Understanding and assessing equity in protected area conservation

A matter of governance, rights, social impacts and human wellbeing

Phil Franks, Francesca Booker and Dilys Roe

iied

espa
ecosystem services
for poverty alleviation

About the author

Phil Franks is a senior researcher in the biodiversity team at IIED.

Francesca Booker is a researcher in the biodiversity team at IIED.

Dilys Roe is a principal researcher in the biodiversity team at IIED.

Corresponding author: Phil Franks, phil.franks@iied.org

Produced by IIED's Natural Resources Group

The aim of the Natural Resources Group is to build partnerships, capacity and wise decision-making for fair and sustainable use of natural resources. Our priority in pursuing this purpose is on local control and management of natural resources and other ecosystems.

Acknowledgments

Equity – or fairness – is increasingly recognised as a crucial issue for conservation, yet it is poorly defined and understood. Focusing on protected areas (PAs), this paper aims to help managers and policy makers make conservation fairer, in the belief that fairer conservation is vital for effective conservation as well as human wellbeing. We explain the meaning of equity in a conservation context, and then examine how equity relates to the more widely understood concepts of rights, governance, social impact and human wellbeing. We suggest four ways to assess the equity of PA management and governance, of varying rigour, feasibility and credibility. We conclude that giving more attention to enhancing equity, rather than directly improving livelihoods, could lead to greater contributions of PAs to human wellbeing, as well as better conservation.

Contents

Summary

Equity is gaining increasing attention in international conservation policy. Specifically, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Target 11 calls for "effectively and *equitably* managed … protected areas". Yet unlike effective protected area (PA) management, equitable PA management has not been defined, and there are few examples of a comprehensive approach to equity in conservation. This paper focuses on PAs, though much of the content will also be applicable to areas with conservation objectives beyond those defined as PAs.

The paper aims to support managers and policy makers progress towards more equitable conservation of PAs. It begins by explaining and exploring links between equity and justice, governance, rights, social impact, poverty and human wellbeing; offers conceptual frameworks for relating these concepts; and discusses assessment methods that can be used with existing PAs. We make the case that equity assessments need to draw mainly on governance assessments, but include an element of social impact assessment to ensure desired outcomes are being achieved.

The following sections of this summary briefly outline our discussions in the full paper.

Equity

Equity – social equity in full – basically means fairness, and is closely related to social justice. We see the terms as technically equivalent, but associated with different approaches. We use the concept of equity because it is much more common in international conservation policy.

Equity and social justice are generally thought to have three key dimensions:

- **Recognition** is about acknowledging and respecting rights and the diversity of identities, knowledge systems, values and institutions of different actors.

- **Procedure** is about participation of actors in decision making, transparency, accountability, and processes for dispute resolution.

- **Distribution** is about the allocation of benefits and costs across the set of actors, and, how the costs/ burdens experienced by some actors are mitigated.

This unpacking of equity into three dimensions will work for almost any aspect of environment and development work, but to make it a useful tool for PA conservation in particular, IIED has been convening a process to define key issues and develop 'equity principles' in each dimension. Through the process 12 equity principles have been defined and further unpacked into three to six themes that explain key aspects of the principle in practical terms (see Annex 1). With the exception of one principle (which specifically addresses the rights of indigenous peoples), the interests and rights of specific social groups who may be marginalised, including women, are a central consideration under every equity principle.

Governance

Essentially, governance is about power, relationships and accountability. At the heart of governance lies decision making which frequently involves tough choices between competing objectives (known as trade-offs). Governance is intrinsically linked to equity, and assessing equity involves assessing the quality of governance in terms of principles of good governance. But assessments need to be practical, so we have condensed and prioritised IUCN's 5 principles and 40 considerations for good PA governance into 11 'good governance principles'.

Unsurprisingly, our two sets of principles on equity and governance are closely related, although the governance principles are broader in scope because they include three that relate more to management *effectiveness* than equity. While some aspects of management may be effective irrespective of governance, the equity of management depends almost entirely on the equity of governance. Therefore, the term 'equitable management' is not a very useful concept. There may be issues around the equity of certain management activities, but these issues usually have their roots in governance and need to be approached from that perspective.

Rights

A right is an entitlement that is defined in law. Law includes not only 'hard law' that is legally binding under international and/or national law, but also 'soft law' that is not legally binding per se but has strong moral force in certain contexts. In law, every defined right also imposes a duty on others (whether a person, group of people, organisation or state). Rights and duties specify how key actors, especially state actors, must and must not act in certain situations. This is what makes rights a core issue for governance and a central feature of the principles of good governance.

Rights law at international level mainly concerns human rights which are rights inherent to all human beings on earth.[1] The most well-known is the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, but there are many other human rights legal instruments at both global and regional levels that are relevant to conservation, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[2]

Governance assessments

The governance arrangements of a PA might be assessed for one or more reasons:

• As a **health check**: to determine strengths and challenges of governance arrangements and thereby identify issues that need some attention,

• As a **diagnostic:** to understand the underlying causes of existing challenges and thereby identify actions that could improve the situation, and

• For **monitoring**: to establish a baseline against which changes in governance (hopefully improvements) at a given site can be measured over time.

Governance assessments should not only cover the PA itself but also any other conservation and development activities that are related to the PA. Where governance assessments are conducted at a number of sites, the results can contribute to a wider system-level governance assessment process if care is taken to ensure consistency across sites.[3]

Typically, a governance assessment has three key elements:

• **Good governance principles** which describe in broad terms the issues to be assessed,

• An **assessment process**, involving key actors, and

• **Methods and tools** used in each phase of the process.

Human wellbeing

Over recent decades, development has gradually broadened its focus from income poverty to a broader notion of human wellbeing. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was an early example of this shift, using a wellbeing framework to explore how ecosystem services benefit people. A further development is the Wellbeing in Development (WeD) framework which proposes three main dimensions of human wellbeing – material, relational and subjective. This evolution in framing from income poverty to three-dimensional human wellbeing has important and largely positive implications for conservation.

Benefits, costs and social impacts

In a conservation context, 'positive social impact' and 'negative social impact' are often more simply termed 'benefit' and 'cost'. However, those terms lead some people to think only about things with a monetary value. Therefore, IIED's Social Assessment for Protected Areas (SAPA) methodology advises using a translation of the phrase 'positive impact of the PA on wellbeing' or, more simply, 'good things about the PA', and for costs, 'bad things about the PA'. The significance of these, in terms of how they affect human wellbeing, will depend on the context and differences in social status of those affected, which is why detecting differences relating to social differentiation is fundamental to both governance and social assessment. Social differentiation includes differences by gender, wellbeing/poverty status, and factors that identify groups vulnerable to social impacts or exclusion. Assessments that simply aggregate results across a community run a serious risk that positive impacts for some social groups will mask negative impacts on others.

Social impact assessment

In general, social impact assessment aims to analyse and manage the intended and unintended social consequences, both good and bad, of planned interventions. In a PA context, social assessment essentially has the same objectives as governance assessment – as a health check, a diagnostic, and for monitoring – to reduce negative impacts and increase and/or more equitably share positive impacts. But many factors unrelated to the PA will be at play and identifying the contribution of a PA can be a major challenge. The most rigorous way to determine whether a certain impact is wholly or partly caused by a certain intervention is to use impact evaluation methodologies

based on quasi-experimental research designs, but these are complex and costly. On the other hand, social assessment (which is largely based on opinion and perception) is relatively simple and inexpensive, and may reveal important but unexpected contributions to wellbeing that could otherwise be missed.

Like a governance assessment, there are three key elements of social assessments – principles, process, and methods and tools. But in contrast to governance assessment, which is based on a set of good governance principles, social assessment often has just one overarching principle "do good where possible, and do not cause harm".

Interrelationship of key concepts

This paper offers a conceptual framework describing how a PA contributes to human wellbeing, elaborated from the IPBES Nature's Contribution to People framework (see Figures 6 and 7). PA management is made explicit and the institutions/governance/indirect drivers box of the IPBES framework has been stretched to reflect the fact that institutions and indirect drivers and some governance issues are largely beyond the local scale of the PA.

Many of the relationships between key concepts are context dependent and based on theories about how one type of change leads to another type of change, and so should be regarded as assumptions that need to be carefully watched to see if they are borne out in practice.

Apparently-equitable governance can fail to deliver equitable social impact

Experience from conservation demonstrates that what looks to managers like equitable governance often fails to distribute social impacts (benefits and costs) equitably. This can be due to: weak governance assessments; disconnects between governance and management; unexpected negative social impacts; or differences in understanding of equity. Even where distribution is considered equitable (for example, the elite capture of benefits is avoided, and there are effective measures to mitigate human-wildlife conflict) this may not lead to desired changes in human wellbeing, and opinion on what is equitable will change over time.

Equity assessment

Efforts to assess equity in PA conservation should be based on governance assessment and, where possible, include an element of social assessment to check whether apparent strengths or weaknesses in governance are indeed reflected in social impacts.

We propose four options with the simplest/cheapest first, noting the trade-off between feasibility, and the accuracy and credibility of the results:

1. Universal equity scorecard using generic indicators.

2. Site specific equity scorecard using site-specific indicators.

3. In depth social assessment plus site specific equity scorecard.

4. In depth governance assessment plus site-specific equity scorecard (only viable with PAs willing to undergo the sensitive process of governance assessment).

Each of these options includes the use of an equity scorecard. A generic scorecard based on our equity framework has already been developed and tested[4] and is being further refined. The choice of options depends primarily on the objectives of the assessment – as a health check, a diagnostic, and/or for measuring progress over time – and on the resources available.

Detecting differences relating to social differentiation is fundamental for the same reasons that it is for governance and social assessment.

From livelihoods to equity

Building on earlier work, we suggest that investments in communities within and around PAs could deliver more in terms of human wellbeing and poverty alleviation, and better conservation, if they are focused on enhancing equity rather than directly improving livelihoods. This represents a major paradigm shift. We believe that this is commonly best-achieved through a gradual process of learning and adapting management and governance. This partly reflects the importance of building trust and confidence in an approach that is likely to be more challenging for all concerned, but ultimately more successful.

Introduction

Equity is increasingly 'on the agenda', but remains poorly understood in practice, despite many frameworks, methods and tools covering its component parts. This paper aims to clarify frequently used terms, draw together different aspects of equity, and convince managers, policy and decision makers that making conservation more equitable will benefit both people and planet.

1

The concept of equity is gaining increasing attention in international conservation policy. Aichi Target 11 of the Strategic Plan of the CBD calls for terrestrial and aquatic habitat to be conserved through "effectively and equitably managed … protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures". Yet the concept of equitable protected area (PA) management is poorly defined and understood (unlike the concept of effectiveness which has been used for more than 25 years[5]). Some aspects of equity have been adopted in policy and practice – for example, on benefit sharing and rights – but there are very few examples of conservation taking a comprehensive approach to equity.

This paper looks at what equitable means in a conservation context, and more specifically in managing and governing PAs. Building on earlier papers,[6,7] we focus on the linkages between concepts of equity, justice, governance, rights, social impact, poverty and human wellbeing, and on methods for assessing PA performance in these terms.

The proliferation of individual frameworks, guidance and tools for various concepts can overwhelm policymakers and may be slowing down their incorporation into national policy and practice. Therefore, this paper's overall aim is to help PA managers and policymakers progress towards more equitable conservation by 'unpacking' the concept of equity and explaining how related concepts fit together. We have included many references further explaining key concepts, but one deserves particular mention here as being relevant to so many aspects of this paper: 'Integrating rights and social issues into conservation: A trainer's guide'.[8]

We approach key themes from the perspective of individual PAs, basing discussions on field experience more than theories.[9] As well as supporting efforts to enhance equity at a site level, this paper will also have value at higher management and policy levels.

We apply the broad CBD definition of PAs as any "geographically defined area, which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives".[10] We thus include all IUCN PA management categories (I-VI) and PA governance types.[11] Much of this paper will also be applicable to conservation objectives outside PAs.

