and objectives

It became clear through the course of this review that the choice of methodology relates directly with the level and objectives of the project itself. Table 2 shows the range of participatory tools and methods used in the 12 projects selected for the review. Projects have been divided according to three of the four ‘platforms’, through which IIED tries to achieve its objectives. These are Research, Stakeholder Engagement and Institutional Development/Capacity Services. For the purpose of this review, Information and Communication has not been included as a category into which projects divide as, for methodological reasons, we did not include a purely information-based project.

5.1.3 Consultative methods for policy processes

Despite having ascertained that the type of participatory approach adopted is related to the level at which the project operates, attaching one single definition of participation to a single project remains difficult due to the complexity of each project. For example, many of the projects comprise a series of country case studies (e.g. Evaluating Eden, FLU Policy That Works, Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge) and again, within each separate case study, the type and scale of participatory method is variable. We found that with those projects trying to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, from local to international level, more consultative participatory processes were adopted. For example, the NSSD project brought donors and developing country representatives together at a workshop in order to develop a dialogue process to lead to the development of guidelines for National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD). Following this, a series of stakeholder workshops and roundtable meetings were used by individual research partners, as the project aimed to consult as broad a range of stakeholders as possible. Other methods included plenary sessions, working groups, semi-structured interviews, mapping what had already been done in the area, and focus groups.

The methodological ‘steps’ used to promote the participation of multiple stakeholders in policy processes is illustrated by the example below, drawn from the FLU Policy That Works project. Drawing on this project, as well as policy work carried out by other programmes, IIED is in the process of developing a sourcebook for methods to work at the policy level.

The Access to Genetic Resources project was also focused at the policy level, but this project was looking at participation as a process – its focus being *how* people can and do participate in

Table 2. Range of participatory methods and tools used in projects at IIED	
Category	Examples from Projects
Research	<p>Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge: Participation in policy formulation – stakeholder engagement/public participation – stakeholder interviews, workshops (plenary and group sessions). Mapping exercise related to article 8J of CBD to demonstrate the range of activities taking place and the lack of coordination between them</p> <p>Rural-Urban Linkages: PRA tools, particularly Venn and Seasonality diagrams, intra-household matrix, wealth ranking, mapping; (see Box 2 for critical perspectives)</p> <p>Evaluating Eden: Adaptation of PM&E work in West Africa case study. South American study claimed to have used PRA. Fieldwork depended on relationship with community, ranging from questionnaires, to focus groups and community meetings.</p> <p>PAVE: The use of participatory appraisal techniques in the area of animal health and veterinary epidemiology is in itself innovative. Participatory methods have been adapted through the project (for example the ranking and scoring methods used to assess livestock problems, including a pair-wise comparison stage to develop indicators against which items were scored). The project looks at how qualitative data generated from participatory investigation can be assessed through 1) using typical scientific criteria and 2) participatory evaluation, thus considering the value of participatory methods from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The project also looks at how the two approaches can be combined.</p> <p>Housing Finance: Looked more at institutional relationships rather than methods and tools, as it was up to partners to identify their own research approaches. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews used.</p> <p>Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel: PRA tools used and adapted to a transhumance context, for example, the Family Portraits tool with which pastoral and settled families go through a process of self-analysis, articulate their own production systems and use this information to better understand each others’ livelihoods. This tool is helpful regarding conflict resolution and as a means to negotiated agreement of the use of common property resources.</p> <p>Hidden Harvest: Combined economic approaches for resource valuation and participatory research techniques, largely drawing from PRA methods. Advantages and weaknesses of each approach regarding data needs and local level valuation were identified, before looking at ways the approaches could be combined. For example, improving questionnaires through participatory methods to describe the research context; verifying results of questionnaire surveys through participatory methods, using participatory methods instead of questionnaire surveys where the key research questions have been developed from economic models. This project included a training workshop to look at the combination and complementarity of methods.</p> <p>AFRICAP- 4Rs: a broad framework for negotiation, analysis of multi-stakeholder roles and responsibilities, in which PRA is one tool used. Framework developed by the Niger partner as a tool for monitoring and evaluation. Other partners used tool for analysis rather than negotiation, e.g. Zambia</p>
Stakeholder Engagement ('Consultative Processes')	<p>NSSD: Focus groups, stakeholder workshops (national and international), roundtable discussions.</p> <p>FLU- PTW: The annexes to the main project document include a set of participatory methods (including PRA) for looking at policy from the perspectives of communities, as well as a section on tactics for influencing policy and how to track the impact of this work. The section on methods for policy analysis includes methods for power analysis, institutional roles and relations, mapping policy influences, stakeholder narrative interviews, stakeholder analysis, policy instrument analysis and participatory appraisal. It also showed how a network of anthropologists was used in Papua New Guinea, to draw on their knowledge of local attitudes towards forests and policy. It lists a range of participatory tools for working with stakeholders, as used in some of the case studies.</p>
Institutional Development/ Capacity Services	<p>Institutionalising Participation: Tools for participatory impact assessment with farmers and communities have been developed (e.g. the use of video in India) as well as a range of policy analysis methods, including key events analysis. National, state and local level learning groups have been established to focus on the process of the project, to put ‘on-going learning’ into Participatory Action Research. Resources are required to support these once the project has ended, so that they can continue to help foster change.</p> <p>MARP: Pilot programme in PM&E and Action Research, MARP tools and gender analysis, organisational assessment, plus adaptation of other methods (e.g. PRA – H-form for example) and 4Rs framework.</p>

Box 1 DEFINING PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEXT OF POLICY FORMULATION:

Drawing from the project overview, participation in forest policy formulation is described, not as a simple definition, but in terms of a process of how to get multiple stakeholders to engage in policy issues. In brief, the steps outlined are listed below.

- *Recognise multiple valid perspectives and the political game:* 'The challenge is to promote recognition of different conceptions of what the problems and priorities are.' It is important to develop mechanisms to bring diverse perspectives to the question in hand.
- *Get people to the negotiating table:* 'Power is participation in the making of decisions'. There is acknowledgement of the need to recognise that current inequities within the forestry sector may be due to a lack of knowledge amongst stakeholders of each other's perspectives. 'Stakeholders who prioritise better understanding of other relevant stakeholders' views, approaches and powers, are more likely to be able to harness policy processes to bring about change in those views and powers over time' and 'Widening the ownership of policy requires that stakeholders recognise that people have different power and potential contributions to make to better forest management'.
- *Making space to disagree and experiment:* There can be a positive outcome even where there is no agreement between different stakeholders, as this can result in different perspectives bringing light to certain situations. 'Situations of 'bounded conflict' can allow the interplay of differing groups with differing objectives to flag errors and provide corrections'.
- *Learn from experience, get organized and fire up policy communities:* Here the key point is generating information and using it in such a way as to support stakeholders in reaching conclusions. 'Using information better means moving away from the 'banking approach' ... to approaches that help learners' pose and solve problems and evaluate information for themselves' (Anderson 1998, cited on p213).

This section concludes that the call for stronger, more effective participation requires 'clear tactics for analysing and influencing policy' and that the focus on 'step-wise approaches' can help make visible progress and build 'momentum for broader change'.

Source: Policy That Works for Forest and People – Series Overview, James Mayers and Stephen Bass, 1998, IIED.

policy formulation, rather than participation used to elicit information to feed into policy formulation, as with the NSSD project. The Access project used stakeholder engagement techniques, such as stakeholder interviews, stakeholder meetings and workshops. An interesting point raised here was that of how such participation can be decentralised when dealing with widely dispersed populations. This project reinforced the view that participatory policy processes may be more successful if there is already a history of social organisation within the region, providing in situ structures through which a process of consultation can be established (e.g. through farmer groups and trade unions). However, as the project points out, it is important to consider who is included and excluded in such organisations, in order to assess how broad these consultative processes are. Women, for example, constitute a group that is often not consulted if the project only involves the leadership of organisations.

In cases like these, consultative participatory methods are certainly more appropriate than for example, PRA methods, as the focus is broader, looking at what people want in terms of policy, which requires the engagement of a wider range of stakeholders. Also, it is important to remember that such nationwide consultative processes involve large amounts of work and time in order to ensure that as many people or stakeholder groups as possible are included in the process. As most projects operate under relatively strict time constraints, it is important to be realistic about the degree to which participation can be successfully achieved, as any participatory process is usually recognised as being time-expensive.

5.1.4 Local level use and adaptation of PRA methods

With other projects working more directly at the community level or with a smaller geographical

focus, PRA has been used and adapted to various contexts (e.g. Common Property, Institutionalisation, PAVE and Rural-Urban Linkages). Thus it is fair to state that the goals of the research itself have important implications for the choice of methodology and tool. This is particularly relevant when referring to the Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel, which was effectively the most bottom-up project of all those included in this review, as the research partners were a mixture of NGOs and pastoral groups and the agenda was led by the pastoral groups. Currently, research partners are involved in defining the research agenda itself. In Mali, there were training workshops on participatory approaches, involving project staff and members of the rural councils, which led to the successful identification of mechanisms for participation at the local levels. The workshops themselves were part of the participatory process, for feeding back, identifying resources, training people and forward planning.

The MARP programme is also interesting in that it is a programme of work, which in response to the demand of MARP networks within West Africa, is focused on establishing support mechanisms (through training, documentation and information) to support the dissemination of MARP methods within the region. The programme started with focusing on dissemination of MARP methods through developing a critical mass of trainers (Training of Trainers) in each of the MARP countries. With this achieved, it has now moved on to looking at organisational analysis and change, the *institutionalisation* of MARP methods and making links with organisations and governments in 'scaling-up' within the region.

5.2 Methodological innovation

In order to assess methodological innovation in the Review, we specifically asked IIED staff how participatory research tools and methods were selected for the project, which they found the most useful, whether there was any training component involved for research partners (and subjects) and whether any methodological adaptation occurred. Again, to reiterate the point made earlier about IIED's position in the collaborative research process, a co-ordinator or facilitator of research, many staff were unable to answer in depth as the research methodology used was the domain of the research partners.

