Facilitating forests of learning

Enabling an adaptive collaborative approach in community forest user groups

A guidebook

Cynthia McDougall, Bishnu Hari Pandit, Mani Ram Banjade, Krishna Prasad Paudel, Hemant Ojha, Manik Maharjan, Sushila Rana, Tara Bhattarai and Sushma Dangol

CIFOR

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This guidebook is based on the CIFOR-led research project titled Enhancing Livelihoods and Equity in Community Forestry in Nepal: The Role of Adaptive Collaborative Management (2004–2007). Funding for this research was generously provided by Canada's International Development Research Centre (www.idrc.ca). Complementary funding was provided by CIFOR, the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development in Nepal. The research organisation partners in this project were CIFOR, ForestAction, NewERA and the Environmental Resources Institute.

The research builds on the prior Asian Development Bank–funded research titled Planning for the Sustainability of Forests through Adaptive Co-Management (1999–2002). Complementary funding was provided at that stage by the CGIAR Systemwide Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis for Technology Development and Institutional Innovation. That project was a formal collaboration of CIFOR and Nepal's Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC), and was undertaken by research partners from CIFOR, ForestAction and NewERA, in collaboration with a MFSC staff member and a team of independent researchers based at NORMs.

This document also contributes to the International Union of Forest Research Organizations' (IUFRO) Task Force on Improving the Lives of People and Forests and to the ongoing Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM) Series (with related publications by CIFOR, RFF and Earthscan).

Printed by SMK Grafika Desa Putera

 The full reference for this publication is:
McDougall, C., Pandit, B.H., Banjade, M.R., Paudel, K.P. Ojha, H., Maharjan, M., Rana, S., Bhattarai, T. and Dangol, S. 2009 Facilitating forests of learning: Enabling an adaptive collaborative approach in community forestry user groups. CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia.

Artwork by Sharad Chandra Adhikari

Design and layout by Rifky

ISBN 978-979-14-1283-4

Published by
Center for International Forestry Research
Jalan CIFOR, Situ Gede
Bogor Barat, 16115, Indonesia
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Foreword

As of August 2008, community forestry programmes have been operating in all but one of the 75 districts of Nepal, with the involvement of approximately 39 percent of the country's households. Nepal's community forest user groups (CFUGs) have nearly 1.65 million household members; these CFUGs manage about 1.22 million ha of forest, or nearly 25 percent of the country's total forestland (DoF 2008).

Many of these community-managed forests need innovation in forest management systems and practices to meet local and national goals: innovation that enables diverse stakeholders to bridge the gaps that so often divide them, and innovation that creates a means of working together effectively. An adaptive collaborative approach is one such innovation. It aims to improve community forestry by increasing capacity for adapting, collaborating and learning within and across institutions. In this approach, all stakeholders—especially those who are often marginalised—are involved in decision-making processes, the creation and transfer of knowledge and skills, collaborative action, conflict management, and shared learning and reflection. The approach takes a holistic view of planning that considers the linkages between human and natural systems, and acknowledges and addresses uncertainties and gaps in knowledge. It engages users at *tole* (hamlet), community and meso (district) levels in identifying priority issues and options for action. Overall, the approach is pro-poor and inclusive, and it ensures that management plans are driven by local people, especially by women and the poor, based on their needs and priorities.

The authors have been able to draw on the experiences of a successful multiyear partnership-based research project to create this guidebook. This publication does not represent the 'end' of the adaptive collaborative approach initiative; however, through the book and the continuation of the approach by a multitude of actors at the community and meso levels, the approach is being applied and is continuing to evolve under various conditions and contexts.

I find the adaptive collaborative approach—and its practical summary in this book—very exciting, useful, and timely. Nepal is home to a myriad of national and international community forestry and development professionals who are working directly or indirectly to achieve the poverty reduction and conservation goals of the country. There are many challenges—including, in many cases, transforming the existing forestry and development (and research) professionals' paradigms and practices towards more inclusive and participatory democracy. I am sure that the adaptive collaborative approach is one of the ways to address these challenges and to move effectively and equitably towards our country's livelihood and environmental goals.

Dr Keshav Raj Kanel
Acting Secretary, Government of Nepal and
Former Director General, Department of Forests and Soil Conservation, Nepal

Acknowledgements

The lessons in this guidebook were generated through the direct engagement of community forest user groups (CFUGs) and actors at the range post and district levels in the research areas in Nepal. As CFUG members and facilitators, these actors developed, led and reflected on innovation in practices in each of the 11 CFUGs that engaged in the project's participatory action research:

- Manakamana, Andheribhajana and Pathivara CFUGs in Sankhuwasabha District;
- Bamdibhir and Deurali Bagedanda CFUGs in Kaski District;
- Khaniyubas Salleri and Handikharka CFUGs in Dhankuta District;
- Chautari CFUG in Morang District;
- Patle CFUG in Lalitpur District;
- Kajipauwa CFUG in Palpa District; and
- Chautari CFUG in Nawalparasi District.

It is through these actors' reflections and wisdom that these lessons have come to life, and we gratefully acknowledge their contributions. Similarly, we acknowledge the contributions of those project researchers—Kamal Bhandari, Chiranjeewee Khadka, Raj Kumar Pandey, Naya Sharma Paudel, Shibesh Regmi, Kalpana Sharma, Him Lal Shrestha, Narayan Sitaula, Netra Tumbahangphe, Hima Upreti and Laya Upreti—and the many research assistants and field researchers in both phases who are not directly co-authoring this work.

We also sincerely thank the wider circle of collaborators in this project, including the staff of the district forest offices, the Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN), and of the many bilateral projects and nongovernmental organisations in each of the seven project districts. The staff and volunteers contributed their time, energy and insights by developing and supporting the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach in the research sites, and then sharing the project lessons in many new CFUGs and forums beyond the project. Although the organisations and actors are too numerous to identify here, it is important to gratefully acknowledge that the lessons generated for this guidebook are directly linked to this web of collaboration.

Our sincere gratitude also goes to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for generously providing the grant to undertake the research in Nepal from 2004 to 2007 through the Enhancing Livelihoods and Equity in Nepal: The Role of Adaptive Collaborative Management project. It would not have been possible to create this guidebook without the Centre's support and input. We would especially like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Liz Fajber of IDRC and the support of Valthsala and Oliver Puginier. We also thank the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), LIBIRD Nepal, and CIFOR for their complementary funding contributions and support for the project. The Asian Development Bank also funded the first phase of this research (1999–2002), through the research project Planning

for the Sustainability of Forests through Adaptive Co-Management, on which these current findings build. Complementary funding was provided in that stage by the CG Systemwide Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis for Technology Development and Institutional Innovation.

Finally, we thank the many individuals who offered feedback, guidance and support to the project and on this guidebook. We gratefully acknowledge the advisory inputs to the research project on which this guidebook is based, including from the following colleagues: Bhola Bhattarai, Apsara Chapagain, Devendra Chapagain, Ram Chhetri, Bala Ram Kandel, Keshav Kanel, the late Damodar Parajuli, Bharat Pokharel and Mohan Wagley. We also recognise the guidance and collaboration of additional colleagues in the first phase of the research, including Steve Hunt, Nick Roche, K.B. Shrestha and Paul Sizeland. Amongst these, K.B. Shrestha, Keshav Kanel and Bharat Pokharel deserve additional recognition for their roles in linking the Nepal project to the international research group at various times.

The international advisers for the Nepal project, Ravi Prabhu and Doris Capistrano, each provided significant input, wisdom, support and leadership. Our thanks also go to the advisors for the international Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM) Project who contributed greatly: Robert Fisher, Peter Frost, Don Gilmour and Irene Guijt. Carol Colfer has provided extremely valuable ongoing encouragement and momentum. Rifky deserves thanks for the fine layout. Gideon Suharyanto, Catur Wahyu and Rahayu Koesnadi also worked tirelessly to see this through the layout and printing process. Sharad Chandra Adhikari produced unique artwork for it. Sheri Englund and Sally Atwater provided wise editorial guidance and Guy Manners contributed his time and gift for proofreading. Reviewers Kalpana Sharma and Him Lal Shrestha as well as two anonymous reviewers offered many important critiques and suggestions. And last but not least, our families made invaluable contributions: they believed in the research enough to support us in the long travels, the working weekends, and the late nights needed to complete our research and this guidebook.

Preface

In this guidebook, we share suggestions for how a team of facilitators and a community forest user group (CFUG) can catalyse and maintain an approach to governance and management that draws on and strengthens the CFUG's own adaptive and collaborative capacities. This approach fits within the Community Forestry framework and supports CFUGs in addressing two fundamental challenges: equity and the generation of livelihood benefits. In our experience, active and thoughtful facilitation of this approach can help CFUGs make their governance more inclusive, address tensions within the group, create more active groups with greater shared ownership of the community forest, and spark more livelihood generation activities, including for the poor.

The transition to such an approach is not an easy or straight path: it involves changing relations and perspectives. Groups and their facilitators may use the suggestions in this book to help guide them as they travel on their journey, but the choices and steps are ultimately their own. Similarly, the specific outcomes of the change will be unique in each context. But this is also a strength: just as every CFUG is unique and ever-changing, so its aspirations and its optimal strategies of governance and management will also be unique and ever-changing.

We sincerely hope that this guidebook will prove useful to you in your own community forestry journey.

PART I

Key concepts

Contents of Part I

INTRODUCTION

Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it.… You must be the change that you wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

This guidebook is intended to support community forest user groups (CFUGs) in making their governance and management processes, practices and outcomes more successful and equitable. As such it is part of the growing response to the challenges of equity and livelihoods, which have gained wide recognition over the past several years.

> Despite community forestry's contributions, achievements, and opportunities … there are many unresolved issues and challenges in community forestry, in all areas of capital as well as governance. Perhaps the most critical is in terms of livelihoods and the relatively weak generation of financial capital for the forest dependent poor.
>
> Kanel and Pokharel (2002)

The ideas in the guidebook have emerged from a 6-year research partnership that focused on creating governance and management practice innovations to strengthen equity and increase livelihood security in community forestry in Nepal (see McDougall *et al.* 2008).

Who is this guidebook for?

This guidebook is a resource for (English speaking) community forestry practitioners, e.g., staff of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), bilateral projects, district forest offices and networks. It will be of particular interest both to practitioners who work directly with or facilitate CFUGs and to 'team leaders' who shape community forestry facilitation and support programmes and coordinate, support and train facilitators. All users of the guidebook should be committed to being a force for positive change in the processes and outcomes of community forestry. Practitioners who would prefer to use a Nepali-language guidebook should refer to the sister publication from this research project, entitled *Sikai ko Brikshya* (Bhattarai *et al.* 2008).

Key shifts that facilitators may want to help spark through using this guidebook include CFUGs:

- becoming more inclusive and responsive to frequently marginalised people, e.g., women, the poor, *dalit* and some *janajati* people;[1]
- generating more sustainable income, employment and/or forest products;
- sharing opportunities and benefits in a way that is considered fair locally; and
- learning more actively about and being stewards of their forest systems.

In fact, in our experience it is effective to work on equity (which refers to social justice or fairness in decision making and distribution) in an integrated way with livelihood generation and sustainable forest management. See Annex A for a summary of the outcomes of the approach in the CFUGs involved in the research.

While this guidebook is oriented towards established CFUGs, the approach can also be readily adapted to CFUG formation and Operational Plan and Constitution development. Facilitators in other settings may want to draw on the concepts and ideas, adjusting them to their own contexts.

1 *Dalit* and *janajati* refer, respectively, to people considered to fall into so-called 'low caste' groups in the Hindu caste hierarchy and to the mostly indigenous people who are not considered to be subsumed within the Hindu caste system.

What is the focus of this guidebook?

To help practitioners meet equity and livelihood goals, this guidebook outlines concepts of, and steps supporting, an adaptive collaborative approach to community forestry governance and management. (In Nepali, this approach is sometimes known as *sikaimukhi samuhik byabasthapan paddhati,* or *SiSaBya.*) This approach does not replace the Community Forestry framework or guidelines (Box 1). Rather, it is a way of putting those guidelines into action while enhancing equity in decision making and benefit sharing. The approach opens the door to positive change by rooting decision making in shared learning, monitoring and adaptation. (An adaptive collaborative approach has no link to the concept or practice of 'collaborative forest management', a forestry model that is currently being trialled in some areas of Nepal's Terai forests.)

Box 1. How does the approach fit with the Community Forestry framework?

The adaptive collaborative approach fits within Nepal's Community Forestry Programme framework and guidelines. The guidelines divide community forestry development processes into five phases:

1. Identification
2. CFUG formation
3. Operational Plan preparation
4. Implementation
5. Review and revision of the Operational Plan.

The steps in this guidebook target 'Implementation', including both overall CFUG planning and the design of specific activities. Specific suggestions relating to the 'Revision of the Operational Plan' phase are found in Annex A. The suggestions can also be easily adapted for use in the 'Operational Plan phase').

How to use this guidebook

This guidebook is divided into three parts: concepts, suggested steps, and supporting information. In Part 1, following this introduction, the second chapter explores the concept and key components of an adaptive collaborative approach. The third chapter discusses facilitation of the approach in terms of teamwork, roles and likely challenges. Note that this is intended to build on established facilitation skills, not develop basic ones, so beginning facilitators may need to seek additional basic understanding and practical skills prior to implementing the approach.

Part 2 offers suggested stages and specific steps for making a transition to and institutionalising the approach in CFUG planning. In this section, we walk through the steps of using the approach: Stage One, laying the groundwork; Stage Two, sparking the transition in overall CFUG (annual) planning; Stage Three, applying the approach in designing and undertaking specific activities; and, Stage Four, continuing and institutionalising the approach.

At the end of the guidebook, in Part 3, the reader will find annexes with: supporting information regarding how the approach affects equity and livelihoods, facilitation, choosing a CFUG, and how to strengthen Operational Plan revision (renewal) by using the approach (Annex A); descriptions of experiential games and activities to

support learning and collaboration (Annex B); plus references and other resources (Annex C).

To use the guidebook effectively we suggest the following:

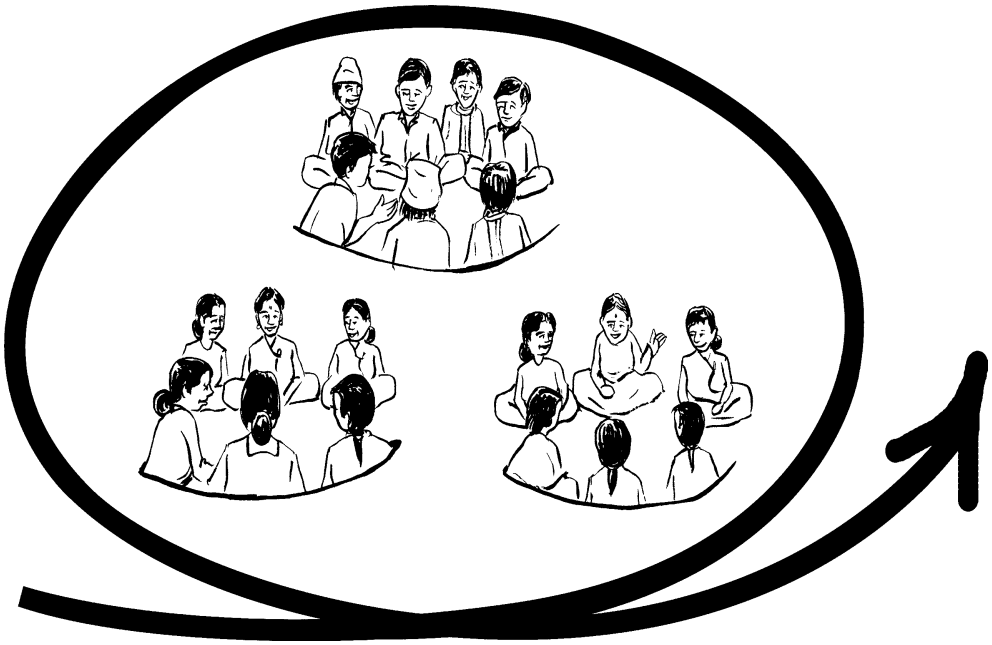
Focus on the concepts and principles, not tools. The success of an adaptive collaborative approach depends on understanding and applying the spirit of the approach, not just using the tools. Thus, both facilitators and forest users must consciously engage in active co-learning and collaboration, rather than simply carrying out suggested steps. Along this same line, the approach has no single 'right' set of steps or practices, but the nine principles (outlined in 'The Adaptive Collaborative Approach' chapter) can function as beacons to help guide the development of specific strategies, processes and arrangements to enhance adaptive capacity and collaboration. For this reason, it is important to read about, discuss and reflect on concepts and principles, ideas and experience before and during the facilitation process.

Move back and forth between ideas and experience. In order to make the most of the facilitation and experience, facilitators should consciously move between ideas, action and reflecting on their action as facilitators. To do so, facilitators may want to start by absorbing the concepts presented in Part 1 of this guidebook, identify questions, and seek clarification through other reading or exchanges with other people. They can then review the guidebook steps and draft a plan for facilitation, always moving between the conceptual and the practical points. Facilitators can adjust plans as they proceed, being flexible but keeping the main goals and concepts of an adaptive collaborative approach in mind, and returning to the guidebook and other resource books and people as needed.

Adapt and adjust. This guidebook is not a blueprint or rigid plan; it is a book of ideas that facilitators can use to help a CFUG make the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach. Successful facilitators will use their understanding of the approach and their creativity, flexibility and skills to adapt as needed to each unique situation. Although it is ideal to facilitate the approach in an integrated way both in a CFUG's overall planning and in its specific activity planning (by using all stages of the guidebook), this can be done in phases rather than all at once. For example, a CFUG could start the approach in its overall planning (using all stages except Stage Three); or, conversely, could start at the activity level (focusing only on Stage Three). It could then expand the approach to the other levels if and when appropriate.

Connect and learn with like-minded people. Facilitators using this approach are encouraged to work in teams, ideally combining people from within the CFUG with people from the meso level (e.g., from an *ilaka*, rangepost or district-level network, forest department or NGO office). Furthermore, it is very useful for the facilitation team to connect with other people engaged in an adaptive collaborative approach or related learning-based approaches for regular sharing of ideas, reflection and support. For example, facilitators can consider connecting with members or facilitators of another CFUG that is already putting an adaptive collaborative approach into action. A visit with some questions in mind could help crystallise understanding of the approach and ideas for other contexts. Exchanges with other facilitation teams can also be very productive in facilitation 'problem solving'. (See Annex C for some contact information and other useful resources.)

THE ADAPTIVE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH



In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

Edward Hoffer (Baum 2000)

In this chapter we explore the concepts, principles and practice of an adaptive collaborative approach, including enabling processes and arrangements. We conclude with a visual snapshot and case example of the approach in action.

Key concepts: Active co-learning and collaboration

The adaptive collaborative approach can be understood as having two main components: active co-learning and collaboration. The concept of 'active co-learning' emerges from awareness that CFUGs are continually confronted with diverse actors' demands, face uncertainties in knowledge, and must adapt plans and practices to changing environments, policies, risks and opportunities. Forest actors can enhance their adaptive capacity by using ongoing learning as the basis for decision making and planning. This learning is expanded and more explicit than much common learning in community forestry in that it is very proactive and applied, is shared (or 'social'), and is about both management and governance.

Furthermore, because community forest actors are diverse and interdependent, their ability to communicate, work together and manage differences in views and power greatly influences the outcomes of community forests. From the perspective of this approach, the concept of 'collaboration' within a CFUG refers to diverse actors contributing effectively to decision making, conflict management and collective action.

In turn, strong adaptive and collaborative capacities enhance ongoing shared learning about community forest contexts, processes and outcomes (Figure 1). This learning contributes to more proactive and effective adjustments in processes and decisions, thereby making governance and management systems more responsive and resilient. Thus, CFUGs may become more likely to thrive and meet their goals (Box 2).

Box 2. CFUGs and individuals already learn and change—what's different in this approach?

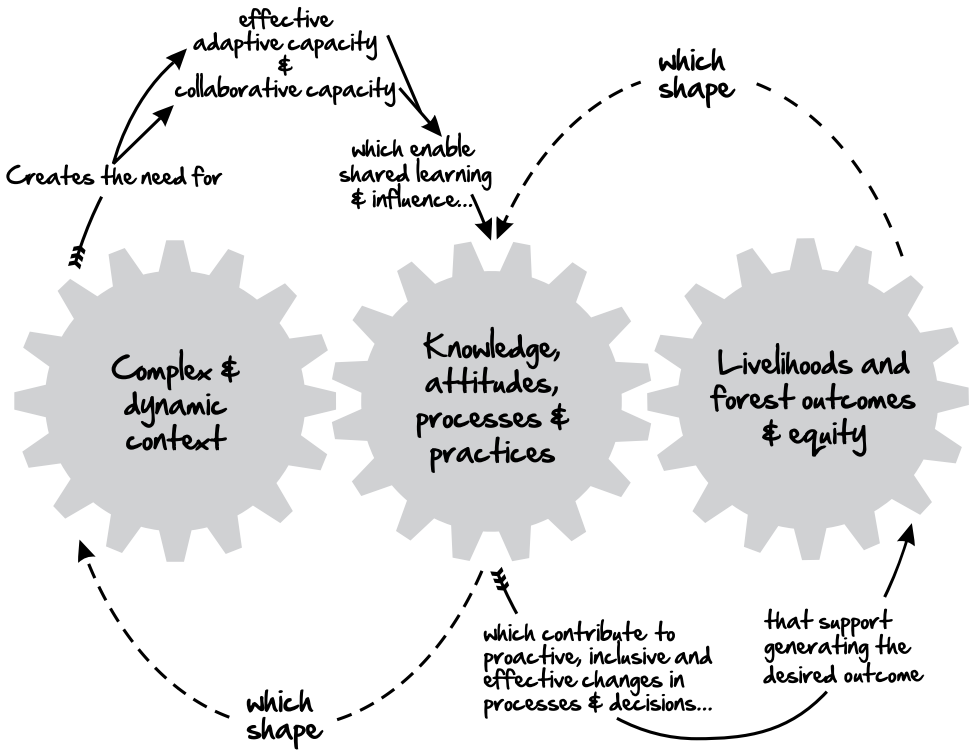
Community forest user groups change over time and their members learn. This is natural and expected. Yet much of this learning is an incidental byproduct of their experience. And institutional change is often in reaction to pressures once they are overwhelming. We call this adapting 'passively'.

An adaptive collaborative approach is a way of engaging in management and governance so that learning and adaptation is proactive. In this approach, learning is intentionally built into CFUG process and practice. It is ongoing and is the basis for the adjusting and updating of rules and practice. Governance and management are approached as cyclical, revolving through phases of joint planning, collaborative action, group self-monitoring and reflection and adjustment of governance and actions based on that learning. Furthermore, the learning that is emphasised in this approach is shared or joint, rather than individual. This enables understanding between actors and better distribution of knowledge: in short, it reinforces their ability to work together as needed as they proactively adapt to change.

Active co-learning

Active co-learning can be seen as highlighting learning which is proactive and applied, shared and focused on both management and governance.

Figure 1. Adaptive and collaborative capacity and context, practice and outcomes



Adapted from McDougall *et al.* (2004) and drawing on Hurst (1995).

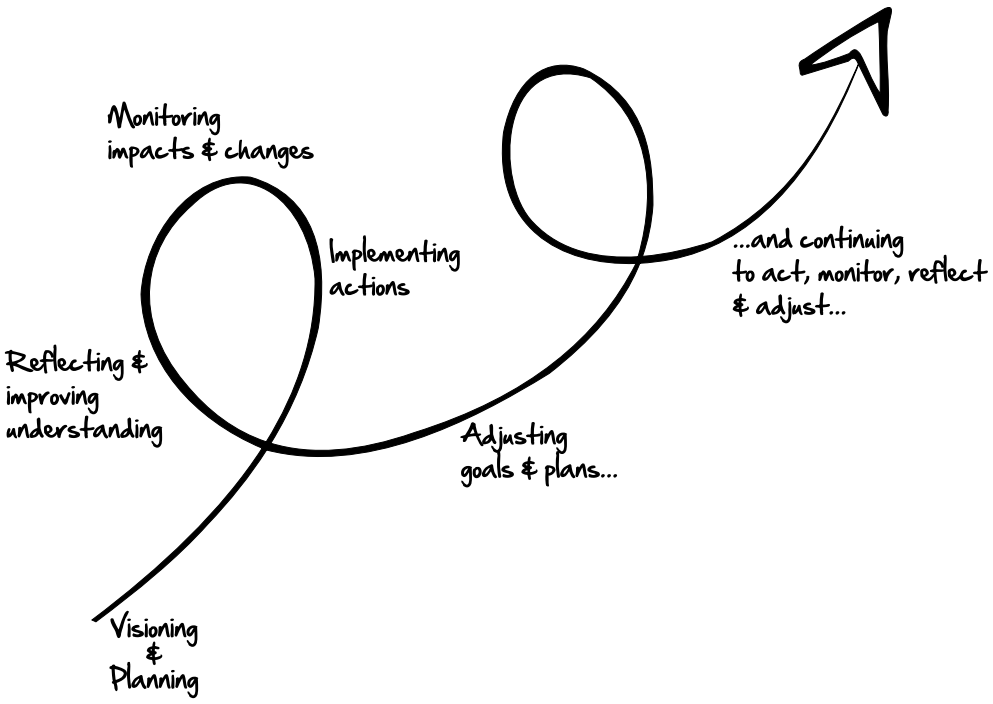
Proactive and applied learning

Natural resource managers cannot predict with absolute certainty the outcome of a policy or activity (Lee 1993). Accordingly, effective decision makers need to learn proactively so that they can better respond to situations. This means intentionally creating ways to learn from outcomes that do not match expectations. In this view, 'failures' are chances to learn: they indicate that something in the decision makers' worldview, knowledge, plan or implementation needs to be adjusted.