Understanding equity

This section offers a framework for understanding what 'equity' means in practice, and shows how equal treatment is not always equitable. It also takes a brief look at the concept of PA management effectiveness, and the relationship between effective and equitable management.
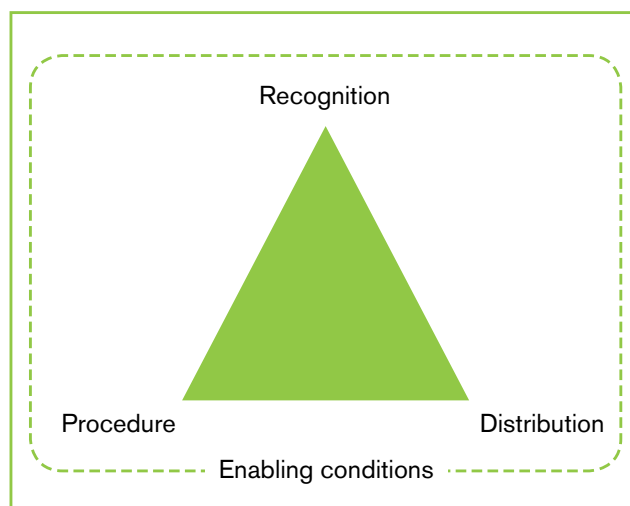
2

2.1 Equity and justice

In plain English, equity simply means fairness. It is closely related to justice, particularly the concept of social justice. Academics and legal experts have long debated the similarities and differences between these concepts. Lawyers use these terms to mean different things, but within the social sciences there is little consensus. Some say there is a real difference,[12,13] while others challenge this.[9] In our work with conservation we see the terms as equivalent from a technical perspective, but as being associated with different approaches. People and organisations that frame their conservation work in terms of governance and social impact tend to talk about equity (and fairness and inclusion). Those taking a rights-based approach tend to talk about social justice. We base our decision to frame the concept as equity on the term's prevalence in international policy, both in conservation policy and broader sustainable development policy – notably in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets, where equity, equality and related terms are used 24 times but the term justice is used only once.[14]

2.2 Three dimensions of equity

Both the equity and justice-framed approaches see three key dimensions to the concept: recognition, procedure and distribution[15,13] (see Figure 1).

- **Recognition** is about acknowledging and respecting rights, and the diversity of identities, knowledge systems, values and institutions of different actors (see Box 1)

- **Procedure** is about participation of actors in decision-making, transparency, accountability, processes for dispute resolution.*

- **Distribution** is about the allocation of benefits across the set of actors, and how the costs/burdens experienced by some actors are mitigated.**

Figure 1. The three dimensions of equity

Principles for each equity dimension

The three dimensions should enable policymakers and practitioners in any sector of development and environment to understand equity. However, different sectors will face different key issues in each dimension. Over the last three years, IIED has convened a series of workshops and wider consultations to elucidate these issues for PA conservation. Starting by developing a list of key issues/concerns, we then drafted a framework of 12 good practice principles for equity (see Figure 2), and subsequently tested this framework at PA sites in Uganda and Tanzania. The framework has also been presented at several international events and reviewed by around 30 researchers and practitioners.

BOX 1: RIGHTSHOLDERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND ACTORS

Rightsholders in the context of protected areas have legal or customary rights to natural resources and land.

Stakeholders in the context of protected areas have interests and concerns about natural resources and land.

Actors is used as a shorthand for stakeholders and rightsholders in this paper, unless a distinction needs to be made.

---

* Also includes the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent for Indigenous Peoples. See: Maharjan Sk, Carling J and Ln S (2012) Training Manual on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in REDD+ for Indigenous Peoples. *Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) and International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).*

** Similar to environmental impacts, mitigation of costs/negative social impacts means avoid if possible and minimise what cannot be avoided. For any residual impact that remains after efforts to avoid or minimise, restore human wellbeing to pre-impact level through compensation or development interventions.

Figure 2. A framework of 12 equity principles for PAs (work in progress)

Recognition

1. Recognition and respect for human rights under international and national law
2. Recognition and respect for statutory and customary rights to land and resources
3. Recognition and respect for rights of indigenous peoples including FPIC and self-determination
4. Recognition and respect for all relevant actors and their diverse interests, capacities and influence
5. Recognition and respect for different identities, cultures, knowledge systems, values and institutions

Equity

Procedure

6. Full and effective participation of all relevant actors in decision-making
7. Transparency supported by timely access to relevant information in appropriate forms
8. Accountability for fulfilling responsibilities, and for other actions and inactions
9. Access to justice, including an effective dispute-resolution process and procedures for seeking redress

Distribution

10. Identification and assessment of the distribution and impact of costs, benefits and risks
11. Effective measures to mitigate negative impacts on indigenous peoples and local communities
12. Benefits equitably shared among relevant actors based on one or more targetting options:
    • Equally between relevant actors
    • According to contribution to conservation
    • According to costs incurred
    • According to rights past and present
    • According to the priorities of the poorest

Historically, conservation has focused mainly on the distribution dimension of equity. Notably, "*Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources*" has been one of the three core objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity since its inception in 1992.[16] In 2004, the Convention's programme of work on PAs[17] extended the scope of equity to "*equitable sharing of both costs and benefits arising from the establishment and management of PAs*" (target for goal 2.1), and "*equitable dispute resolution institutions and procedures*" (a suggested activity under goal 3.1). There are no other references to equity and no reference at all to justice. A key feature of our equity framework is, the greater emphasis on the recognition and procedure aspects of equity which have long been recognised both in equity/justice theory and conservation practice, and are increasingly seen as crucial for achieving both social and conservation goals.[18]

PA-specific themes under the principles

To further unpack the concept of equity in conservation, IIED and partners have identified several 'themes' for each principle in the equity framework (see Annex 1). These were chosen based on workshop discussions, a review of relevant literature, and experience from six PA governance assessments that we supported in Africa and Asia during 2017. Generally, the themes follow a logical sequence. For example, within the 'full and effective participation' principle, the themes are:

a) Structures and processes that enable people to participate in decision making,

b) The extent of dialogue and consensus-based decision making,

c) How peoples' representatives are selected and how their performance is monitored,

d) Peoples' capacity to participate effectively,

e) Peoples' contributions in decision-making processes, and

f) Whether/how these contributions influence decisions.

Essentially, our 'themes' are equivalent to the 'criteria level' of a typical standard, such as the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC's) standard[19] and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) standard[20] used for REDD+ and other forest carbon projects. In these standards, indicators are usually nested below criteria, and both criteria and indicators define a threshold of acceptable performance. Our equity framework is different – although our 'principles' do propose desired good practice (ie are normative) the 'themes' are just a set of important aspects of the principle and do not define a level of performance that actors are expected to achieve.

Our framework is designed to be universal, and applicable to PAs anywhere in the world. By contrast, good indicators must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timebound) and this means that they need to be context specific. The FSC standard includes an 'interpretation process' to develop a country-level set of indicators. Although the CCB standard does not include such a process, using it at a given site involves defining more specific site-level indicators called verifiers. Our equity principles and themes do provide a structure for developing site-specific equity indicators (see Section 2.4), but our main intention has been to help managers and policymakers advance equity in practice, rather than to provide a tool for comparing the situation at a given PA with some relatively inflexible notion of best practice.

2.3 'Equitable' does not necessarily mean 'equal'

Alongside the three *dimensions* of equity, and the people and their actions that are the focus of an equity concern (*subjects* of equity), there is a third key consideration of equity – the *relationship** between subjects.[12] This relationship may be based on:

- **Equality** – where everyone is treated the same,

- **Merit** – where preference is given to those who contribute more, suffer costs, or who have the right to affirmative treatment, or

- **Need** – where preference is given to the poorest, or otherwise most needy people.

The five options in our benefit sharing principle (see Figure 2, Principle 12) are based on this idea, and, in a given situation, several may apply with different weightings.

These 'relationship options' are a fundamental consideration in benefit sharing but they could also be applied to other equity principles. For example, equity in participation could mean equal opportunity for all stakeholders to participate, or could be based on rights (ie rightsholders participate more than other stakeholders), or on need (eg those most dependent on protected resources get priority). The choice should depend on the initiative's overall objectives and context, should be agreed early on, and may change over time. However, it is common to find that such decisions are unclear and this often leads to poor conservation performance, missed social objectives and sometimes resentment from excluded groups that can even undermine the whole intervention.[21]

Gender equity/equality is an integral aspect of our framework and every principle and theme will have a gender dimension. Organisations focused on women's empowerment see gender equality as the ultimate goal.[22] In a conservation context, treating people equally tends to be the norm in the recognition and procedural dimensions of equity, with the exception of indigenous peoples (IPs) who have rights that apply only to IPs, but not necessarily in the distribution dimension where benefits may serve as incentives for conservation, and/or compensation for costs/burdens, and will need to be targeted accordingly. A weighted approach that combines several relationship options is often the most appropriate, for example with employment where equal opportunity may be the starting point, to which may be added some preference for local people and perhaps women in particular.

2.4 'Effective' is not necessarily 'equitable'

In PA conservation, the term effectiveness is applied to PA management and refers to:[23]

- Design issues for sites and PA systems,

- Adequate and appropriate management systems and processes, and

- How well PA objectives are delivered, including how well their value to local communities is preserved.

---

* Note Sikor *et al.* (2014)[12] uses the term 'criteria' rather than 'relationship'.

Over the past 15 years more than ten thousand sites have been assessed for management effectiveness globally,[24] ensuring that the term is fairly well and widely understood. While some effectiveness assessments do look at delivery of higher level conservation and social goals, and examine values, the main focus is on whether management is delivering expected measurable 'outputs', and whether these are producing anticipated 'outcomes' for the site.[25] This is also how the term effectiveness is understood in a development context.[5] Outputs, such as reports and workshops, and outcomes such as reduction in illegal activities can be readily assessed. But it is much harder to assess progress towards conservation and social goals over a relatively short timeframe, and although it could be expected that progress towards conservation goals is strongly correlated with PA management effectiveness there is still a lack of solid evidence to support this assertion.[24]

Although there will often be trade-offs between the conservation and social goals of effectiveness, and between goals of effectiveness and the principles of equity, there is a growing amount of evidence that such trade-offs may be less common and more easily reconciled than once thought.[26,27] A recent study of reports from 160 PAs worldwide found a positive correlation of conservation and social achievement in two thirds of cases.[28]

Governance

Governance is about power, relationships and accountability – who makes decisions, how those decisions are made, how resources are allocated, and how stakeholders have their say and hold those in power to account.[29] Focusing on the context of protected areas, this section provides an overview of governance and governance assessment, closely related issues of rights and rights-based approaches, and the relationship between governance and equity.

3

3.1 Governance differs from management

There is a distinction between governance and management. Governance is about who defines the overall objectives and how, and the allocation of responsibility and accountability for delivering on these objectives.[3;30] Management is about what is done to achieve the overall objectives, and includes defining and allocating lower level objectives, responsibilities and accountabilities. It is important to ensure that management is accountable to governance through clear governance structures and processes – although where the line distinguishing management from governance is drawn will vary from one organisation to another.

3.2 Governance type

There are four main types of PA governance arrangement (called governance types) which are distinguished by where decision-making authority lies:

A. Governance by government (state governance),

B. Governance by two or more different groups working in collaboration (shared governance),

C. Governance by private organisations or individuals (private governance), and

D. Governance by Indigenous Peoples and/or local communities (community governance).

Within categories A, C and D, the lead authority may *consult* with other actors to get their views but is not obliged to take account of these views. Consultation becomes full participation where policy requires that the lead authority involves other actors in decision making on a regular basis to the point where they have some real influence over decisions (effective participation) and, by definition, the governance type becomes 'shared governance'. Table 1 shows one way of depicting this for a continuum from governance by government at one end, to community governance at the other.