The Evaluating Eden project, which again illustrates a range of participatory processes, can claim some methodological innovation in the West Africa country case study through direct IIED staff involvement on participatory monitoring and evaluation. (See also Kothari et al, (2000)) for detailed work at the local level within the EE project, looking at local assessments of impact). The Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel project is innovative in using participatory approaches and PRA in particular, in the context of transhumance rather than settled communities (see for example, the use of the Family Portraits tool in Table 2). In general, the methods were perceived much more as an aid in the project rather than as an end in themselves. Both the NSSD and FLU-PTW projects have resulted in the current development of a sourcebook of participatory methods with a focus on how to analyse policy from different stakeholder perspectives. The PAVE project uses participatory appraisal methods in the context of veterinary epidemiology, which is usually highly technical and quantitative. The project assesses how qualitative data from participatory investigation and analysis on animal health topics can be assessed through using typical scientific criteria; and also, through participatory evaluation, thus considering the value of participatory methods from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

5.2.1 Partner choice

Working within the context of collaborative research, the level of participation adopted relates

back to issues of partner relationships and ultimately, that of partner choice, as they generally carry out the fieldwork within the broad project remit. In the same way that partner values affect their approach to the project, so does their knowledge and experience of methods and tools.

With the NSSD project, it is up to the implementing teams in country to consult with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. Although guidance is provided through international project planning workshops, it is still up to the research partners concerned how and whom they consult. Also, the degree to which partners adopt participatory approaches often relates to their relationship with IIED staff and the socio-economic context of the countries in which they are working. A good example is provided by the six country case studies of the FLU PTW project. For example, the Costa Rica case study was particularly strong in its use of participatory approaches at community level, which may be due to the fact that partners had a history of organising in-country to increase community access to forests and of giving voice to the views of less powerful groups. In comparison, in the India case study, the team did not focus at the community level, but instead, restricted their fieldwork to focusing on the policy makers and ‘walking the corridors of power’. This was because the research partner saw this as the most important way to achieve policy change and partners argued that they already ‘knew’ what was in the best interests of communities. With these two case studies, the extent to which research partners moved towards collective action differed substantially, with the Costa Rica team moving closer towards this than the Indian team. This brings up questions of values and approaches where organisations committed to participatory development tend to work more collaboratively with both IIED and research subjects, which also impacts on the quality of the participatory research being conducted.

5.3 Critical reflection on the use of participatory tools and methods

Despite the prevalent use of participatory research approaches and processes within the twelve IIED projects reviewed, only those projects that focus on methodology (e.g. Hidden Harvest, PAVE, AFRICAP–the 4Rs) have generated outputs which look critically at the research methods adopted in the specific project. This absence of methodological reflection is in itself an important issue for consideration if we are keen to promote institutional learning about participatory processes and methods. It is only through critical analysis that the debate around participatory development can be moved forward and key lessons be drawn out to influence IIED practice.

In most cases, with exceptions, it is the research partners who conduct the practical fieldwork on the ground and it is they who, subsequently, go through the process of adapting a research methodology. If their experiences are not documented and shared with a wider audience, then valuable lessons will not be disseminated more broadly, and hence, will not impact on practice, particularly not at the IIED level. Out of all the projects involved in the review, only one, the Rural-Urban Linkages project, asked partners to develop a methodological report from the research undertaken in one of the case studies (Tanzania). In this, methods used were critically reviewed, drawing together things that worked well and those that required further attention. This is part of an important learning process, for both the research partners involved in this fieldwork and also the project staff at IIED. Box 2 shows some of the key reflections on the part of the research partners regarding their experience with PRA tools.

Such reflections provide an honest account of advantages and disadvantages of using PRA techniques, particularly when new to the researchers involved. It is from such frankness that key lessons be synthesised and disseminated, so to support learning on a broader basis. Despite the problems encountered above, the required information for the research was generated through PRA tools in this ‘first phase’ of the case study and enabled the research team to move to draw out identified ‘gaps’ in the information through the use of quantitative methods. The researchers

Box 2 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS FROM PRACTICE IN THE URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES PROJECT: TANZANIA CASE STUDY

Advantages of using PRA Tools. PRA tools used in the project included: mapping, wealth ranking, seasonality diagrams, Venn diagrams, mobility/migration matrix, intra-household matrix and trend change. It was agreed that ‘The use of PRA tools was effective and led to the generation of a great deal of qualitative information, much of which was directly relevant to the research issues’. PRA tools were found to be successful as they incited discussion and analysis amongst the research subjects themselves. This analysis often led to conclusions that the participants themselves did not expect. PRA tools helped to break down the insider/outsider dynamics regarding the relations between the research partners and the research subjects and helped generate a feeling of ‘common purpose’. Discussion, inherent to PRA tools, also served to develop consensus, not only between villagers but also between villagers and researchers.

Lack of research team’s experience. Problems were experienced in the application of PRA tools due to the researchers’ relative inexperience in applying them to a real-life situation. The research team was new to PRA tools (having had only one week’s training including one day in the field), so had yet to develop the flexibility and confidence in adapting and sequencing methods as found with experienced PRA practitioners. This hindered the flexibility of the tools and the researchers tended to adopt a ‘blueprint approach’ where the tools became directors of the process rather than accessories to it.

Choosing appropriate tools. There were tangible differences in the success of PRA tools between different areas (e.g. between Himo and Lindi). It was concluded that this was either due to prior familiarisation of the people with PRA techniques (through previous projects), or that the issue in question was of more importance to the people. The socio-economic context of a location must be taken into account when adopting a particular research approach.

The importance of pre-testing tools. It is important to pre-test the tools adopted to improve actual sessions with research subjects (in terms of time, less overlap between methods, better sequencing etc). The team found that ‘flexibility is often a product of familiarity’ – i.e. only when you are comfortable with the tools you are using, can you adapt them and use them in a more flexible way. Pre-testing and practice would have helped.

Timing of the sessions. It is important to arrange participatory sessions taking account of the daily routine of the participants to ensure that those members of the community who want to participate are not prevented from so by other activities.

Short term benefits. One thing inherent to participatory research is that it requires time and can often be a slow process. Not only the research team but also, and more importantly, the community, invest a great deal of time in the process. Without being able to articulate the aims of the research in terms of direct benefits to communities, it is a natural reaction of participants to ask ‘what’s in it for them’, particularly when they see ‘rich’ researchers coming in to their communities who will undoubtedly, in their eyes, benefit in material terms from the research and the community’s input into it. With the case of wealth ranking, researchers found participants were placing themselves at the poorer end of the community, regardless of whether or not this was in fact the case, in the hope that they would receive some material benefit as a result.

Adapting PRA tools to rural and urban contexts. The research team had to adapt the PRA tools to use in the urban context, where even the definition of community was different, i.e. less focused on geographical location and more related to relationships in daily life. They found it difficult to use all the tools which had worked in the rural context, for example, wealth ranking. Town dwellers were also less enthusiastic about drawing on the ground, and the research team had to adapt their approach accordingly.

themselves have also learned from the experience, many of whom will use PRA techniques again, albeit more flexibly with the benefit of hindsight and experience. Another example of methodological reflection is the NSSD project, which is currently developing a post-project assessment of the participation of various stakeholders in the process.

5.3.1 Ethics of Participatory Research

An interesting perspective emanating from the Tanzania methodological report was that of the re-

search partners' unease about what they perceived to be the slightly extractive nature of the research. As an antithesis to the top-down initiatives of the late 1970s/1980s, participatory approaches are based on the underlying philosophy that through their participation in, and ownership over, a development process, a community will be subsequently empowered, realising their own potential for analysis and action. However, that is not to say that every participatory intervention will empower the community it is purporting to mobilise, nor will it challenge the inherent power structures in every community through this intervention. What is important is that the researchers should maintain good behaviour and attitudes, fundamental to PRA, and treat informants with respect. With the Tanzanian case study, some of the researchers doubted that the community members involved in the research saw it as an opportunity for them to become actively involved and to voice their views. The researchers felt particularly uneasy as the process the communities were asked to be involved in took up so much of their time, with little tangible benefit to them in the short term.

The lessons from this report are important, not only for the research teams involved, but also for IIED staff who will co-ordinate projects using participatory research techniques again in the future, particularly with teams of researchers who are new to these methods. However, for IIED to capitalise on such experiences, there needs to be a clearer mechanism in place for drawing from these lessons, rather than the ad hoc approach which exists currently of whether or not reports are actually read by those working in different programmes. This also applies to a wider audience outside IIED.

5.4 Benefits and trade-offs of participatory approaches and methods

IIED staff provided a range of reasons why it is important to use participatory approaches with project partners. These include:

- Building partners' ownership of projects
- Allowing diversity and adaptation to the local context
- Enabling partners to drive the process
- Building the capacity of local researchers to be more effective in their dialogue with policy makers
- Developing coalitions for policy change.

In the case of the FLU PTW project, Evaluating Eden and others, explicit objectives were to understand policy and/or resource use from the viewpoint of communities – participatory approaches at community-level were therefore essential. In the FLU project, the impact on policy was evident in all but one of the countries and the contention is that policy research which engages a range of stakeholders is far more effective in actually influencing policy.