The approach suggests that CFUG members practise governance and management in an action–reflection–action cycle, as opposed to using a more linear planning process ('plan–implement–new plan') in which learning is more of a 'byproduct'. In practice, this means that CFUG members regularly look back (*pharkera herne*) at what they have done, how it worked and why. To support this, CFUGs may use a learning-oriented self-monitoring system—*swa-mulyankan* or *swa-anugaman*—as the basis for governance and management. As shown in Figure 2, key points of this may include:

- identifying expectations about the outcome of a management or governance action, with the awareness that these are only expectations, not certainties;
- monitoring the effects of the actions and changes in the natural resource and related human systems, including surprises and failures;
- improving knowledge and understanding by reflecting on the observations and assessing the situation and outcomes; and
- adjusting or correcting governance or management actions to reflect that new, shared understanding.

Figure 2. The adaptive collaborative approach as a spiral



Subgroups or action groups may take an action–reflection–(revised) action approach to planning of specific activities or events. As illustrated in the example below, it is critical to follow through with applying the learning to improve the activity or process.

Example: Reflection and action in a general assembly process. One CFUG's executive committee and facilitators developed a goal of breaking with their past tradition of top-down and outsider-oriented assemblies, and instead planned to make the assembly inclusive and user–oriented. Despite their intentions, however, the assembly ended up reverting to the formal top-down and outsider-oriented model. The executive committee and facilitators reflected on what should have happened differently and immediately arranged to hold the assembly again. This time they succeeded in using a more inclusive and user-oriented process.

Shared or 'social' learning

The *co-* in active co-learning refers to the shared nature of the learning. But it doesn't simply mean passing information along or even learning at the same time, as in a training course. Rather, it refers to 'social learning', in which actors jointly create new and mutual understanding. In this process, multiple stakeholders bring together different knowledge, experiences, perspectives, values and capacities, then engage in dialogue, critical reflection, and deliberation to jointly understand shared challenges and envision potential solutions. This creates more understanding among actors and better distribution of knowledge, enhancing their ability to work together as they proactively adapt to change. Social learning is increasingly recognised in natural resource management as a process that allows people to bridge the divide between their diverse worldviews, perspectives and 'mental models'. At its best, social learning sparks 'ah-ha' moments—moments when participants' (and facilitators')

understanding of the world shifts or is transformed, usually towards an understanding that is more holistic or inclusive.

Learning about both management and governance

The active co-learning concept includes reflection about both management and governance. In other words, it focuses not only on what decisions are made (and the outcomes of those decisions), but also on who makes the decisions and how (and what effect this has). This means that people are undertaking single-loop learning (about the effects of specific management actions, e.g., of a harvesting technique on trees) plus double- or triple-loop learning (about management and governance processes and about learning within them).

Example: Joint monitoring of equity. As part of their adaptive collaborative innovations to governance, CFUGs in the research focused on distribution of benefits among gender, caste, ethnic and socio-economic groups. As a social learning process, the monitoring and facilitated discussions triggered dialogue in the CFUG about equity and prompted members—rich and poor, women and men, so-called 'high caste' and *dalit* people alike—to question the 'normal' perceptions of fairness and consider the rights of marginalised members. This questioning—combined with experiences of trying out different patterns of engagement, leadership and distribution—ultimately helped transform some perceptions and power relations in the groups.

Collaboration

Community forestry—like all multistakeholder processes—involves power-related interactions, including negotiation of views, rights, responsibilities and even conflict management among diverse actors (Box 3). Collaboration—*sahakarya*—refers to the

Box 3. Diverse actors in community forestry

One key starting point for collaboration is the recognition of, and respect for, both the differences and the commonalities among actors. Even within a CFUG, people have different worldviews, knowledge, access to resources and power, and resilience. Differences that CFUG members may identify as significant include gender, caste and ethnicity, occupation, age, resources (e.g., land, house, livestock), and hamlet (*tole*). Perceptions of some differences, especially gender and caste, are deeply influenced by long-standing historical values and hierarchies. Although shifting, discriminatory perceptions of gender and caste continue to shape local realities. Political party affiliations can influence local relations and decisions, even within community forestry—for example, sometimes affecting executive committee member selection.

Meso-level community forestry actors are those from the *ilaka*, range post, and up to the district level, e.g., neighbouring CFUGs, networks, district forest office and rangepost offices, village and district development committees, local governments, NGOs, bilateral district offices, organisations from other sectors e.g., agriculture, and multistakeholder forums at the district level. Community forestry also involves multiple actors at the national level, including the Department of Forests and Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, national-level networks e.g., the Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN) and other associations, NGOs, research organisations, university forestry departments, bilateral and international development organisations, and research organisations. Political party linkages stretch from national to local level. Each of these meso and national actors—and individuals within those groups—may hold differing and evolving interests, capacities, knowledge, power and alliances, which influence their behaviour and actions.

search for constructive relations, including effective and equitable communication, power sharing, and negotiations about decisions and benefit sharing.

Within a CFUG, this concept especially denotes the meaningful inclusion (*samabesikaran*) of marginalised actors in governance and constructive relations, and collective action among diverse members and subgroups.

In terms of CFUG external actor relations, collaboration refers to appropriate inclusion and influence of the CFUG (including its marginalised members) in meso-level agenda setting, as well as communication, constructive relations and joint initiatives between the CFUG and outside actors. This includes, for example, effective communication between the CFUG and village development committee in order to link community forestry and wider governance processes. It also involves CFUGs individually or jointly seeking engagement with meso actors to shape the support meso actors offer. This is thus a more proactive and strategic kind of CFUG engagement with meso actors than is often the norm.

Appropriate and socially just collaboration is necessary to enable diverse actors in community forestry to make and undertake effective and equitable decisions and actions. To collaborate effectively, actors need to recognise other actors' value, and the validity of their 'voices' and contributions. In other words, they need to perceive an advantage to working together rather than separately on an issue or challenge. These conditions for collaboration do not need to exist before starting an adaptive collaborative approach, however. In fact, applying the approach can help build them.

It is critical to note that the emphasis on collaboration does not mean that actors should ignore underlying tensions or conflicts. Power issues and imbalances need to be explored and addressed if trust is to be built. In practice, conflicts may sharpen in the short term as underlying tensions are brought to the surface, before they can be addressed in the long term.

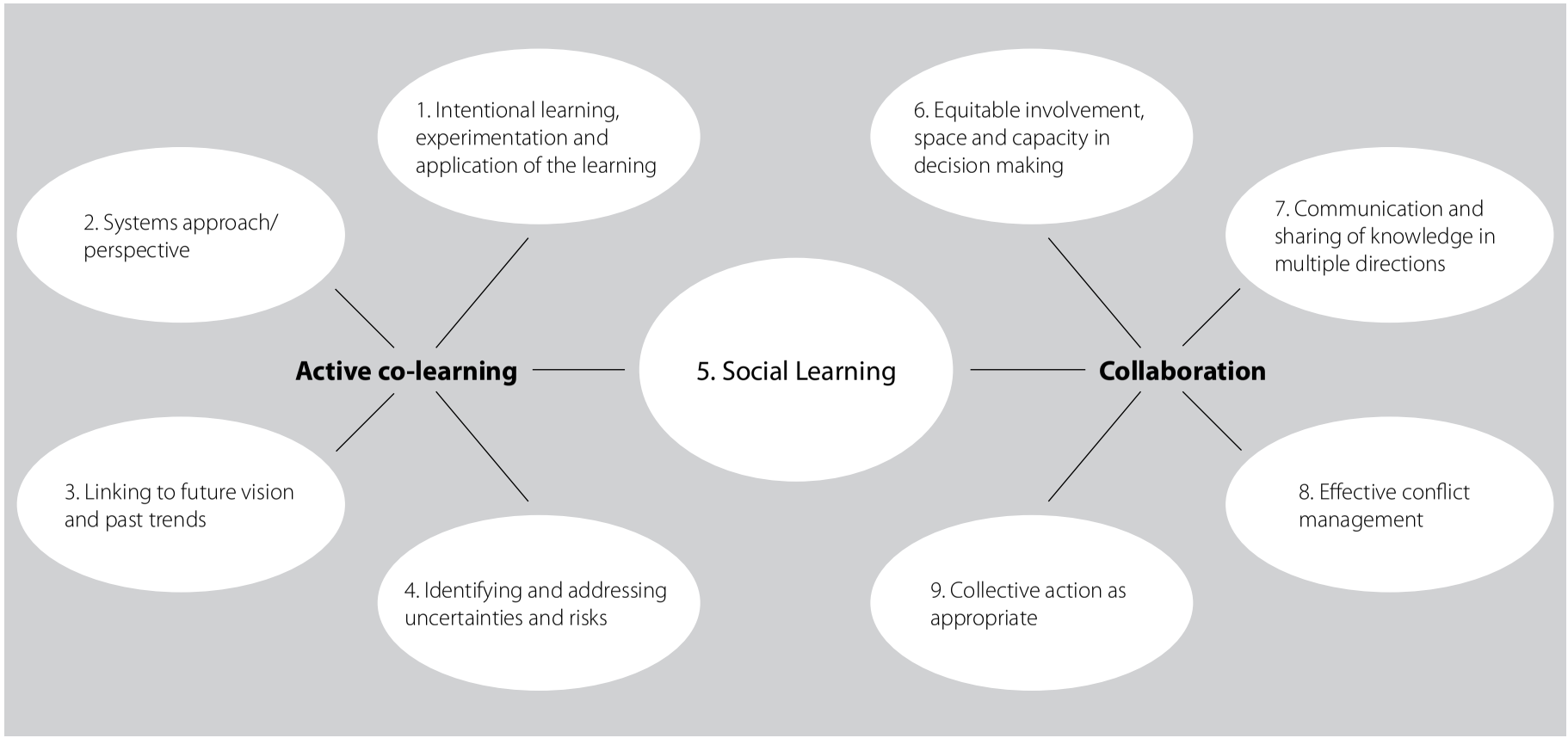
Principles to guide the approach

The approach can be broken down into nine essential principles to help guide the shift from concept to practice. The better these principles are understood by community forestry facilitators and actors, the more powerful the outcomes. The first four relate to learning, the last four emphasise collaboration, and, in between these, the fifth one connects both concepts through social learning (Figure 3).

The nine principles:

1. Management and governance are based in shared intentional learning and experimentation, and stakeholders internalise and consciously apply this learning to improve their understanding and practices.
2. Planning and decision making include attention to relationships within and between human and natural systems.
3. Planning and decision making clearly reflect links to the desired future, and take into account past and present trends.
4. Stakeholders identify and deal effectively with uncertainties, including risks and gaps in knowledge, in their planning processes.
5. Stakeholders join together in reflection and social learning processes so that shared understanding or knowledge is created and learning is 'transformative'.

Figure 3. Principles of an adaptive collaborative approach



6. All relevant stakeholders are involved in decision making and negotiation and have the opportunity and capacity to make themselves heard.
7. Stakeholders communicate and transfer knowledge and skills in multiple directions.
8. Stakeholders seek to manage conflict effectively.
9. Stakeholders implement action together as appropriate.

Enabling processes and arrangements

There is no single model for implementing an adaptive collaborative approach. Rather, using the approach involves developing appropriate forms and means of more inclusive and learning-oriented decision making. In other words, it means shifting away from more centralised and linear or *ad hoc* planning towards governance and management based on the nine principles given above. From our research, the two key patterns of enabling processes and arrangements can be synthesised as:

- cyclical and learning-based decision making through self-monitoring of governance and CFUG outcomes and ongoing reflection; and
- inclusive and 'nested' layers of governance, e.g., *tole*-level decision making, and leadership of activities by action groups.

Before exploring these processes and arrangements further in the following subsections (and offering suggested steps for them in Part 2), we note that these make explicit and link four 'layers' or cycles of CFUG planning: long-term, medium-term, annual and activity-level planning (Box 4). This is significant because making these

Box 4. Connecting all levels and cycles of CFUG planning

Although CFUGs are often treated as if they had a single management process or cycle, they can in fact usefully be understood as encompassing four interconnected layers or cycles of management and governance:

- Long-term planning (20 years plus). A vision to guide sustainability over time is especially important where there are slow-growing species, e.g., sal (*Shorea robusta*) or chilaune (*Schima wallichii*).
- Medium-term planning (5 to 10 years). This is a reasonable timeframe for seeing the results of management for many species, and it matches the Operational Plan's revision (renewal) period, as per the Department of Forests' guidelines.
- Annual planning (1 year). This is the yearly practical management cycle for putting the Operational Plan into effect.
- Activity planning (variable). Each activity in the annual plan may have its own cycle of planning, implementation and adjustment.

Each of these layers is addressed in an adaptive collaborative approach, and they have distinct, but linked processes, e.g., long-term visioning, medium-term goal setting, and annual planning. The decisions made in each of the layers are connected to other layers and driven by the CFUG. The layered connections flow from long to short term and back: (long-term) visioning by the CFUG (as opposed to outside actors) is the basis for the (medium-term) goal setting; the goals create the indicators; the indicators are used for the self-monitoring process that is the basis of the annual planning; the annual planning develops the specific activities; the group returns every five years or so to recheck its vision and goals based on its ongoing learning and uses this as the basis for its formal Operational Plan revision and renewal process.

layers explicit and connecting them to each other strengthens the planning process and its outcomes, for example, by grounding annual plans in long-term visions.

Furthermore, we emphasise that the critical forces that help drive the adaptive and collaborative capacity are the facilitation and the attitudes and commitment of facilitators and CFUG members, guided by the principles—the processes and arrangements play an enabling, not directing, role.

Processes: How decisions are made

Governance and management using an adaptive collaborative approach may follow an overall process flow—or cycle—e.g., this:

- development of shared (long-term) vision;
- creation of agreed (medium-term) goals, based on the vision;
- identification of indicators based on the goals;
- self-assessment using the indicators;
- prioritisation of weaknesses that need strengthening;
- development of annual plans for (revised) activities and innovation;
- implementation of activities and innovations by action groups (using a collaborative and learning approach);
- ongoing gathering of information for future (annual, semiannual) self-assessments;
- self-assessment and adjusting of understanding, priorities and annual plans based on the assessment;
- continuation of the cycle; and
- periodic review of the vision, goals and indicators, with revisions as needed.

Institutional arrangements: Who makes the decisions and at what level

By institutional arrangements, we refer to the way the CFUG organises its decision making, or in other words, the 'structure' of the CFUG. Along with processes, the design of arrangements can play a significant role in creating or limiting 'space' for marginalised people—in other words, access to, and control over, decision making. In this guidebook we highlight two main enabling arrangements: 'nested decision making' in CFUG planning; and action groups to lead each activity.

To support inclusive decision making and power sharing, a CFUG may choose to develop 'nested decision making'. In other words, the CFUG may begin each decision-making step of their process (above) at the *tole* level and then move up to negotiation across all *toles* and with the executive committee. This nested approach is 'bottom up', with interconnected decision-making 'nodes', e.g., *toles*, *tole*–executive committee meetings, executive committees and finally the general assembly. This arrangement has more 'nodes' than the typical decision-making structure of committee and general assembly, and thus puts more time demands on more people. Its strength is that it creates much more opportunity for general members and marginalised people to engage freely and directly shape decisions.

Furthermore, in an adaptive collaborative approach, a CFUG may choose to share control, learning, benefits and responsibilities of each activity (e.g., an income generation activity, conflict management strategy, or plantation activities). Specifically, they may choose to create volunteer action groups to lead each CFUG activity, rather than having the executive committee lead them.

In our research sites, as CFUGs reflected on governance, two additional trends emerged across most sites that supported inclusive and CFUG-led decision making: formal representation on executive committees shifted to include previously marginalised groups; and, CFUGs started to reconceptualise the role of outside actors as resource people in supporting the CFUG, as per the CFUGs' needs.

A snapshot of the approach in practice

In this section we draw on the principles, processes and arrangements from the section above to illustrate an adaptive collaborative approach in action. Figure 4 offers this in visual form; this is followed by a brief case example comparing an adaptive collaborative approach with a more typical approach.

In Figure 4, the overall loop represents active co-learning and application of this learning: the process moves through shared visioning, self-assessment, planning and action, and then returns to self-monitoring and reflection to improve understanding, plans and future action. The collaborative aspect—in terms of inclusive and equitable decision making—is illustrated by the nested decision making and by the action-group leadership of activities. External collaboration is flagged by the action groups proactively seeking connections and support, as needed.

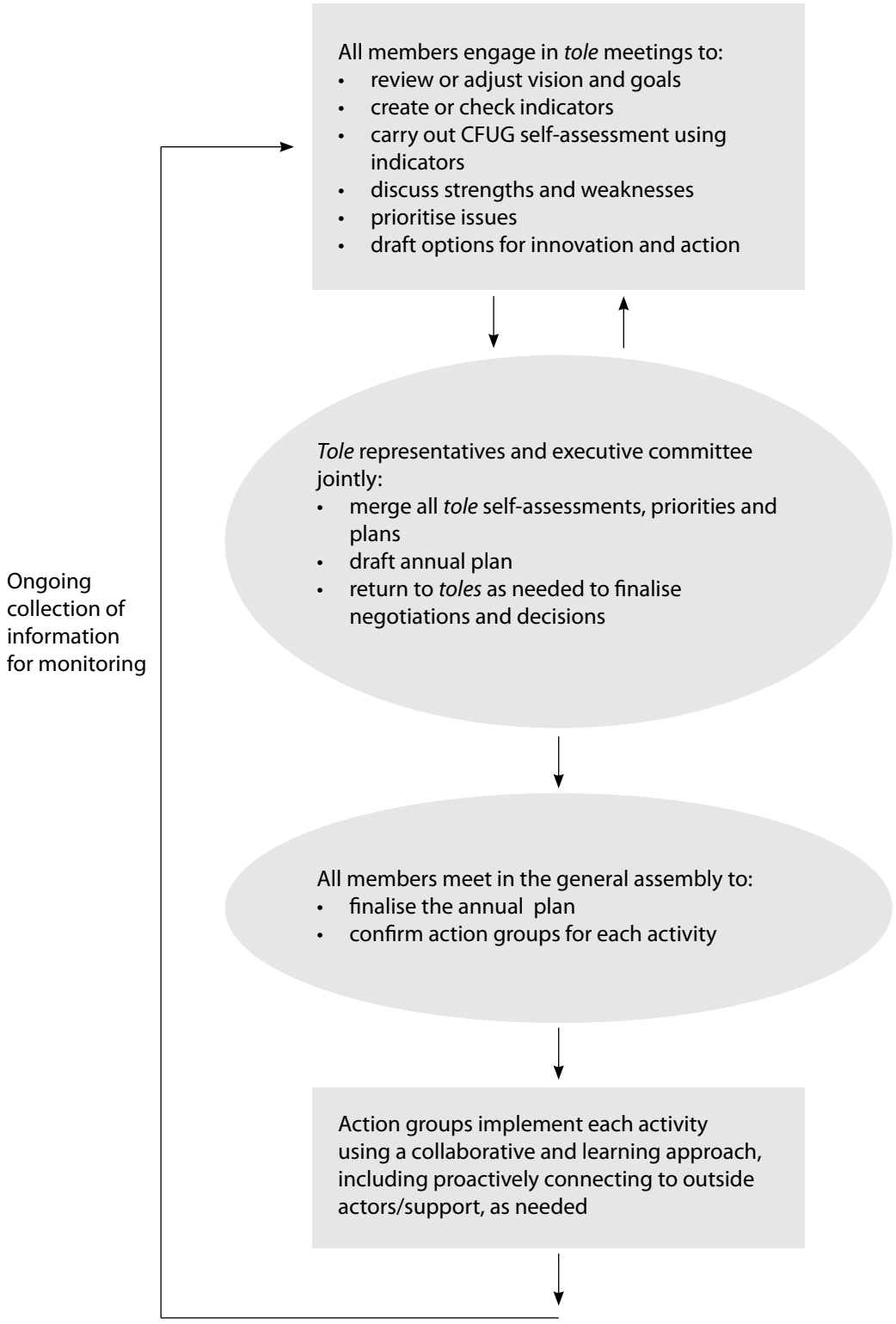
Two examples illustrate the differences between a more 'typical' approach and an adaptive collaborative approach.

Example 1: 'Typical' approach. Maksuwa CFUG (Sankhuwasabha District) was involved in the research as a 'control' site (i.e., used for comparison to the participatory action research sites). It was selected because, like other sites, it was considered typical in its form and quality of governance. In this CFUG there was no explicit long-term planning process. The CFUG's medium-term (5-year) draft plan was prepared by the district forest office ranger and the chairperson of the CFUG, with the help of one or two male executive committee members. This was presented in the general assembly for approval. The approved plan was turned into an Operational Plan, which was formalised by the district forest office. For annual planning, every year a few committee members met to prepare activity plans, which were then approved at the general assembly. The activity planning process did not involve any direct engagement of CFUG members, or of the poor or women. The activities, if implemented, were led by the executive committee with some participation of some members.

Example 2: Adaptive collaborative approach. Having shifted towards an adaptive collaborative approach during the research project, Manakamana CFUG (Sankhuwasabha District) undertook participatory visioning and goal setting as the basis for its long-term planning. It developed indicators from its goals and used them to do a participatory assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. Members developed medium-term plans based on that assessment and then revised their Operational Plan. The plan was formalised in the general assembly and approved by the district forest office. The CFUG also started preparing its annual plans systematically, based on the self-monitoring assessment, thereby linking the annual plans to the longer-term goals set out in the Operational Plan. The CFUG has begun to conduct the annual self-monitoring routinely, beginning at the *tole* level. Each *tole* assesses all indicators and identifies its priority issues for action. Members select two people from each *tole* who synthesise and negotiate across the *toles* to finalise the CFUG's activity plans. In this way, every year the CFUG reviews and assesses the progress

of its activities and, based on agreed priorities, revises or develops new activities for implementation. Each committee ('action group') in charge of activity-level plans leads its own learning-oriented planning and action implementation, and connects with the larger CFUG as needed.

Figure 4. An adaptive collaborative approach in action



FACILITATION, TEAMWORK AND CHALLENGES

What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.

Pericles

Strength through teamwork

We suggest that facilitators work in teams, with members from both within the CFUG and from the meso (rangepost or district) level.

Working in teams rather than as individuals can offer great advantages. In effective teams, members pool their depth and breadth of skills and knowledge, more easily earn the respect of CFUG subgroups, share responsibilities, and provide mutual support. In our experience, teams with facilitators from both CFUGs and meso-level organisations are particularly effective: the partnership offers a synergy between in-depth local knowledge and an outside perspective with links to potential collaborating institutions.

Facilitators from the meso level may include staff or volunteer members of a community forestry or development organisation or network, e.g., a district forest office, an NGO, a bilateral project, or FECOFUN. These actors need to be acceptable to the CFUG and have the support of their own organisations to engage effectively in this role.

Among the facilitators from the CFUG, each team should consider having at least one person from the executive committee, since committee members usually have access to other powerful CFUG actors. Equally, to connect with and empower marginalised actors, the team should also consider including one or more effectively trained and supported facilitators who are women, poor or from *dalit* or other disadvantaged groups (see 'Meeting challenges' below).

The facilitator selection process and choice of facilitators has a strong influence on the transition to, and outcomes of, the approach. This is addressed in Part 2 'Stage One: Step 1' and Annex A.

Facilitation roles and responsibilities

A facilitator plays the following overall roles in effecting a transition to an adaptive collaborative approach:

- sharing the concepts and value of the approach, bringing people together, and encouraging, motivating and leading them by example;
- facilitating adaptive collaborative processes, including self-monitoring and reflection on changes in process and outcomes; and
- keeping up the momentum in changing attitudes, processes and practices, and helping to solve any problems.