There is no simple relationship between PA governance type and equity. While it might be expected that governance types which enable genuine participation of communities will lead to more equitable distribution of benefits and costs (ie social impacts), and thus make a greater contribution to human wellbeing, this is not always the case (see Section 5.2). Also, there is often a difference between what the governance type of a PA is said to be and what it is in reality.

Table 1: Governance types and sub-types for a government-community governance continuum[3]

GOVERNANCE BY GOVERNMENT		SHARED GOVERNANCE (GOVERNMENT – COMMUNITY)			GOVERNANCE BY COMMUNITY	
Pure	**Consultative**	**Government-led**	**Joint**	**Community-led**	**Consultative**	**Pure**
Government has decision-making authority and does not routinely consult communities	Government has decision-making authority but routinely consults and takes some account of community views and interests	Government has primary decision-making authority but communities participate in some decisions with some real influence over the outcome	Government and communities jointly make decisions with similar levels of influence over the outcome	Communities have primary decision-making authority but government participates in some decisions with some real influence over the outcome	Communities have decision-making authority but routinely consult with government and take some account of their views and interests	Communities have decision-making authority and do not routinely consult government actors

3.3 Good governance

Based on a framework developed by UNDP[29], IUCN has developed a set of five very broad principles of good governance for PAs:

1. Legitimacy and voice,

2. Direction,

3. Performance,

4. Accountability, and

5. Fairness and rights.

IUCN further elaborates on these principles through 40 'good governance considerations'.[3] The term 'governance quality' refers to the extent to which the governance of a PA achieves the level of performance implied by these principle and considerations.

While the 40 considerations provide a rich interpretation of the 5 principles, 40 issues are simply too many to cover in a programme of governance capacity building or assessment. Therefore, in developing our methodology for site-level governance assessment we started by condensing the 40 considerations down to 11 key issues which are described in the language of principles, ie 11 'good governance principles' for PAs (see Table 2).

In Table 2, Principle 9 on enforcement might seem more a management than governance issue; its inclusion reflects concerns from some PAs over how law enforcement staff behave towards local people.[31] There will be some overlap between Principle 9 and Principle 3 if law enforcement activities violate human rights. There may also be overlap between Principle 6 on benefit sharing and Principle 2 on participation if a specific group gains disproportionate benefits because they are able to limit the participation of other groups in decision making (ie there is 'elite capture'). Some overlap is inevitable, and indeed helpful in governance assessment as it is usually not feasible to address all 11 principles in one assessment.

When prioritising principles for assessment, it is worth noting that the governance frameworks of major multilateral development agencies and banks generally include three core principles: participation, transparency, and accountability.[32] To these three, we would add benefit sharing as a core principle as it provides the incentives for good PA management and governance, without which governance arrangements may well collapse, no matter how good.

Table 2. Good governance principles for PAs

IIED PA GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLE	RELATED IUCN PA GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLE
1. Recognition and respect of all relevant actors and their knowledge, values and institutions	Legitimacy and voice
2. Effective participation of relevant actors in decision-making	Legitimacy and voice
3. Recognition and respect for the rights of all relevant actors	Fairness and rights
4. Fair and effective processes for dispute resolution	Fairness and rights
5. Effective measures to mitigate negative social impacts	Fairness and rights
6. Fair sharing of benefits according to a targeting strategy agreed by relevant actors	Fairness and rights
7. Transparency supported by timely access to relevant information	Accountability
8. Accountability for fulfilling responsibilities, other actions and inactions	Accountability
9. Fair and effective enforcement of laws and regulations	Fairness and rights/Performance
10. Achievement of conservation and other objectives as planned	Performance
11. Effective coordination and collaboration between different actors, sectors and levels	Direction

Note: 'Actors' is shorthand for stakeholder and rightsholder groups.

3.4 Equity and governance

The 12 principles under our three dimensions of equity (see Figure 2) are strongly reflected in our Governance Principles because equity is fundamentally a governance issue. However, the two lists of principles do differ. The Equity Principles include a principle on assessing the benefits and costs of a PA to different actors, and this is not considered a priority governance issue. Conversely, the Governance Principles (see Table 2) include three principles that are not in the equity framework because they relate more to effectiveness than equity.

Another implication of the fact that equity principles are fundamentally governance issues rather than management issues is that the term "equitable management" is not a very useful concept. There may be issues around the equity of certain management activities, but these issues usually have their roots in governance and need to be approached from that perspective.

A key related point is that neither effective and equitable governance, nor effective management, are end states, ie we can never reach a point where we can say that governance is now equitable, or management is now effective, as there will always be room for improvement. Furthermore, different actors have different notions of effectiveness and equity and these are likely to change over time.

3.5 Rights and governance

A right is an entitlement defined in law, whether that be legally binding international or national 'hard law', or 'soft law' drawing its strength from a strong moral force in certain contexts, eg customary law of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

International rights law mainly concerns human rights which apply to all people on Earth. The most well-known international human rights law is the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and its associated covenants on social, economic, civil and political rights. But there are many other legal instruments at both global and regional levels that define human rights.[1,2] For conservation contexts, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is particularly relevant.

In law, every defined right imposes a responsibility on others (whether a person, group of people, organisation or state) to recognise, respect or uphold that right. A responsibility that is actually a legal obligation is called a *duty*. In human rights law states/governments have a threefold duty: to *respect*, and therefore not interfere with citizens' rights; to *protect* citizens from human rights abuses by others; and to actively help citizens *fulfil* (exercise) their rights. International human rights law mainly relates to the duties of states to their citizens but is increasingly being extended through 'soft law' to the private sector (eg UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights[33]), and to civil society through initiatives such as the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights.[34]

By definition, all legally-binding human rights are applicable to PA conservation. A recent analysis identified 14 proposed conservation standards reflecting core human rights to be upheld at all times.[2] Below these come rights to use and/or own property (including intellectual property) and resources: a second major category of context-specific rights that are fundamental in conservation.*

In rights-based approaches the stakeholder having a right is a 'rightsholder' and the stakeholder bearing the duty is a 'duty bearer'. Rights and duties specify how key actors, especially state actors, must act and must not act in certain situations. This is what makes rights a core issue for governance, and a central feature of principles of good governance – in particular the IUCN principles of legitimacy and voice and fairness and rights (shown in Table 2) which are actually based on human rights law. More broadly, a rights-based approach that empowers rightsholders to claim rights, and holds duty bearers accountable for respecting those rights, can change power relationships and therefore have a broader impact on governance.

3.6 Governance assessment

The governance arrangements of a PA might be assessed for one or more reasons:

- As a **health check**: to determine strengths and challenges of governance arrangements and thereby identify issues that need some attention,

- As a **diagnostic:** to understand the underlying causes of existing challenges and thereby identify actions that could improve the situation, and

- For **monitoring**: to establish a baseline against which changes in governance (hopefully improvements) at a given site can be measured over time.

As with other PA assessments, governance assessments should cover the PAs and also any related conservation and development initiatives that:

---

* The right to own property is a human right but the right to own or use a particular piece/item of property is not a human right since the right is not inherent to all people but rather relates to specific rightsholders.

• Have been designed to contribute to PA conservation, and

• Give PA management and other key actors influence over their design and implementation.

Short term activities (such as an NGO project) should still be included as part of the bigger governance picture, even if managed separately.
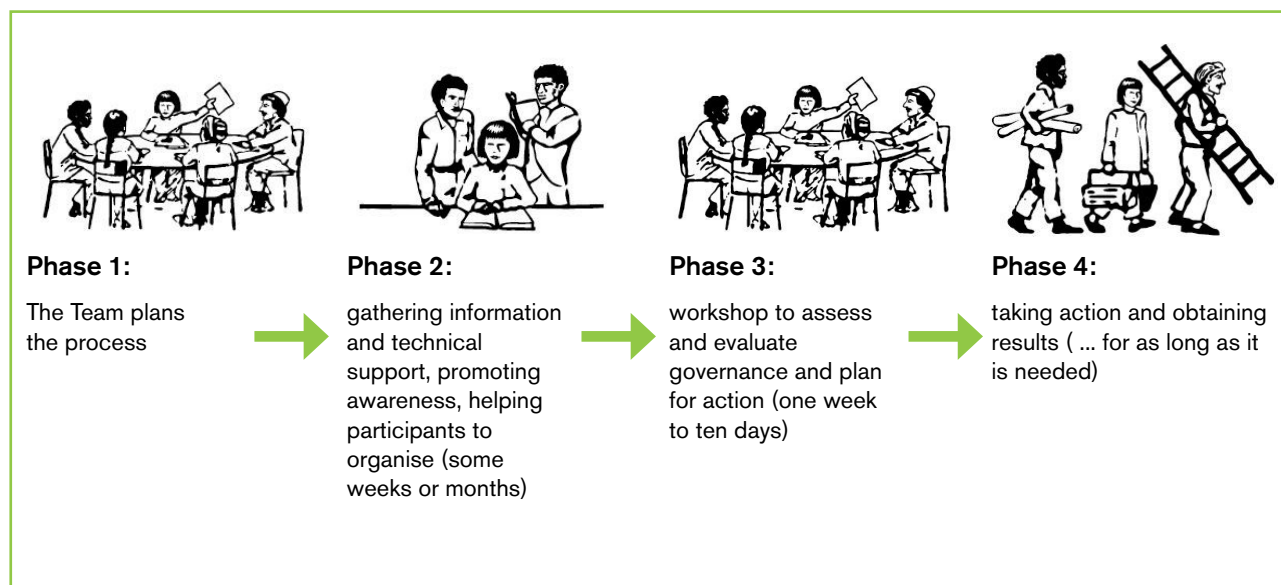
Where governance assessments are conducted at a number of sites, the results can contribute to a wider system-level governance assessment process if care is taken to ensure consistency across sites.

A recent internal review by IIED identified 29 governance assessment methodologies used for PAs or in related contexts. However, with the notable exception of the 'participatory governance assessment' methodology used in Nepal at more than 750 community forests, practical experience of site-based PA governance assessment remains limited. This is despite major advances in policy and guidance over the past 15 years.

Typically, a governance assessment methodology has three key elements:

• **Good governance principles** which in broad terms describe the issues to be assessed and a sense of the desired level of achievement (Table 2 lists the principles in the IIED methodology).

• **An assessment process**, with the following four phases (as shown in Figure 3, below):

Phase 1 – Preparation, training and planning, including scoping to determine which stakeholders to engage in the assessment and what focal issues (ie principles) to prioritise,

Phase 2 – Gathering information/data,

Phase 3 – Synthesis, ideas and plans for action, and

Phase 4 – Taking action.

• **Methods and tools** that are used in each phase of the process, including data gathering methods such as focus groups, key informant interviews and surveys.