The constraints and trade-offs, however, were reiterated by most staff who were interviewed. General trade-offs, irrespective of which groups of stakeholders are involved, include:

- The costs of participation are high in terms of time and material resources
- It can be a slow and frustrating process at times, for example, in the NSSD project

- The costs and time involved are often not adequately budgeted for and lead to delays
- IIED is often under pressure to show 'efficiency' and develop 'products' while partners may be more interested in process and action
- In working with different groups of stakeholders, there are sometimes trade-offs made between building trust and maintaining relationships and insisting on some forms of equity, for example gender equity. *This raises an interesting question for IIED: are some trade-offs more acceptable than others?*

At community level, there are additional constraints, related to who exactly participates, in what kind of activity, and to what end:

- Consulting with dispersed populations poses practical difficulties (e.g. in the Access to Genetic Resources project), as does working with pastoral communities (Sahel project)
- The degree of representation of the groups consulted is questionable in many contexts
- Time and opportunity costs as well as 'participation fatigue' for low-income groups and communities (e.g. in the Rural-Urban linkages project and in the Access to Genetic Resources project)

The use of participatory approaches (with both project partners and research subjects) requires good communication and conflict resolution skills. This was pointed out by staff working at community/local levels on the Sahel Common Property Resources project but the need for skills, or working closely with more senior researchers, was also pointed out by less experienced staff. As one researcher points out: you have to be comfortable with risk taking and shifting goal posts, if genuinely participatory approaches are used. And as another researcher commented: there is a greater potential for better outcomes but greater risks and difficulties in estimating transaction costs.

The time and costs of participation should be clearly recognised in project proposals and have implications for donors who state their support, if not insistence, on the use of participatory approaches and methods (see section 6). IIED has to be careful not to raise longer-term expectations which cannot be met.

Quality work and the institutionalisation of participatory approaches take time, money and investment in staff development. This is as true for the organisations that IIED works with, as it is for IIED itself. As the IIED MARP researcher pointed out, it is important that organisations change their own practices to reflect participation, not just use participatory techniques externally.

Participatory methods and tools may not always be called for, irrespective of objectives and context and there may be times when the active choice not to participate may have to be respected, particularly when related to extractive techniques for eliciting information from low-income groups.

6. IIED's donors and their impact on projects

At the outset, donors can sometimes impose conditions on the countries to be included in their research. The conditions relate to their own priorities usually defined by historical connections and socio-economic indicators, in addition to where the project may yield interesting or positive results.

In general, IIED staff find most donors to be flexible and understanding about changes to original agreements which might have to be made during the research process. A good example of this is the AFRICAP project that started off as a capacity building project and was reformulated to test an analytic framework for analysing different stakeholder roles in forestry. However, there are significant exceptions to this and there is a variation in terms of how willing donors are to be flexible, trust IIED and take risks. Some donors are much more 'hands-off' than others, although it is not always clear if this is because of the trust they have in IIED's work or if systems are not in place to follow up once the funds are granted! Being 'hands-on' does not signify being more open to or facilitating participatory methods and processes, and may only include greater bureaucratic control.

As one researcher put it: the choice of donors is important and it is worth knowing their track records and willingness to take risks. Donors can be persuaded to fund high potential but risky activities, as in the case of funding in-country 'learning groups' in the Institutionalising Participation project. Donors sometimes participate in workshops to discuss results of projects and usually engage with the debates.

There is a difference between the technical and administrative staff within donor agencies and it is more difficult to get administrators to understand the need for flexibility if participatory ap-

proaches are used and goal posts, strategies and time frames shift. The procedures in place in some agencies are simply not geared to participatory ways of working, with cumbersome invoicing systems and reluctance to allow any money to be carried forward into different accounting periods. There have been some bitter experiences, for example in the case of funding for 'Evaluating Eden' where the donor was inflexible about huge losses incurred by declining exchange rates, not interested in the research process or the implications for outcomes and action.

As one researcher pointed out, it is not sufficient for a donor to 'push' participatory approaches with organisations in the South and then provide them with limited advice and resources to change in an effective way. This links into debates about the importance of institutionalising participation and the time and resources involved in organisational change.

7. Summary of findings and recommendations

In reflecting on whether IIED is still a 'centre of excellence in participatory approaches and methods', it is clear that IIED has enormous and on-going experience in this field. However, we need to draw out, disseminate and incorporate lessons from our work much more systematically than we do. This requires the development of appropriate mechanisms as well as staff capacity building.

7.1 Main findings

7.1.1 *The concept and definition of participation*

Practically all mainstream institutions now use the language of 'participation' and 'empowerment', which used to be associated with more radical 'bottom-up' development. It is important that we define exactly what we mean when we talk about participatory approaches and methods in IIED supported projects. There is a need for 'clarity through specificity', with more attention to who participates, in what, how and to what end. Unequal power relations and conflicts of interest should also be clearly recognised. A more critical analysis of concepts within individual projects and sectors is required, looking at issues of representation and state-civil society relations in particular contexts. 'Full participation' is not always feasible or desirable.

7.1.2 Participation in Collaborative Research

IIED staff generally aim for a ‘co-learning’ approach with partners. However, the extent of partner involvement in early stages of project development varies enormously and there may be more we can do ensure that opportunities for joint agenda-setting occur in an appropriate and timely manner across projects. This may contribute to partner ownership of projects and perhaps even improve the quality of outputs. The opposite is true when it comes to project implementation. We have argued that greater involvement of IIED staff in fieldwork at the implementation phase is desirable in order to ‘ground truth’ findings and analysis, as a ‘reality check’ to assumptions and current discourse. This is perhaps particularly important when staff are not familiar with the context where the project operates and implies IIED staff participation as ‘learners’.

Involvement in fieldwork also provides opportunities for IIED staff learning and methodological innovation with partners. While the increased involvement of IIED staff in fieldwork has cost implications, the returns may outweigh these in terms of sharper, more grounded analysis and closer relationships with some partners. If this learning feeds into outputs, it may result in better reports, publications and information dissemination. In this way, the ‘co-learning’ objectives and values that so many IIED staff express may yield even better results.

7.1.3 IIED’s partners

The choice of partners is critical for the degree to which less powerful groups benefit from the research directly and indirectly. This is not only a question of partners’ expertise, experience and access to decision-making forums although this is very important. It is also the *values* of the partners and the extent to which they see the research process and findings as a potential tool for promoting change in favour of impoverished and less powerful groups in their societies. The clearer we can be about our own values, the easier it will be to work with organisations and individuals who share the same principles. However, for relations to develop, there needs to be time and space for them to evolve. There also needs to be space in IIED for non-partnership arrangements.

Several factors emerged in discussions as being important for positive research outcomes:

- Partners’ expertise and experience in the particular field
- Partners’ positioning to influence decision-making at different levels
- Levels of clarity and trust in IIED-partner relations
- Partners’ values and approaches

Although IIED has often worked informally with partners, the recent insistence on contracts is important, as much to clarify expectations on all sides as it is for being a binding document. However, it is essential that these contracts should be flexible to suit different circumstances and that issues such as editorial responsibility and intellectual property rights, for example, are dealt with fairly and according to context, for IIED staff and partners. The current work on drawing up an IIED ‘code of conduct’ provides an excellent opportunity to clarify our values, define ‘partnerships’ and promote transparency on all sides.

7.1.4 The use of participatory methods and tools

In the discussion of participatory methods and tools, we refer not only to tools based on PRA and used at the community level, but tools to aid consultative processes or stakeholder engagement at different levels. It was difficult to assess the quality of methods in the Review as IIED staff are usually not involved in their implementation, but there is a wide range of tools used, depending on the project objective and level. It is not possible to talk about what works and what does not, in any universal way, since so much depends on the political and institutional context.

There does seem to have been more methodological innovation where:

- IIED staff have worked alongside local researchers and other stakeholders
- Partners have a specialisation in participatory approaches and methods

However, there is an alternative explanation for our first finding, which is that IIED staff find it easier to recognise innovation when they are present. It is essential that we do more to disseminate innovative work, internally and externally.

The development of a sourcebook on participatory methods and tools at the policy level, building largely on the FLU project, provides an excellent complement to earlier IIED work on participation at community level.

Quality work in the use of participatory methods takes time, money and investment in staff development and there have been times where we have assumed that partners can be trained to use methods, which are new to them, too quickly.

7.1.5 Trade-offs in the use of participatory approaches and methods

Participatory approaches and methods may not always be called for, irrespective of objectives and context. There may be times when the active choice not to participate may have to be respected, particularly when related to extractive techniques for eliciting information from low-income groups.

Quality work and the institutionalisation of participatory approaches take time, money and investment in staff development. This is as true for the organisations which IIED works with, as it is for IIED itself. It is important that organisations change their own practices to reflect participation, not just use participatory techniques externally.

Trade-offs are sometimes made between interesting processes and high-quality products, which are required within the limited time frame of most research projects. The time and costs of participation should be clearly recognised in project proposals and have implications for donors who state their support, if not insistence, on the use of participatory approaches and methods.

7.1.6 Information and communications

The findings on dissemination relate to the current debate in IIED on the need to pay more attention to different forms of information and communication, and to systematically link research and information, at the level of individual research projects, programmes and the Institute as a whole. Dissemination and ‘influencing strategies’ need to be better planned and budgeted for at the start of projects, with partners.

7.2 Lessons from the Review process

Promoting learning across IIED programmes is not easy. People are busy, programme activities are prioritised, even when there is funding for cross-cutting activities, and e-mails can be ignored! Structures and incentives are important, as is capturing people's attention and making them feel that they will gain something for their 'core' work, from engaging with colleagues on a particular cross-cutting issue

IIED staff have a lot to contribute on the use of participatory approaches and methods and staff that participated in the Review were generally positive about the experience of reflecting on their work. We opted for individual face-to-face contact for the Review and an output in the form of this report. The specific recommendations for action below, to improve our work on participatory approaches and methods have been developed with staff that participated in the Review and have been discussed at an IIED-wide meeting. Further discussions within IIED will be held to prioritise recommendations and discuss mechanisms and timing for their implementation.