More specific facilitation responsibilities might include the following:

- planning and facilitating the specific steps, processes and tools as described in this guidebook, including work at the *tole,* committee, action group, and assembly levels;
- clarifying and explaining an adaptive collaborative approach;
- formally and informally encouraging individuals and organisations to explore learning and collaboration, both in concepts and in practice;
- offering and encouraging critical questions to spark reflection about governance and management; and
- helping address obstacles or challenges and negotiating tensions that arise as the group makes changes in how it operates.

A facilitator might also be asked by the CFUG to serve as a resource person in formal and informal meetings regarding community forestry policy and related issues. If this is not possible or appropriate in the circumstances, then the facilitator can help the CFUG link to an appropriate resource person.

Facilitation roles and responsibilities within specific meeting processes are outlined in Annex A.

Effective facilitation

As noted in the introduction to this guidebook, to facilitate the approach effectively facilitators need to:

- focus on the concepts and principles more than the tools;
- move back and forth between ideas and experience;
- adapt and adjust; and
- connect and learn with like minded people.

Based on our experiences and related participatory process literature (e.g., Chambers 2002), there are several other important principles that underlie enabling or empowering facilitation:

- balance flexibility with 'progress';
- be a learner;
- be an active listener;
- 'sit with people' and honour commitments;
- recognise, value and empower individuals;
- let participants set the direction;
- use inclusive and creative communication;
- be a part—and be apart; and
- develop and use a support network.

See Annex A for more detail on each of these.

Meeting challenges and sparking change

Effectively sparking the transition towards the approach—including shifts in attitudes, relations and decision making—can be very challenging for facilitators, especially local ones. One key challenge is that local facilitators operate from within their own community and thus face the same pressures and social structures that reinforce the social exclusion and elite domination they are working to change. For this reason, engaging marginalised people, e.g., women, the poor or *dalit*, does not necessarily empower those individuals or marginalised subgroups. A related challenge is that the local CFUG leadership may be reluctant to share responsibility—and thus power—with change agents. Also, change agents may struggle to find the time to commit to the role, especially if it is uncompensated. Additionally, the process of sparking innovation in governance and resource distribution naturally meets resistance. The creation of more decision-making space and access to benefits for marginalised people necessitates that others have to relinquish some of their influence and either share or generate more benefits. This is especially challenging when relations have been poor between the more and less powerful actors. Furthermore, the reflective nature of the process may spark concerns by leaders that members will become critical of the executive committee.

Clearly there is no single path to successfully meet these challenges. Our experience suggested that facilitators need to address these proactively and as they emerge; to do so the facilitators require a thoughtful strategy and support system. Specifically, we observed that the following can help minimise or address these challenges.

- Local leaders, as well as members, need to agree with and have ownership in the criteria and process for selecting facilitators, and in the development of plans for facilitators' roles and their connections to the executive committee. This helps 'pave the way' for leaders' commitment to change and sharing of responsibilities.
- Local facilitators should include both higher-status individuals (e.g., committee members) and people from more marginalised subgroups, so that connections can be made between—and shifts enabled among—the diverse actors in the CFUG.
- Facilitators—especially meso ones—can help shift resistance of leaders to governance change through ongoing honest dialogue and use of critical questioning with both leaders and members, including individual consultations and small–group meetings, encouraging reflection on the situation, opportunities and challenges (Box 5).

Box 5. Addressing leaders' resistance to innovation

In our participatory action research, some CFUG leaders were initially reluctant to engage in an adaptive collaborative approach because they perceived the 'raising of members' voices' as a potential threat to their leadership. This initial resistance was addressed through recurring dialogue and discussion between facilitators and leaders in various settings, from individual consultations to small–group meetings. The discussions helped clarify the ideas and goals of an adaptive collaborative approach, as well as the roles and responsibilities of facilitators, the executive committee and general members. Very importantly, they also helped develop a realistic understanding of both potential risks (e.g., the surfacing of latent tensions) and long-term benefits (e.g., a more active CFUG, stronger social cohesion, and more livelihood-related activities). Through these meetings, and some added sharing by actors from other CFUGs that were using the approach, the leaders' hesitation eased. In most cases, the leaders also started to be under growing pressure from increasingly engaged marginalised members to continue with pro-equity changes. Leaders' support for the approach grew as they perceived benefits emerging, e.g., decreased CFUG conflict and reduced executive committee workload (through the sharing of responsibilities with action groups and *toles*).

- Capacity building in facilitation and conflict management skills can boost local facilitators' confidence, as can improved knowledge about policy through engagement with meso-level facilitators on the team.
- Team building among facilitators creates mutual understanding and support, and helps them engage in shared reflection.
- Local facilitators need focused and supported preparation time (e.g., retreats, workshops or planning sessions), both to develop strategies for their CFUGs and to equip them to meet the challenges they will encounter.
- Local facilitators must be operating from a commitment to contribute to equitable and effective outcomes, and not be motivated by a desire for personal gain, whether financial or status. This has implications for the facilitator selection process.

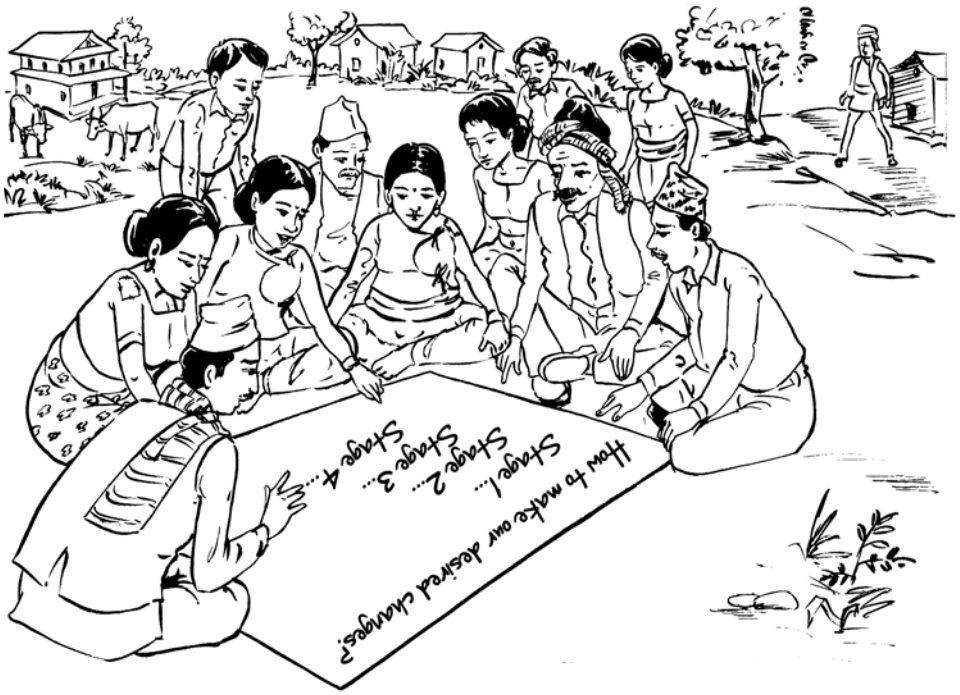
- From the start, the facilitation team should develop or connect with a supportive network of outsiders, e.g., meso or national actors. The team can also benefit from connecting with other teams of facilitators. Such networks not only offer the facilitators practical support, but also contribute to their credibility with CFUG members.

PART II

Stages and steps for facilitating the approach

Contents of Part II

OVERVIEW OF STAGES AND STEPS



Change doesn't always happen at the time. Sometimes it takes another question being asked before people take the next step.

Olga Gladkikh in Stackpool-Moore *et al.* (2006)

The suggested steps for facilitating the approach are divided into four stages:

- laying the groundwork (Stage One);
- sparking the transition in overall CFUG (annual) planning (Stage Two);
- applying the approach in undertaking specific activities (Stage Three); and,
- institutionalising and continuing the approach (Stage Four).

Stages One and Two are about starting and making the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach. As such, a CFUG will only move fully through Stages One and Two of the guidebook one time (i.e., during its transition to the approach). By the time it has completed those two stages, the CFUG will have used the approach to create a new annual plan based on its own vision, goals and self-assessment. It is thus ready to put its activities and innovations (that make up the annual plan) into action in a learning-based and collaborative way, using the approach. That activity-level design and implementation is the focus of Stage Three. Once those specific activities are well underway, the CFUG is ready for Stage Four: returning to the 'big picture' of CFUG planning to reassess its overall progress, adjust as needed, and continue on with its next cycles of governance and management.

Note that some of the key processes and arrangements for Stage Four—such as visioning and self-monitoring—are initially introduced in Stage Two, thus facilitators may want to return as needed to those sections to refresh their understanding. Equally, facilitators and CFUG members may choose periodically to revisit some specific steps from Stages One and Two to refresh their skills and learning. For example, the facilitators may occasionally return to checking and developing their facilitation skills (from Stage One); or, the CFUG may occasionally use experiential games to refresh their appreciation or understanding of active co-learning and collaboration (from Stage Two).

The suggested steps are shown in Figure 5. In the sections that follow, we explore each step's objectives, key points and suggested tasks.

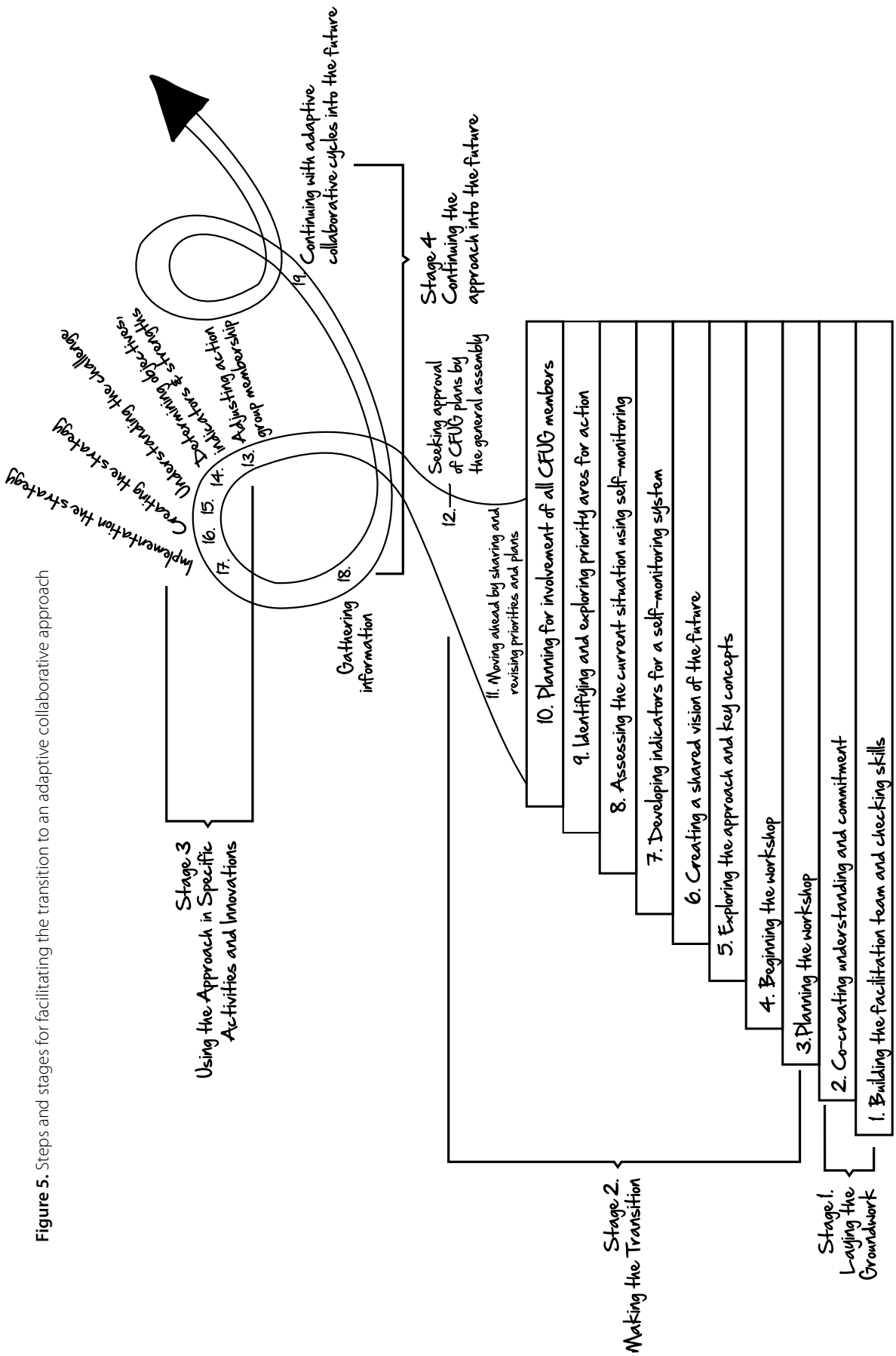


Figure 5. Steps and stages for facilitating the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach

STAGE ONE:
LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.

Maria Robinson

Goals

- To create a facilitation team that is agreeable to the CFUG.
- To check and develop facilitation skills.
- To generate shared understanding in the CFUG and facilitation team about the current situation.
- To build agreement about goals and expectations for facilitation and the adaptive collaborative approach.

Overview

The facilitation team needs to create a positive environment that will engage diverse actors, particularly women and other members typically marginalised, in CFUG decision making. This groundwork includes the following.

- Forming a diverse and appropriate facilitation team and making sure that everyone has the skills to take on their roles and responsibilities.
- Building agreement on goals and expectations between the facilitators and other actors. This creates a solid foundation for working together, saves time, and reduces the potential for confusion and misunderstanding.
- Building the facilitators' understanding of the context, as well as sparking shared awareness among CFUG members of the current situation and opportunities for change. This awareness can create momentum for a shift towards an adaptive collaborative approach.

An underlying focus of this stage is building trust and understanding between the facilitation team and CFUG members. Honesty, respect for others, and reliability in fulfilling commitments all contribute to building trust. This fundamental task runs through the whole process.

The following two steps are presented separately, but in practice, you may move back and forth between them—for example, using the discussions with the CFUG (Step 2) to check your facilitation skills (Step 1) in action.

The suggestions in this section assume that you already know which CFUG(s) you would like to work with. If you are not sure of this, please see Annex A for ideas about the CFUG selection and negotiation process.

Steps in Stage One

Step 1. Building the facilitation team and checking skills
Step 2. Co-creating understanding and commitment

Step 1

Building the facilitation team and checking skills

Building the facilitation team and checking skills

Objectives

- To create a team of facilitators.
- To assess the team's facilitation knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- To make a plan for strengthening weaknesses.

Pointers

Facilitate in teams. A team has more time, skills and resources to contribute, and facilitators can support one another. Having a team also ensures continuity: if one facilitator has to leave, the initiative can nevertheless continue.

An ideal combination is people from the CFUG and the meso level (from NGOs, networks or forest offices) working together as facilitators, sharing roles and responsibilities as appropriate. For example, a team with two people from the CFUG and two from the meso level offers a good balance. The CFUG facilitators contribute direct knowledge of the user group, and the meso-level facilitators bring an outside perspective. As outsiders, meso actors may also be able to motivate CFUG members in a way that insiders sometimes cannot.

Identify criteria for creating the facilitation team. The selection process will significantly affect the success of the transition to the approach, so choose the team carefully so that members can work well both together and with the CFUG. It is critical that CFUG members ultimately agree with the choice of facilitators. One option for selection is to suggest some basic criteria for selecting facilitators (see list below), ask the CFUG to suggest additional criteria, then negotiate a merged set of criteria. Let the CFUG take a lead in the selection process, using the combined or modified set of criteria.

Some basic criteria that may be used are:

- time to commit to the process;
- realistic expectations about the role's challenges and benefits;
- motivation, enthusiasm and commitment to community forestry and to an adaptive collaborative approach—in short, a 'volunteer spirit';
- support from their organisations in taking on this role;
- acceptance by CFUG members, including marginalised members; and
- ability to connect with marginalised groups and yet command the respect of more powerful actors, both local and outside.

These are further explored in Annex A. Besides meeting the criteria, facilitators should at minimum have the skills and attitudes described in the chapter on facilitating the approach.

Check facilitation skills. Team members need to identify their strengths and weaknesses, both as individuals and collectively, and devise a plan to address the weaknesses. The team may begin by asking:

- What skills, knowledge, attitudes or resources do we need to have to facilitate this approach in this CFUG?
- How will we obtain or enhance these?

Some of the key skills or strengths they might seek include:

- commitment to learn from the approach and experience;
- leadership skills, especially the ability and desire to initiate innovation and mobilise others, understand and value other actors, generate, honour and return trust;
- understanding of the concepts and guideposts of an adaptive collaborative approach and how these might translate into practice; and
- good basic facilitation and participatory process skills and a commitment to strengthen these if needed.

The team should strengthen their individual and collective weak areas before beginning, and also continue to engage in the facilitation with a 'learning mind' to help improve skills on an ongoing basis.

The following four tasks are designed to help build the facilitation team and check skills.

Tasks

Task 1.1. Outline the roles and responsibilities of a facilitator

How:

Information review and discussions

a. Review the information in this guidebook about the roles and resources of a facilitator.
b. Discuss the adaptive collaborative approach and facilitators' potential roles with the CFUG and meso actors, for this specific context.

c. Prepare a summary of jointly agreed facilitator roles and responsibilities, keeping in mind that these will evolve over time.

Resources: This guidebook; flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–3 hours.

Task 1.2. Select facilitators from the CFUG and meso level

How: Discussions, shortlisting facilitators, selection and followup

a. Discuss and develop with relevant CFUG and meso actors a selection process for facilitators, and develop criteria for their selection, based on the roles and responsibilities of facilitators identified in Task 1.
b. Brainstorm a list of potential facilitators.
c. Meet with potential facilitators and gather the necessary information from them.
d. Support the CFUG and meso actors in following through with the selection process and creating the facilitation team.
e. Communicate the decision and plans back to the meso actors and the CFUG members.

Resources: The proposed criteria in this guidebook; flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–2 hours for discussion, plus time for gathering information and making the decision.

Task 1.3. Self-assess the team's facilitation skills

How: Reflection and discussion

a. Reflect both as individuals and as a team. Consider and discuss such questions as these:
   - Do I/we understand the role of a facilitator in an adaptive collaborative approach?
   - What knowledge, attitudes and resources do I/we need to have to fulfil this role?
   - How do our current skills compare with what we need? What are the priority areas to strengthen, including

do I/we need a better understanding about adaptive collaborative theory or action?

Resources: This guidebook; flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–2 hours.

Task 1.4. Improve facilitators' capacity

How: Strategising and carrying out capacity-building plans

a. Based on the self-assessment completed in Task 3, list the priority skills, knowledge, attitudes and resources that need improvement. Then ask, 'What is a realistic strategy for strengthening these weak areas?' and develop a concrete plan. Such a plan might include the following:
   - obtaining information about facilitation and adaptive collaborative approach processes;
   - asking for constructive criticism on your facilitation;
   - contacting people or organisations that can help; and
   - trying, practising, getting feedback, reflecting, discussing and learning as a facilitation team and with the CFUG.

b. Carry out the capacity-building plan. Start before the adaptive collaborative approach facilitation begins and continue during its implementation, gathering feedback as the process unfolds.

Resources: This guidebook; flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: One hour to plan; as needed to implement the plan.

Step 2

Co-creating understanding and commitment

Co-creating understanding and commitment

Objectives

- To develop facilitators' understanding of the CFUG and its forest system to a level that is adequate to support the process
- To build momentum for the shift to an adaptive collaborative approach by increasing shared awareness about the current situation and challenges
- To clarify and negotiate goals and expectations and agree on next steps

Pointers

Iterate between tasks. The three objectives are interrelated and thus need to be approached iteratively. Although the facilitators need sufficient information to discuss and negotiate initial plans for facilitating the approach, much of the learning about the existing situation can be done as a joint exploration that creates learning for both facilitators and CFUG members. This joint learning also creates a platform for agreement on specific goals, roles and next steps.

Build consensus through informal exchanges. Engaging in informal consultation and sharing with CFUG members and leaders can support the transition to a more learning-based and inclusive approach. These interactions, which should take place both before and after formal meetings, are helpful in developing mutual trust and clarifying expectations; they also enable individual members, especially executive committee members, to get comfortable with making the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach.

Informal meetings make the idea of a shift in approach less threatening for CFUG leaders. By the time 'public' meetings begin, CFUG leaders will be ready to engage more confidently and with fewer reservations. Sharing and clarifying in informal one-on-one meetings need to be an ongoing step, particularly if the leaders are uncertain or hesitant about or resistant to, making changes (see the 'Facilitation, Teamwork and Challenges' chapter and Annex A).

Explore the need for a transition through situation analysis. To build momentum for a transition to an adaptive collaborative approach, CFUG members—including the leaders—must genuinely perceive a need for change. Even if a CFUG is generating few benefits or experiencing conflict, agreement on the need for change may not exist. For this reason, we suggest putting lots of energy into the CFUG's own

critical reflection of its practices and assessment of the need for change. We call this situation analysis.

We offer two options for situation analysis. One is a discussion of strengths and weaknesses—this option takes place directly through dialogue. The other is a participatory exercise, such as participatory mapping or a forest transect walk, which 'opens the door' for discussion.

Participatory mapping and transect walks (as outlined in Colfer *et al.* 1999a and 1999b) can be learning experiences for both participants and facilitators. For the facilitators, the learning prepares them for what and how to facilitate; for the members, it can increase their awareness of their own satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their current situation.

Why use a participatory exercise for situation analysis? Information that depends on people's perspectives—such as social relations, priority issues, and effectiveness of the CFUG—is best generated from multiple sources. Compared with the separate input of individuals, such knowledge is often richer if it is generated by people conversing or reflecting in the forest itself. Dialogue *in situ* can give the facilitator insights into the dynamics of the group, may spark more creative thinking, and builds momentum for CFUG change through participants' collective increased awareness.

To maximise inclusion and freedom of ideas, consider beginning the situation analysis discussions in *toles* or other small groups. You might also plan one small-group discussion with the executive committee alone, so that members can develop their own awareness of potential weaknesses; otherwise, committee members may feel judged or threatened and be reluctant to expose their vulnerabilities. The small-group discussions can be followed by a larger, multi-*tole* discussion. It may also be useful to bring in respected outside actors—from a meso-level organisation or another CFUG, for example—to help in the reflection.

If, after shared critical reflection, the group does not perceive the need for change, facilitators must obviously rethink the CFUG selection and find a group that does want to adjust its approach.

Explore many angles. Develop facilitators' and group members' understanding of the CFUG in a holistic way. During discussions, look at the CFUG from several angles, making connections among the issues and learning. Here are some sample questions:

- Who are the main actors in the group (e.g., socio-economic, ethnic or caste, and gender subgroups) and surrounding area (e.g., district forestry office, NGOs, village development committees, networks)? What kinds of relations do actors in the CFUG have? Are there hidden or overt conflicts or alliances? How about CFUG–outside actor relations (including conflicts over membership)?
- How do the subgroups earn their livelihoods? What is their dependence on, and view of, the community forest? Who is most vulnerable in the CFUG and surrounding area?
- What policies, including the Operational Plan and community forestry regulations, affect the members?
- What are the major influences in the CFUG, including outside actors, conflict and natural disasters?
- What kind of forest system does the group have, in what condition? What subsistence, financial and cultural values does it have?
- In management and governance, which actors and subgroups make decisions, how and when? How freely and effectively can different people participate in decision making? To what extent are decisions and plans implemented? Does the CFUG conduct any monitoring? How does it work, and what effect does it have? Is any of it learning–oriented and connected to planning?
- How familiar are group members with CFUG rules and regulations? To what extent do members and outsiders follow these?
- What are the main challenges and successes of the CFUG so far?

Use critical questioning to spark learning. For each of the above angles, go beyond asking 'What' or 'Who' and explore 'Why'—the reasons for the current situation. Throughout this and other stages, gently reflect back key assumptions and statements that emerge and encourage the group to look at the 'roots' underlying them or see them from new angles.

Be sensitive when focusing on equity. Exploring 'soft' issues such as social relations and perceptions of equity (see Box 6)

Box 6. Equity versus equality

Equity is different from equality. Equality refers to the state of being equal or the same. CFUGs that use a principle of equality tend to offer access to, or distribute, forest products in equal proportions to all families, regardless of their different needs, options or vulnerability.