Figure 3. The four phases of governance assessments

Phase 1:
The Team plans the process

Phase 2:
gathering information and technical support, promoting awareness, helping participants to organise (some weeks or months)

Phase 3:
workshop to assess and evaluate governance and plan for action (one week to ten days)

Phase 4:
taking action and obtaining results (... for as long as it is needed)

Reproduced from Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* (2013)[3]

Social impacts and human wellbeing

The approach of development and the social dimension of conservation has been changing from a focus on income poverty to a much broader concept of human wellbeing. This section provides an overview of this transition in the context of protected areas and related conservation and development initiatives, summarises the different types of impacts of PAs on wellbeing, and provides an overview of how these can be assessed.
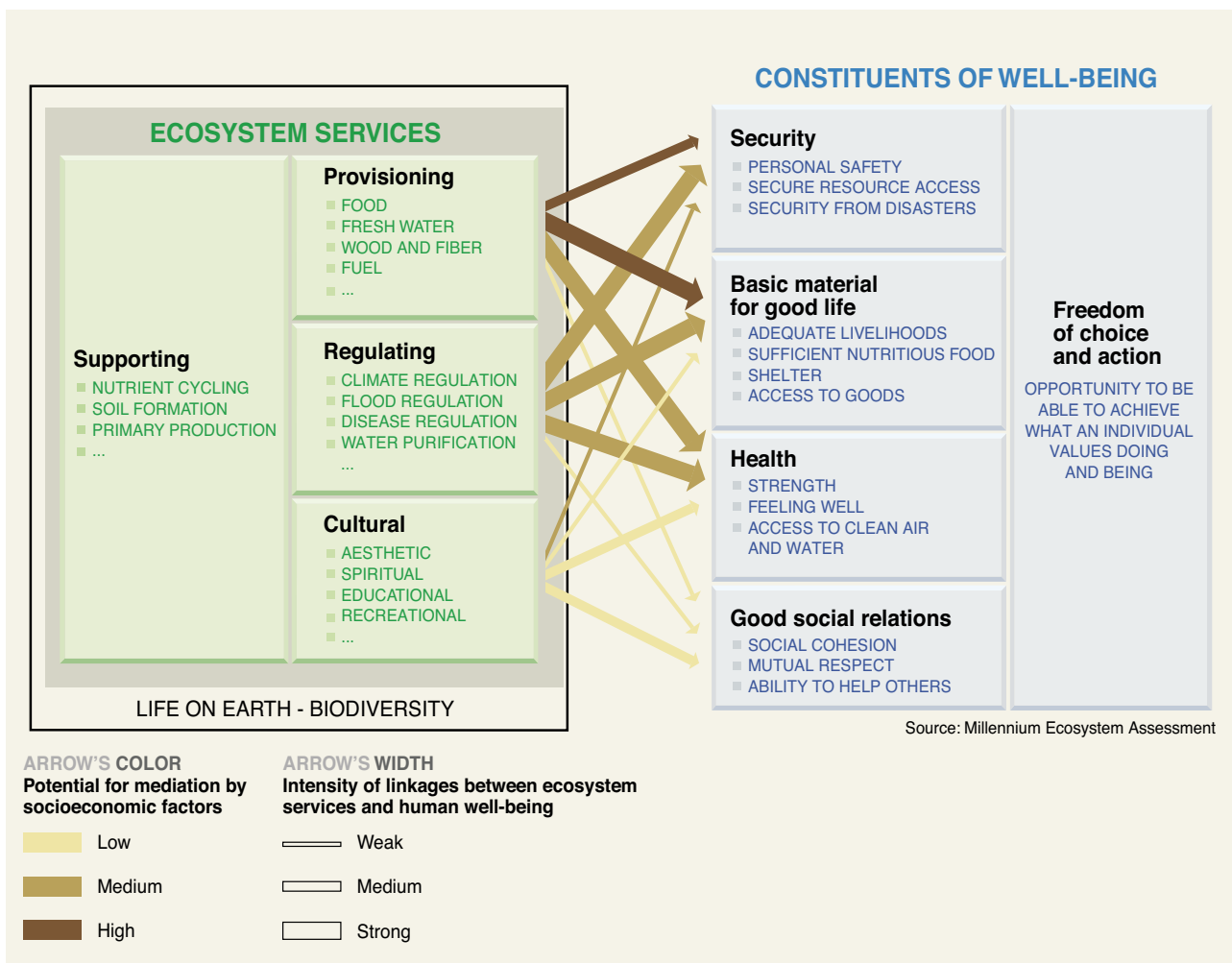
4

4.1 A shift from poverty to human wellbeing

Over recent decades, development work has been changing its framing from a narrow focus on income poverty to the much broader concept of human wellbeing. A landmark study in 2002 on how the poor see poverty[35] confirmed that non-economic dimensions need much more attention, especially what people feel they need in order to participate in society and live a decent life. Other arguments for this change include:[36]

• Focusing on poverty emphasises what people lack over what they have, missing important attributes of people's lives and reducing development's relevance to non-poor,

• Categorising people in terms of their poverty status defines the poor as hapless victims rather than active agents of change, and

• A broader focus fosters a more socially informed, holistic analysis of peoples' lives and relationships.

An early example of this change was the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment which explores the contribution of ecosystem services to people using a wellbeing framework[37] (see Figure 4). A further development in understanding wellbeing is the Wellbeing in Development (WeD) framework[38] which proposes three dimensions of human wellbeing – material (including health), relational (including security) and subjective (including freedom of action and choice), and this has since been further elaborated (see Box 2).

Figure 4. Conceptual framework of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

CONSTITUENTS OF WELL-BEING

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Provisioning
- FOOD
- FRESH WATER
- WOOD AND FIBER
- FUEL
- ...

Supporting
- NUTRIENT CYCLING
- SOIL FORMATION
- PRIMARY PRODUCTION
- ...

Regulating
- CLIMATE REGULATION
- FLOOD REGULATION
- DISEASE REGULATION
- WATER PURIFICATION
- ...

Cultural
- AESTHETIC
- SPIRITUAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- RECREATIONAL
- ...

LIFE ON EARTH - BIODIVERSITY

Security
- PERSONAL SAFETY
- SECURE RESOURCE ACCESS
- SECURITY FROM DISASTERS

Basic material for good life
- ADEQUATE LIVELIHOODS
- SUFFICIENT NUTRITIOUS FOOD
- SHELTER
- ACCESS TO GOODS

Health
- STRENGTH
- FEELING WELL
- ACCESS TO CLEAN AIR AND WATER

Good social relations
- SOCIAL COHESION
- MUTUAL RESPECT
- ABILITY TO HELP OTHERS

Freedom of choice and action
OPPORTUNITY TO BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE WHAT AN INDIVIDUAL VALUES DOING AND BEING

Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

ARROW'S COLOR
Potential for mediation by socioeconomic factors
- Low
- Medium
- High

ARROW'S WIDTH
Intensity of linkages between ecosystem services and human well-being
- Weak
- Medium
- Strong

Reproduced from Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005)[37]

BOX 2. THREE DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN WELLBEING

The **material** concerns practical welfare and standards of living:

- income, wealth and assets
- employment and livelihood activities
- education and skills
- physical health and (dis)ability
- access to services and amenities
- environmental quality

The **relational** concerns personal and social relations

- relations of love and care
- networks of support and obligation
- relations with the state: law, politics, welfare
- social, political and cultural identities and inequalities
- violence, conflict and (in)security
- scope for personal and collective action and influence

The **subjective** concerns values, perceptions and experience

- understandings of the sacred and the moral order
- self-concept and personality
- hopes, fears and aspirations
- sense of meaning/ meaninglessness
- levels of (dis)satisfaction
- trust and confidence

Source: White, S C (2009)[39]

4.2 Benefits, costs and social impacts

A 'social impact' means any effect on society, including changes to people's way of life, culture, community, political systems, environment, health, wellbeing, human and property rights, fears and aspirations[40] at an individual, community or wider societal level.

In a conservation context, 'positive social impact' and 'negative social impact' are often simply termed 'benefit' and 'cost'. However, the use of these terms in economics leads some people to limit their thinking to impacts with a clear monetary value. For this reason, IIED's Social Assessment for Protected Areas (SAPA) methodology[41] advises using a translation of the phrase 'positive impact of the PA on wellbeing' or, more simply, 'good things about the PA', and for costs, 'negative impacts of the PA on wellbeing' or simply 'bad things about the PA'. In the world of impact assessment these are often simply called 'goods' and 'bads'.

We can also distinguish between the 'good' (meaning what the thing is, for example, clean water, firewood or food) and its importance to people. The importance of a 'good' or 'bad' (their 'utility', in economic terms) will vary between people and places, especially with differences in social status between men, women, richer, poorer, different ethnic groups, young and old, etc. For example, an acre of maize destroyed by an elephant has a far less serious impact on the wellbeing of a farmer with ten acres and significant assets (eg some cows) than a farmer with just two acres and very few assets (eg a couple of chickens). A 'socially differentiated' approach to assessing social impacts that explores these differences is therefore fundamental to good social assessment.[42,43]

4.3 Types of positive and negative social impacts

Table 3 shows the five broad categories of positive and negative social impacts emerging from focus group discussions with men and women (separately) at four different terrestrial PAs in Africa which were part of a social assessment process.[44] This indicates some key categories of social impact but, being based on just four terrestrial PAs, cannot be considered a comprehensive typology of PA social impacts.

Social impacts can contribute to all three dimensions of human wellbeing in the 3D framework. On the positive side, improved security makes an important contribution to relational wellbeing that would be missed by a traditional cost-benefit assessment. On the negative side, unjustified arrest and unfair distribution of benefits relate mainly to the subjective dimension of wellbeing and highlight the importance of fairness/equity/justice as an issue.

Importantly, most of the positive and negative social impacts are more a function of PA governance and management activities than properties of the natural assets of the PA. Furthermore, it seems likely that some improvements in social impact could be made with little or no trade-off with conservation outcomes – notably on the negative side where there are certainly opportunities at many PAs to reduce transaction costs, improve the way law enforcement is conducted, reduce human-wildlife conflict and/or more fairly distribute existing benefits – all of which are potential win-wins. On the other hand, some measures to increase positive impacts or reduce negative impacts to local people may in fact negatively affect conservation outcomes, at least in the shorter term, ie there is a trade-off.

Table 3. Categories of positive and negative social impacts from four protected areas in Africa

POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS
Ecosystem service benefits	Reduced/lost access to resources
Improved security (from PA law enforcement)	Unjustified arrest
PA-supported development projects	Unfair distribution of benefits
PA-related employment	Transaction and management costs
Reduced human-wildlife conflict (resulting from interventions by PA management)	Human-wildlife conflict

4.4 Social impact assessment

A widely used definition suggests that social impact assessment is *" the process of analysing and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans, projects)".*[40]

Like environmental impact assessment, social impact assessment was developed in the late 1960s for predicting the impacts of proposed projects, but is now increasingly used for assessing on-going development and conservation initiatives, and at scales from a site-based project to national level.

In a PA context, social assessment essentially has the same objectives as governance assessment – as a health check, a diagnostic, and for monitoring – to reduce negative impacts and increase and/or more equitably share positive impacts.

A major difference from governance assessment is that there are many other factors that affect each of the three dimensions of human wellbeing beyond factors related to a PA, and working out what is caused by the PA versus other factors can be a major challenge – the challenge of attribution. Two approaches to addressing the contribution/attribution problem are illustrated in Figure 5 which shows the analytical framework for IIED's SAPA methodology.