7.3 Recommendations

Recommendations have been divided into three areas:

- Review, Learning and Communications
- Staff Development
- Values and work practice

7.3.1 Review, learning and communications

- Clearer definitions of participation and being more specific about the concept and type of participation adopted in our work, including all outputs from it.
- Setting up of a periodic IIED participation retreat to learn from each other, possibly organised on a thematic basis.
- Encouragement of methodological reflection from project partners.
- Introducing systems to access information on 'participatory methods' for projects working at different levels and with different objectives, for internal and external use. For example, we could have a 'participation portal' on our web site to guide users to methods used at different levels.
- Using *PLA Notes* more proactively within IIED to disseminate methodological innovation and critical reflection in IIED-supported projects.
- Developing more guidance material from 'real world' experience on participatory approaches at the policy and institutional levels, while emphasising the importance of context and not raising expectations of 'quick fix' universal guidance.
- Carrying out a review or gap analysis of what similar organisations to IIED, which work internationally, are doing in the field of participation to help identify the most fruitful way to take our work forward

7.3.2 Staff development

- Adequate training in participatory methods at the project level, where required, for IIED and partners.
- Greater involvement of IIED staff in fieldwork whenever possible, to learn and/or to better understand the impact of 'participatory' approaches and methods.
- Investments in staff capacity building: training and exposure to new methods, approaches and to theoretical debates on participation, development and ethics.

7.3.3 Values and work practice

- Making our values of social justice and equity clearer and building relationships with like-minded organisations.
- Board endorsement of an IIED code of conduct on collaborative research and monitoring of its implementation.
- Clearer, transparent criteria for site and partner selection – to include issues of timing and capability and to provide a basis for collaboration.
- Encouragement of more exchanges between Southern partners and practitioners.
- Practising what we preach within our own walls and reviewing our own 'organisational health' from a participation perspective.
- Recruitment policies and staff TORs to emphasise the importance of adequate training and experience in the use of participatory methods and approaches.

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9. Appendix 1: Project Summaries and Contacts

9.1 Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge

This research project aims to support the implementation of the benefit-sharing provisions of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The project was initiated in view of the need for meaningful participation in the development of policies on access to genetic resources and traditional knowledge protection to ensure that such policies are effective and equitable. The project has involved case studies of Peru, the Philippines, India and South Africa. The final report contains summaries of the case studies and recommendations for securing effective participation. The project is funded by the UK Department for International Development and the J.D. MacArthur Foundation.

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9.2 AFRICAP – the 4Rs (Rights, Responsibilities, Returns/Revenues and Relationships) framework

This project seeks to contribute to the development of tools to assess stakeholders' roles and power in an attempt to support the political dimension of forest management. This has been inadequately

dealt with by decision-makers and practitioners, mainly due to the lack of available tools to consider the stakeholder dimension as well as a lack of capacity to manage role changes in Forestry. Through this three-year DANIDA supported project, IIED, in collaboration with partners in six African countries, has developed a framework whereby stakeholders' roles are defined by their respective '4Rs' i.e. Rights, Responsibilities, Returns/Revenues and Relationships'. This framework has been tested under different circumstances, in different biomes and involving different types of stakeholders.

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9.3 Evaluating Eden

This project emerged from an earlier review of key issues in community wildlife management (CWM), which resulted in the 'Whose Eden?' report (IIED 1994). This focused mainly on experience in Africa and was based largely on a review of literature. Evaluating Eden was initiated to take forward the debate on community wildlife management, by widening the geographical focus and looking beyond the literature. Evaluating Eden was a 4-year (1996-2000) collaborative research project supported by the Development Directorate (formerly DGVIII) of the EC and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs – DGIS. It explored the myths and realities of community-based wildlife management. The project was coordinated by IIED with regional research teams from collaborating institutions in South and South-East Asia, South and Central America, West, Central, East and Southern Africa, Canada and Australia

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9.4 The Hidden Harvest

The Hidden Harvest project was initiated by IIED's Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods (SARL) Programme and the Environmental Economics Programme in order to understand the importance and value of wild resources to local people and to develop practical methods to make this value more visible. It aims to investigate the importance of wild plant and animal resources in agricultural systems through the use of local-level valuation, and to explore the impacts on rural livelihoods. This project was funded by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – International, the International Development Research Centre and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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9.5 Housing Finance

This set of activities sought to better understand how improved housing and neighbourhoods could be achieved for the urban poor. Through research, documentation and networking micro-finance initiatives for housing and infrastructure were considered and assessed. Particular focus was given to the critical role of local communities and the participation of local residents, and how government support can be secured and used more effectively. Activities were funded by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), Finnida (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department for International Development Cooperation), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), Misereor and EZE (German Council of Evangelical Churches).

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9.6 Institutionalising Participatory Approaches and Processes for Natural Resource Management

Participatory approaches to natural resource management (NRM) have mostly been limited to single, specific instances and initiatives. Recently, however, this case by case approach has given way to attempts by large, public and private agencies to adopt and apply them on a large scale.

While offering tremendous scope for active involvement by local users in processes that affect their livelihood security and well-being, there is a danger that they may be misapplied and abused in the rush to scale up. This could lead to disillusionment among conservation and development agencies with people-centred approaches and result in the discrediting of 'participation' itself. Clearly, if participatory NRM is not to become yet another 'passing fad', we must learn more about the ways in which large bureaucracies function, learn, improve and transform themselves.

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9.7 MARP (Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative)

In 1993, IIED's Drylands Programme set up a training programme on Participatory Research and Planning Methods in the Sahel. These activities were designed in response to growing demand from a wide range of Sahelian institutions, particularly NGOs, interested in strengthening their capacity to promote genuine partnerships with local communities. The programme started in Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal, but was subsequently extended to Niger in 1994. Initial emphasis was on the training of trainers in order to build up a core group of qualified development workers with the necessary skills in MARP methodologies at the national level. The aim of the programme was to support the development and spread of participatory research and planning methods in order to qualitatively improve the participation of local communities in the design and implementation of development projects. Therefore beneficiaries include: local NGOs, grassroots organisations, natural resources management projects and government field-based services. The geographical scope of the programme is Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal. The key components were:

- a) Training of Trainers.
- b) Training NGO and NRM project staff in MARP
- c) Development and dissemination of training materials and a newsletter on MARP
- d) Support to national networks and the sub-regional office.

After an evaluation was carried out 1997 to assess the impact of the programme, a new emphasis has been put into developing a methodological approach, and to define and pursue the institutionalisation of participatory processes based on a partnership involving the MARP Programme, the MARP networks and key partner organisations in Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Niger. The focus has also been on analysing the different strategies and policy options pursued by development organisations and how they influence the effectiveness of participatory approaches to Natural Resource Management (NRM).

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9.8 National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD)

Agenda 21, agreed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, called on all countries to introduce National Strategies for Sustainable Development. Since then, two international targets have been set: a Special Session of the UN General Assembly (Rio +5) set a target date of 2002 for NSSDs to be introduced; while the OECD+Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has set a target date of 2005 for NSSDs to be in the process of implementation.†

The OECD/DAC initiated a project to develop policy guidance for development assistance agencies on the development and implementation of NSSDs. This project, 'OECD/DAC Donor-Developing Country Dialogues on National Strategies for Sustainable Development', involves a review of experience with NSSDs, and other strategies for environment and development, in a number of developing countries on the basis of consultations with a range of stakeholders. It focuses in particular on the kinds of processes and conditions required to make NSSDs work in practice.

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9.9 Participatory Approaches to Veterinary Epidemiology (PAVE)

The PAVE project is located within the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme of IIED. The project investigates options for using participatory appraisal in veterinary epidemiology and focuses on animal health services and information systems in pastoral areas in Africa. The project is funded by the Animal Health Programme of the Department for International Development, UK.

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www.iied.org/agri/projects.html

9.10 Policy That Works for Forests and People (PTW)

This project was a three year initiative in which multidisciplinary, national research teams analysed the processes that led to promising policies for forests and people in Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, India, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Costa Rica. There are also key conclusions from shorter country studies in Australia, China, Portugal, Scotland and Sweden, which are presented in an Overview report as an analysis of international forest policy processes and market instruments such as certification. Themes explored under the Policy that Works project include climate change mitigation by forestry, the NGO perspective on international forest policy processes and participation in the policy process in Grenada in the Caribbean.

■ **Project Contact:**

James Mayers
Programme Director, Forestry and Land Use Programme
www.iied.org/forestry/index.html

9.11 Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel

This project seeks to identify and implement appropriate tenure arrangements for the sustainable and equitable management of common property resources which take into account the pastoral dimension of local livelihood systems. To date, the move towards supporting the allocation of tenure rights to local groups and individuals has paid little attention to issues of equity and the fact that rural communities are often highly differentiated. Mobile groups, such as transhumant herders, who often depend on 'village lands', community forests and other strategic resources far from their home areas, are being left out of the process of defining how these areas should be managed. This is both threatening their livelihoods and the sustainable use of the resource base, as well as contributing to social conflict between different user groups. The project is jointly managed by SOS/SAHEL/UK and IIED Drylands Programme and it works with eight partners with operational projects in Mali, Ethiopia, Niger and Sudan. The programme is funded for three years (January 1999 – December 2001)

■ **Project Contact:**

Ced Hesse,
Research Associate, Drylands Programme
www.iied.org/drylands/index.html

9.12 Rural-Urban Linkages

Linkages between urban centres and their surrounding regions include flows of people, goods, money and other social transactions that are central to processes of rural and urban change. This project was conducted in collaboration with researchers from two Tanzanian institutions (University College for Land and Architectural Studies and the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, a national NGO) to look specifically at the linkages and interactions between rural and urban locales with a focus on the impacts of such interactions on the livelihood strategies of those communities involved. The objectives of the study are: (a) to describe the ways in which the livelihood strategies of different groups, especially those with least access to resources, straddle the rural-urban divide; (b) to identify the main factors affecting the potential contribution of rural-urban linkages to individual and household livelihoods, and to the development of local

economies; and (c) to promote policies at the local and national level which encourage positive interactions whilst reducing or eliminating negative interactions. An additional overall aim of the study is to support the capacity of the two Tanzanian research institutions to document the nature and scale of rural-urban interactions in their country, and to engage in dialogue with policy-makers at the local, national and international levels.