Equity relates to perceptions of fairness. CFUGs that use a principle of equity as the basis for access to forest resources tend to take into account differences in member households' wellbeing and thus aim to create more opportunities for the families with the greatest needs and vulnerability. 'Exclusion' from CFUG membership can also be a significant equity issue in some areas, including where membership fees are perceived as prohibitively high.

in the CFUG (and between the CFUG and other actors) is critical for improving governance, and it can be a strong motivator for change. This sensitive topic can trigger strong reactions, however, which could actually block a process of change. Use judgement about how and when to address equity. The dialogue should raise awareness and desire for change, but not provoke negative feelings that make people unwilling to continue exploration. Later, as momentum and trust build, the tougher issues can be raised and addressed.

Tasks 2, 3 and 4, described below, could all be part of one day-long workshop.

Tasks

Task 2.1. Address facilitators' need to learn about the CFUG

How:

Information identification and gathering

a. Brainstorm a list of CFUG issues that facilitators want to know more about. Consider the CFUG from many angles to get a well-rounded picture:
   - the people involved in the CFUG (and outside it) and their relationships to each other and to the forest;
   - the forest's condition, resources and (potential) value;
   - how policies and outside actors affect the CFUG;
   - the systems for decision making and forest–product distribution, and different people's views about them;

- the CFUG's degree of activeness; and
- the CFUG's successes and challenges.

b. Gather this information through interviews and documents. Some information, such as the date for revision (renewal) of the Operational Plan, should be readily available. Other information can be gleaned during interviews with one or two well-informed CFUG members and meso actors. Note that this is just basic information gathering; learning continues and deepens through CFUG discussions in the next task.

Resources: Background documents on the CFUG; paper and pens.

Time: Approximately a day for document review and brief meetings.

Task 2.2. Share and discuss information

How: Individual meetings

a. Hold individual meetings with formal and informal CFUG leaders, including influential members of subgroups, to share ideas and build consensus. The aim is to clarify ideas and expectations, generate interest in innovation, and build trust. Within these meetings, share information on the following:
   - the adaptive collaborative approach; and
   - experiences of other CFUGs.

   Respectfully ask leaders to reflect on their experience:
   - Are the CFUG's outcomes and achievements the best they could be, or is there a possibility or need for improvement?
   - Are the governance and management practices optimal, or could they be improved?
   - What efforts—and with what effects—have members and leaders made in the past to improve practices or outcomes?
   - Are the leaders interested in trying new community forestry governance styles or practices?

Resources: None.

Time: As needed.

Task 2.3. Build momentum and consensus for the transition through situation analysis

How: Small–group reflection exercises followed by joint discussions

a. Facilitate situation analysis, beginning with small-group discussions—separate meetings of *toles,* the executive committee, and other subgroups. One straightforward way to explore the issues is to assess the CFUG's current strengths and weaknesses. Using strengths as an entry point can build positive momentum; save the discussion of weak areas for later. The discussion could focus on the following:
   - **Governance practices.** Who makes decisions about rules, benefits and opportunities, and how are they made? Why? To what effect? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these practices?
   - **Outcomes.** What kinds of benefits are created? What are the effects of decisions on different people and their livelihoods? On the forest? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these outcomes?

   Confirm that the major points from each small group are recorded accurately so that—with everyone's consent—they can be shared in the joint discussion. Select representatives from each *tole* or small group for the following activities.
b. Collate (or ask group representatives to collate) the points raised by the small groups, comparing and merging their observations.
c. Hold a joint discussion with all *tole* (or other small-group) representatives and the executive committee to connect views and raise shared awareness about the CFUG's strengths and weaknesses, and to assess the need for innovation. This discussion might start with the following:
   - setting goals for the meeting; and
   - setting norms, including honesty, respectfulness and the validity of all participants' views.

   Then share (or have representatives share) the summaries of strengths and weaknesses from the small groups and executive committee, noting commonalities and differences. To keep this discussion motivating and forward-looking, return to the question of how current

practice compares with ideal practice. If current practice improved, what benefits or outcomes might also improve?

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–2 hours each for *tole* discussions; 1–2 hours for multi-*tole* and executive committee discussion.

Alternative Task 2.3. Use a participatory exercise to build momentum and consensus

How: Participatory mapping and/or transect walk ('Transects over Time') to generate insights

a. Conduct a participatory mapping session or forest transect walk (described in detail in Annex B1). Invite a cross-section of male and female leaders and members from different *toles*, wealth groups, and caste/ethnic groups to participate.
b. Use the participatory exercise(s) to explore the issues listed above.

Resources: See Annex B.

Time: Half a day.

Task 2.4. Clarify and negotiate goals and expectations

How: Planning meeting

a. Once the executive committee and members have reached consensus about their goals, expectations and roles in the transition to the new approach, hold an official planning meeting to develop a basic strategy. Include the facilitators and the executive committee, as well as *tole* or other subgroup representatives and others as appropriate. Build directly on the preceding steps and tasks, revisiting the issues and points of agreement and planning for the next steps. At this meeting, offer the following:
   - a clear explanation of an adaptive collaborative approach, including examples of what it can do and how it works;
   - a reminder that this initiative is not a 'development project', but support for a process, and any changes and

outcomes will depend on the engagement and commitment of CFUG members;
- an explanation of the role of facilitator (as distinct from a donor, funder or 'dictator'); and
- an overview of suggested next steps (Stages Two, Three and Four) and their goals.

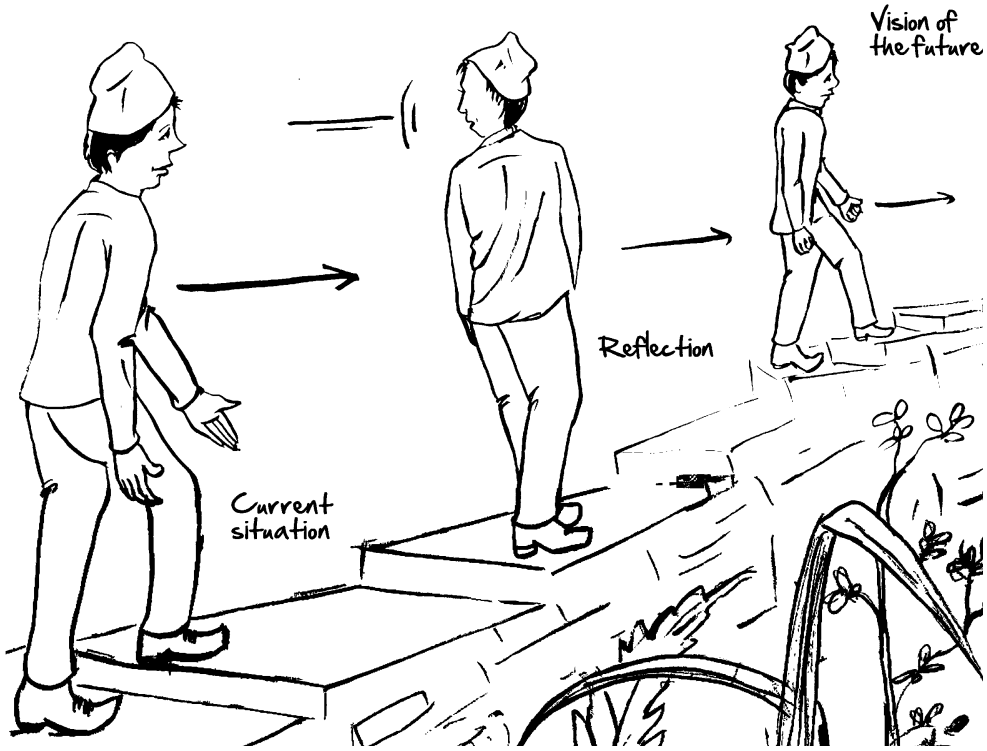
Discuss any questions about an adaptive collaborative approach, actors' roles or expectations about a transition to the approach.

b. Conclude the meeting by jointly confirming the following points:
   - the priorities for the CFUG and people's expectations for the adaptive collaborative approach;
   - the roles and responsibilities of facilitators and CFUG members;
   - the next steps for making the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach, including what, who, and when; and
   - the process by which the facilitators, executive committee, and CFUG members will communicate, including specific plans for informing the rest of the CFUG about the outcomes of this meeting.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape; paper and pens.

Time: 1–3 hours for the meeting, plus planning time.

STAGE TWO: MAKING THE TRANSITION IN CFUG PLANNING



The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps—we must step up the stairs.

Vance Havner

Goals

- To develop a common understanding of, and appreciation for, the potential value of collaboration and active co-learning.
- To create a shared vision for the CFUG.
- To develop a learning-based self-monitoring system as the foundation of annual planning.
- To assess the current situation using the self-monitoring system.
- To draft a set of priorities and action plans based on the assessment.

Overview

This stage is the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach—sparking learning, connecting, visioning and self-monitoring as the basis for CFUG governance and management. We suggest catalysing the transition through a 5-day workshop. Alternatively, you could spark the transition by adapting the steps directly to the *tole* level. Use your judgement and local input about what will work best in your context, and adapt the suggested steps accordingly.

The workshop draws out and integrates the perspectives of diverse CFUG members. This is done through joint visioning and through developing and using a system by which the group monitors its progress and assesses its strengths and weaknesses. The assessment is then used as the starting point for prioritising the CFUG's activities for the year. In the workshop, these processes are interwoven with various activities—including experiential games—that emphasise the meaning and significance of active co-learning and collaboration. We have not specified an introduction or wrap-up for each session, but when planning the workshop, you should add a clear introduction and brief conclusion to each session.

The workshop is just the beginning of the CFUG's transition to the approach. The transition cannot work if the learning stays with the workshop participants. For the approach to take root and bear fruit, the ideas must be shared with all members and shaped by their input. Thus, facilitators need to ensure that the followup is well planned.

A shift towards more learning-based and collaborative governance and management relies on a corresponding shift in the underlying attitudes of involved actors, including: from 'top down' to participatory, from exclusionary to inclusive, from elite–oriented to pro-poor, and from dependent or independent to interdependent and proactive. Shifts in attitudes and beliefs cannot be forced, neither can they be planned in the way that other changes can. But facilitators and CFUG members can enable an awareness of attitudes and assumptions—including their own. Throughout discussions, encourage reflection on where attitudes come from and how they affect behaviour, relations, other people and CFUG practices.

Steps in Stage Two

(Pre–workshop)

Step 3. Planning the workshop

(Workshop)

Step 4. Beginning the workshop

Step 5. Exploring the approach and key concepts

Step 6. Creating a shared vision of the future
Step 7. Developing indicators for a self-monitoring system
Step 8. Assessing the current situation using self-monitoring
Step 9. Identifying and exploring priority areas for action
Step 10. Planning for involvement of all CFUG members

(Post–workshop)

Step 11. Moving ahead by sharing and revising priorities and plans
Step 12. Seeking approval of CFUG plans by the general assembly

Note that Steps 6–9 are not only part of the workshop, but are also important steps in an ongoing use of the approach (so the CFUG will return to cycle through these once they institutionalise the approach as per Stage Three). Furthermore, there is an inherent logic to the order (or flow) of these four steps:

» The visioning (Step 6) creates the foundation for developing indicators;
  » the indicators (Step 7) are used as the basis for the self-assessment; and
    » the self-assessment (Step 8) identifies weak areas, which become the starting point for identifying priority areas for action (Step 9).

Because the visioning, indicators and self-assessment build upon one another, it is important to use them in sequence both in the workshop and in subsequent planning.

Step 3

Planning the workshop

Planning the workshop

Objective

- To design a workshop that sparks the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach, including visioning and monitoring.

Pointers

Enable learning. People learn more when they:
- are relaxed and enjoying themselves;
- can draw on their own experiences; and
- can combine seeing, hearing and speaking about ideas (not just listening).

Design a creative workshop that offers a good balance between hands-on experience, participant sharing and the incorporation of new information.

Reduce barriers to participation. Several factors can limit effective participation in a workshop, including social relations and participants' confidence. Literacy and language also influence how easily and effectively different people can engage in a process. During workshop planning, brainstorm about these and other influences on accessibility and participation and how to address them. Design the workshop to accommodate nonliterate people and others who typically have difficulty engaging in participatory processes; for example, use symbols and pictures for recording, as well as the written word.

Tasks

Task 3.1. Joint workshop planning with CFUG and committee members

How:

General workshop planning meeting(s) and followup

a. Carry out a joint meeting (or meetings) about workshop goals, participants, venue, timing and costs with executive committee members and other CFUG representatives. Clarify the reason for the workshop and its links to the steps and learning so far, and to the CFUG's identified interests in innovation.

   Reach agreement on who will participate in the workshop. The maximum manageable number of participants for this type of workshop is usually 40 or fewer, depending on the venue, resources and facilitators. Participants should include a good cross-section of CFUG members—

in gender, age, ethnic or caste group, class and *tole* representation—both to achieve effective representation and to provide linkages back to the rest of the members.

b. Followup and link with formal or informal discussions at the *tole* levels as needed; some decisions, such as participation, may require some back and forth between a workshop planning group and individual *toles*.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–2 hours, plus time for followup.

Task 3.2. In–depth workshop planning with facilitators

How: Detailed workshop planning meeting(s)

a. Gather all facilitators (and other actors as needed) to plan the workshop processes, roles, responsibilities, timing, and resources. Start by planning the overall flow of the workshop, then plan each specific session. At the end, check back to see whether the sessions flow well together and add up to the desired whole.
b. Clarify each facilitator's responsibilities, such as confirming plans with the participants and arranging the venue, resources, materials and refreshments.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: One to three planning sessions of 2–3 hours each, plus time as needed for gathering materials and confirming plans with others.

Step 4

Beginning the workshop

Beginning the workshop

Objectives

For workshop participants and facilitators to:
- get to know one another better.
- share and clarify which workshop expectations are likely to be met.
- share and clarify workshop objectives and steps of the learning process.
- establish norms for the workshop.

Pointers

This step lays the foundation for the rest of Stage Two, so take enough time to establish clear, shared expectations and develop commitment to the experience of exploring an adaptive collaborative approach through a workshop. At the same time, aim to keep things lively, moving forward and focused.

Tasks

Task 4.1. Begin with introductions

How: Game in plenary

a. Play an 'icebreaker game', such as Proverb Pairs (described in Annex B).

Resources: Paper and pen, or as needed for the exercise.

Time: 30 minutes.

Task 4.2. Set workshop goals and expectations

How: Presentation, discussion and workshop refining in plenary

a. Share the planned workshop goals and agenda with the whole group and post on the wall so everyone can see them. Invite questions and discussion, and clarify and adjust the goals and agenda as needed.
b. Jointly set realistic expectations for the workshop. One approach is to have participants write their workshop expectations on 10x20 cm 'meta' cards; a facilitator reads these aloud and tapes the cards up on the wall, clustering similar cards, and the group discusses the feasibility of each expectation. Using these, make the appropriate adjustments to workshop plans and goals.

c. Create a workshop subcommittee—such as a 'documenting team' or a 'recording subcommittee'—consisting of facilitators and participants who will document the workshop process and the lessons and plans it generates. This record of the workshop will be used later to help share and build on the experience and outcomes with other CFUG members.
d. Create an additional small group—a 'workshop process team'—of facilitators and two or three participants who will reflect daily on progress and process, and adjust the workshop design and management as needed. This can give participants more ownership of the workshop as well as make the workshop more responsive to participants' needs and unanticipated opportunities or challenges. The team can involve the same participants each day, or different participants can take turns.
e. Invite participants to select a person who will share formal closing reflections at the end of the workshop.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 30 minutes.

Task 4.3. Set norms

How: Working in pairs and sharing

a. Divide workshop participants into small groups or pairs to brainstorm 'norms' for the workshop. 'Norms' here refers to agreed ideas about how the participants and facilitators will try to communicate, act and interact so that the workshop is inclusive, effective and enriching for all participants.
b. Have the groups share their ideas in plenary. Record the norms that are agreeable to all workshop participants on flipchart paper and post them on the wall for everyone to see. Review, refine and confirm the final list of norms.
c. At the beginning of each day or as needed during the workshop, refer to the norms to support a constructive group process.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 15–20 minutes.

Step 5

Exploring the approach and key concepts

Exploring the approach and key concepts

Objective

- To develop an understanding of the adaptive collaborative approach, including of the key concepts of active co-learning and collaboration.

Pointers

This step involves three workshop sessions (each described as a task) that explore the concepts of active co-learning and collaboration and how these can help CFUGs meet their goals. The tasks move between a conceptual and an experiential focus. Participants move from *discussing* the concepts to *experiencing* learning and collaboration through games, then return to discussing, but this time in concrete terms based on their experiences. This iteration—which mirrors the action–reflection loop of the adaptive collaborative approach—helps participants to generate and apply their learning.

Clarify concepts through sayings, stories and examples. Create understanding of the concepts by linking to local proverbs and stories. Facilitators in our project, for example, introduced monitoring with the phrase 'looking back' (*pharkera herne*), then linked that to the Nepali expression of 'looking back like a lion' (*sinhawalokan*). This was useful for conjuring the image of the sage lion who regularly turns back to check its path. In some workshops, the need for realistic and honest self-reflection or monitoring was effectively introduced through the Mirror Game (Annex B).

In terms of Nepali phrasing, since the concepts of the approach are abstract, the specific terms may vary. In our experiences, the following were useful concepts and translations in most CFUGs:

- adaptive collaborative approach: *sikaimukhi samuhik byabasthapan paddhati* (or *SiSaBya* for short)
- collaboration: *sahakarya*
- learning together: *apasi-sikai*
- looking back: *pharkera herne*
- self-monitoring: *swa-mulyankan* (or *swa-anugaman*)
- good governance: s*ushasan*
- inclusion: s*amabesikaran.*

See 'The Adaptive Collaborative Approach' chapter of this guidebook and McDougall *et al.* (2008) for examples from CFUGs using the approach.

Deepen meaning through experience. Explore the concepts experientially through well-designed games. Relevant games for these concepts are ones in which:

- participants are more likely to succeed when they communicate and collaborate effectively (rather than act in isolation); and/or
- there are opportunities to reflect on and reassess strategies, and improvement is iterative and learning-based (rather than a one-time success).

The 'debriefing' discussion after a game is critical to crystallising the learning. In this discussion, participants may be inclined to talk only about what happened in concrete terms, so the facilitators need to help them jointly analyse the deeper (more abstract) lessons and explore how they apply to community forestry. For example, how do lessons about collaboration among teammates link to challenges or opportunities for collaboration among *toles* or between the CFUG and other organisations? Descriptions of games and questions to guide debriefing discussions are given in Annex B.

Revisit this step throughout the workshop. The exploration in Step 5 lays the foundation for understanding the larger adaptive collaborative approach and the later steps of visioning and self-monitoring (Steps 6, 7 and 8). For this reason, we strongly encourage you to briefly revisit the concepts and learning from Step 6 games and discussions during each day of the workshop. For example, each day you might reinforce the concepts and learning by asking participants to summarise the adaptive collaborative approach in their own words, reflect on the lessons from a game or play a new learning or collaboration game. Even after the workshop, as the approach is being institutionalised, it may be useful to refresh the conceptual and experiential understanding of active co-learning and collaboration through discussions and games.

Tasks

Task 5.1. Explore the concepts and purpose of the approach

How:

Facilitator presentation and plenary discussion

a. In a mini-presentation and discussion:
   - Remind the group of the CFUG's successes and challenges (from Stage One). Highlight if and how a

transition to a new approach may help the group meet its goals; and
- Introduce and discuss the approach, focusing on collaboration and active co-learning. Explain adaptive collaboration as a way of viewing, designing and implementing decision making and planning, and as a strategy for shaping and meeting goals. Offer an example, story or analogy illustrating collaboration and active co-learning and their influence on process and outcomes.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 30 minutes.

Task 5.2. Play and debrief a learning and collaboration game

How: Experiential game(s) in small groups and debrief discussion

a. Facilitate one or two games that let participants engage in activities that spark collaboration (versus individual effort) and active co-learning (versus the lack of it). Examples include the Human Knot, the Circle Game, and No-hands Passing (Annex B).
b. Facilitate a debriefing discussion to draw out participants' learning from the game. Use debriefing questions to move from the concrete experience of the game to developing more general lessons about collaboration and learning in community forestry. In this, consider both collaboration among socio-economic groups, *toles*, and others within the CFUG and collaboration with outside actors, such as other CFUGs, agencies and nongovernmental organisations. A good flow of debrief questions could be as follows:
   - How successful were the teams? If each team tried several times, did their standing change, and why?
   - What were the indicators of success? How did they measure their improvement?
   - How much collaboration and learning did each team engage in their various attempts at the task? Was the learning individual or shared? Was the learning incidental or planned (active)?
   - Did the collaboration and learning contribute to the outcomes?

- What helped or hindered the collaboration and learning?
- What links are there between playing the game and managing a community forest?

Resources: Various, depending on the game.

Time: Approximately 20 minutes to one hour for the game and debrief, depending on the game.

Task 5.3. Present the approach in action

How: Facilitator presentation and plenary discussion

a. Highlight the concepts. Share the two components and nine principles as described in 'The Adaptive Collaborative Approach' chapter. Facilitate a discussion on active co-learning and collaboration, drawing links to the lessons from the games as appropriate.
b. Describe a real-life example of what the approach looks like in CFUG planning. Explore long-and medium-term, and annual planning and the links between them. Make clear that the example is not a prescription or a blueprint and that the group will innovate, experiment and adopt a spirit of learning and openness to collaboration. Use the example above to illuminate:
   - Attitudes: why learning and collaboration are fundamental to making a transition to the approach.
   - Enabling processes: how visioning and self-monitoring form the basis for prioritising actions and planning.
   - Enabling arrangements: how *toles*, *tole*–executive committee linkages, and inclusive general assemblies create more 'space' for all members to engage; and how action groups, and leadership positions for marginalised members can contribute to activeness and equity.
c. Share a real example of the approach at the activity level (i.e., of one specific action plan such as an income generation activity). Illustrate changes in processes, attitudes and outcomes. Identify some ways a CFUG can implement the approach at the activity level—for example, in:
   - shaping arrangements (forming action groups);
   - attitudes (cultivating a learning attitude, working together); and

- group processes (identifying uncertainties and risks, using learning questions to gather information and generate knowledge, reflecting to generate shared understanding, collaborating).

d. Engage the group in discussion on the above, including their questions and adding their experiences from the CFUG or other fields.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–1.5 hours.

Step 6

Creating a shared vision of the future

Creating a shared vision of the future

Objective

- To create a shared vision and goals for the CFUG.

Pointers

Focus on the desired future. This exercise moves from creating a long-term (20-year) vision to creating medium-term (5- to 10-year) goals based on that ideal. The goals will be used in Step 7 when the group develops indicators for self-monitoring. In developing the vision and goals, establish that the exercise is to describe the desired future—not the likely future based on the current path.

Example: In 10 years …

- The CFUG will have developed sustainable forest management practices, with effective protection of trees, management of trees, and nurturing of non-timber forest products.
- There will be equitable distribution of forest resources, and marginalised and poor users will have sufficient access to income generating activities.
- The CFUG will have effective communication among different actors, including all members, the executive committee, and outside actors.

Work in small groups and use drawings to get everyone engaged and creative. Encourage thinking of possibilities by asking each group to draw its vision rather than write it. Emphasise that it is the ideas that are important, not the quality of the art. Statements of goals can then be developed from the drawings.

Prepare participants for being flexible. This exercise will not produce a 'final' vision or set of goals. The products of the workshop will change—or at least be refined—when taken to the entire CFUG in the workshop followup.

Task

Task 6.1. Develop a shared vision and goals for the future

How:

Small–group drawing of ideal vision and plenary creation of goals

a. Explain the concept of an ideal vision. 'Ideal' can be a difficult concept; help clarify by asking participants whether they want their families and their neighbours to stay in the same situation they are in now, or be in a better

situation in the future. Then ask them to focus on that better future for this exercise.

b. Divide into small, homogeneous groups (such as all women and all men, or by *tole* or occupation) and have participants draw their ideal visions of the CFUG approximately 20 years hence. Make sure everyone understands the time period; clarify by referring to when participants' very young children are grown. Ask the groups to include both people and forests in their visions, plus other things that they see as linked to the forest, such as health, water, food or policies. Also ask them to include the group's ideal governance (i.e., decision-making practices, including who is involved).
c. Have the groups present their visions to plenary and post the drawings on the wall. Find the commonalities shared by all the pictures and list these on the flipchart, both in the words suggested by the participants and as pictures. From this list, create a shared long-term vision in writing.
d. In plenary, draft medium-term (5- to 10-year) goals based on the vision and list them on the flipchart. Each drafted statement should address one aspect of the vision (including governance and decision making) and relate to the drawings. Work with participants to express each goal as a clearly worded, complete sentence that states a positive statement (such as 'Hillsides are green and stable', for example, rather than 'No erosion'). Keep the number of goals workable—perhaps a maximum of eight.
e. Lead a final group reflection on the vision and goals. Do they clearly express the group's desired future? Are participants in agreement on their vision and goals? Make any final adjustments to them. Leave the drawings on the walls as inspiration for future meetings.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: Two hours.