The traditional 'impact evaluation' approach is to focus on the ultimate impact (the middle arrow in Figure 5) and evaluate the contribution of different factors, often using a 'quasi-experimental research design'.[45] In simple terms, this means comparing communities affected by a PA with unaffected but similar 'control' communities, ideally over a period of time. Finding appropriate control communities, repeating data collection over time, and the large sample size needed to achieve statistical rigour makes this approach technically complex and costly. There are many factors that can affect human wellbeing more than PA-related factors (eg erratic weather patterns, changes in market prices, insecurity)
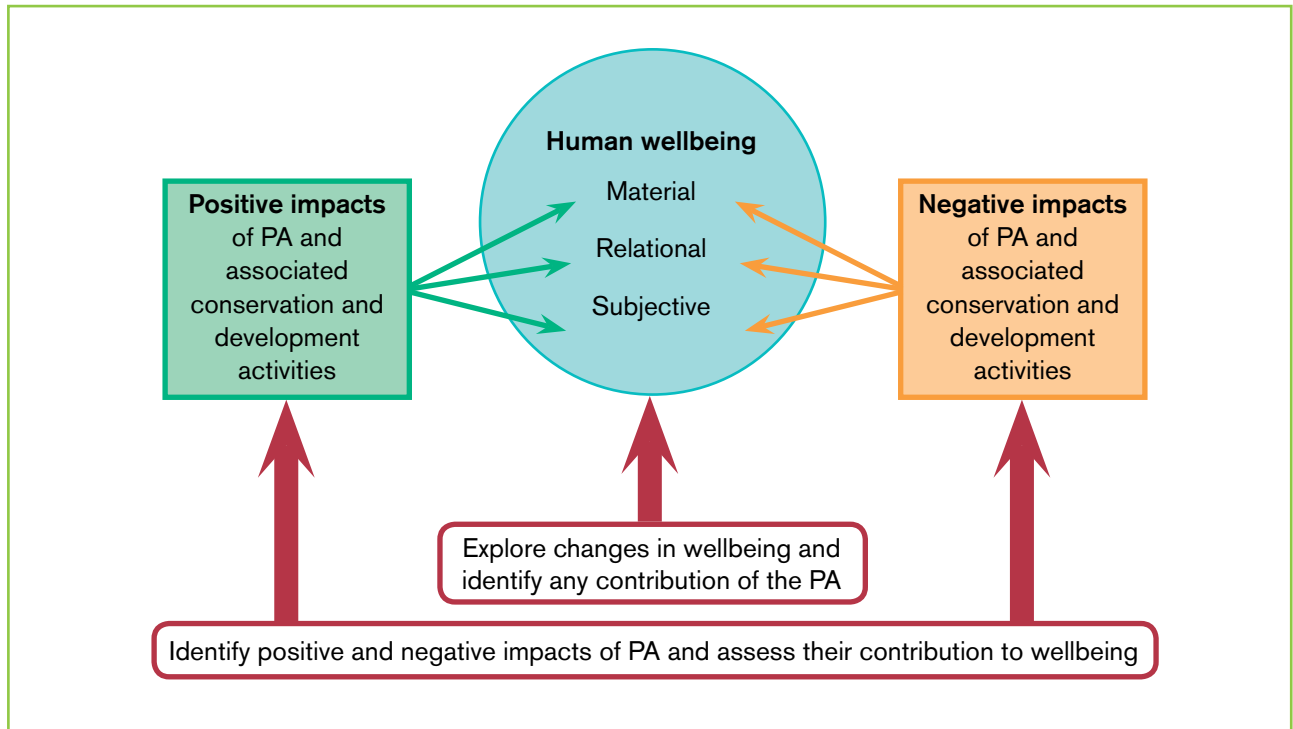
and these can easily 'drown out' the PA impacts. This and other concerns form part of a growing critique of traditional impact evaluation approaches.[46]

A social impact assessment approach has a different entry point – identifying positive and negative social impacts, short-listing impacts that are more significant based on an initial assessment of the contribution of each to wellbeing (a process called scoping), and then an in-depth assessment of the more significant impacts. IIED's SAPA methodology uses both approaches (all three arrows).

Social assessment methods are often relatively simple and inexpensive and therefore feasible to do and to replicate at other sites. A common criticism is that they rely on peoples' perceptions/opinions rather than objective measurements[47] but it can be argued that what people feel very much influences their behaviour towards the PA (helping PA management or engaging in illegal activities) and so is important in its own right.[48,49,50] A second criticism is that it is hard to decipher what impacts are due to the PA versus other factors because there is no comparison with communities not affected by the PA. However, it can be argued that a good way to find out what is due to a PA, and what isn't, is to simply to ask the people themselves what they think. In technical terms this is called a 'reflexive comparison'. Further advantages of social assessment methodologies are that they can detect non-material impacts that are difficult to quantify and often overlooked by the more quantitative impact evaluation methods. On the other hand, the more qualitative nature of social assessment and its reliance on perceptions that are context-specific means that aggregating results from several PA sites may give misleading results.

As with governance assessment, social assessment should cover not only the social impacts related to the PA itself, but also any other conservation and development activities that are related to the PA. Although such activities may be of limited duration (eg NGO projects), for the time that they exist they

Figure 5. IIED's Social Assessment for Protected Areas (SAPA) analytical framework

Source: Franks, P and Small, R (2016)[41]

can make substantial contributions to human wellbeing which may in turn contribute to conservation.

IIED started its work on PA social assessment with a review of 20 methodologies, methods and tools for assessing the social impacts of conservation, natural resource management and development initiatives.[51] Ten had been used with PAs and the remainder hadn't, but seemed to have potential. From this review four key elements emerged:

1. **Principles:** The overarching principle for assessment of the impacts of a PAs on human wellbeing can be simply stated as 'do good where possible, and do not cause harm'.

2. **Assessment questions:** To expand the structure of an assessment beyond one principle, some methodologies define sub-principles or assessment questions (similar to research questions). For example, put simply, the IIED SAPA methodology[41] asks:

   • What is the **overall contribution to human wellbeing** of the PA and related conservation and development activities?
   • What are the more significant **negative impacts** of the PA and related conservation and development activities?

   • What are the more significant **positive impacts** of the PA and related conservation and development activities?

3. **An assessment process** with a number of phases similar to those of governance assessment.

4. **Methods and tools** that are used in each phase of the process, including data gathering methods such as focus groups, key informant interviews and surveys.

A recent review of 90 social impact studies of PAs[47] found nearly a quarter used impact evaluation methodologies while the remainder used social assessment methodologies, mostly based on perceptions. In terms of methods, 76 per cent used surveys, 38 per cent used key informant interviews and 31 per cent used focus group discussions. Most methodologies had two key weaknesses: a) material aspects of wellbeing were overwhelmingly dominant, and b) a general tendency to base sampling on households rather than individuals. While sampling at the household level may work for material wellbeing, it does not work well for relational and subjective wellbeing which are mainly experienced at an individual level.

Interrelationship of key concepts

This section explores the interrelationship of the key concepts discussed in previous sections in a protected area context, why what looks like equitable governance can sometimes fail to deliver, options for assessing equity, and how a shift in emphasis in the social dimension of conservation from livelihood improvement to equity might better serve almost everyone's interests.

5

5.1 How protected areas contribute to human wellbeing

From work discussed here and in other papers, IIED has developed a conceptual framework for how PAs contribute to human wellbeing (shown in Figure 7). This is based on the Nature's Contributions to People conceptual framework that has been developed by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)[52,53] (see Figure 6 below).
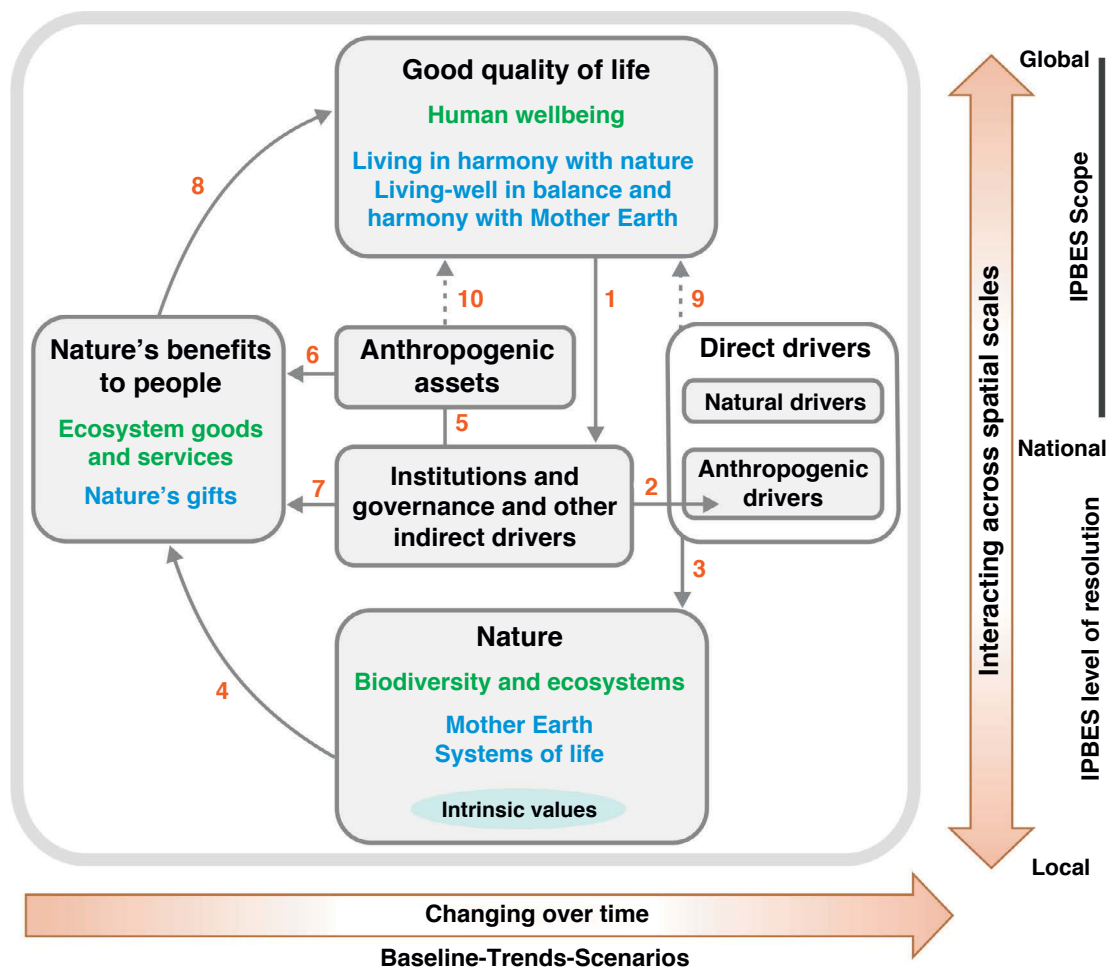
The IPBES framework represents several significant changes from the MEA thinking, in particular:

- Framing key concepts not only in terms of 'western science' but also in terms of other knowledge systems,

- Treating culture and cultural values as a cross cutting issue rather than a specific ecosystem service, and

- Recognising that nature's contributions to people may be negative as well as positive.

Arrow number four in the IPBES framework relates to the relationship between nature and nature's contribution to people (benefits and costs/social impacts). In a PA context, the contribution of nature to people is not just a product of ecosystem structure, processes and function – it is also very much influenced by PA management actions. Notably, this includes a) actions that control access to specific benefits that have supply constraints (eg Non-Timber Forest Products, or funds for development projects that depend on tourism revenue), and b) actions that aim to maintain ecosystem health without which almost all benefits will decline over time.

Our conceptual framework is essentially the IPBES framework at a site level with some further elaboration of the two boxes in the middle (see Figure 6). To the 'anthropogenic assets' box we have added PA management, both of which may generate positive and negative social impacts at a local level, for example the roads within and around a PA may be important to local people for access to markets and health centres, but may also give greater access to people from further away ('outsiders') who may compete with local people

Figure 6. The IPBES conceptual framework for nature's contribution to people

Reproduced from Díaz, S et al. (2015)[52]

for a share of (legal and illegal) benefits. Furthermore, there may be NGOs and/or private sector partners using their human, physical and financial assets to support community development projects.

The institutions/governance/indirect drivers box has been stretched so that the institutions and other indirect drivers are outside the PA, while much (but not all) governance remains within. Note that the IPBES framework uses the term 'institutions' in the political economy sense of formal and informal norms of society rather than organisations.[54] In this sense, indirect drivers relevant to PA conservation include historical legacies, powerful narratives, rents/incentives, and a large category of structural factors including climate, economic growth, population dynamics and the status of poverty and equity in the society of the country.

Like the IPBES framework, our framework also has a direct drivers box for factors that have a direct positive or negative affect on nature – the positive drivers may be opportunities and the negative drivers are commonly called pressures or threats in PA planning. These include threats caused by people, and also natural threats such as climate change which is both a direct and indirect driver.