■ **Project Contact:**

Cecilia Tacoli,
 Research Associate, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods/Human Settlements Programmes
www.iied.org/human/index.html
www.iied.org/agri/index.html

10. Appendix 2: The Research Tool

1. The Participation Review

This is a flexible, semi-structured interview guide with a mapping exercise which we will use. Issues can be added as we discuss.

Tell us about the history of the project, in particular how the research agenda was developed and how partners were selected.

2. Typology of participation

In the selected project, what is your overall assessment of the type of participation taking place for project partners and for research subjects.

Type of participation	Research partners	Research subjects
Compliance: tasks are assigned, with incentives: outsiders decide agenda and direct process		
Consultation: local opinions asked, outsiders analyse and decide course of action		
Cooperation: local people work with outsiders to determine priorities; responsibility with outsiders to direct process		
Co-learning: local people and outsiders share knowledge, create new understanding and work together to form action plans (outsider facilitation)		
Collective action: local people set own agenda, mobilise to carry out in the absence of outside initiators		

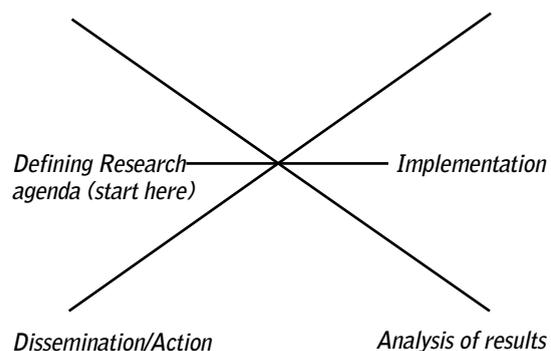
Source: Cornwall, 1995: Participatory research methods adapted from others including Pretty *et al*, 1995, IIED.

3. Mapping the type of participation during the research process

We will map with you the participation taking place in the selected project according to the chronology of the research process – on two separate sheets for research partners and for research subjects, if appropriate.

- For research partners:

Development of Research proposal Preparatory phase

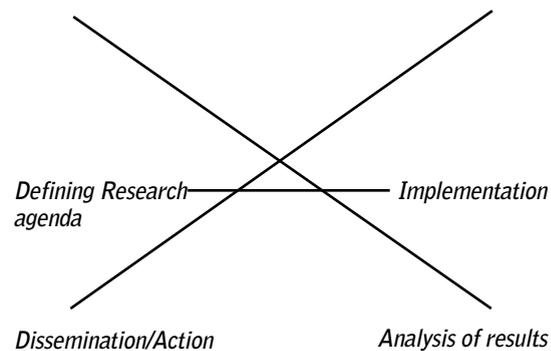


Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:

- 1: compliance
- 2: consultation
- 3: cooperation
- 4: co-learning
- 5: collective action

- For research subjects:

Development of Research proposal Preparatory phase



Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:

- 1: compliance
- 2: consultation
- 3: cooperation
- 4: co-learning
- 5: collective action

4. Questionnaire

4.1 How did you select participatory research tools and methods? Which have you found most useful (in this project)? Were they adapted for the project? Was training incorporated?

4.2 What were the advantages/ benefits of using participatory approaches with research partners? And research subjects? Were there context-specific factors?

4.3 What were the constraints and trade-offs? With research partners and with research subjects? Any context-specific factors?

4.4 What effect did the donor funding for this project have on the research process?

4.5 What kind of collaboration or participation did you have from among IIED programmes, if any?

4.6 How did the outcomes relate to the objectives of the project? Did the objectives change during the research process?

4.7 Was the project evaluated? How and what results did it have? Has there been any follow-up?

4.8 If you were to do the project again, what would you do differently? (with the benefit of hindsight!)

11. Appendix 3: Common Principles of Participatory Approaches

COMMON PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

Despite the different ways in which participatory approaches are used, there are important common principles uniting most of them:

- *A Defined Methodology and Systemic Learning Process* – the focus is on cumulative learning by all the participants and, given the nature of these approaches as systems of learning and action, their use has to be participative.
- *Multiple Perspectives* – a central objective is to seek diversity, rather than characterise complexity in terms of average values. The assumption is that different individuals and groups make different evaluations of situations, which lead to different actions. All views of activity or purpose are heavy with interpretation, bias and prejudice, and this implies that there are multiple possible descriptions of any real-world activity.
- *Group Learning Process* – all involve the recognition that the complexity of the world will only be revealed through group learning. This implies three possible mixes of investigators, namely those from different disciplines, from different sectors, and from outsiders (professionals) and insiders (local people).

- *Context Specific* – the approaches are flexible enough to be adapted to suit each new set of conditions and actors, and so there are multiple variants.
- *Facilitating Experts and Stakeholders* – the methodology is concerned with the transformation of existing activities to try to bring about changes which people in the situation regard as improvements. The role of the ‘expert’ is best thought of as helping people in their situation carry out their own study and so achieve something. These facilitating experts may be stakeholders themselves.
- *Leading to Sustained Action* – the learning process leads to debate about change, including confronting of the constructions of others’, and this debate changes the perceptions of the actors and their readiness to contemplate action. This leads to more sophisticated and informed constructions about the world. The debate and/or analysis both defines changes which would bring about improvement and seeks to motivate people to take action to implement the defined changes. Action is agreed, and implementable changes will therefore represent an accommodation between the different conflicting views. This action includes local institution building or strengthening, so increasing the capacity of people to initiate action on their own.

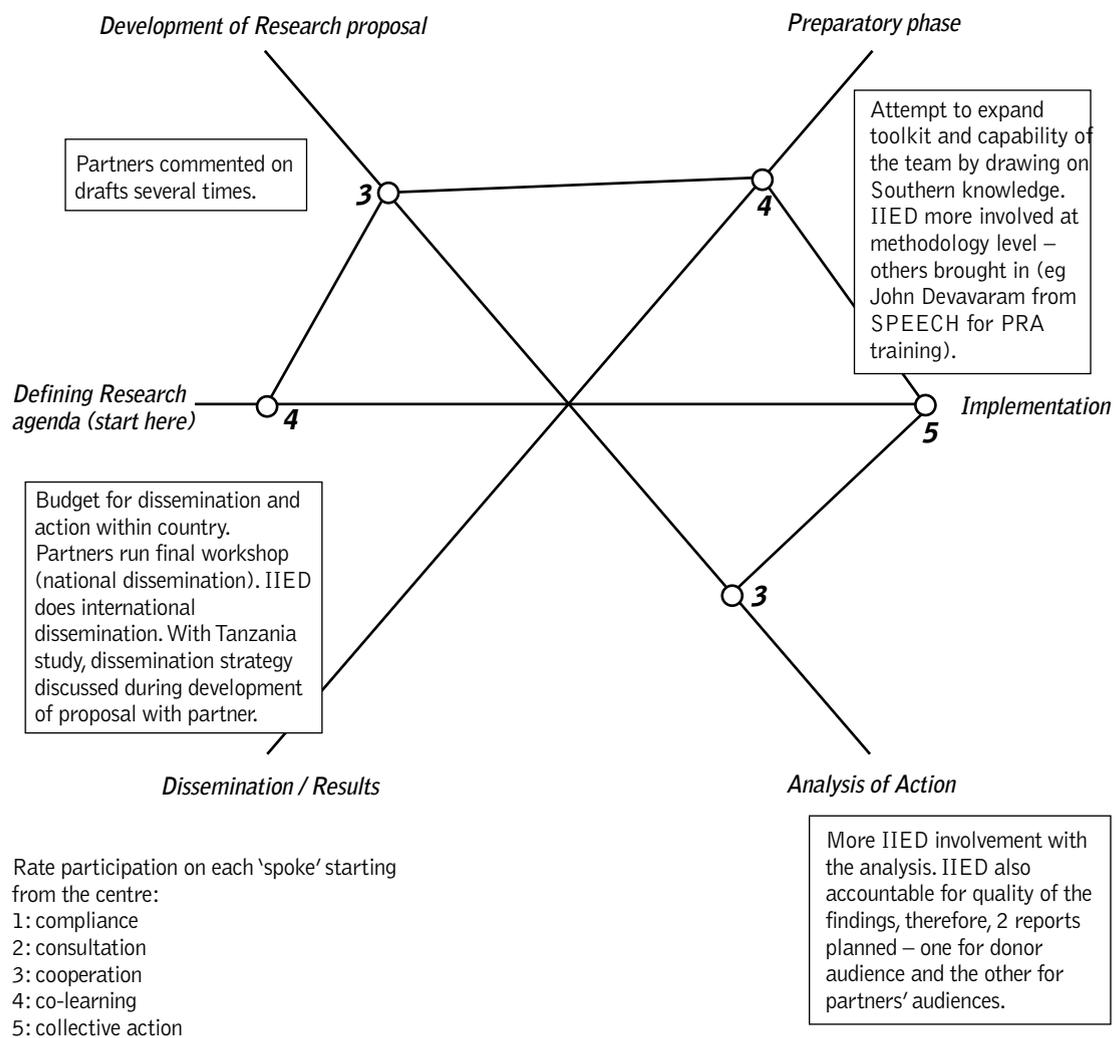
Extract from Pretty, J.N. (1994) ‘Participatory Learning for Sustainable Agriculture.’ *World Development*, 28 (8).

12. Appendix 4: Mapping Participation in the Research Cycle (webs)

This appendix presents the individual project webs for mapping participation with research partners, and subjects where appropriate, in the research process. These are the results of the mapping exercise conducted during staff interviews as part of the Participation Review. The charts in the main document have been done in Excel and hence the orientation of the charts in this section is different (as they are done in Word). The charts in this appendix match those used in the original tool for the participation review. Please note that no map was developed in the Hidden Harvest project interview, thus there are only 11 maps in this appendix. Each ‘web’ maps participation in each stage of the research process relating to the following scale: 1. compliance; 2. consultation; 3. cooperation; 4. co-learning; 5. collective action, moving from the centre of the spokes outwards.