Step 7

Developing indicators for a self-monitoring system

Developing indicators for a self-monitoring system

Objectives

- To create a shared understanding of self-monitoring as a tool for planning.
- To create indicators, which are the building blocks of the self-monitoring system.

Pointers

The group will develop indicators based on the vision and goals generated in Step 6. In later steps, and at regular intervals after the workshop, the group will use these indicators to see whether it is moving towards—or away from—its goals.

Emphasise that self-monitoring is a tool for learning and improvement. A self-monitoring system is a tool for CFUG reflection, learning and improvement, and the basis for the planning process—not an external review, punishment or competition. Self-monitoring enables a CFUG to become more aware of its situation and how that situation is changing. It allows the CFUG to better understand the outcomes of its own decisions and actions, as well as perceive external influences, on an ongoing basis. This awareness and understanding allows the CFUG to strengthen its decision making and planning to better meet its goals. Box 7 illustrates the difference between self-monitoring that is used for learning and self-monitoring applied without such a clear learning link.

In explaining the concept, emphasise the 'self' in self-monitoring. It is the CFUG—not an outside actor—that owns, controls and uses the system. All CFUG members are important in creating and using the system and learning together in the self-assessments.

The concept of, and need for, self-monitoring can be difficult to explain. The Mirror Game (Annex B) can be useful to show how self-monitoring is like looking in the mirror so that one can see oneself more clearly.

Clarify how self-monitoring works. The monitoring system consists of indicators created by the group, relevant information collected by members, and a shared self-assessment using those indicators. At the agreed interval, the group assesses, scores, records and reflects on its progress towards each indicator following pointers regarding indicators, including reasons for the progress or lack thereof (see following pointers regarding indicators). The group then readjusts its governance and management plans accordingly and implements revised plans. As the new plans are implemented,

Box 7. Self-monitoring: Differences in learning orientation and outcomes

Here we offer an example from one CFUG which used self-monitoring in two ways: first, with relatively little learning–orientation; and subsequently, with a clearer learning– and improvement–orientation.

Monitoring without a clear learning orientation

The executive committee of one midhills CFUG tried to incorporate monitoring into its planning process during the year prior to the Adaptive Collaborative Research Project. Although the monitoring was conducted at the *tole* level, it was completed very quickly and marginalised members perceived it to have been dominated by a few members. Furthermore, participants were unclear as to its purpose: they perceived it to be either a competition between *toles* or an external assessment (with the potential risk of punishment for CFUG weaknesses). As a result, the *toles* assessed the CFUG as having achieved a near-perfect score on most indicators. Thus, there was very little room for improvement or scope for learning from past efforts or mistakes. The executive committee did later develop some action plans, but their links to the *tole* assessments were not clear and the slightly weaker areas that were noted were not prioritised in plan development. Rather, the action plans were based on issues identified by the committee and ideas collected from those who spoke influentially in the general assembly. As a result, the situation before the monitoring exercises continued, with plans driven largely by the committee and dominant CFUG members, and little specific input from, or benefit for marginalised users.

Monitoring used to enable learning

During the participatory action research, the CFUG revisited the idea of monitoring, and explored how learning could be used as the basis for planning. Members developed a shared vision and indicators of progress towards the vision. They began using these indicators to assess progress, identify weaknesses, and prioritise areas for action. These processes—with the explicit purpose of shared reflection, learning and improvement—created opportunities for the group to improve its management and governance. This process began at the *tole* level, with efforts to include all members. *Toles* selected representatives to work with the executive committee to make sure that their views and priorities were carried upwards. This shift contributed to several changes in the CFUG, including the redistribution of leadership and an increased emphasis on pro-poor initiatives, such as loans for income generation activities.

it collects information for the next assessment, and the cycle of assessment, adjustment and monitoring continues. In this way, CFUG self-monitoring can be understood as central to the approach's spiral or loop: reflection–planning–action–self-monitoring–reflection–(re)planning–revised action…

Explain when the CFUG will use self-monitoring. CFUG self-assessments should ideally be conducted approximately every six months. We suggest that the group undertake a full *tole*-based self-assessment once a year as the basis for creating its annual plan, and then carry out a quicker ('mini') self-assessment at the 6-month midpoint of implementing that plan. This mini assessment allows for learning and minor adjustments halfway through implementing the annual plan. Self-monitoring is also used as the basis for revision of the Operational Plan and Constitution every 5 to 10 years (see Annex A).

Introduce indicators as measuring all aspects of goals. Indicators are the specific benchmarks or information points the group will track in order to assess progress towards its vision and goals. In other words, the group will use them as their 'measuring stick' to know if and how much they are moving in their desired direction. Indicators are developed from, and relate to, all aspects of the CFUG's own goals, including quality of governance, equity, relations with external actors, forest sustainability and benefits such as income. Further explanations and examples of community forestry indicators are given in Ritchie *et al.* (2000).

One approach to explaining indicators is to recall the learning games played in earlier sessions and ask people to reflect on what signs or signals they used to assess their teams' success: Did a team's speed or number of errors tell them about progress? The concept can also be introduced through familiar examples, such as 'Where there is smoke, there is fire' (with smoke being the indicator). Some facilitators in our project workshops asked participants, 'How do you know that a family is happy? What are the signs of a happy family?' Participants mentioned close family relationships, good health, and a stable financial situation. Facilitators then asked them to relate this concept to community forestry and their goals and work on indicators for each of those.

Keep the indicators directly related to the vision and goals. To work effectively, indicators need to be clearly related to

the CFUG's goals and the goals need to be directly drawn from the CFUG's vision. In the tasks below, the group will identify its indicators from the goals it has developed (in the previous step). If desired, in the indicator creation task below emphasise the connection between indicators and vision and goals by using a tree as a metaphor. The whole tree represents the overall vision, the branches are goal statements, and the leaves are indicators. If the tree is healthy, then the leaves are green and undamaged; if the tree is not healthy, they show signs of weakness or sickness. This metaphor can be drawn on flipchart paper.

Aim for quality of indicators, not quantity. To be useful, indicators need to be:

- focused on the major points of the goals—and only those points;
- clear, specific and precise;
- reliable; and
- measurable by the community with the resources and time available.

To determine whether an indicator is reliable, Ritchie *et al.* (2000) suggest asking, 'Would different people interpret, measure, and get the same result for this indicator?' Some indicators are too big to measure directly and should be broken down, so that specific information can be gathered consistently and accurately.

Encourage the group to find a good balance between a necessary level of detail and the time available to collect and assess the information; the indicators must be measurable by the community with the resources and time available.

Tasks

Task 7.1. Explain and explore self-monitoring

How:

Facilitator presentation and plenary discussion

a. In a plenary session, present information about CFUG self-monitoring. Address the following questions, providing examples:
   - What is CFUG self-monitoring? Note what it is and what it is not, using the learning game from Step 5 as an example.
   - Who controls it and uses the knowledge from it?

- How does self-monitoring work in practice and when does the CFUG use it?

b. To demonstrate why self-monitoring is needed, play the Mirror Game (Annex B).

Resources: For the presentation, prepared flipchart points and visuals; for the Mirror Game, mirror and washable paint for faces.

Time: 30 minutes plus discussion.

Task 7.2. Develop indicators from the goals

How: Plenary explanation, followed by small-group work, and then presentation back to plenary

a. In plenary, introduce the concept of indicators and the next part of this task:
   - Describe indicators as the building blocks of the CFUG self-monitoring system for assessing progress. Use local examples and sayings to reinforce the concept.
   - Explain that the group will develop indicators from their goals in this session. Make sure participants know they will be using these indicators for CFUG self-assessment later in the workshop, as the basis for identifying the CFUG's stronger and weaker areas.
   - Describe what makes a good quality indicator. Make sure this is posted where everyone can see it so participants can keep this in mind as they develop their indicators.

b. Break into small groups—perhaps a maximum of five people each, or as many groups as there are goals. Give each group a goal and ask participants to identify indicators for that goal and the associated information needed to assess progress (towards the indicator). The groups should note whether the information needs to be collected once a year or more frequently.

c. To revise and refine the draft indicators, start by recalling what makes a good quality indicator, then conduct a small-group 'tour'. One participant stays at his or her group's station with the draft indicators while the others travel together to the next station, where they review the indicators, ask questions, and make suggestions. Allow about 10 minutes for each station visit, then ring a bell to signal time to rotate. When participants have rejoined their original groups, the person who stayed at each

station summarises all the suggestions offered by the visiting participants. The groups then incorporate the suggested changes and write the revised indicators on flipchart paper.

d. Alternatively, the small groups can present their draft indicators in a plenary session, and the full group can make suggestions for adjusting them. This is faster, but fewer people end up with in-depth knowledge of all the indicators.

e. To wrap up the session, have each small group present the revised indicators to plenary and post them on the wall. They will be used for CFUG self-assessment in the next step.

Resources: For the presentation, prepared flipchart points and visuals; for the small groups, flipchart paper, markers and tape, plus a bell for signalling rotation.

Time: 20–30 minutes for the presentation; 2–4 hours for the small-group work and conclusion, depending on the number of goal statements and indicators.

Step 8

Assessing the current situation using self-monitoring

Assessing the current situation using self-monitoring

Objective

- To apply the self-monitoring system as the basis for prioritising and planning.

Pointers

This step focuses on using the indicators as the basis for a CFUG self-assessment that illuminates stronger and weaker areas of governance and management, so the group can identify priority areas for action.

Start with a refresher on learning and collaboration. If this step takes place on a different day from the development of the indicators (Step 7), start by recalling how self-monitoring supports learning and improvement. One strategy is to play another experiential game about learning or collaboration. Use the game's debriefing discussion to help participants focus on how they monitored progress and reflected on their performance while playing the game. Use collaboration-related lessons to help spark reflection in the sessions about relations—and potential synergies—among actors within the CFUG and between the CFUG and external actors (such as the village development committee, other CFUGs or an NGO).

Work in small groups for the self-assessment. Using small groups can prevent the more outspoken or elite members from dominating the session. One method that works well is the 'rotating small group': sets of indicators are posted around the room, for example, all forest and environment indicators in one set. The indicators in each set are scored by one small group. At a signal, the groups rotate to the next set of indicators and score them. In this way, all groups have the chance to assess all indicators.

Use whatever scoring system is appropriate for the participants. For people who are not numerically literate, progress towards a goal—as measured by an indicator—could be scored by a 'low–medium–high' or 'egg–chick–chicken' system. The phases of the moon also work well—this was chosen by all the CFUGs in our research (Figure 6). Once the scoring system is chosen, the group begins the 'small-group rotation' process (above), with each small group assessing their set of indicators. As the group decides on a score for each indicator, they place a mark in the appropriate column. At the end of all the rotations (as described in the previous paragraph), each indicator will have multiple scores because it will have been scored by several small groups. The group can decide whether it wants final scores for each indicator

expressed as a distribution (i.e., multiple scores) or averaged to create a single score for each one. Although having multiple scores is 'messier' than an average score, the multiple scores save time and explicitly reflect the diversity of perspectives on each indicator.

Figure 6. Forest sustainability indicators, as scored by 6 groups

Indicator	○ New moon	☾ Quarter-moon	◖ Half-moon	◕ Three-quarter moon	● Full moon
Forest protection measures have been adopted		II	II	II	
Plantation established on barren land	IIIII	I			
Number of forest animals, including birds, has increased		III	III		
Forest has different tree and shrub species of various ages or stages			III	III	
Users' demand for forest products has been fulfilled		I	III	II	

From Andheri Bhajana CFUG, Sankhuwasabha District.

Tread carefully if scores differ. The scoring may expose different views, especially about sensitive issues like benefit sharing. At this early stage of developing an adaptive collaborative approach, plenary discussions about such issues may erupt into conflict. (Although maintaining the diversity of views by keeping the multiple scores—rather than averaging them—records everyone's voice and still identifies strong and weak areas for action planning, but is less likely to aggravate tensions.) Conflict is not necessarily negative, nor should it be avoided, but sensitive issues may need to be addressed in a constructive way in a conducive setting, such as a facilitated small group. Moreover, workshop time is limited. Thus, during the plenary wrap–up of indicator scoring, use your judgement about how deeply to delve into the differences in that moment versus following up later. The diversity of opinions may have to be simply acknowledged during the plenary, underscoring that reality is different for different people. Bringing these

different actors closer to understanding one another's views may need to happen over an extended time.

Use time efficiently. Prepare the scoring sheets for Task 2 during a break in Task 1, so as not to use up participants' time.

Tasks

Task 8.1. Conduct a refresher on active co-learning and collaboration

How:

Play another experiential game

a. To remind participants about the value of active co-learning and collaboration, facilitate a new game. We suggest the Ball Toss (Annex B), because it can be used to highlight co-learning and collaboration and involves minimal set–up and time.
b. Debrief the game with similar guiding questions as earlier games; encourage participants to relate this game experience to visions, goals, self-monitoring, indicators, active co-learning and collaboration.

Resources:

One ball for each small group.

Time:

Approximately 30 to 60 minutes (e.g., 15–30 minutes for the game plus 20 minutes for the debrief discussion), depending on group size.

Task 8.2. Conduct a CFUG self-assessment using the indicators

How:

Small–group assessments using indicators

a. With the group, decide on a scoring system for the self-monitoring, such as the moon system (Figure 6) or an alternative agreed by the group. Prepare the scoring sheets, with only one goal and its indicators per page, and post them around the room.
b. Explain the objectives of the self-assessment and give an overview of the process, including a reminder of the scoring system. Now that participants have developed a vision, goals and indicators, it is the time to reflect on progress towards each goal, using the indicators. In doing this, participants will generate specific knowledge about

many key facets of the CFUG's situation. Together, the scored indicators will give a good overall picture of the strong and weak areas so that the group can prioritise areas for action.

c. Carry out indicator assessments using a rotation system. Divide participants into subgroups and distribute the scoring sheets among the small groups (one sheet with a goal and all its indicators per group). Space the small groups so that they have enough room to speak freely. Each small group may want to choose its own facilitator, who will have the following responsibilities:
   - supporting all members' participation;
   - confirming that everyone understands the indicators to mean the same thing, and clarifying and resolving differences;
   - helping the group discuss how well the CFUG is currently doing on the indicators;
   - identifying the information or evidence that is the basis for their judgement;
   - reaching agreement on the small group's scores for each of their indicators and writing them on the matrix (e.g., as a 'dot' in the appropriate 'moon phase' column for each indicator);
   - noting on the matrix or another flipchart the reasons for each score.

   At an agreed signal, the small groups rotate to the next station and assess that set of indicators. In terms of timing of rotations, keep things moving, but allow enough time so that participants do not feel rushed.

d. After all the small groups have visited all the stations, collect and share the scored indicators. Post the assessments where everyone can see them. Depending on the groups' preference, either keep the multiple scores or create an average score for each indicator.

e. Optional: reflect on the process. Before using the assessments to consider CFUG strengths and weaknesses, the group may want to discuss the self-assessment experience. In small groups and/or plenary, invite participants to share their reflections on the process:
   - What did they think of the reflection, discussions and scoring method?
   - What did they learn about their CFUG?
   - Did they see the current situation in a new light or through others' eyes?

Resources:	Flipchart paper, markers and tape for each small group; a bell for signalling rotation.
Time:	For the set–up, 15–30 minutes; for the small group scoring, 10 minutes per indicator; for considering the scores and discussing the process, 30–60 minutes.

Step 9

Identifying and exploring priority areas for action

Identifying and exploring priority areas for action

Objectives

- To identify current strengths and weaknesses.
- To prioritise areas for revised or new action and governance innovation.
- To examine priority areas as the basis for future action planning.

Pointers

Based on the scoring of indicators in Step 8, the group identifies strong and weak areas, then prioritises some weaker areas and prepares draft action plans to address them. During our research, for example, one CFUG workshop identified 20 weak areas based on the indicators and then selected six priorities for which they prepared draft action plans.

This step will yield the following outcomes:
- a preliminary list of priority areas;
- insights into each priority area; and
- a set of possible options for action on those priorities.

The priorities and ideas for action will be shared with other CFUG members after the workshop. In workshop followup sessions, all CFUG members will refine and revise these draft ideas and plans.

Use common sense to define priority areas. The indicators scoring (Step 8) will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses. If the group chooses to set a 'benchmark' distinguishing 'strong' versus 'weak' areas, they should still allow common sense and group preference to guide their prioritisation, rather than rigid adherence to the benchmark. Alternatively, instead of setting and using a benchmark as a quantitative cut–off point, the group can use a qualitative group discussion and assessment of what is strong and weak. The latter is more flexible but may take longer.

Prioritise both forestry activities and innovations in governance. Some of the ideas for priority action will involve specific CFUG *activities*, such as income–generating enterprises or forest improvements. Others will be about innovations in *governance*. These governance innovations may include strategies that would make planning more collaborative, such as *tole*-based decision making. Other strategies would include CFUG plans for active co-learning, such as using shared visioning and self-assessment routinely as the basis for planning. Adjustments in activities and

innovations in governance are linked, and both are critical in helping the CFUG become more effective and equitable.

Keep action planning preliminary. Action planning during the workshop is a first step only: the plans cannot be considered firm until the rest of the CFUG's members have become engaged in the adaptive collaborative approach, including self-monitoring and the related planning. Planning in this step is meant to bring together the learning and desires of workshop participants and create a launching point for future decision making and planning.

Tasks

Task 9.1. Identify strengths, weaknesses and priorities

How:

Plenary discussion

a. Set a benchmark. With the scored indicators posted up where they are easily visible, discuss and determine a benchmark score—the dividing line between strong and weak scores. For example, a group using the five moon phases described in Step 8 might decide on the half-moon as the benchmark, making new moons and quarter-moons the weak areas and the three-quarter and full moons the strengths.
b. Use the benchmark to identify the stronger areas. Facilitate brief plenary or small-group discussions to generate and record learning from the strengths:
   - Why are these areas strong? What factors enabled success?
   - What lessons can be drawn for other areas or issues? Did the group overcome any obstacles to earn the high scores in these areas, and if so, how?
   - Do any of these strong areas need to be continued as actions into the future?
c. Use the benchmark to identify the weaker areas—the areas for action and innovation. If there are many such areas, ask the group to choose 3 to 10 priorities, depending on available time, resources and interests. Make sure the prioritisation includes the views of all participants, especially of the poor and women. If only a few people tend to express their views in a plenary session, try using a 'dot' vote: distribute 3, 4 or 5 small dot stickers to each participant, list all the weak areas on a flipchart, and ask

everyone to place their dots next to the items they consider the highest priorities for action. The items that receive the most dots become the priorities.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape; dot stickers if needed.

Time: Approximately 1 hour (for setting the benchmark, 10 minutes; for identifying and discussing strengths, 20–30 minutes; for identifying and prioritising weaknesses, 10–20 minutes).

Task 9.2. Generate learning about prioritised weak areas

How: Small–group work followed by plenary discussion

a. In self-selected small groups, address the priority weak areas, one area per group. Emphasise that this planning is preliminary; plans will be adjusted and refined when all members are involved and the action groups take the lead. With the goal of strengthening its selected weak area in mind, each small group should generate shared knowledge about the issue, including the following:
   - why it is important to strengthen this area;
   - the forces or factors that make it weak and any that give it strength;
   - the history of the issue, past efforts to address it, and lessons learned;
   - any uncertainties, unknown factors, or missing information;
   - the realistic possible improvement in the indicators within 1 year, within five years;
   - options for strengthening the area through innovation in governance or management activities, with ideas about who could lead these actions; and
   - the best two or three options, their strengths and weaknesses, and potential challenges.

   Have each group record the major points on flipchart paper for presentation and later use.
b. Have the small groups present their learning and options in a plenary session. Facilitate this sensitively to keep the discussion constructive rather than laying blame.
c. Discuss the findings and options in plenary. Invite participants to add or correct information about an issue. Look for similarities and differences across the areas,

	and patterns in the strengths or weaknesses. Facilitate agreement on a draft summary of priority areas and options for action, to be shared with other members in the workshop followup.
Resources:	Flipchart paper, markers and tape.
Time:	1.5–2 hours total (for small-group work, 30–60 minutes; for presentations, 30 minutes; for discussion and preparation of final list, 30 minutes).

Step 10

Planning for involvement of all CFUG members

Planning for involvement of all CFUG members

Objectives

- To bring closure to the workshop, with reflection on learning.
- To prepare for sharing the approach and workshop learning with all CFUG members, and for adjusting and further developing plans for innovation and action.

Pointers

Focus on moving ahead. This step is a critical bridge that moves the transition process from the workshop to the rest of the CFUG and towards future innovation and action. Facilitators can support this in several ways:

- allowing time for unrushed discussion of workshop followup plans;
- emphasising that the workshop priorities and options are only the basis for final planning by the full CFUG;
- clarifying and reaching agreement on the followup plans, including responsibilities for tasks and sharing of progress; and
- offering facilitation and other support for sharing ideas from the workshop with all CFUG members.

Wrap up creatively. There are many ways to bring closure to a workshop, and facilitators often have their own preferred approaches. Below, we describe a small-group method, but we encourage you to use your judgement about what would work best. In most of our workshops, we found that participants were interested in sharing their reflections in creative ways, such as poems, in addition to organised feedback and closure activities. Making space for this sort of creative work adds value to the reflection and enhances the sense of community.

Tasks

Task 10.1. Plan the workshop followup

How:

Plenary session

a. In a plenary session, discuss the commitment to, and make plans for, the transition to an adaptive collaborative approach. What messages (lessons, ideas, action items) do they want to share and further develop with the other members? How will the workshop participants link with the rest of the CFUG? For example, will they use *tole* meetings? Will they need a general assembly to formalise the plans once they are agreed?

b. Discuss responsibility for each of the followup steps, including the sharing of workshop ideas and leading the action and innovation planning. Have participants appoint a task group—a such as a 'Next Steps Committee'—that includes executive committee members, *tole* representatives, and facilitators.
c. Determine the timeline for meetings and other agreed-upon actions.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1 hour.

Task 10.2. Wrap up the workshop

How: Small–group discussions followed by plenary sharing

a. Prepare by writing questions such as these, one per flipchart sheet:
   - What did you like best about the workshop?
   - What improvements or changes do you suggest for future workshops?
   - What was the most important thing you learned? How will you use this learning?
b. Divide participants into small groups and give each group one question. Ask them to discuss the question and record their ideas in bullet points. About 15 minutes should be sufficient.
c. Return to the plenary so that the groups can share their ideas.
d. Ask the person selected in Step 4, Task 2, to share formal closing reflections about the workshop. Other kinds of reflections could complement this, such as poems or songs about the experience that participants would like to volunteer.
e. Conclude by thanking and congratulating the participants on their achievements, restating the facilitation team's commitment, and encouraging the group to apply the learning and continue the transition process.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers, and tape sufficient for small-group work.

Time: 1 hour.

Step 11

Moving ahead by sharing and revising priorities and plans

Moving ahead by sharing and revising priorities and plans

Objectives

- To share the adaptive collaborative approach and workshop learning with all CFUG members.
- To further develop and refine the CFUG vision, goals, indicators, priorities, and action and innovation plans with all members.

Pointers

This step moves the idea of an adaptive collaborative approach from the workshop to the whole CFUG, and builds momentum for the transition to a more collaborative, inclusive, learning-based approach. The step is essential because it gives the whole CFUG legitimate ownership of its transition.

Work in small groups. All members should be included in this step. To promote participation, we suggest engaging people through small meetings rather than in the whole CFUG all at once. In the tasks below, we describe *tole* meetings because that was the process in our research sites. Every user group should decide for itself the most appropriate subgroups.

Delegate the facilitation of the groups. As the *tole* groups or other small groups become decision-making nodes, they will need facilitation. Initially, the team facilitators can work with them, but transferring the facilitation role to capable volunteers from within the CFUG will expand capacity among members and make the process more sustainable. This may require capacity building for these facilitators; training can be done internally or by connecting with facilitation training from outside the CFUG and facilitation team. The facilitation team can continue to provide mentoring and backstopping on an ongoing basis. The *tole* facilitators may be the *tole* representatives.

Be clear about leadership, ownership and benefits. Especially as plans become more final, make sure that the leadership of each proposed activity or innovation is clear to everyone. For example, if certain women expect that they will lead a cardamom sales initiative, their assumption should be made explicit in CFUG negotiations and planning. Decisions about leadership and benefits need to be negotiated and ultimately agreed by everyone. Ambiguity about leadership or beneficiaries could contribute to confusion or conflict.