Both frameworks conceptualise the contribution of nature/a PA to human wellbeing at a number of levels from local to global, through social impacts that are
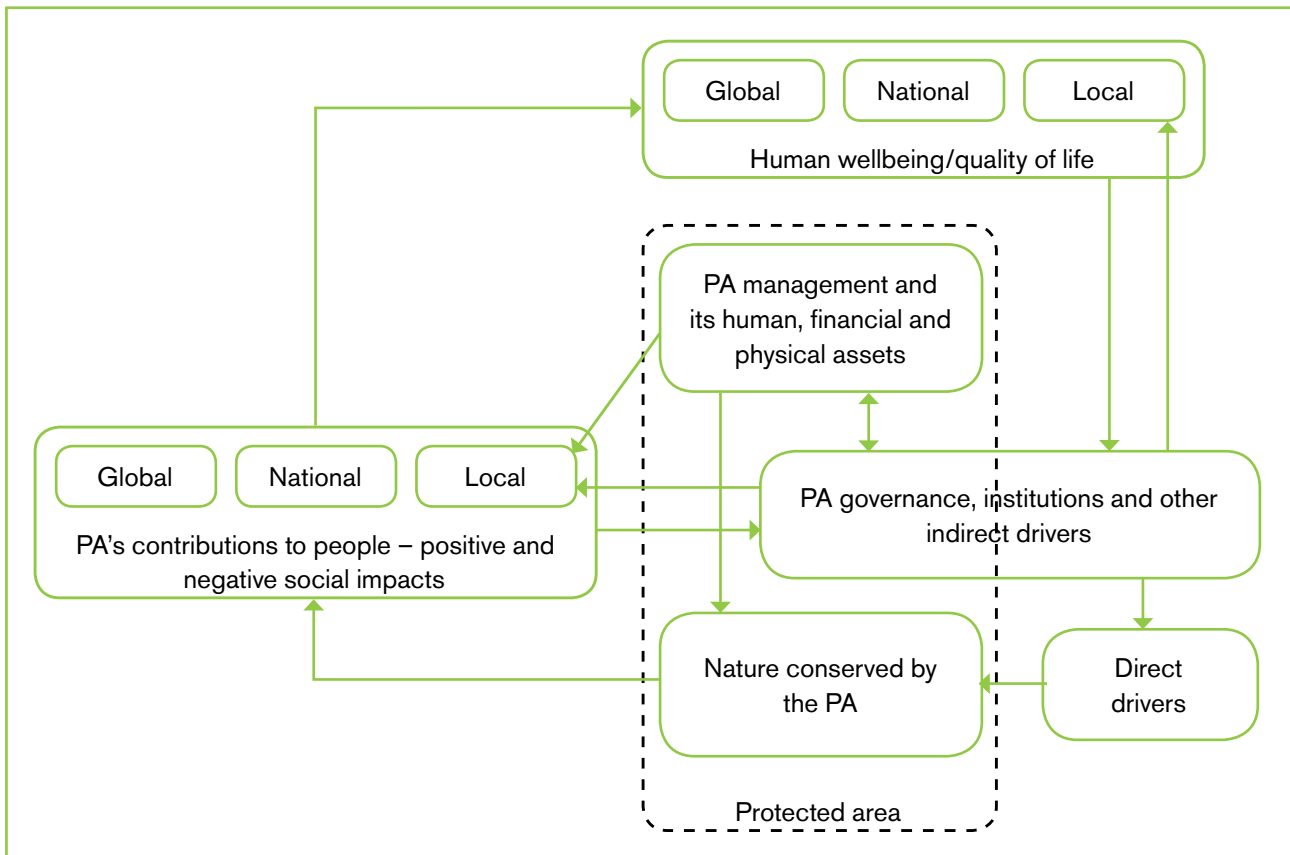
experienced at each of these levels. We have unpacked this into three levels as some of the relationships most relevant to PAs are primarily local level, and assessments usually focus on the PA/local level.

While it is PA management actions that regulate and sustain the supply of benefits and mitigate costs, what the actions are, who implements them, the approach to implementation, and what happens when things go wrong is determined by governance. Although the boundary between management and governance may vary from one organisation to another, it is important that the two functions are separated. With PAs that are part of a larger system, some aspects of governance will be at system level, and this is why part of governance is beyond the PA boundary.

Each of the green arrows in our framework represents an important interaction between key concepts. But the theories underpinning these relationships are far from proven, and most are affected by the external context. These theories should be regarded as assumptions that need to be carefully watched, both for problems in the theory and changes in external context. Any such problems may indicate a need for adjustments to management and/or governance.

The green arrow between governance and PA's contribution to people at local level, for example, represents how aspects of recognition and procedural

Figure 7. IIED's proposed conceptual framework for a PA's contribution to wellbeing/quality of life

equity can be a positive social impact (eg recognising rights of traditional resources users). In the case of governance strengthening activities that are only loosely associated with the PA (eg women's empowerment) then there may actually be a direct relationship between governance and wellbeing as shown. However, as with all social impacts, how these impacts actually affect human being will vary with the context. The IPBES framework uses the term 'modulation' to describe how a relationship between two variables may be affected by a third variable such as an aspect of the external context – in other words, how a social impact actually affects wellbeing is modulated by contextual factors.

In our framework, as in the IPBES framework, there are many feedback loops and just the most important are shown, notably how experience and learning from management, social impacts and changes in human wellbeing influence governance and indirect drivers beyond the scope of PA governance. Influence of this kind is often political in nature.

5.2 Why apparently-equitable governance can fail to deliver

Experience from conservation and related fields, such as Payments for Ecosystem Services, demonstrates that what looks like equitable governance often fails to deliver equitable distribution of costs and benefits (social impacts). Even where distribution seems equitable (eg where 'elite capture' of benefits is avoided, and there are effective measures to mitigate human-wildlife conflict) this may not lead to the desired social outcomes (eg poverty reduction). Such disconnects may occur for a variety of reasons, including:

1. What looked like reasonably equitable governance (eg inclusive participation, and strong transparency) was actually not so because weak governance assessment only scratched the surface or was manipulated by some individuals/groups.

2. Decisions made through an equitable process may not be equitably implemented, ie there is a disconnect between governance and management. Strong accountability should avoid this, but efforts to strengthen accountability often lag behind efforts to strengthen participation.

3. Benefits that were equitably allocated didn't deliver the expected wellbeing. This is often because poor understanding of contextual factors led to flawed

assumptions on how benefits flow. For example, a project associated with Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park gave tree seedlings to households to provide women with an alternative source of firewood, but most were instead used by men to grow building poles for sale.[55]

4. Some activities designed to strengthen governance bring unexpected negative social impacts. For example, unanticipated transaction costs can undermine the value of benefits. A common situation is where efforts to increase poor people's participation in meetings mean they lose income because they are kept from their work.

5. Decision makers have different understandings of equity, so the social impacts of decisions are not what some actors thought they agreed to. This is common with the concept of pro-poor conservation, which can mean very different things to different people.[56]

On the positive side, some benefits can have a far greater impact on wellbeing than expected. For example, a scheme in Zambia used money from tourism to support local women to start a business producing sanitary pads for school girls. The women got a source of income and the girls avoided missing school during their periods, making the experience very empowering all round.[44] But some people were greatly surprised when this intervention topped the list of benefits from the PA.

5.3 Equity assessment combines elements of governance and social assessment

Efforts to assess equity in PA conservation should be based on governance assessment and, where possible, include an element of social assessment to check whether apparent strengths or weaknesses in governance are indeed reflected in social impacts (see Figure 7). Social assessment serves to check whether the apparent strengths or weaknesses in governance are indeed leading to the expected social impacts. This provides triangulation and, where there are discrepancies, should reveal disconnects, flawed assumptions unexpected costs and misunderstandings, all of which may have implications for governance. Furthermore, social assessment can show how good governance itself directly contributes to wellbeing

(eg through recognition, empowerment), thereby strengthening the case for types of PA governance that really empower Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
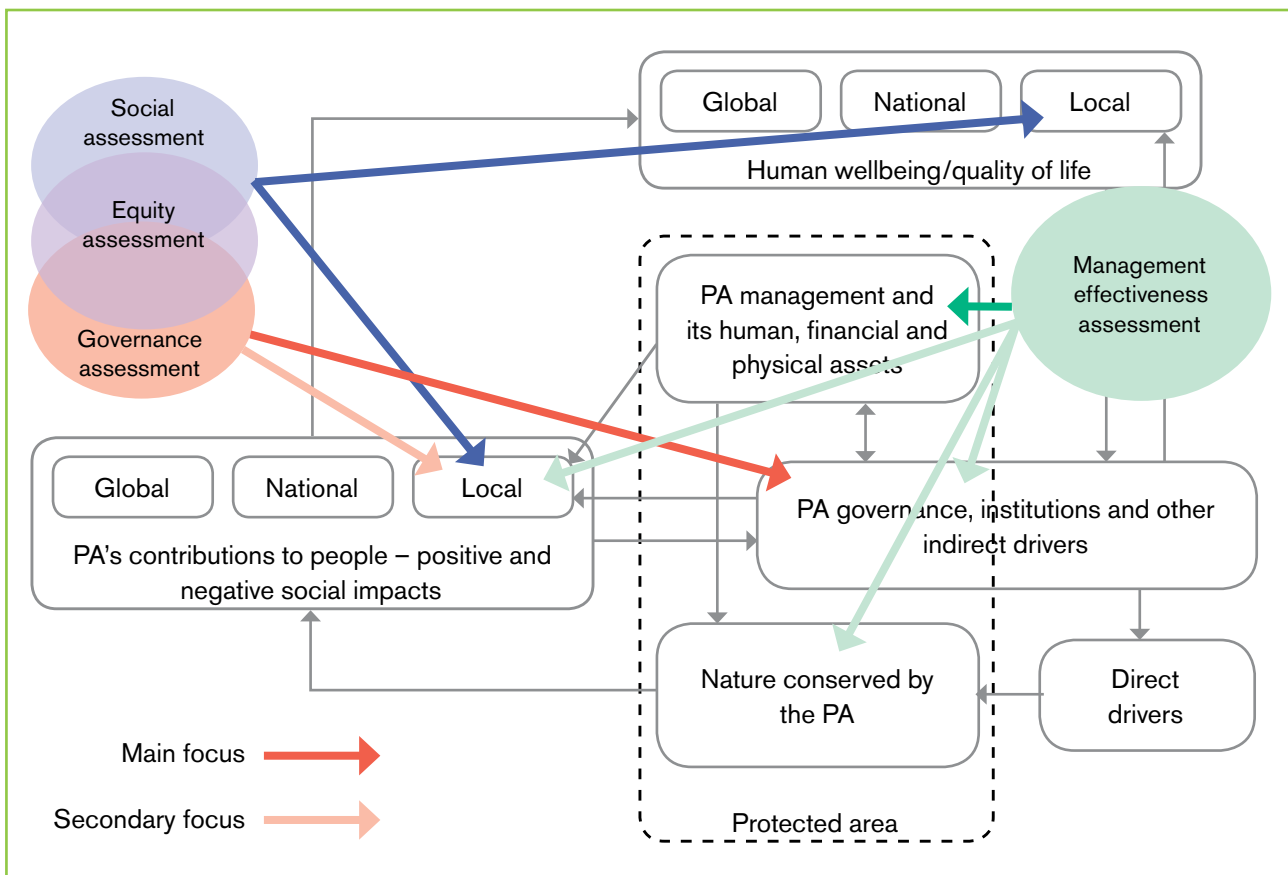
One of the most important issues in governance and social assessment, and therefore equity assessment, is social differentiation – meaning being able to recognise the different perspectives of different social groups on specific issues. Key parameters of social differentiation include gender, wellbeing/poverty status, and factors that may identify groups vulnerable to social impacts or exclusion. Assessments that aggregate (average) results across a community run a serious risk that positive results for certain social groups will mask negative results for other groups.

5.4 Equity and effectiveness assessments

The focus of PA management effectiveness (PAME) assessments is shown below in Figure 8. Dotted arrows reflect the fact that most PAME assessment methodologies provide only superficial coverage of governance and social impacts.[25]

Both equity and effectiveness relate to activities, outputs and outcomes associated with a PA, but there is an important difference. Equity performance is assessed relative to good practice principles (see Table 2), while effectiveness is assessed against expected outcomes, planned objectives and activities, and relative to issues of context, planning and inputs. These issues, called criteria in PAME assessments, are equivalent to our equity themes (see Section 2.2 and Annex 1).