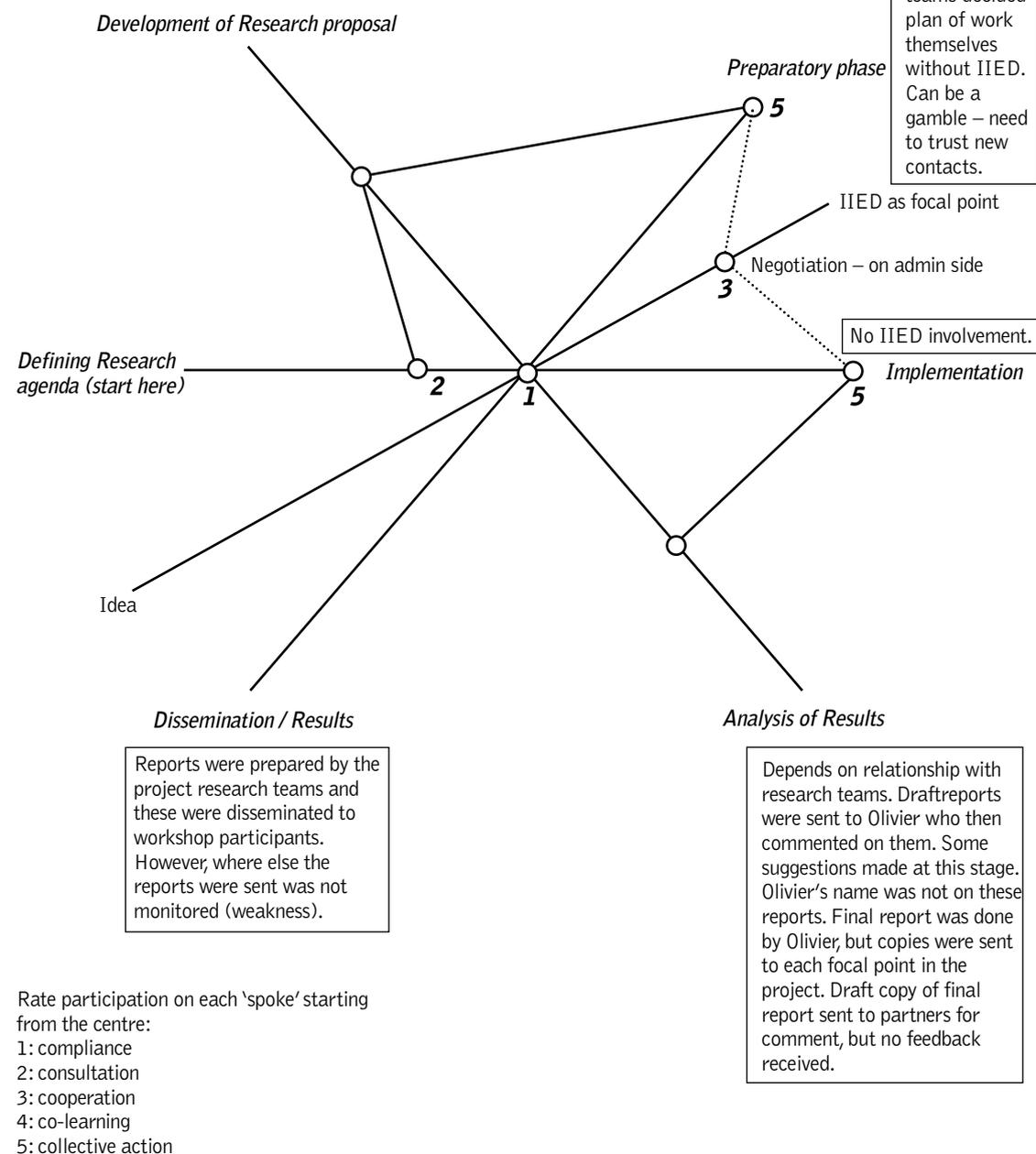
12.1 Rural-Urban Interactions – Cecilia Tacoli

Research partners



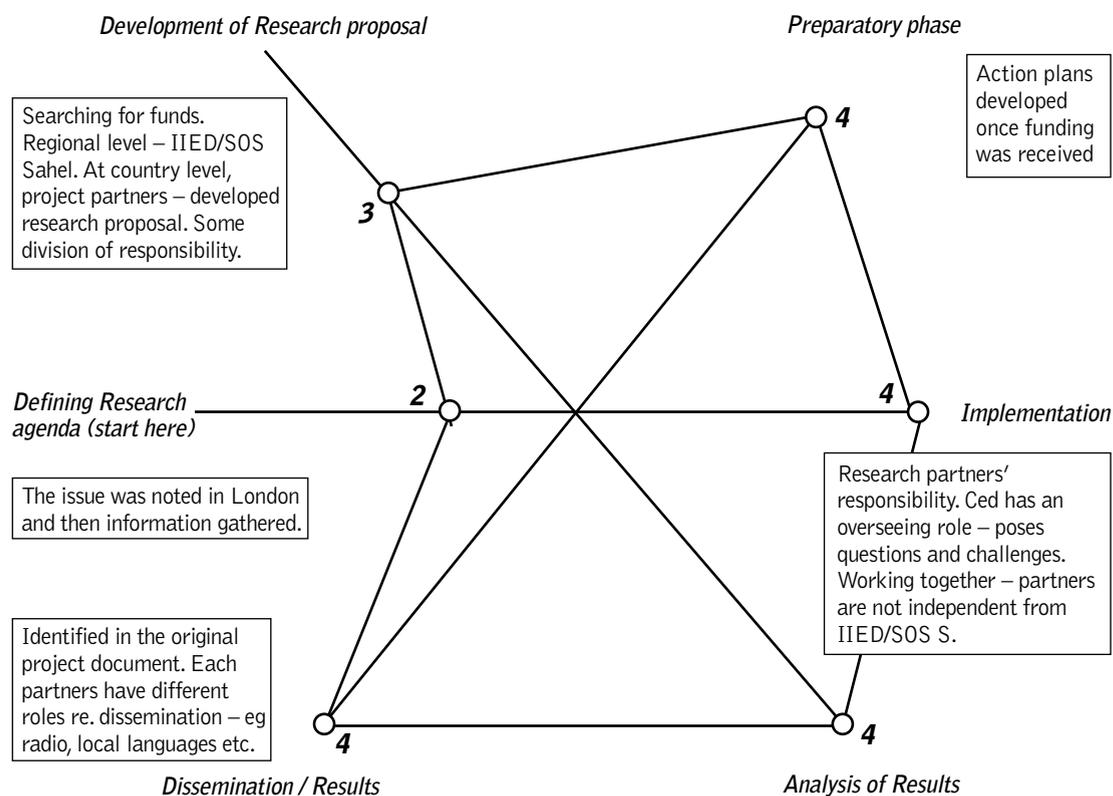
12.2 AFRICAP – 4Rs – Olivier Dubois

Research partners



12.3 Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel – Ced Hesse

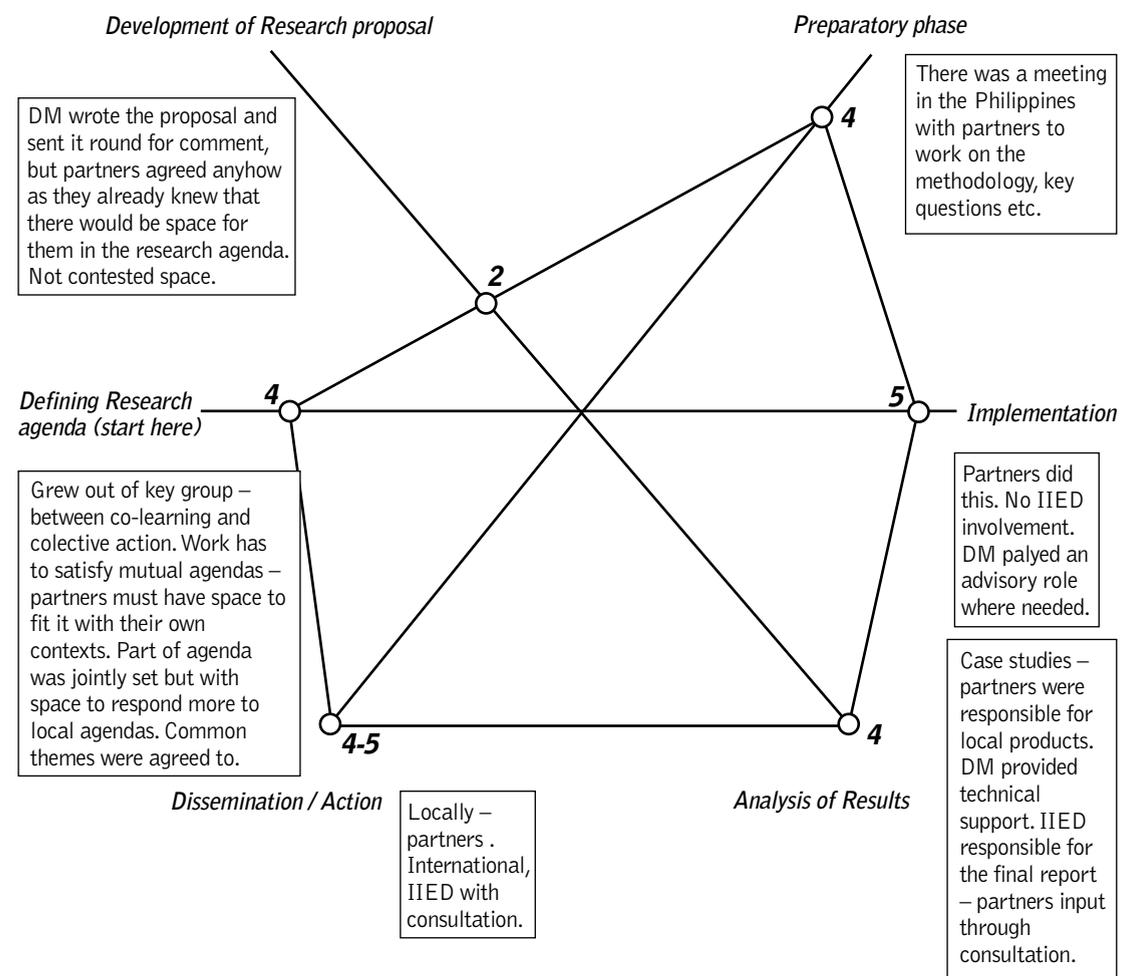
Research partners



Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:
 1: compliance
 2: consultation
 3: cooperation
 4: co-learning
 5: collective action