Focus on both governance innovation and revising management activities. As discussed in Step 9, CFUG members should consider options for strengthening not only

what the CFUG does (management), but also how and who makes its decisions (governance). Options for the former may include developing or adjusting activities such as harvesting or income generation; options for the latter may include strategies to strengthen communication, conflict management, distribution practices or to institute self-monitoring.

Tasks

Task 11.1. Plan for the next steps

How:

Meetings of the Next Steps Committee

a. Facilitate a series of meetings of the Next Steps Committee to decide how to share the workshop ideas. The first meeting should focus on which subgroups the committee will meet with. For example, the committee may decide to hold a separate meeting with each *tole* group.
b. Get input from the *toles* (or other subgroups) about the process, including expectations, timing and locations.
c. In following meetings:
    - Set goals for the subgroup sharing sessions. Focus on the desired outcomes of each meeting, the lessons and ideas to be shared, how the participants can contribute, and what plans or decisions should be made.
    - Plan the process for the subgroup sharing sessions. Confirm the steps and timing of the meetings, the roles of members of the Next Steps Committee, and the tools they will need.
    - Check the process. Reflect on what will help all subgroup participants learn and contribute. Ensure that everyone who wants to participate will be able to do so effectively.
    - Plan details and logistics.

Resources:

Flipchart paper, markers and tape; all workshop notes.

Time:

1.5 hours, plus time for planning discussions with prospective subgroups.

Task 11.2. Share the approach, deepen learning and further develop plans

How: Participatory meeting ('mini–workshop') in each *tole* or other subgroup

a. Begin the participatory session in each *tole* or other subgroup by introducing the reason for the meeting and explaining that it is part of a CFUG-wide strengthening that began with the workshop. Make sure that all the key points in the ensuing discussions will be clearly recorded, so they can be taken forward to multi-*tole* meetings in the upcoming tasks.
b. Share the concepts of an adaptive collaborative approach in community forestry. Use an active co-learning and collaboration game with a debriefing discussion, if appropriate. Discuss the approach's components and principles, illustrating with stories or analogies. Describe the approach in action in a CFUG.
c. Lead the *tole* in a quick visioning exercise similar to that in the workshop; alternatively, share the vision already prepared during the workshop, discuss it, and make adjustments as agreed by the *tole* participants. Work towards consensus on a long-term (20-year) vision and medium-term (5- to 10-year) goals.
d. Revisit the concept of self-monitoring, including that it is a mechanism to promote learning and improvement. Then share the indicators developed by the workshop; review and refine them as agreed by the participants.
e. Undertake a CFUG self-assessment. Using the same system as in the workshop (such as moon phases), have the group score progress towards the goals as measured by the indicators. Have them also record key reasons for the scores. Participants can do this without knowing the workshop scores or they can begin with the workshop's scores, revising them as appropriate. The former allows for views that are fresh and free from influence, but takes more time; the latter approach may be less free, but also takes less time.
f. Based on the *tole*'s own assessment, identify the CFUG strengths and weaknesses and prioritise areas for innovation and action. Compare this with the priorities identified by the workshop, revise the list, and select a manageable number of priorities.

g. Explore options for innovation and action. Following the workshop procedures and discussion points (Step 9), have the participants brainstorm about options for innovation and action in their priority areas. Include consideration of forces that strengthen and weaken the issue, uncertainties, and assessment of various options. The group can develop its own options from scratch or begin with the workshop suggestions. Make sure these are recorded.
h. Synthesise learning and gaps. In a discussion, summarise the new understanding or learning that has emerged, especially about the forest or CFUG governance or management. Highlight any questions or uncertainties the group needs to focus on.
i. Discuss the Next Steps Committee's proposed plans for moving ahead and how the outcomes of this meeting fit with those. Have the *tole* select representatives for the next steps and clarify their responsibilities for providing input, feedback and followup—and make sure they keep all the records from this *tole* meeting.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape; materials for games.

Time: One full day per *tole* or other subgroup.

Task 11.3. Merge subgroup assessments and priorities into an agreed annual plan

How: Joint meetings of *tole* representatives, executive committee, Next Steps Committee and facilitators

a. Work jointly with the Next Steps Committee, *tole* representatives and executive committee to synthesise the vision, goals, indicators, assessments, strengths and weaknesses, and priority actions and innovations suggested by all the *toles* or other subgroups.
b. As questions or differences arise and as progress is made, have representatives return to their subgroups. The back-and-forth dialogue between the *toles* and the Next Steps Committee and executive should continue until agreement is reached on the major points. *Toles* may agree to disagree on some points as long as they can work constructively and allow the group to proceed.
c. Finalise in writing the current synthesis, including vision, goals, indicators, assessments, strengths and weaknesses,

priority management actions and governance innovations, and what action groups will lead these. Aim to be as specific as possible at this stage, while acknowledging that the action groups that will lead the activities will need to refine and adjust them. For example, if priority plans include continuing to use a self-monitoring system, then this synthesis should specify when, how and by whom the indicators will be reassessed, and how any necessary information will be gathered in the interim.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape; notebooks and pens.

Time: 2–6 hours, depending on the size of the CFUG, plus time for discussions with *toles.*

Step 12

Seeking approval of CFUG plans by the general assembly

Seeking approval of CFUG plans by the general assembly

Objective

- To gain approval of CFUG plans through an inclusive process.

Pointers

The purpose of the general assembly is to publicly and collectively formalise the decisions and plans developed through the workshop and followup processes. Before any plans are raised in this assembly, they should have been thoroughly negotiated and agreed to in the small groups and in *tole*–executive committee meetings.

Reach agreement on the major issues before the general assembly. In large forums like general assemblies, dominant actors—who tend to speak more, engage more confidently, and get better reception from other participants than marginalised members—can often sway or even determine the outcomes. To ensure a more inclusive form of decision making, thoroughly discuss and settle the important issues before the meeting, working with all relevant actors in a way that enables everyone to shape decisions. If the crucial issues are negotiated in *toles* and then in *tole*–executive committee meetings—as suggested in the previous steps—decisions can better reflect the views of all actors.

Follow a high-quality process. Even if much of the decision making has shifted to the *toles*, the general assembly meeting process is still very important. Providing a forum for all actors will add strength to the transition to more inclusive and learning-based governance; allowing the assembly to fall into old patterns with elite domination or token participation will inhibit such a transition.

To safeguard an inclusive, member-oriented process, avoid taking a lot of assembly time for formal speeches by leaders and guests. Identify priority issues and tasks beforehand—with the input of all CFUG members—and focus the assembly's processes and discussions on those matters. To encourage external actors as supporting actors, consider asking them to participate in the closing session, where they can contribute by responding to the decisions and plans of the CFUG. (Of course, this does not preclude direct engagement with external actors as needed for input or collaboration on specific activities beyond the assembly—this kind of proactive interaction remains important.)

Seating arrangements can affect discussions. If *toles* or interest groups will need to deliberate during the meeting, arrange their seating for efficient discussion and negotiation.

Be alert for conflict. Identify potentially sensitive issues that will be addressed in the assembly. Plan to support CFUG leaders in handling these issues and engaging all actors concerned, both in the planning stages and in the assembly itself.

Keep a record. Minutes from the assembly will be important. Have an impartial individual or team take minutes and record the decisions, both to keep the CFUG on track and to avoid confusion or even conflict. Have the record of decisions and major points read back to the group and corrected if necessary at the end of each part of the meeting. Make sure that the minutes accurately capture differing views as well as consensus points: the voices of dominant actors should not be the only voices on the record.

Be prepared for the need to update the Operational Plan or change the composition of the executive committee. The reflexive process leading up to the assembly may have sparked changes in plans or in confidence in the executive committee that require formal action. Executive committee elections are normally held every two to five years. In several of our research sites, however, by the time of the first assembly following the adaptive collaborative workshop, general members were calling for a new election because the CFUG was embarking on a new, more inclusive path of governance. As noted above, if identified as a need prior to the assembly, the selection of new executive committee members can happen through a *tole*-based process before being finalised in the general assembly meeting.

If the reflection has created significant changes in CFUGs plans, the group may want to update its Operational Plan accordingly, even if it is not due for formal 5–10 year revision. Forest Regulation 1995 gives CFUGs authority to add or adjust activities if they are approved through the general assembly and the CFUG informs the district forestry office a month prior to implementation. The District Forestry Officer can then consider the proposed plan's potential environmental impact; if no objections are raised, the CFUG may implement the plan. The Joint Technical Review Committee (2000) report

which is nonbinding, states that revisions to the Operational Plan can be made at least every two years (i.e., as a minimum interval). In practice, this means that any significant shifts in direction or plans can be submitted to the district forest office for approval every second year.

Tasks

Task 12.1. Plan the general assembly

How:

Planning meeting

a. Meet with the executive committee and the Next Steps Committee—or the appropriate combination of CFUG actors—to develop the goals, agenda and processes for the general assembly, as detailed below.
b. Make sure that the planning group understands that the assembly will be to formalise priorities and plans made through the *tole*-based processes. Check that they are clear about the specifics of the priorities and action plans, including:
   - ownership or leadership of each action plan;
   - intended goals and benefits;
   - available resources and opportunities for accessing needed resources; and
   - likely challenges and risks.
c. Develop the assembly agenda, for example, such as the following:
   - introduction;
   - review of previous year's progress;
   - next year's innovations, (revised and new) activities, and budgets;
   - discussion and endorsement of proposed revisions to the Operational Plan and Constitution;
   - executive committee elections (if required);
   - confirmation of plans for the next steps; and
   - closing.
d. Plan the assembly process and review the norms for the meeting. Anticipate potentially sensitive issues and identify ways to help conflicting interests find common ground. Also plan the logistics and seating arrangement.
e. Consider the possibility that a change in leadership might be raised during the assembly. Be prepared to help the CFUG deliberate about equitable representation of different demographic groups and special interests—perhaps in

tole-based (or other small-group) processes following the assembly. Selection of a new executive committee through *tole* or other small-group processes may need to be formalised in a followup general assembly.

f. Consider whether to invite outside actors who could contribute to the general assembly's goals by linking to and supporting the planned actions or innovations.

g. Divide general assembly roles among facilitators, executive committee members, and others as appropriate. Agree on responsibilities for the announcer, chairperson, facilitator and recorder. Identify also those who will: describe the previous year's activities, achievements, challenges and learning; report on past and projected expenditures and income; provide an overview of proposed innovations and actions; and present proposals for any revisions to the Operational Plan and Constitution based on the new plans and priorities.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: Approximately 2–3 hours.

Task 12.2. Conduct the general assembly

How: General assembly meeting using the agreed process

a. Support the CFUG in conducting a meeting that is inclusive, builds on *tole*-level decisions, focuses on CFUG issues, minimises time for speeches and special guests, and formalises all the planning done through collaborative processes. Consider using a sequence such as the following.

Session 1. Introduction

- Seat participants in a way that facilitates small-group discussion, if needed.
- Keep the introductory remarks brief, focusing on the purpose, agenda and schedule of the day. Assembly participants should see their previously identified priorities clearly reflected in the agenda, but allow adjustments or additions if necessary. Describe the planned process and norms of the assembly, and adjust them if necessary, based on the group's input. Encourage everyone's involvement, highlighting how and when people can participate in the meeting.

Session 2. Review of previous year's progress

- Have the secretary present the CFUG's progress report and the treasurer a financial report of the previous period.
- Have someone from the Next Steps Committee present a summary of the CFUG self-assessment (from the synthesis developed in Step 11).
- Include time for questions and comments from CFUG members. After discussion, clarification, and adjustments based on the suggestions of members, the reports can be put forward for final endorsement.

Session 3. Next year's innovations, activities and budgets

- Summarise the processes undertaken to arrive at the proposed innovations and actions including the workshop and the *tole* or subgroup meetings.
- Present the proposed:
  - innovations to governance (e.g., to institutionalise self-monitoring at the *tole* level every six months; to establish formal and active *tole* representative positions; to develop a boundary conflict resolution group; and
  - action plans (e.g., plantation activities; patrolling; income generating activities).
- Share the complete budget, including budgets for all activities and any fees paid to CFUG or executive committee members. This kind of transparency can contribute to building trust, allows meaningful informed participation, and can help to prevent future conflict.
- Organise discussion of the proposed innovations and action plans in small groups and a plenary session; adjust the plans if needed. Since all the plans have been thoroughly negotiated, this session will most likely involve only small adjustments and final questions before the plans are approved—but more significant changes are also possible. If significant, consider calling a break before the next session to allow time to incorporate these into the proposed Operational Plan or Constitution revisions.
- Confirm leadership for each agreed activity plan, naming the group that will lead each innovation or action. Discuss how these action groups will link to the executive committee and communicate with the rest of the members.

Session 4. Discussion and endorsement of revisions to the Operational Plan and Constitution

- Present the proposals for any necessary revisions to the Operational Plan or Constitution, incorporating any adjustments generated in the previous session.
- Discuss the proposals in subgroups; return group comments and suggestions in a brief plenary discussion. Incorporate changes on the spot, if possible. Alternatively, with the agreement of CFUG members, a subgroup can make refinements afterwards, and any necessary formal CFUG approval can be handled in a brief followup assembly.

Session 5. Executive committee elections

- If an executive committee election is due, concensus about election processes and representation of different groups should be negotiated beforehand, as a part of the *tole* and *tole*–executive committee discussions. Proposals for these points and their rationale can then be presented to the general assembly for adjustment or endorsement.
- If the need for an election is raised, work out an election procedure during the assembly if possible, and schedule the vote to follow in a timely manner.

Session 6. Confirmation of plans and next steps

- Read aloud all decisions and plans for final endorsement. Include plans for action groups to lead for the innovation and action plans, plus the procedure for communication between the action groups and the executive committee and between these and the rest of the CFUG.
- Make final corrections or adjustments as needed.
- Confirm the immediate plans for assembly followup and upcoming events.

Session 7. Closing

- Allow time for brief comments from a member or special guest, reflecting on the CFUG's progress during the assembly and looking ahead.

Resources:	Documents and notes; flipchart paper, markers and tape if the general assembly is small and worksheets can be seen by all; flipchart paper and markers for any small-group work; notebooks and pens for taking minutes.
Time:	One day, or more, as needed.

STAGE THREE: USING THE APPROACH IN UNDERTAKING ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIONS

An adaptive management approach...is learning to manage by managing to learn...

Bormann *et al.* (1993)

Goal

- To undertake the specific planning and implementation of each CFUG activity using an adaptive collaborative approach.

Overview

This stage addresses the 'activity level', which is the decision making about—and within—a specific management action or governance innovation (Box 8). This 'micro' level is distinct from, but fits inside, the overall CFUG planning that was the focus of Stage 2. Figure 7 shows how the activity level fits into the adaptive collaborative approach, as little 'loops' of action planning within the larger CFUG annual planning loop.

Box 8. Examples of innovations and actions

The innovations and actions emerge from the CFUG annual planning process, as described in Stage 2. In our experience, the main innovations that were integrated into ongoing governance were the development or adjustment of: *tole* representatives and *tole* committees; representation of marginalised users and women in leadership positions; self-monitoring processes as the basis for planning; and activities being led by learning-oriented action groups. Innovations that were implemented by action groups included: pursuing greater transparency by an executive committee (through a 'watchdog' action group); establishing a conflict management action group; creating an action group to monitor the equitable distribution of forest products; and setting up a loan monitoring and investment committee. Examples of activities implemented by action groups included setting up a bamboo nursery and craft enterprise, establishing a sawmill, distribution of small loans, reforestation and plantation activities, timber harvesting, trail construction, beekeeping training and establishment, and water tap construction.

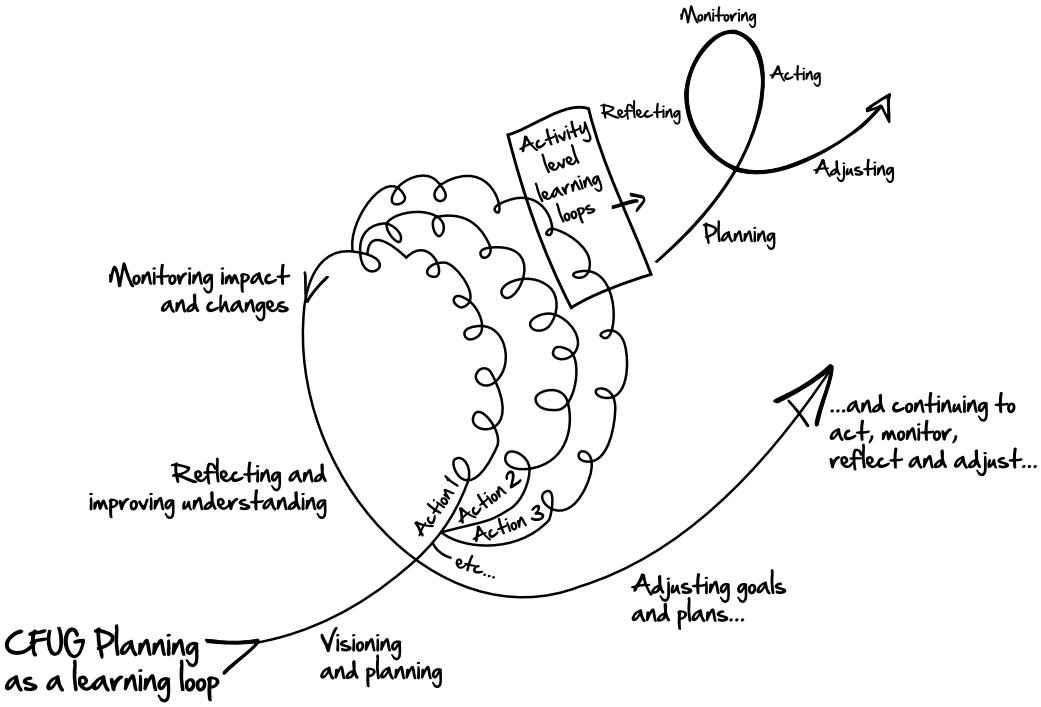
The activity level directly affects equity, community benefits and forest sustainability. Even with an excellent overall (long-term, medium-term and annual) planning process to steer the group in the right direction, achieving goals depends on the quality of activity-level processes. If learning, information, resources, connections, capacities or other factors are lacking at this level, activities can generate less than optimal results. Here we briefly explore three underlying strategies that can be used to support the effectiveness of activity-level planning and implementation: action groups; learning-based planning; and facilitation. These are woven throughout the steps outlined in this section.

Action groups

Our research suggested that common practice in CFUGs is for the executive committees to lead and implement activities. This can result in high time costs for committee members if the group is active; it can also contribute to a low sense of ownership of the activities by CFUG members.

In applying an adaptive collaborative approach at this level, CFUGs adjust both their arrangements and processes to be more inclusive and learning–oriented. The key shift in arrangement—as observed in our research—is that CFUGs use small volunteer action groups or subcommittees to lead the activities. The action group might be a single *tole*, multiple *toles*, an interest-based group (such as a women's cardamom–selling group or a potmakers' group), or a committee (such as a forest product distribution committee).

Figure 7. Activity 'learning loops' fitting within the CFUG planning cycle



Action groups offer several advantages. They enable general CFUG members to become more directly involved in decision making and activities, while reducing the workload—and more importantly, the total control—of the executive committee. They can create opportunities for members, including marginalised ones, to generate income and develop expertise. They also contribute to a sense of ownership by members and thus contribute to the likelihood of successful activity implementation.

Potential drawbacks of action groups include demands on group members' time, which is in short supply especially for poorer members. Also, when external actors—such as district forest office or project staff—engage with the CFUG, they may need to commit extra time so that they can work with multiple action groups, rather than just with the one executive committee.

Example: a forest encroachment monitoring committee. Based on their reflection and participatory self-monitoring, Manakamana CFUG created a Forestland Encroachment Monitoring Committee and charged it with resolving its issues of community forest encroachment. In coordination with the executive committee and *tole* committees, this action group began to effectively manage such conflicts through *tole*-level negotiation. It also contributed to developing a new, more effective forest monitoring and patrolling system. To avoid elite domination, the committee was composed of mainly 'medium' wealth-class members, plus a representative from the lowest economic class and one from a wealthy class. Based on the success of this subcommittee, Manakamana CFUG has created another action group, the Forest Product Distribution Committee, to address issues of equity.

Learning-based planning processes

Our research suggested that in common practice, activity planning often involves little shared reflection on past learning, gaps in knowledge, or potential negative effects on members, especially marginalised people. This can lead to dissatisfaction with the results.

In drawing on the adaptive collaborative approach, action groups shift their planning process and underlying attitude, by drawing on the approach's principles in their planning and decision making (see 'The Adaptive Collaborative Approach' chapter). In practice this may include action groups:

- identifying potential risks and gaps in information and ways to address them;
- assessing the need to connect with actors outside the CFUG (such as other CFUGs, networks, or NGOs) and engaging proactively with these actors, as needed;
- basing each activity in a cycle of action–reflection–adjusted action. This includes using small trials or experiments with identified learning questions, regularly monitoring the activity's progress and adjusting plans as needed.

Facilitation role at the activity level

A facilitator's role at this level is to encourage and support an action group in using active co-learning and collaboration as it plans and implements its activity. While the above arrangements and processes may be helpful, there is no one set of correct steps to catalyse or use the approach; rather, facilitators and action group members should internalise the concepts of the approach and then translate them into activity-level processes. A good place to start is to review the principles and consider what they might look like in action at this level.

For each specific activity (e.g., starting a nursery), decide what steps, processes and arrangements would support adaptive and collaborative capacity in undertaking the activity. Questions include, How can we develop a plan for this activity such that we…

- are sure the right people are involved and all understand and agree on a vision?
- identify uncertainties and the information we need to help our plans succeed—and figure out how to learn that together?
- actively use that shared learning to improve our understanding of the challenge and to improve our decisions and actions?

The facilitator may take the responsibility for recording key points of each meeting or the action group may assign someone else that task.

Action group ownership of facilitation

Using a learning and collaboration-based process in action groups will require facilitation in each action group, as described above. Initially the CFUG's facilitation team can fulfil this role, but—similar to *tole*-based decision making—it is a good idea to ultimately transfer the facilitation to action group members themselves, if possible. Depending on the existing facilitation skill levels, group relations, and the complexity of the activity, this will take varying amounts of time, capacity building and support. As a starting point, work directly with agreed volunteer facilitators from the action group. Share, and encourage them to apply, the principles of good facilitation (see the 'Facilitation, Teamwork and Challenges' chapter and Annex A), including keeping the process and records accessible to nonreaders and people who are not fluent in the dominant language of the group. The facilitation team can usefully continue to provide occasional direct facilitation, backstopping, troubleshooting or guidance to the action group and its facilitators, as needed.

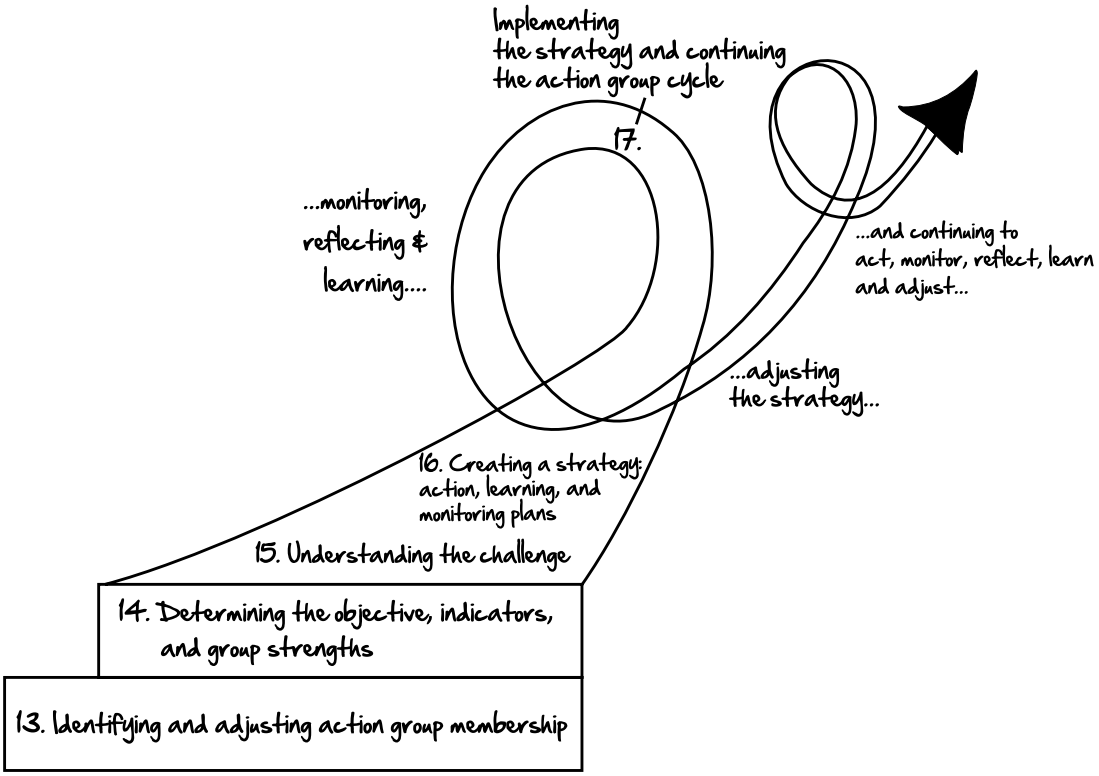
Steps in Stage Three

Step 13. Identifying and adjusting action group membership
Step 14. Determining the objective, indicators and group strengths

Step 15. Understanding the challenge
Step 16. Creating the strategy: action, learning and monitoring plans
Step 17. Implementing the strategy and continuing the activity's cycle

Like the CFUG planning steps (outlined in Stage 2), these steps help translate the principles into action, they flow from one to another in a logical order, and they are continued as the basis for improvements. Overall, these steps can be understood as a learning loop, similar to the overall CFUG planning loop (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Activity-level steps as a cycle



Note that the steps include action plans and learning and monitoring plans. As described in the following steps, the action plan is only one-third of the strategy. The other two parts are integrated with, and strengthen the action plan so that it is oriented towards learning and improvement.