Figure 8. Focus of site-level governance, social impact and management effectiveness assessments

The way forward on equity and protected areas

To assess equity, a mix of social and governance assessments is needed, and this section outlines several ways to achieve this. Having reviewed practical options for equity assessment, we make the case that investments in communities within and around PAs could deliver more in terms of human wellbeing and poverty alleviation, and better conservation, if focused on enhancing equity rather than directly focusing on improving livelihoods.

6

6.1 Practical options for equity assessment

The inclusion of 'equitable management' in Aichi Target 11 has led to growing interest in methodologies and tools to assess equity in PA management. As we have explained, this is mainly a function of PA governance, but a robust equity assessment also needs some elements of social assessment. While well-resourced PAs may be able to do in depth social and governance assessments at more or less the same time this may not be realistic for many PAs, including many PAs in developing countries. We propose four options for equity assessment starting with the simplest/lowest cost option:

1. **Universal equity scorecard**. A light universal equity assessment tool similar to PAME assessment tools. One such, based on our equity framework, is under development.[57] It is subject to the same limitations as PAME: universal indicators may not in fact be universally applicable; self-assessment bias is likely; comparison of PAs is not valid where the context and assessors are different; and coverage of issues will be limited. But universal scorecard approaches have value, especially where there is a desire to aggregate results at national and global levels, and, despite the limitations with their use at a site level, they may still prove a good starting point.

2. **Site specific equity scorecard**. A light site-specific equity assessment methodology and tool. The methodology will include a process for developing the indicators that are to be included in the assessment tool (ie the scorecard). This overcomes the indicator applicability challenge of a universal tool. The other benefit of this approach is that the scorecard can give more comprehensive coverage to key issues that are particularly relevant to the site, and site-specific indicators should give more accurate and reliable results. IIED is currently developing a process for producing a site-specific scorecard that covers both governance and equity.

3. **In depth social assessment plus equity scorecard.** This option will reinforce use of a scorecard with a comprehensive social assessment methodology that can explore underlying causes of challenges that have visible social impacts, and, depending on the methodology, may also capture unanticipated but important issues.

4. **In depth governance assessment plus equity scorecard.** This option will be the most comprehensive form of equity assessment, including in depth exploration of underlying causes and potential solutions. However, this is only viable with PAs that are willing and able to undertake the sensitive process of in depth governance assessment.

The choice depends not only on available resources, but also on the assessment's objectives – health check, diagnostic and/or monitoring (ie tracking progress over time). Like PAME, options 1 or 2 will be useful for basic health checking and for monitoring, provided that a wide enough range of stakeholders participate to reduce the risk of bias. However, options 1 and 2 will tell you little about the underlying causes of a challenge and how to address it. Furthermore, the scope of the assessment is predefined by the choice of indicators with the risk of missing issues that may be unanticipated or not sufficiently visible to be detected with a scorecard. There will always be trade-offs between the sensitivity, accuracy and scope of an assessment methodology/ tool and the feasibility in terms of cost and complexity.

6.2 From livelihoods to equity?

In an earlier paper[41], and more recent work by one of the authors[9], we suggest that the efforts of PA agencies, NGOs and private sector actors to invest in PA-adjacent communities in support of PA conservation could be more effective in conservation terms, and in some cases in terms of human wellbeing, if focused on enhancing equity rather than focusing directly on improving livelihoods. This view is supported by bitter experience of the many integrated conservation and development projects that very often failed to deliver significant conservation impact and even, in many cases, failed to deliver much impact on wellbeing. In contrast, there is growing evidence that human behaviour that is damaging to conservation can be motivated by a sense of in-equity/injustice[28,58] as much as by poverty and/or opportunism, and of how this sense of injustice often relates as much to recognition and procedure as to distribution.[43,59]

While solid evidence is lacking, there are plenty of anecdotes of how community members conduct illegal activities as 'revenge' for what they feel is an

injustice.[9] Therefore, it seems logical to focus on addressing the causes of this sense of injustice and, on the positive side, benefits that reward efforts to support conservation, rather than simply trying to improve livelihoods. Essentially this is saying that, in a situation of limited resources, you may get more conservation bang for the buck by focusing on equity rather directly focusing on livelihoods. Furthermore, in situations where ecosystem services from the PA make a major contribution to wellbeing, and where this is an important element of the PAs conservation goals, it can be argued – at least from theory – that an equity focus may ultimately deliver more for wellbeing than a livelihoods focused approach. Although this represents a major paradigm shift we believe that this will be best achieved in most cases (situations of serious conflict being an exception) through a gradual, ongoing process of learning and adaptive management and governance rather than abrupt change. This partly reflects the importance of building trust and confidence in an approach that is likely to be more challenging for all concerned, but ultimately more successful.

Annex 1

A framework of equity principles for PA conservation

EQUITY PRINCIPLES	KEY THEMES OF EACH EQUITY PRINCIPLE
Recognition	
1. Recognition and respect for human rights under international and national law	Key themes include: a) the awareness and capacity of rightsholders to claim their rights, b) the duty of all actors to take measures to respect (ie not violate) rights, c) the duty of state actors to protect and fulfil rights, d) the verification and documentation of any rights violations, and e) remedies for any rights violations. The scope of rights includes all human rights affirmed in global and regional human rights treaties and conventions, and rights defined in a country's own legal framework.
2. Recognition and respect for statutory and customary rights to land and resources	Key themes include: a) the awareness and capacity of rightsholders to claim their rights, b) the duty of all actors to take measures to respect (ie not violate) rights, c) the duty of state actors to protect and fulfil rights, d) the verification and documentation of any rights violations, and e) remedies for any rights violations. The scope of rights includes any statutory and customary rights to own and/or use areas of land and water and other natural resources within.
3. Recognition and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, including FPIC and self-determination	This principle gives particular attention to the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in accordance with the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Key themes include: a) the awareness and capacity of rightsholders to claim their rights, b) the duty of all actors to take measures to respect (ie not violate) rights, c) the duty of state actors to protect and fulfil rights, d) the verification and documentation of any rights violations, and e) remedies for any rights violations. FPIC stands for Free, Prior and Informed Consent. It is a right of indigenous peoples, and best practice with local communities. Key themes for FPIC include: a) processes being conducted in accordance with the peoples' values and customs and with representatives of their own choosing, b) adequate time for understanding, analysis and decision-making before activities commence, c) whether information provided is adequate, objective, accurate, and accessible, and d) whether consent is genuinely collective and freely given without coercion.
4. Recognition and respect for all relevant actors and their diverse interests, capacities and influence	Key themes include: a) acknowledging the distinct rights, interests and influence of all relevant actors (recognition), and b) having a good opinion of all relevant actors and their rights, interests, capacities, influence (respect). Note the word 'respect' in this principle has the normal English meaning rather than the legal meaning of principles 1-3. Relevant actors include all stakeholders, including rightsholders, who have interests in the PA and associated conservation and development activities, whether or not they have any influence. Relevant actors may also include some with negative interests.
5. Recognition and respect for different identities, cultures knowledge systems, values and institutions	Key themes include: a) acknowledging the identities, cultures, knowledge systems, values, and institutions of all relevant actors (recognition), and b) having a good opinion of these different identities, knowledge systems, values and institutions (respect). Note the word 'respect' in this principle has the normal English meaning rather than the legal meaning of principles 1-3. Institution is used in the sense of cultural institution such as an important cultural practice or belief, as well as organisation.
For all principles, particular attention should be given to the interests and rights of women and other social groups who have traditionally had little or no involvement in PA governance matters.	

EQUITY PRINCIPLES	KEY THEMES OF EACH EQUITY PRINCIPLE
Procedure	
6. Full and effective participation of all relevant actors in decision-making	Key themes include (in a logical sequence): a) structures and processes through which relevant actors can participate in decision-making, b) extent of dialogue and consensus-based decision-making, c) selection and effectiveness of actors' representatives, d) capacity of actors to effectively participate, e) contribution that actors make in decision-making processes, and lastly f) influence that these contributions have on decisions. 'Full' indicates that participation is respectful of community customs, inclusive and iterative (ie not just a one-off). 'Effective' means participants have influence on decision-making outcomes although not necessarily in every case. This principle is understood as including good faith consultation – a two-way exchange of views but where the lead authority has the right to decide whether a participants' views will be taken into account and influence the outcome. At a given PA, the level of participation in decision-making is dependent on the PA's governance type, but equity implies at least some level of meaningful consultation, ie pure government, pure private or pure community governance may only be equitable if there are genuinely no other actors with a legitimate interest in the PA.
7. Transparency supported by timely access to relevant information in appropriate forms	Key themes include (in a logical sequence): a) the willingness of actors to share all relevant information, b) gathering of specific information needed for transparency, c) access to relevant information by active dissemination and on request, and how decisions are made on who has access to what, d) timeliness of information, and e) the relevance and accuracy of information (ie information quality). Transparency overlaps to some extent with accountability but also covers information issues beyond those related to accountability. Within the overlap, the scope of gathering and dissemination of information focuses on the responsibilities of different actors (who is supposed to do what) and whether/how these responsibilities are fulfilled. 'Timeliness' refers to receiving information in time for it to be effectively used. Information provision may be proactive or reactive (ie in response to a specific request).
8. Accountability for fulfilling responsibilities, and other actions and inactions	Key themes include (in a logical sequence): a) clear definition and communication of the responsibilities and duties of different actors (who is supposed to do what), b) gathering and disseminating information on whether/how these responsibilities/duties have been fulfilled, c) structures and processes used to hold people to account, d) performance of actors and any rewards/sanctions, e) allocation and use of financial resources (including malpractice), and f) capacity of actors to hold those responsible to account. A duty is a responsibility that is defined in law in relation to a specific right. For every right, one or more duty bearers should be identified. Primary duties to protect, respect and fulfil rights are held by the state, while the duty to respect rights may also be held by private sector and civil society actors. Responsibilities and duties may be derived from a variety of instruments including policy, strategy, and cultural norms, as well as law. Accountability applies to both organisation and individuals that have specific responsibilities and may be upward, downward and in some cases horizontal. Accountability also applies to inaction (failure to act) as well as the performance of actions.
9. Access to justice, including an effective dispute-resolution process and procedures for seeking redress	Key themes include: a) structures and processes (statutory and customary) used for dispute resolution, b) awareness of dispute resolution processes and how to access them, c) capacity to effectively use these processes, and d) the degree of success or failure of efforts to resolve disputes and whether any redress is just and fair. Access to justice includes both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, as well as non-state remedies, where applicable (eg customary arrangements of IPs and local communities). This includes use of the national legal system and extends also to any existing PA dispute resolution mechanism(s). The scope of disputes may include the ongoing impacts of historical injustice going back many years as well as more recent events.
For all principles, particular attention should be given to the interests and rights of women and other social groups who have traditionally had little or no involvement in PA governance matters.	