12.4 Housing Finance – Diana Mitlin

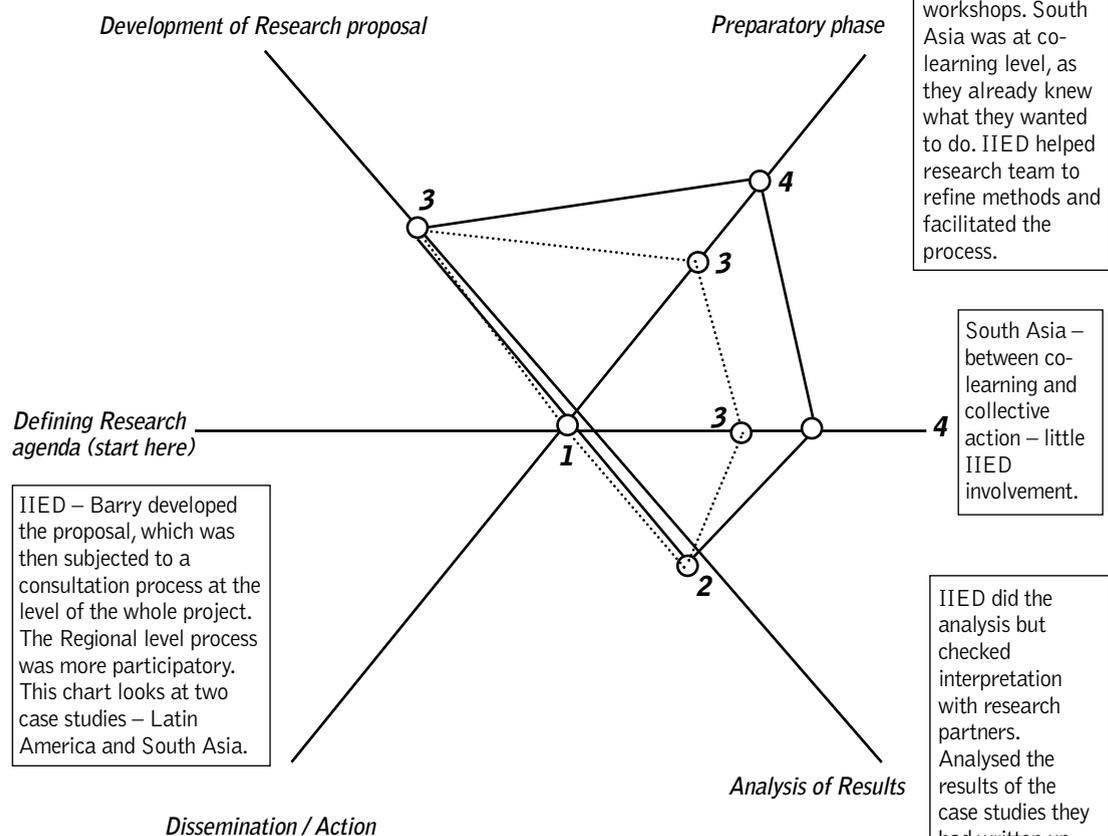
Research partners



Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:
 1: compliance
 2: consultation
 3: cooperation
 4: co-learning
 5: collective action

12.5 Evaluating Eden – Dilys Roe

Research partners



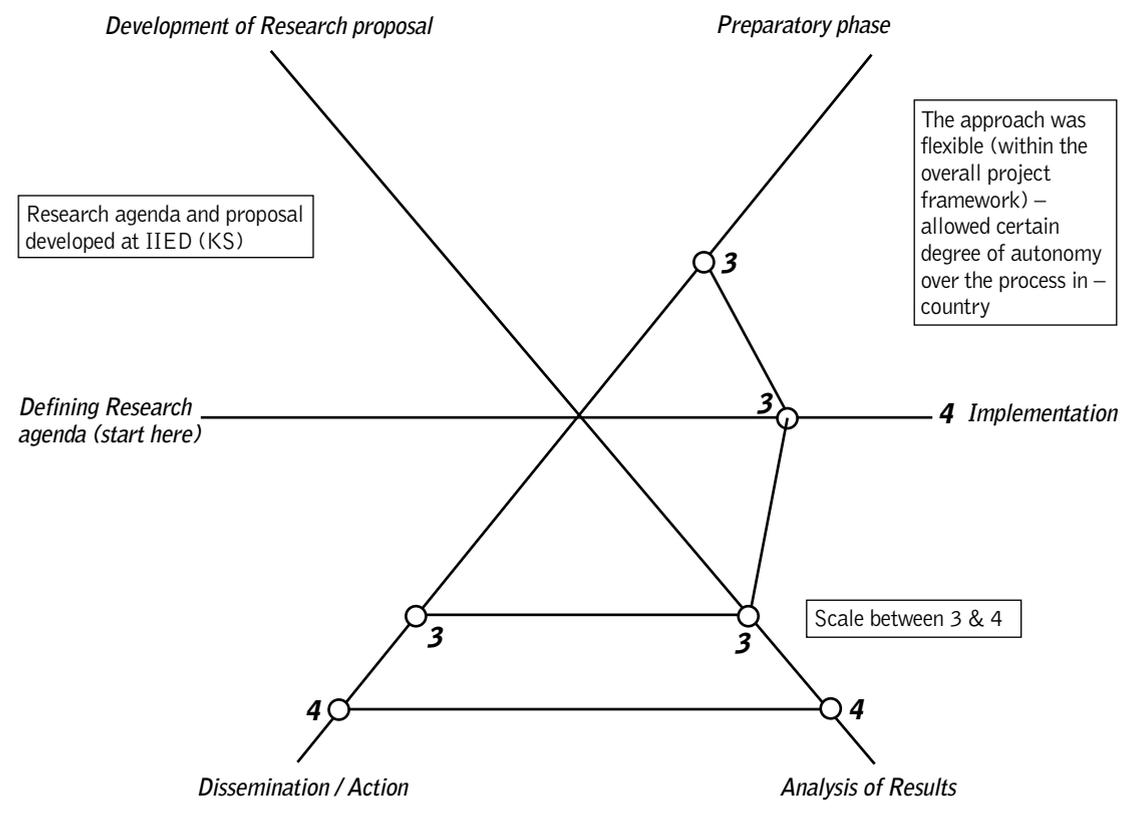
IIED – Barry developed the proposal, which was then subjected to a consultation process at the level of the whole project. The Regional level process was more participatory. This chart looks at two case studies – Latin America and South Asia.

Some regions have their own plans for dissemination. Funding problem for this at IIED. Originally, there were funds for dissemination including regional workshops, an international event, translation in to national and local languages, but the project lost money and this was the first set of activities to suffer as a result.

- Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:
- 1: compliance
 - 2: consultation
 - 3: cooperation
 - 4: co-learning
 - 5: collective action

12.6 Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge – Krystyna Swiderska

Research partners



Research agenda and proposal developed at IIED (KS)

The approach was flexible (within the overall project framework) – allowed certain degree of autonomy over the process in – country

KS will do the final report and key lessons. This will feed into the policy process through the UK government adopting this paper as their contribution to CBD – which will give it high exposure. It will also be disseminated to all the project contacts and partners and Southern Governments, as well as those interviewed in the process. Some of the draft reports have been disseminated in country by the research partners.

1. For the Philippines case study, KS wrote the draft report, which was then circulated for comments from project partners.
 2. For the other case studies, partners wrote the first drafts and KS commented.
- Co-analysis – looking at the key lessons.

NB The proposal was largely developed on the basis of external consultations and priorities of NGOs and experts (although generally not the partners themselves. However, indications of interest were obtained from the countries during proposal development/design).