If the action group is focusing on a very simple, straightforward issue, a simpler process may be more appropriate, as long as it ensures inclusion, learning-based planning, and linkages with other actors as needed. A complex issue, such as enhancing income benefits or addressing conflict, could likely benefit from the whole set of steps.

An action group could use or adapt these five steps in a series of 2- to 3-hour meetings.

Step 13

Identifying and adjusting action group membership

Identifying and adjusting action group membership

Objective

- To build awareness of who is in the action group and who is not, and adjust membership if needed.

Pointers

This step explores not only the individual members of the action group, but also those people whom the members represent in terms of wealth, ethnicity or caste, and gender (or other distinctions prioritised by the CFUG). This allows the group to consider socio-economic differences and power issues, and creates opportunities for inclusion of marginalised members. For more information about the source of this step, see Barndt (1989).

Keep equity in mind. The choice of action group members that took place at the end of the annual planning process (Steps 11 and 12) should be understood as a preliminary or draft plan for membership, not a final one. This current step is a check on the membership of the action group. Identifying socio-economic representation of group members sheds light on who is involved and will benefit from the activity and who is/will not. It thus offers group members the chance to see whether any actors that should be involved, including women or the poor, have been overlooked. The process can build group identity and understanding of itself in relation to the CFUG, as well as enhance inclusion and contribute to equity.

This task works best if the CFUG has already conducted a 'wealth ranking' exercise in the community (see Step 18), so that information about the socio-economic status of households is readily available. If not available, the action groups can use their own judgement or work with the CFUG to undertake wealth ranking.

Task

Task 13.1. Reflect on the action group's membership

How:

Reflection and adjustment of action group membership

This task should be undertaken by the preliminary action group (identified in workshop followup and the general assembly). If a preliminary group is not yet formed, this task can be done by *tole* representatives and the executive committee.

a. Brainstorm about who should be involved in decision making about this particular issue by discussing the following questions:
   - Who is influenced the most by the issue in positive or negative ways?
   - Who has rights, strong feelings, or ownership of some kind in this issue?
   - What special criteria or characteristics—knowledge, time, leadership ability—are we looking for in members of this particular action group?

   Consider these questions from the perspective of the most relevant socio-economic differences in the community. These are usually perceived to be wealth and gender; other differences may be distance from the forest and recent migrant versus indigenous origin. From this discussion, develop an ideal composition for the action group. For example, an action group focused on resolving forest product distribution issues might want women and men representing all *toles* and all wealth groups; an action group for income generation from a particular non-timber forest product might involve only one or two *toles* and be led by poor members.
b. Compare the current action group composition with the ideal, and on the basis of that comparison, make a plan for adjusting the membership. The action group membership need not perfectly meet the criteria; there will always be gaps, imbalances or surprises. But aim for a reasonably representative, balanced and committed group. Everything, membership included, will evolve as the process continues.
c. Follow up with the plan, engaging other CFUG members and securing additional or different members as needed.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape; information from the wealth ranking if available and appropriate.

Time: 1 hour, plus time for securing new members if needed.

Step 14

Determining the objective, indicators and group strengths

Determining the objective, indicators and group strengths

Objectives

- To develop a clear objective.
- To identify indicators for tracking progress towards the objective.
- To identify strengths and build awareness of the action group's abilities.
- To establish action group norms.

Pointers

Think broadly about the objective. Make sure that the whole group understands and has agreed on its main objective by determining the desired long-term outcome, using a timeframe appropriate to the activity. Resist the tendency to immediately develop 'how to' steps instead of an objective. At this point, focus on the outcome, not how to get there.

Also, at this stage, resist the temptation to frame this objective in a narrow way by linking it directly to one option. For example, if an action group formed to address low benefits to the poor might set as its objective as, 'to generate 8000 Rp per year for 10 households each through bamboo craft sales', then this commits the group to one path and doesn't allow members to look at the whole system and other options. For now, describe the desired outcome of the action, such as, 'CFUG benefits contribute significantly to the income of the poor member families'. Later in the planning process, after the issues have been explored more fully, more specific targets and plans can be set.

Practice appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry is 'the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential' (http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm). Focusing on positive potential and on a group's internal strengths contributes to group self-empowerment, rather than looking to outside sources of power or strength. The group's self-empowerment is important in many ways. Even though an adaptive collaborative approach encourages CFUGs to work with other actors on shared issues, this work needs to happen in balanced relationships. CFUGs—and their action groups—are more likely to achieve their goals when they operate interdependently, rather than largely dependently or independently. Such relationships are possible when all actors—including CFUGs and action groups—operate from a base of self-empowerment.

Tasks

Task 14.1. Set the overall objective

How: Action group discussion

a. Facilitate a discussion of, and clearly identify and record, the action group's overall desired objective or outcome. If earlier workshop or followup discussions highlighted an objective, start with that and refine it as needed. Otherwise, the group can brainstorm. Using drawings instead of words can sometimes free up people's creativity.

   Keep the objective broad at this stage so that the reflection in the following steps can be creative. Make sure the group doesn't lock itself into a particular path before it has thoroughly explored the issue and the possibilities in the following steps.

Resources: Any draft objectives from the workshop or earlier discussions; flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 30–60 minutes.

Task 14.2. Identify strengths

How: Action group discussion

a. Discuss the strengths of the group that will help it achieve the objective, including available time, commitment, skills, resources, linkages to others, experiences in related activities, and knowledge.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 30 minutes.

Optional Task 14.3. Establish group norms

How:

Action group discussion

a. Help the group identify and agree on ways of proceeding and interacting that will contribute to its success. The specific norms will depend on the group; examples include:
   - coming to meetings informed and on time;
   - following through on responsibilities; and
   - listening to all action group members in an open-minded way and with a learning attitude.

Norms are only effective if they are created by those who are going to commit to them, so they need to be set by the group.

Resources:

Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time:

30 minutes.

Step 15

Understanding the challenge

Understanding the challenge

Objective

- To deepen and develop a more holistic understanding of the issue as the basis for creative, insightful and effective planning.

Pointers

The issue that the action group is addressing was identified as a weakness in the CFUG self-monitoring. Before the group can address it, members need to explore the roots of the problem, looking at the issue from several angles. If an exploration of the issue was started in the workshop or followup discussions, build on the knowledge generated in those earlier sessions.

Explore the issue. We offer two approaches: using a problem tree and reflecting on the issue. The first option considers the issue a problem and explores its causes and effects. The tree metaphor helps participants create a holistic perspective of the problem and distinguish between the roots and the symptoms so that they can decide where to make change. Alternatively you can also use a problem tree to explore the issue's economic, social and political aspects—a more complicated approach, but one that offers holistic insights (see Barndt 1989).

The second option reflects on the issue from various angles and in terms of 'forces for' achieving the objective and 'forces against' achieving the objective (adapted from Barndt 1989), including drawing from past lessons. These two options are complementary, so you can do one or both or come up with an alternative way of understanding the problem.

Throughout the exploration of the issue, encourage the group to be clear and specific about whom the problem affects and how, and to be aware that not all issues affect everyone the same way.

Keep an eye out for uncertainties. In the tasks below, distinguish information that is known from information that is uncertain. If something arises that is uncertain or debatable, note it—for example, with a star on the flipchart—so that you can address it later.

Tasks

Task 15.1. Understanding the roots and symptoms of the problem

How: Use a 'Problem Tree' exercise and discussion (adapted from Hartanto *et al*. 2003 and Barndt 1989)

a. Begin by drawing a large tree with roots, a trunk and branches on a piece of flipchart paper. Label the trunk with the name of the problem (e.g., 'low income benefits'). The precise wording or the problem itself might change during the course of this exercise, so be prepared to be flexible.
b. Explain that the roots symbolise all the causes and factors contributing to the problem; the branches and leaves represent all the effects or outcomes.
c. Ask participants to write on cards what they see as the important causes of the problem (one cause per card). Share and discuss the cards, cluster similar cards, and tape them on the roots.
d. Do the same with the effects, and tape them up as the branches and leaves. Adjust the cards and their placement as needed, according to the discussion.
e. Explore the connections between the identified causes and effects. Link causes and effects on the tree by adding arrows. What some people see as roots may be seen by others as branches and leaves; recognise these differences in perception.
f. Conclude by looking at the whole tree and discussing and recording any lessons that can be drawn from seeing the issue in this way.

Resources: Any supporting information or documentation; cards, flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–2 hours.

Task 15.2. Reflect on the issue

How: Exploring different angles of the issue and/or exploring 'forces for' and 'forces against' (adapted from Barndt 1989)

a. Before using either of the exercises below, help the action group gather information and reflect on what CFUG members know about the issue and past lessons from earlier efforts or neighbouring CFUGs. Consider inviting people from outside the action group or CFUG to share their experiences related to the issue. Review related CFUG documents and past decisions. Consider information generated through reflective tools, such as equity tracking, to add a socio-economic dimension to the analysis.
b. Option 1: Explore the issue from different angles. Ask the group to identify key aspects or ways of perceiving

the issue. For example, an income-related issue could be examined in terms of policy and rules, skills and knowledge, markets, and forest resources. Encourage in-depth discussion on each angle, and record the points and learning on a flipchart. Note any connections that help give a holistic perspective on the issue.

c. Option 2: Assessing enabling and limiting forces. Facilitate a discussion about the forces and factors that contribute to positive change and those that exacerbate the problem or hinder strategies to address it. Brainstorm and discuss, and record the points on a flipchart.
d. Option 3: Construct a timeline of the issue. This is especially useful if the problem has a long or complicated history that will influence current strategies. Draw a long 'blank' timeline, adding the timescale in terms of either dates or major community events on the scale. Then add the specific events, initiatives or changes relating to the issue. Identify the actors, outcomes and significance of events or changes. This tool can help people visualise how the problem has developed over time and see themselves within the context of a larger process. It can also reveal useful past experiences.

Resources: Any supporting information or documentation; flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–1.5 hours.

Step 16

Creating the strategy: action, learning, and monitoring plans

Creating the strategy: action, learning, and monitoring plans

Objectives

- To decide on specific targets (goals).
- To develop a strategy to reach the targets, including the action, learning and monitoring plans.

Pointers

Set targets based on the overall objective and group learning. As the action group develops its targets, it should directly draw on the previous steps, using the overall objective, noting group strengths, and incorporating insights about the issue. For example, if the objective is 'to generate regular income for at least 10 poor households', now members can draw on their shared knowledge to develop specific targets, such as: increasing nursery production of a specific non-timber forest product; developing high-level processing skills for that product among the 10 households; establishing reliable market links; and maintaining an equitable and transparent process, including for selection of involved households.

Develop a three-part strategy linking action, learning and monitoring. Much of the most important strategising and planning happens in this step. The group's strategy should have three interconnected components:

- an *action plan* that takes into account possible challenges and unknowns;
- a *learning plan* that identifies what the group needs to learn before or during its action; and
- a *monitoring plan* that identifies what the group needs to track to see whether it is progressing towards its objective.

All three components are necessary because together they enable effective understanding, response to change and challenges, and action. Moreover, the three components need to be clearly connected.

The group cannot ever have perfect knowledge about how a forest or human–forest system works at all points in time and in all circumstances. This is where the learning plan fits: the learning plan highlights the knowledge that the group wants to acquire as 'learning questions' (see below). The action group can then design its actions in a way that specifically enables learning. For example, they might start their action with a study tour or implement their action as a trial or experiment. Developing learning and action plans together in the same session will help the group remember the interconnection of learning and action so that members can design actions

around the learning questions. The monitoring plan helps the group track its progress towards its targets and also feeds into the learning and action. It does so by creating a regular reflection process that creates learning about the connections between action and outcomes, flags possible challenges, and signals the need to maintain or adjust actions.

Use systems analysis. The main 'learning tool' for this step is systems analysis. Described in detail in Task 3 (below), this exercise has participants create a systems diagram to make explicit how different people understand an issue and perceive the connections amongst all parts of that issue. By encouraging members to articulate and discuss their perceptions, systems analysis supports the group in developing shared understanding. In encouraging group members to think in terms of systems and cause-and-effect relationships, systems analysis helps the group:

- realise what information is missing or uncertain;
- identify potential problems that may hinder progress;
- identify risks, unanticipated outcomes, or unintended effects on others; and
- determine the most strategic actions with the greatest likelihood of success.

This can be a challenging task to facilitate because the group will be linking many different forces and factors. Think through and even practise the facilitation of this exercise beforehand and work on strategies to keep the task clear. For example, capture major points but not all possible points on flipcharts; use markers or cards of different colours to distinguish causes from effects.

Frame uncertainties as learning questions. As you proceed during activity-level planning, uncertainties will surely arise. The systems analysis tool will help identify such uncertainties as unknown information (e.g., the market price of a non-timber forest product) and potential obstacles (e.g., unreliable transportation to the market). Emphasise that in a learning-based approach, uncertainties are opportunities to learn and strengthen plans.

In the tasks below, we suggest using the identified uncertainties as the basis for creating learning questions, which are the focus of the group's learning plan. A learning question turns the uncertainty into a specific question to be addressed by the

group. Some learning questions are 'big' and will be addressed through experiments and experience, such as, 'Will CFUG members be more satisfied with negotiated distribution of forest products based on need or with the current system of equal distribution regardless of need?' Others will be more specific questions that identify missing information, such as, 'How much fuelwood did each *tole* receive last year?'

Learning questions thus identify knowledge to be gathered or developed while the group is implementing the action (through the action plan) and then reflecting on the action and its outcomes (through the learning and the monitoring plans). The knowledge is then used to improve understanding and ultimately the strategy.

Gather information through study tours and other sources. Some types of learning questions—such as current policy information or market prices—can be addressed by gathering information from outside the action group. This could include collecting information through interviews and document reviews. Learning tours and cross-visits can be extremely useful means of building knowledge based on the experience of others, as well as building relations with other actors or institutions. To enhance effectiveness, we suggest that the action group identify specific learning questions to be addressed by direct, in-context interaction with other groups or organisations. Combining discussions, forest tours, and observation of processes or practices, such visits can enable participants to share practical knowledge and insights. They can also contribute to the development of intergroup networking and support over the longer term.

Generate learning through experiments or trials. For the kinds of learning questions for which the information does not already exist, the action group may need to generate knowledge through their own action and learning. For example, the group might need to know about the viability of a certain species in its unique growing setting or about the response of the CFUG to changes in forest product distribution rules.

By designing the activities to generate information relating to the questions *while* implementing the action, the group is able to develop its own context-specific insights and learning. One useful way to build learning directly into action is through experiments or trials. These can be applied both to management

actions and to governance innovations; as Lee (1993) suggests, 'all policies are experiments … learn from them'.

Experiments or trials, as we use the term here, are activities designed to address learning questions; they test the group's belief about what is likely to happen as a result of their action (i.e., its hypothesis). In the case of learning questions about biophysical uncertainties—such as the most effective silvicultural treatment for certain species in their community forest context—the group may be able to organise its action in a way that mimics a 'scientific experiment' to a certain extent. One commonly known experiment of this kind is the use of comparative silvicultural test plots. In this experiment, the species, conditions and care are the same in the two or more plots—the one main difference is that the CFUG uses different silvicultural practice in each of the plots. Another example would be an action group whose objective is to generate income through non-timber forest product development, which might use comparative trial plots to select the best site condition to grow its desired species (or test different species in its available site).

Other learning questions that action groups address may be social or other issues for which the above experimentation approach is not possible. In these cases, experimentation can be used in terms of a 'trial' of the innovation with planned monitoring and feedback that relate to learning questions. For example, in our research sites, the development of *tole*-based planning and decision making was done as a trial to generate learning about inclusion and deliberation. Other examples include:

- An action group seeking to improve distributional equity might implement changes in prices or access to forest products for the poor—or a new system for deciding about allocation—as a trial rather than a formal rule, pending feedback from members.
- An action group whose aim is to find a reliable marketing system for its forest products might experiment with developing partnerships, adjusting these as it learns from experience.

In each case, the experiments or trials are combined with monitoring and reflection on the learning questions to improve the group's understanding and effectiveness. There is a substantive and qualitative difference between the

implementation of these and the implementation of fixed plans. Although both involve planning and action, the experiment or trial is part of a learning and improvement process. Learning may happen in the implementation of a fixed plan, but it is often an incidental byproduct. As such, it is often neither specifically focused nor applied directly to improve shared understanding and future actions.

Remember collaboration. Help the group to explore whether they want to engage other actors, including meso agencies such as NGOs or projects, in their plans. In line with the approach, encourage the group to be proactive in identifying their own needs (and strengths) and seeking appropriate partnerships, if needed. Explore what it would mean to develop partnerships as interdependent interactions with others (as opposed to dependent interactions)—in other words, balanced engagement in which all parties are understood to contribute and benefit meaningfully.

Keep an eye on process and participation. All participants need opportunity to express themselves and be heard. In designing this step, think about what might prevent or limit some people's participation, such as language barriers, illiteracy, fear of scorn or retribution, or lack of confidence. Then build into the design ways to overcome these barriers. If not everyone is comfortably literate, use pictures as well as words on flipcharts. Be creative so that all participants—especially those facing the barriers—can help design effective strategies.

For this step to be successful, facilitators will have to 'think on their feet', constantly responding to the group and ideas and improving the process.

All seven tasks below are part of the systems analysis exercise, and can be completed in one meeting.

Tasks

Task 16.1. Introduce the session and systems analysis

How:

Explanation to action group

a. Share the purpose of the session and clarify the roles of the action, learning and monitoring plans. Differentiate them but show how they are linked.

b. Explain this session's process and tasks. Describe how the action group can use systems analysis to add depth to action planning, check its understanding in later rounds, and make adjustments based on improved understanding.

Resources: None.

Time: 5–10 minutes.

Task 16.2. Develop specific targets

How: Facilitated discussion

a. Refresh and contextualise:
   - Post the action group's objective on a flipchart and update or refine it if needed.
   - Briefly discuss how the objective contributes to or is related to the CFUG's vision and goals.
   - Review the major points of learning about the issue (from the previous step).
b. Develop specific targets. Facilitate this discussion by asking, 'What could the action group achieve within the next *x* months or years?' The group should identify an appropriate timeframe. List possible targets on a flipchart. Finalise the list through discussion, narrowing it down to one priority target that the group thinks it could reasonably achieve within the chosen time period. Note secondary targets as needed.
c. Write down (and/or draw) the main target on a large card, to be used in the next task.

Resources: Flipchart paper and markers.

Time: 15–30 minutes.

Task 16.3. Draw a diagram of the system

How: Systems analysis (i.e., system diagramming) exercise

a. Using flipchart paper posted up so that that everyone can see it, tape the target card (from the previous task) in the top right corner of the flipchart. In the bottom left corner of the flipchart write 'current situation' and/or a few points describing this situation.

b. Ask participants to identify factors and forces that they believe will help achieve the target. These 'causes' can include conditions, policies or resources, as well as actions by the group. Narrow these down to 2–4 causes. Write each cause on a card and tape the cards on the flipchart between current situation and the target. Add arrows connecting the causes to the target to show the causal connections.
c. Focusing on one card at a time, explore each cause through discussion and add to, or adjust, the diagram and cards as you proceed. The group should begin to identify connections and feedback loops between causes and effects that need to be noted with arrows. Discussion questions include:
    - **What is needed to make this 'cause' happen?** For example, what actions, natural resources, funding, skills, information or attitudes are required? Make cards for these needs and tape them to the flipchart between 'current situation' and the appropriate cause. For each, ask, 'Do we need to have this before we finish planning, or before we start or continue our action?' Mark these with a star so that you can come back to them later.
    - **What else needs to happen between this 'cause' and meeting the target?** Add factors linking this cause and the target, so that it is not a big jump from one to the other. Make a drawing or write a card for each of these and paste it on the flipchart with the appropriate arrows.
    - **Will there be other effects of this 'cause'?** Consider unintended outcomes of the 'cause', especially potential actions of the group, affecting natural resources or people outside this group. For example, could an action cause hardship for another group or negatively affect the forest or water? Make cards for the outcomes and place between the cause and the target. Mark the negative outcomes so that you can return to them. Ask how the negative outcomes might be avoided or minimised and adjust the cards or add new ones.
    - **What are we uncertain about?** Uncertainties may be causes and effects as well as data. Some missing information may be essential to have, some may be less critical, some may be impossible to know. Mark the need-to-know items.
d. Proceed, adding new cards as needed until the group feels the system diagram is sufficiently complete and refined. The diagram should be detailed enough to show

major factors and relationships, but not so complex that it is overwhelming. The discussion will likely shift perspectives on the issue, so be ready to alter the diagram and revise cards.

e. If the group has more than one target, use separate analyses, or modify the diagram as necessary to accommodate multiple related targets, if his can be done without making the system overly complex.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers, tape, cards. Optional: 'Cut out' paper arrows can be used instead of drawn arrows, so that the arrows can be moved around as the drawing evolves. Prepare these in advance. Alternatively, the system diagram can be drawn on a large whiteboard with eraseable markers.

Time: 1 hour or more.

Task 16.4. Check the system

How: Reflection on system diagram

a. Ask the group to reflect on the diagram and check its validity. Are the points it is based on true? And are the connections and information accurate and logical? Has the group identified the major problems and uncertainties? Was anything important left out? Discuss and refine the diagram as needed.
b. Ask members to take 1–2 minutes to reflect on the diagram, this time considering new insights about the issue. Share, discuss and record the major points.

Resources: System diagram, flipchart and markers.

Time: 20–30 minutes.

Task 16.5. Develop the action plan and the learning plan

How: Facilitated planning discussion that works on the action and learning plans in an integrated way

a. Start on the action plan by having the action group identify the most important actions on the system diagram. These are the actions that, whether large or small, will: (i) have

the greatest desired effect on the system; and (ii) be realistic given the available time and resources. (These actions will be points associated with the causes in the systems diagram.) Record the priority actions on a flipchart.

b. Ask the group to identify key risks and challenges that relate to the priority actions and plan to address them or minimise negative consequences. Invite the group to draw on its own strengths or link to other people or groups. Record the risks and challenges and how they will be addressed.
c. Switch to the learning plan. Start by returning to the system diagram and, with the actions in mind, have the group identify the main uncertainties—missing information, unknown outcomes—and record them on a flipchart. For each uncertainty, create a learning question. Clarify and refine the learning questions. Encourage the group to focus on three to five priorities rather than list all possible questions; record the less important ones on a list of future learning questions, to be moved up once the initial priorities have been addressed.
d. Integrate the learning questions into the design of the action plan. In other words, have the group determine how to: (i) gather the missing information from the CFUG or other actors or sources; and/or (ii) generate the needed knowledge through experiments, trials or study tours as a part of implementing the action.
e. Confirm and record the learning and action plans, including identifying the specifics: who will take responsibility for the specific parts of the plans, how and when.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1–2 hours.

Task 16.6. Develop the monitoring plan

How: Facilitated discussion

a. Identify indicators of progress towards the action group's targets. This process should be a relatively quick one—refer to the suggestions in the annual planning process. Group members can identify signs of progress by discussing questions such as:
   - How will we know whether we are achieving our target?

- What are the specific signs of progress that we can track?