EQUITY PRINCIPLES	KEY THEMES OF EACH EQUITY PRINCIPLE
Distribution	
10. Identification and assessment of the distribution and impacts of costs, benefits and risks	Key themes include: a) types of benefits, costs and risks (social impacts) and actors affected, b) process and methods used for the assessment, c) social differentiation in assessing impacts at community/household level, and d) how the contribution of a PA to wellbeing versus other non-PA related factors is determined.
	In terms of the range of actors who experience benefits, costs and risks, the scope of an assessment will vary according to the scope of distributive equity considerations – a narrow focus on impacts of local communities or a broader focus that also includes benefits, costs and risks accruing to other actors (eg private sector investors). The terms 'cost' and 'benefit' are used in the broadest sense to include factors that have monetary value and those that do not. A cost/benefit/risk assessment becomes a 'social assessment' where it assesses the impact of costs/ benefits/risks on human wellbeing. Assessments may be done before an initiative starts (ex-ante assessment) or while an initiative is ongoing.
11. Effective measures to mitigate negative impacts on indigenous peoples and local communities	Key themes include: a) clear description of responsibilities (who is supposed to do what), b) how, and by whom, mitigation measures were designed, c) gathering of information on negative impacts and sharing this with the responsible actors, d) whether/how the responsible actors respond, and e) the actual effectiveness of mitigation measures in avoiding/reducing negative social impacts.
	Negative social impacts include impacts that affect any aspect of human wellbeing, whether, or not, the impact has a monetary value. They are 'costs' in the broadest sense of this term, including opportunity costs. Mitigation of negative social impacts starts with measures to avoid negative impacts (as far as possible), then measures to minimise any remaining impacts, and lastly measures to remedy any residual impacts which may include compensation, restitution, restoration etc.
12. Benefits equitably shared among relevant actors based on one or more targeting options: a) Equally between relevant actors b) According to contribution to conservation c) According to costs incurred d) According to rights, past and present e) According to the priorities of the poorest	Key themes include: a) benefit sharing strategy, including targeting options, and how it was developed and agreed, b) how and by whom decisions on benefit allocation are made, c) availability of information on benefit sharing policy and strategy, and its implementation, d) the integrity of the process, including avoidance of elite capture, nepotism and corruption, e) who actually received what benefits (quantity and quality), and f) timeliness of the receipt of benefits.
	Benefit sharing refers to the process and outcome of a mechanism designed to allocate certain benefits to certain actors. The term 'benefit' is used in the broadest sense to include factors that have monetary value and those that do not. The scope of benefits includes both benefits derived directly from the resources of a PA (eg NTFPs) and indirect benefits arising from an enterprise or project that is associated with the PA (eg employment, development projects funded from tourism revenue).
	There is no standard recipe for equitable allocation of benefits. This will be context-specific and should be subject to negotiation between the relevant actors based on one, or a weighted combination of, the five targeting options. Where the strategy is defined in national policy there often remains some room for interpretation at site level.

For all principles, particular attention should be given to the interests and rights of women and other social groups who have traditionally had little or no involvement in PA governance matters.

Notes

1. Birdlife International (2011) *An Introduction to Conservation and Human Rights for BirdLife Partners,* Birdlife International, Cambridge, UK.

2. Jonas H, Makagon J and Roe D (2016) Conservation standards: From rights to responsibilities. *IIED Discussion Paper.* International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

3. Borrini-Feyerabend G, Dudley N, Jaeger T, *et al.* (2013) Governance of Protected Areas: From understanding to action. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 20, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xvi + 124pp.

4. UNEP-WCMC Protected Planet Website. Equity and Protected Areas. Accessed Online January 2018: https://www.protectedplanet.net/c/equity/assessing-equity

5. OECD (2010) Evaluating Development Cooperation – Summary of key norms and standards. Second Edition. *OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation.*!

6. Franks P, Martin A and Schreckenberg K (2016) From livelihoods to equity for better protected area conservation. *IIED Briefing paper.* International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

7. Schreckenberg K, Franks P, Martin A, *et al.* (2016) Unpacking equity for protected area conservation. *Parks,* 22**,** 11–26.

8. Schneider H, Thomas D, Trevelyan R, *et al.* (2017) Integrating rights & social issues into conservation: A trainer's guide. Cambridge Conservation Initiative, UK.

9. Martin A (2017) *Just Conservation: Biodiversity, Wellbeing and Sustainability*, Taylor & Francis.

10. Protected Areas and the CBD. Website accessed online January 2018: https://www.cbd.int/protected/pacbd/

11. Dudley N (Editor) (2008) Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 86pp. Area Guidelines Series No. 21, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xxpp.

12. Sikor T, Martin A, Fisher J, *et al.* (2014) Toward an empirical analysis of justice in ecosystem governance. *Conservation Letters,* 7**,** 524–532.

13. Mcdermott M, Mahanty S and Schreckenberg K (2013) Examining equity: a multidimensional framework for assessing equity in payments for ecosystem services. *Environmental Science & Policy,* 33**,** 416–427.

14. UN (2015) Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Accessed online January 2018: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

15. Pascual U, Phelps J, Garmendia E*, et al.* (2014) Social equity matters in payments for ecosystem services. *BioScience,* 64**,** 1027–1036.

16. Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) Article 1. Accessed online January 2018 (pdf): https://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf

17. Convention on Biological Diversity (2004) Programme of Work on Protected Areas. Available online: https://www.cbd.int/protected/pow/learnmore/intro/#element2

18. Dawson N, Martin A and Danielsen F (2017) Assessing equity in protected area governance: Approaches to promote just and effective conservation. *Conservation Letters*.

19. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) (2015) FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship. Accessed online January 2018: https://ic.fsc.org/en/what-is-fsc-certification/national-standards

20. See the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard's Website for more information. Accessed online January 2018: http://www.climate-standards.org/ccb-standards/

21. Franks P and Twinamatsiko M (2017) Lessons learnt from 20 years of revenue sharing at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. *IIED Research Report.* International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

22. Care (2012) Explanatory Note on CARE's Gender Focus. *CARE International Gender Network.*

23. Hockings M, Stolton S, Leverington F*, et al.* (2006) *Evaluating Effectiveness: A framework for assessing management effectiveness of protected areas*, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

24. Coad L, Leverington F, Knights K, *et al.* (2015) Measuring impact of protected area management interventions: current and future use of the Global Database of Protected Area Management Effectiveness. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B,* 370.

25. Burgess N, Danks F, Newham R, *et al.* (2014) Towards equitably managed protected areas: A review of synergies between Protected Area Management Effectiveness and Social or Governance Assessment. *IIED Discussion Paper.* International Institute for Environment and Development.

26. Law EA, Bennett NJ, Ives CD, *et al.* (2017) Equity trade-offs in conservation decision making. *Conservation Biology*.

27. Halpern BS, Klein CJ, Brown CJ, *et al.* (2013) Achieving the triple bottom line in the face of inherent trade-offs among social equity, economic return, and conservation. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,* 110**,** 6229–6234.

28. Oldekop J, Holmes G, Harris W, *et al.* (2016) A global assessment of the social and conservation outcomes of protected areas. *Conservation Biology,* 30**,** 133–141.

29. Graham J, Amos B and Plumptre T (2003) Principles for good governance in the 21st century. *Policy brief.* The Institute On Governance, Ottawa.

30. Worboys GL, Lockwood M, Kothari A, *et al.* (2015) *Protected area governance and management*, ANU Press, Canberra.

31. For example, Makoke, K. (2014) Anti-Poaching Operation Spreads Terror in Tanzania. Inter Press Service News Agency. Access online: http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/01/anti-poaching-operation-spread-terror-tanzania/.

32. For example, Moore P, Zhang X and Triraganon R (2011) *Natural Resource Governance: Trainer's Manual*, IUCN, RECOFTC and SNV.

33. UN (2011) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework. Accessed online January 2018 (pdf): http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf

34. For more information see The Conservation Initiative on Human Rights. Accessed online January 2018: http://www.thecihr.org/

35. Narayan-Parker D, Patel R, Schafft K, *et al.* (1999) *Voices of the poor: can anyone hear us?*, Poverty Group, PREM, World Bank Publications.

36. Coulthard S, McGregor JA and CS White (2018). Multiple dimensions of wellbeing in practice. Chapter 15 in: Schreckenberg, K., Mace, G., and Poudyal, M. (Eds.) *Ecosystem Services and Poverty Alleviation: Trade-offs and Governance*. Routledge.

37. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) Ecosystems and human well-being: Synthesis. Island, Washington, DC.

38. Gough I and Mcgregor JA (2007) *Wellbeing in developing countries: from theory to research*, Cambridge University Press.

39. White SC (2009) Analysing wellbeing: a framework for development practice. *Wellbeing in Developing Countried Paper 09/44.* University of Bath, UK.

40. Vanclay F and Esteves AM (2011) *New directions in social impact assessment: conceptual and methodological advances*, Edward Elgar Publishing.

41. Franks P and Small R (2016) Social Assessment for Protected Areas (SAPA). *Methodology Manual for SAPA Facilitators.* IIED, London.

42. Mariki SB (2016) Social impacts of protected areas on gender in West Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. Open Journal of Social Sciences, 4:220.

43. Chaudhary S, McGregor A, Houston D and N Chettri (2018) Environmental justice and ecosystem services: A disaggregated analysis of community access to forest benefits in Nepal. Ecosystem Services, 29: 99–115.

44. Franks P and Small R (2016) Understanding the social impact of protected areas: A community perspective. *IIED Research Report.* International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

45. Ferraro PJ and Pressey RL (2015) Measuring the difference made by conservation initiatives: protected areas and their environmental and social impacts. The Royal Society.

46. Stern E, Stame N, Mayne J, *et al.* (2012) Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluations. Report of a study commissioned by the Department for International Development, London, UK.

47. De Lange E, Woodhouse E and Milner-Gulland E (2016) Approaches used to evaluate the social impacts of protected areas. *Conservation Letters,* 9**,** 327–333.

48. Bennett NJ (2016) Using perceptions as evidence to improve conservation and environmental management. *Conservation Biology,* 30**,** 582–592.

49. Jones N, McGinlay J, and P Dimitrakopoulos (2017) Improving social impact assessment of protected areas: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 64: 1–7.

50. Rasolofoson RA, Nielsen MR and JP Jones (2018) The potential of the Global Person Generated Index for evaluating the perceived impacts of conservation interventions on subjective well-being. *World Development,* 105: 107–118.

51. Schrekenberg K (2010) *Social assessment of conservation initiatives: a review of rapid methodologies*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

52. Díaz S, Demissew S, Carabias J*, et al.* (2015) The IPBES Conceptual Framework–connecting nature and people. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability,* 14**,** 1–16.

53. Díaz S, Pascual U, Stenseke M, Martín-López B, *et al.* (2018). Assessing nature's contributions to people. *Science*, 359:270–272.

54. Poole A (2011) How-To Notes: Political Economy Assessments at Sector and Project Levels. *World Bank: Public Sector and Governance Group. Washington, DC*

55. Blomley T (2000) *Woodlots, Woodfuel and Wildlife: Lessons from Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

56. Roe D, Booker F and Franks P (2017) Climate-smart people-centred conservation: a synthesis report. *WWF and IIED Working together to support learning for conservation.* WWF, UK.

57. Zafra-Calvo N, Pascual U, Brockington D*, et al.* (2017) Towards an indicator system to assess equitable management in protected areas. *Biological Conservation,* 211**,** 134–141.

58. Harrison M, Baker J, Twinamatsiko M*, et al.* (2015) Profiling unauthorized natural resource users for better targeting of conservation interventions. *Conservation Biology,* 29**,** 1636–1646.

59. Dawson NM, Grogan K, Martin A, Mertz O, Pasgaard M and LV Rasmussen (2017) Environmental justice research shows the importance of social feedbacks in ecosystem service trade-offs. *Ecology and Society*, 22(3).

Equity – or fairness – is increasingly recognised as a crucial issue for conservation, yet it is poorly defined and understood. Focusing on protected areas (PAs), this paper aims to help managers and policy makers make conservation fairer, in the belief that fairer conservation is vital for effective conservation as well as human wellbeing. We explain the meaning of equity in a conservation context, and then examine how equity relates to the more widely understood concepts of rights, governance, social impact and human wellbeing. We suggest four ways to assess the equity of PA management and governance, of varying rigour, feasibility and credibility. We conclude that giving more attention to enhancing equity, rather than directly improving livelihoods, could lead to greater contributions of PAs to human wellbeing, as well as better conservation.

IIED is a policy and action research organisation. We promote sustainable development to improve livelihoods and protect the environments on which these livelihoods are built. We specialise in linking local priorities to global challenges. IIED is based in London and works in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, with some of the world's most vulnerable people. We work with them to strengthen their voice in the decision-making arenas that affect them – from village councils to international conventions.

iied

International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055
www.iied.org

Knowledge
Products