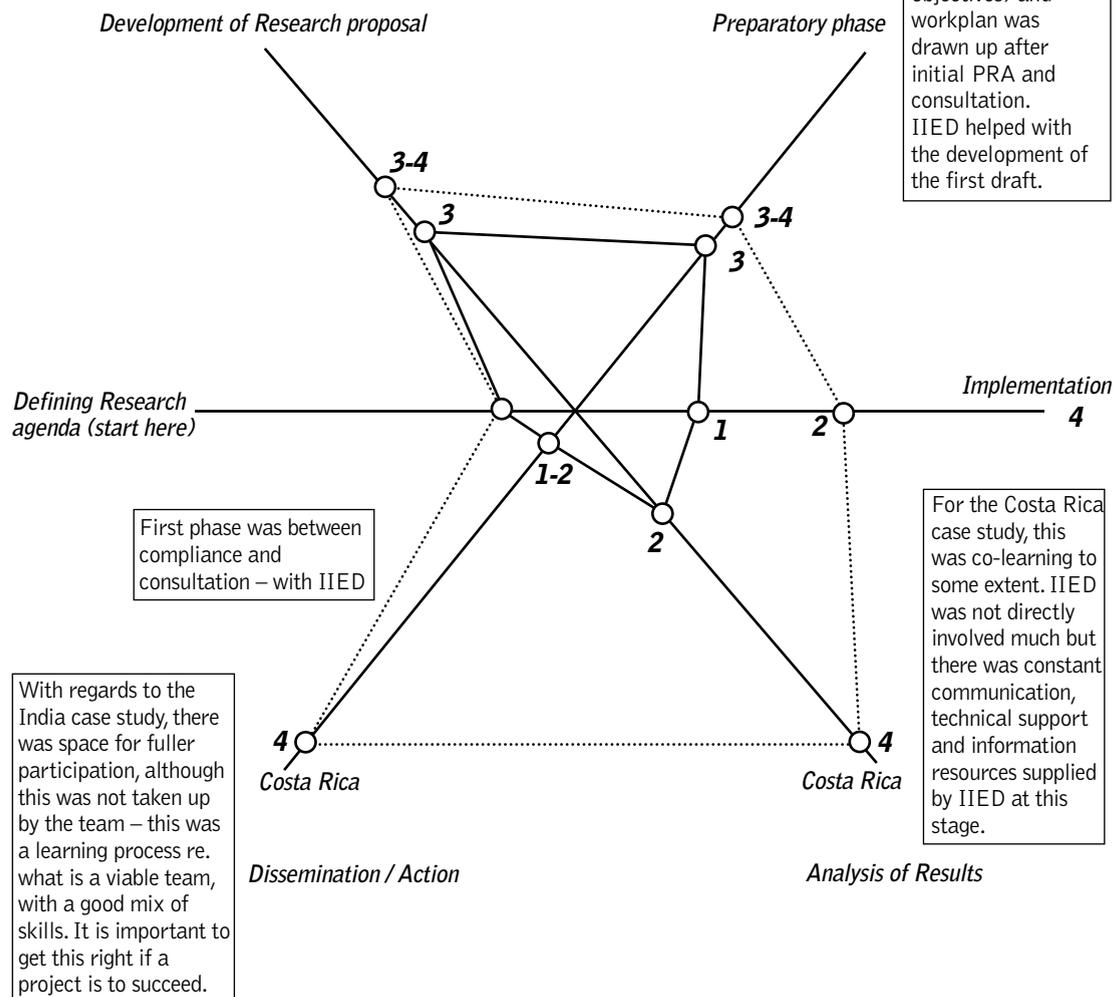
- Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:
- 1: compliance
 - 2: consultation
 - 3: cooperation
 - 4: co-learning
 - 5: collective action

12.9 FLU, Policy That Works for Forests and People – James Mayers

Research partners

India —————

Costa Rica (dotted line)

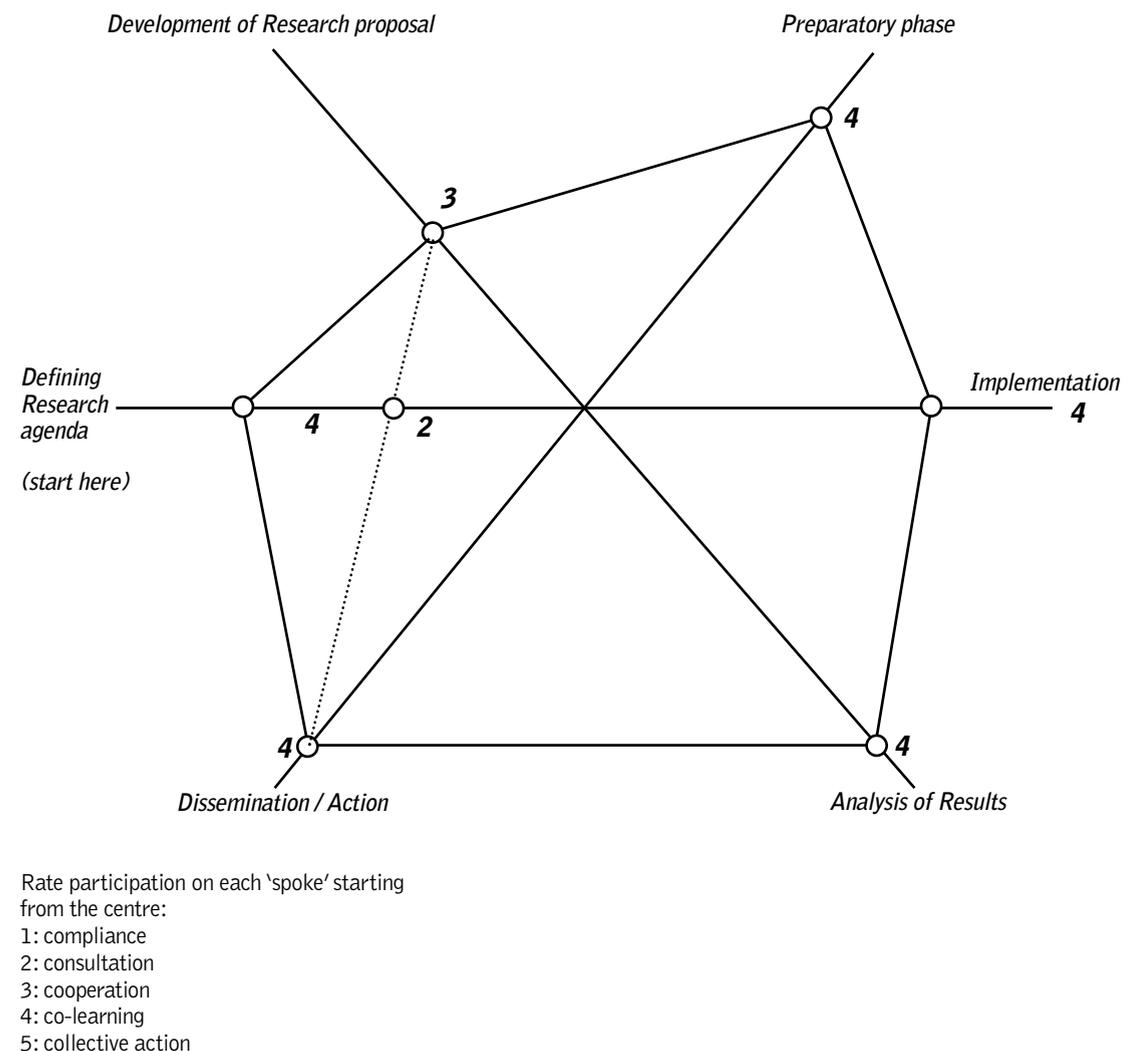


Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:
 1: compliance
 2: consultation
 3: cooperation
 4: co-learning
 5: collective action

12.10 Participatory Approaches to Veterinary Epidemiology (PAVE) – Andy Catley

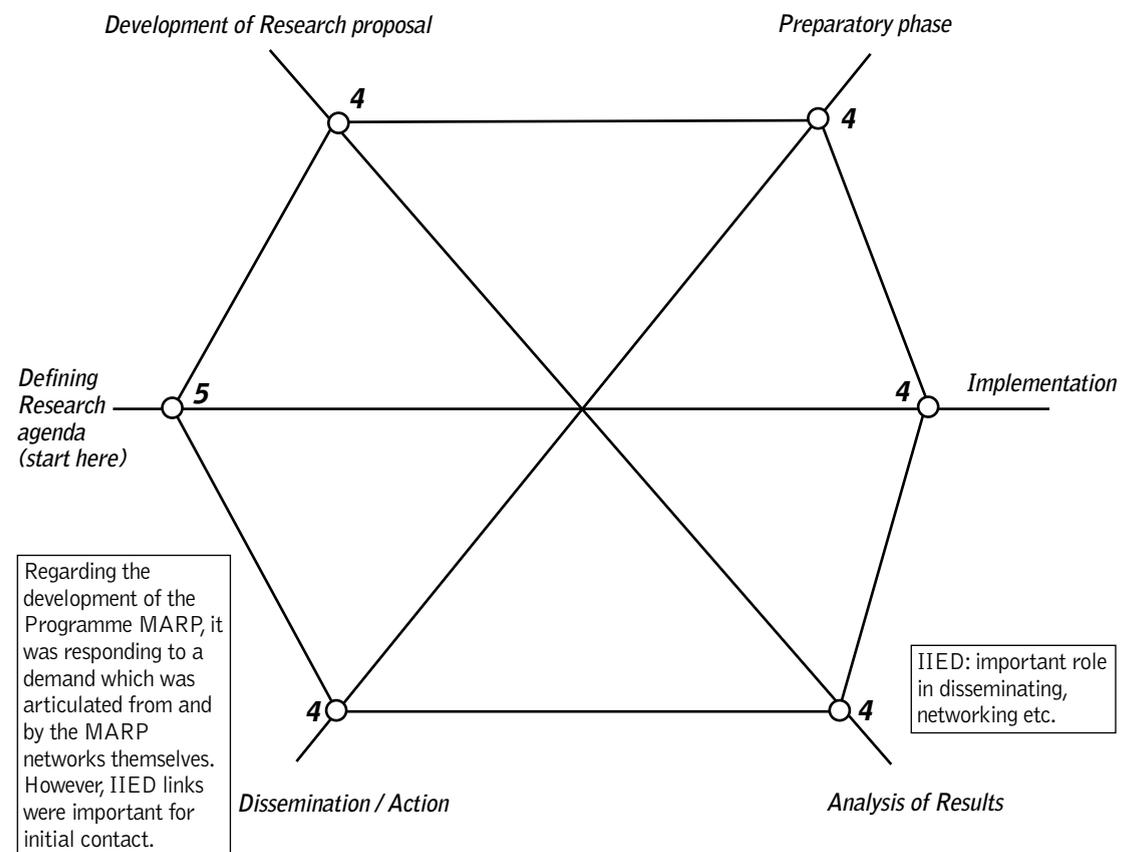
Research partners —————

Research subjects (dotted line)



12.11 MARP – Bara Gueye

For network partners



Rate participation on each 'spoke' starting from the centre:

- 1: compliance
- 2: consultation
- 3: cooperation
- 4: co-learning
- 5: collective action