Note the key indicators, focusing on those that identify movement towards (or away from) the target(s). Keep in mind that these should highlight effects of actions, rather than just checking whether parts of the action plan were implemented.

b. Alternatively, use the systems diagram to develop indicators. Ask participants to identify parts of the system that need to be monitored to see whether they are moving towards their target. Narrow the choices down to a few cards—the minimum indicators that will show progress. Record these on a flipchart.
c. Develop the plan for monitoring. Ask the group to identify how the information about the indicators will be collected, when and by whom. Include in this discussion whether the monitoring should be done by the action group alone, with information from others, or by collaborating with others.
d. Ask the group to decide how often and when its members need to reflect on their progress using the indicators. We recommend scheduling an in-depth reflection about every 3 months. Agree on a date for the next session. These monitoring sessions will be different from the group's regular meeting discussions in that they will be more in-depth reflections on progress. Ideas for this reflection session and the use of indicators in monitoring are offered below, in the next step.
e. Confirm and record the monitoring plan, including specifics such as responsibilities and timing.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Task 16.7. Confirm the strategy and next steps

How: Facilitated discussion

a. Confirm the strategy by reviewing the action, learning and monitoring plans. For each, make sure that everyone is clear on the what, why, when, how and who for each plan. Refine the plans if needed. Be prepared to refine them again later based on the input of others in the CFUG.

b. Confirm and record the immediate next steps of the action group, including sharing and connecting with the rest of the CFUG.
c. Schedule the next meeting of the action group and decide on its agenda.
d. Gather feedback on the planning session and process, including about the use of the system diagramming tool, to help facilitators and the action group make future processes more inclusive and effective. Make plans to adjust the process as needed.

Resources: Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 1 hour.

Step 17

Implementing the strategy and continuing the activity's cycle

Implementing the strategy and continuing the activity's cycle

Objectives

- To communicate the action group's objective and strategy to the CFUG.
- To implement the action, learning and monitoring plans.
- To assess learning and progress, reflect, and adjust the strategy through the quarterly in-depth reflection.

Pointers

This step launches the action group's adaptive collaborative approach-based planning into the future.

Communicate plans with others. The action group needs to communicate its strategy effectively to other CFUG members, especially if the objective involves or affects others. In earlier steps the action group will have adjusted its membership to involve relevant actors and considered needed connections to others; in this step, it should share the strategy and ask for feedback through *tole* meetings, the executive committee, and the general assembly. This will provide input for the action group, help avoid potential confusion or conflict, and contribute to potential cooperation or participation of other members. Make certain that poor people, women and other marginalised members are included in these discussions.

Since each action group represents one part of the CFUG's overall annual plan, each group should also share its progress and learning during the CFUG's annual planning and self-monitoring process (Stage Three).

Hold regular meetings about implementation and learning. To make progress in implementing the action and learning plans, the action group should meet regularly, as frequently as members deem necessary, to discuss implementation. Do not lose sight of the learning component. These meetings give members the chance to learn as they go and adjust plans accordingly.

Step back and see the whole picture with quarterly in-depth reflections. The action group should also meet periodically (we suggest quarterly) to reflect more deeply on the issue and monitor progress towards its targets, perhaps with input from others. In these in-depth reflections, groups should:

- Check how their understanding of the issue has deepened—including insights or remaining gaps for each learning question;

- Assess their progress towards each target and the overall objective using the indicators (from the monitoring plan); and
- Use its learning and assessment to revise its strategy, if needed.

The in-depth reflections invite the action group to step back and look at the whole picture again to enable deeper learning. Whereas the regular meetings about implementation may produce small adjustments in strategy, the in-depth planning is a chance to make bigger corrections to the group's course.

Tasks

Task 17.1. Share the plans and gather responses

How:

Meetings between the action group and others

a. If not already done, make or refine the plans for when and how the action group's strategy will be shared with the rest of the CFUG and possibly also with outside actors. Identify any specific input that the action group needs for the action, learning or monitoring plans. The action group may want to link this sharing with a general assembly, organise separate events, or participate in executive committee and *tole* meetings. If the strategy addresses sensitive issues, consider meeting with separate subgroups, such as groups for women or the poor, to encourage honest feedback. Prepare written or drawn flipcharts for the meetings, as needed.
b. Share the strategy with the CFUG members, committee and others as planned. Make sure the group clarifies its objective, target, strategy, timeframe, beneficiaries and participants. Also briefly describe the action group's planning process and any learning so far. Ask for, and record, input from non-members of the action group.

Resources:

Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time:

Variable.

Task 17.2. Implement the plans

How:

Ongoing implementation of plans and regular action group meetings

a. The action group implements its strategy as planned.
b. The action group holds regular meetings as implementation progresses. Encourage a learning orientation in the meetings by focusing the discussion on questions such as the following:
   - Were all the plans or responsibilities carried out as planned? If not, why not, and what needs to be done?
   - Are there any challenges that need to be addressed? Opportunities that require followup?
   - What have we learned thus far (including from unexpected outcomes), and what does it teach us about the issue, the system, or our plans?
   - What should the next steps be in implementing or adjusting actions, seeking or generating information, and connecting with other actors? Who will undertake these, how and when?

Resources:

Flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time:

2 hours for monthly meetings, or as agreed by the group; as needed for implementation.

Task 17.3. Reflect in depth and revise plans

How:

Quarterly in-depth reflection session

a. Organise an action group session to collectively deepen understanding of the issue, monitor learning and progress, and revise the strategy and plans. This may be every 3 months, or as agreed by the group. Prior to the session, gather necessary input for the session; consider inviting other actors to offer an outside perspective on the progress or issue.
b. Start the session by looking at the session's objective: improving understanding and adjusting the strategy and plans based on group reflection.
c. Facilitate a group discussion and reflection about implementation, monitoring and learning thus far and record points on a flipchart. Address discussion questions such as the following.

Action (and outcomes)

- Was the action plan launched as expected? What helped and what hindered implementation? Why?
- What have been the outcomes of the actions to date? Including, did anything unexpected happen, either negative or positive? Why? With what effect?

Learning (and uncertainties)

- What have we learned about our priority learning questions? Include learning about specific questions, such as market prices; also address more complex questions, such as the different perceptions of subgroups on an innovation.
- Does the learning change the way we see the issue or problem and require a change in any part of the strategy?
- Have we resolved any uncertainties or fully answered any learning questions? Are there any new learning questions?

Monitoring (and progress)

- What progress have we made towards specific targets and towards the objective? Use the indicators from the monitoring plan to assess. Describe the progress with a simple scoring system (e.g., no progress, a little progress, good progress, great progress).
- What are the reasons for success or lack of success? Do these suggest a need for adjustment in any part of the strategy?

d. Revise the action, learning and monitoring plans as needed, based on the insights from the above discussion. To do so, the group may check iteratively on the following points:
   - What are the implications of our reflection for the action plan? Is it still the best plan? Should we adjust it?
   - Which learning questions are fully answered and which still need to be addressed? How can we address the revised learning questions in an integrated way with the action plan?
   - Are the monitoring plan and process working well? Are there ideas for improvement?

e. Option: If the group benefited from using systems analysis in the previous step, post the diagram and use it as the starting point for discussing the above questions about implementation, monitoring and learning; record the points. Update the diagram and maintain it as a 'living' document.
f. Record the revised action, learning and monitoring plans, including specific responsibilities, methods and timing.

Resources: Information gathered for monitoring; priority and second priority (future) learning questions; flipchart paper, markers and tape (optional: system diagram).

Time: 2–3 hours.

Task 17.4. Continue the action group cycle

How: Continue the learning and collaboration-based strategy

The action group continues to implement its strategy, learn and adjust into the future, as per the timeline of the activity. The group continues to connect with the CFUG and link with the ongoing CFUG planning cycle (Stage 4).

Resources: As needed.

Time: As needed.

STAGE FOUR: CONTINUING THE APPROACH INTO THE FUTURE

The world is round and the place which may seem like the end may also be only the beginning.

Ivy Baker Priest

Goals

- To prepare for the next cycle of CFUG self-monitoring by gathering the necessary information.
- To institutionalise an adaptive collaborative approach and continue it into the future.

Overview

Stages One and Two laid the foundation for the overall CFUG planning cycle to use an adaptive collaborative approach. These stages identified priority issues and activities for the CFUG. In Stage Three, small action groups applied the approach in designing and implementing each specific activity. Stage Four moves back up to the whole CFUG level for the next steps: gathering information for, and applying, the CFUG self-monitoring system to reassess overall CFUG progress and continuing the active co-learning and collaborative approach into the future.

Continuing into the future by cycling through key steps

By the time the CFUG has gone through Stages Two, Three and Four, it will have experienced one full cycle of CFUG planning and governance. In completing this cycle it will have returned again to its self-monitoring system to assess its progress and adjust its plans. Moreover, because the adaptive collaborative approach is a cycle, the latter part of Stage Four is actually the beginning of another loop of planning and governance, starting with self-monitoring, reflection and adjustment of plans before implementing innovations and new, adjusted or ongoing actions (Figure 9). It is important to note that for this next loop, and the ones that follow, CFUGs do not have to cycle all the way back through Stage One and implement each of the steps in every stage. This is because the steps in Stage One and some of those in Stage Two were needed for starting the transition to the approach, but are not all necessary for its continuation. For example, holding the workshop was for the purpose of sparking the transition and so does not need to be repeated. Rather, in continuing the approach, the CFUG draws on its own capacities, and its facilitation team, to cycle onwards through the key steps and processes of:

- *tole*-based CFUG self-monitoring, reflection and adjustment of plans;
- action groups (and others) implementing innovations and new, adjusted or ongoing actions using the approach; and
- looping back to *tole*-based self-monitoring, reflection and adjustment…and continuing…

This is outlined in detail in Step 19 'Continuing with adaptive collaborative cycles into the future'.

The role of the facilitator

In the continuing use of the approach signalled by Stage Four, the facilitators help anchor the ongoing decision making and planning firmly in active co-learning and collaboration. This is important because if the processes aren't based in learning and collaboration, they won't effectively contribute to long-term equity and livelihood outcomes.

One essential aspect of the facilitation role is to encourage critical reflection and exploration during the self-assessment and in all ongoing processes. Facilitators can reflect back assumptions or statements and encourage groups to explore the reasons

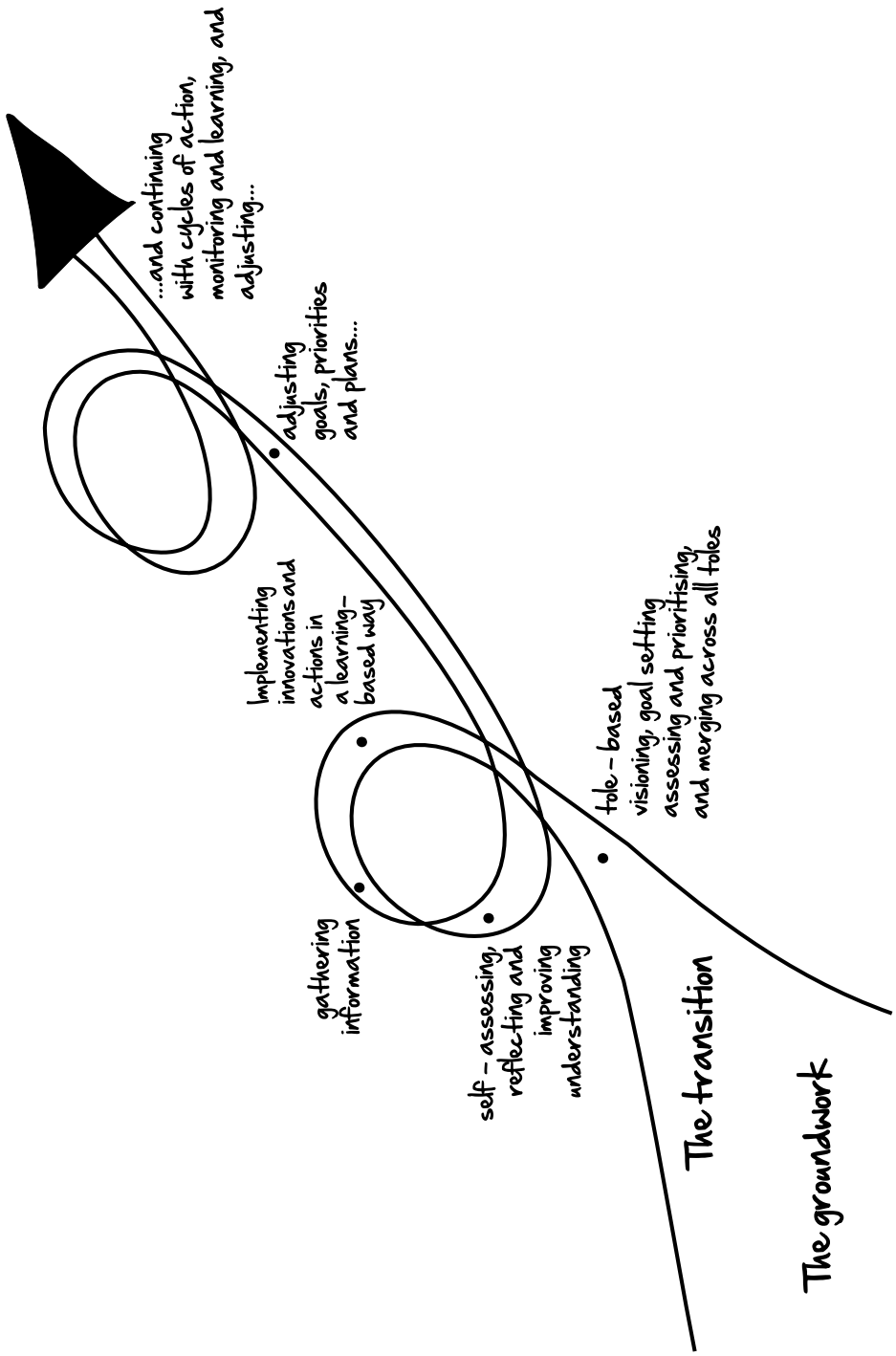


Figure 9. Continuing the approach: Cycles of planning, action, self-monitoring, and adjustment

for them, their implications, and alternative ways of viewing them. Groups and facilitators may also chose to invite other actors—such as members of other CFUGs, networks or agencies—to play this role and to offer outside perspectives. Additionally, facilitators need to ensure that the space that was established for marginalised CFUG members in earlier steps is kept open, making sure their engagement is meaningful, not just symbolic. Facilitators may need to help members recall the components and principles of an adaptive collaborative approach, especially the concept of equity within the user group.

Steps in Stage Four

Step 18. Gathering information for CFUG self-monitoring
Step 19. Continuing with adaptive collaborative cycles into the future

Step 18

Gathering information for CFUG self-monitoring

Gathering information for CFUG self-monitoring

Objective

- To generate or collect the information needed to inform the self-monitoring process, including about equity in the CFUG.

Pointers

This step is undertaken between, and in preparation for, CFUG self-assessments. In earlier steps (7 and 11), the CFUG will have identified what information is required to assess the indicators, as well as what information needs to be collected on an ongoing basis between assessments. In this step, the CFUG members or an agreed monitoring committee gather or generate that information.

The information to be tracked between self-assessments depends on the indicators, the CFUG's priorities, and members' available time. Some information is seasonal and can be collected only at particular times. Specifics about forest condition may be gathered just before the self-assessment. CFUGs may choose to assess some qualitative indicators, such as relations with external actors, using knowledge gained through experience rather than quantitative data; for example, CFUGs involved in the research project generally assessed indicators about their relations with external actors in this way.

This section focuses on one particular area of information generation and assessment: equity. It does so both because of the significance of equity and because such strategies tend to be relatively unexplored and under–applied within CFUGs.

Track equity. One critical indicator (or set of indicators) requiring ongoing information gathering is equity in community forest benefit sharing. We strongly encourage CFUGs to adopt a clear strategy—such as the 'equity tracking' tool described in this step—for obtaining accurate quantitative data, as well as members' perceptions. Equity tracking involves the CFUG carrying out wellbeing ranking, then monitoring the distribution of community forest-related benefits with reference to that ranking. By identifying advantaged or disadvantaged households and groups, equity tracking makes it easier to see distribution patterns. Making the distribution of benefits more transparent can help members and leaders become informed and aware of equity—and create momentum and leverage to address inequities.

Equity tracking begins with an appropriate and informed 'task group', such as *tole* representatives, ranking CFUG households' according to their wellbeing. This is sometimes known as 'wealth ranking'. With the input and agreement of *tole* members, this task group develops locally relevant criteria for ranking, such as the following:

- land holding;
- food sufficiency;
- income;
- educational attainment; and/or
- social status.

The task group then collects and verifies information from each member household and categorises each household, for example as 'Wealthy', 'Medium' and 'Poor' or 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E'. These categories will be used to monitor how benefits are distributed. The CFUG may want to carry out wellbeing ranking annually to see whether any changes are occurring, or refine or update criteria for the wellbeing categories.

Once wellbeing has been assessed, the CFUG can track the distribution of community forest-related benefits and leadership roles among the wellbeing categories, as well as by gender and caste or ethnicity. Specifically, a CFUG might track distribution of the following:

- CFUG membership;
- leadership roles, such as executive committee member and *tole* leader;
- timber, fuelwood and non-timber forest products (including quantities and charges);
- CFUG loans, employment and other benefits;
- CFUG-related training and other capacity–building opportunities.

Once the benefits and opportunities are tracked, members of the CFUG can identify patterns in the distribution of benefits (and costs) during self-monitoring. They can consider the impact of existing distribution patterns on the wellbeing of different people who were advantaged or disadvantaged by the community forestry decisions and rules. Furthermore, they can reflect on factors underlying these distribution patterns, including assumptions, processes or rules, and identify ways to address inequities.

Table 1 summarises the results of an equity tracking exercise, supported by the facilitators in four *toles*, that identified the class, ethnicity and gender of the CFUG's leaders, and the recipients of training and other support.

Table 1. Example set of equity tracking data

Leadership positions and benefits	Categories of members
Executive committee members (11)	Caste/ethnicity: 6 Brahmin/Chhetri, 2 Magar, 3 *dalit* Wealth: 7 medium, 4 poor Gender: 6 female, 5 male
Tole committee members (38)	Caste/ethnicity: 17 Brahmin/Chhetri, 9 Magar, 12 *dalit* Wealth: 5 rich, 19 medium, 14 poor Gender: 18 female, 20 male
Recipients of training (25)	Caste/ethnicity: 7 Brahmin/Chhetri, 7 Magar, 11 *dalit* Wealth: 1 rich, 10 medium, 14 poor Gender: 15 female, 10 male
Recipients of support for income-generating activities (24)	Caste/ethnicity: 6 Brahmin/Chhetri, 4 janajati, 14 *dalit* Wealth: 24 poor Gender: 11 female, 13 male

From Bamdibhir CFUG, Kaski District 2006.

Tasks

Task 18.1. Plan the information gathering for self-monitoring

How:

Meeting of the 'monitoring committee' (or relevant task group)

a. Referring back to the CFUG indicators (developed and refined in Steps 7 and 11), help the CFUG, executive committee or an agreed task group, such as a monitoring committee, confirm the following:
   - what information needs to be collected for use in self-monitoring;
   - who will gather the information, when and how; and
   - how the information will be recorded and maintained transparently.

b. As a part of the above, help plan how the CFUG will specifically track equity. As described above, the purpose is to illuminate how wealth, caste or ethnicity, and gender relate to distribution of representation, benefits

and opportunities so that the group can reflect on the current level of equity and make appropriate decisions or adjustments in governance. See 'Pointers' (this Step) for an explanation of how to undertake 'equity tracking'.

Resources: Lists of indicators and information needed for the indicators (from Step 7 and 11).

Time: 1–3 hours.

Task 18.2. Gather and record the information

How: Gathering and recording of information as planned

a. The people selected in Task 1 gather the identified information as planned. This may occur at one point in time, certain regular intervals, or continuously, depending on the information they are monitoring and the purpose.
b. As well as being used during the next round of self-monitoring, the information should also be accessible to interested members between assessments. Encourage the group to maintain the information in accessible formats (such as clear tables) and in an accessible location. If appropriate, prior to the next self-monitoring session, support the group in translating the information about trends over time into accessible visual formats such as spider diagrams or trend lines.

Resources: As needed.

Time: As needed.

Step 19

Continuing with adaptive collaborative cycles into the future

Continuing with adaptive collaborative cycles into the future

Objective

- To seek ongoing improvements in understanding and in CFUG practice and outcomes, by continuing to use an adaptive collaborative approach in management and governance.

Pointers

This step marks the beginning of the next cycle of planning and governance. Drawing on the approach, the CFUG: conducts its next self-assessment and reflection; refines priorities and plans for innovation and action based on that reflection; and implements its revised governance and management activities using a learning and collaboration approach. The CFUG then continues into the future with the ongoing cycles of adaptive collaborative approach-based planning.

Envision planning and governance as a learning loop. This step relies on an awareness of effective community forest management and governance being cyclical and learning based. By this point, facilitators and CFUG members should have a comfortable understanding of the logic and flow of the cycles of reflection–planning–implementing–generating information–reflection–planning, and so on.

Link long-term, medium-term, annual and activity-level planning. The cycle undertaken thus far connected long-term, medium-term, annual and activity-level planning. This began with long-term visioning leading to medium-term goal setting, which laid the foundation for self-monitoring. The self-monitoring formed the basis for the *tole*-based annual planning (all introduced in Stage Two). It also included using the approach at the activity level (described in Stage Three), based on the priorities set in the annual planning. As the CFUG progresses with the approach into the future, these connections between the various scales of planning will all continue.

Additionally, annually planning will periodically reconnect and intertwine explicitly with the formal aspect of medium- and long-term planning, which is Operational Plan revision. At least every five years, in conjunction with the formal Operational Plan revision and renewal, the CFUG will revisit and revise, as needed, the long-term (20-year) vision and the medium-term (5- to 10-year) goals. At the same time, it may need to update its set of indicators accordingly (because they assess progress towards the goals). Undertaking this review as often as every 2 or 3 years may be appropriate in some CFUGs; for example, if the group is undergoing rapid change or has

fast-growing tree and plant species. See Annex A for specific suggestions about using the approach in formal Operational Plan revision and renewal.

Conduct regular CFUG self-assessments, alternating between full and mini CFUG self-assessments if needed. We suggest that once a year the CFUG uses a full *tole*-based self-assessment as the foundation for creating its annual plan. Additionally, we suggest that the CFUG carry out an abbreviated 'mini' self-assessment six months later (Box 9). This mini assessment occurs halfway through the implementation of the annual plan, and thus allows the group

Box 9. Mini versus full self-assessment explained

Mini self-assessment

The mini semi-annual self-assessment is undertaken by *tole* (and/or other subgroup) representatives and executive committee members. These actors:

- reassess indicators and progress;
- synthesise learning about the forest, as well as management and governance and their outcomes on people, forests and related systems;
- communicate the learning to the *toles* and gather feedback; and
- use the assessment to adjust governance and plans as needed, usually in a minor way.

Full self-assessment

The full annual self-assessment is undertaken directly by all CFUG members. Members engage in *tole*-level meetings to:

- reassess indicators and progress;
- synthesise learning about the forest, as well as management and governance and their outcomes on people, forests and related systems; and
- use the assessment to create the annual plan, that is identify the set of revised or new priorities and plans for governance and actions for the year.

Then:

- representatives and the executive committee merge assessments and negotiate priorities and plans, returning to the *toles* as needed; and
- all members meet in general assembly to finalise the new annual plan.

to check on progress and make minor adjustments, as needed. Because it is carried out by representatives, rather than all members, this mini assessment is less time consuming than the full one. If this 6-month cycle is not possible, then aim to carry out one full *tole*-based self-assessment each year as the basis for annual plan development.

Put the approach into practice. As it reaches this step, the CFUG will be completing a full 'loop' or cycle of self-assessment, planning/adjustment, implementation, and next self-assessment using the approach. When it continues in the future, the CFUG will use the key steps, processes and arrangements, and attitudes of the approach, as appropriate. (As such it leaves behind those elements of Stage One and Two that were for sparking the initial transition to the approach, such as the workshop).

In outline, the continuing cycle—integrating long-, medium-term, annual and activity-level planning—looks like this:

1. Annual (full) *tole*-based self-assessment and planning:
   - *tole*-level reassessment of indicators to check progress towards goals;
   - development of new or revised action plans and innovations in governance;
   - meetings between *tole* representatives and the executive committee to negotiate assessments, priorities and plans;
   - approval of plans first by all *toles* and the executive committee, then by the general assembly; and
   - updating of the Operational Plan or Constitution, if needed.
2. Implementation of new annual plan: action groups lead activities and innovations using the adaptive collaborative approach.
3. Collection of information required for self-assessment.
4. Semi-annual (mini) CFUG self-assessment.
5. Continue/adjust implementation of annual plan.
6. Continue collection of information required for self-assessment.
7. Annual (full) *tole*-based CFUG self-assessment and re-planning.
8. And continue through the cycle…
9. At 5-year intervals (as a minimum), reflect on and update the vision and goals and revise and renew the Operational Plan (see Annex A).

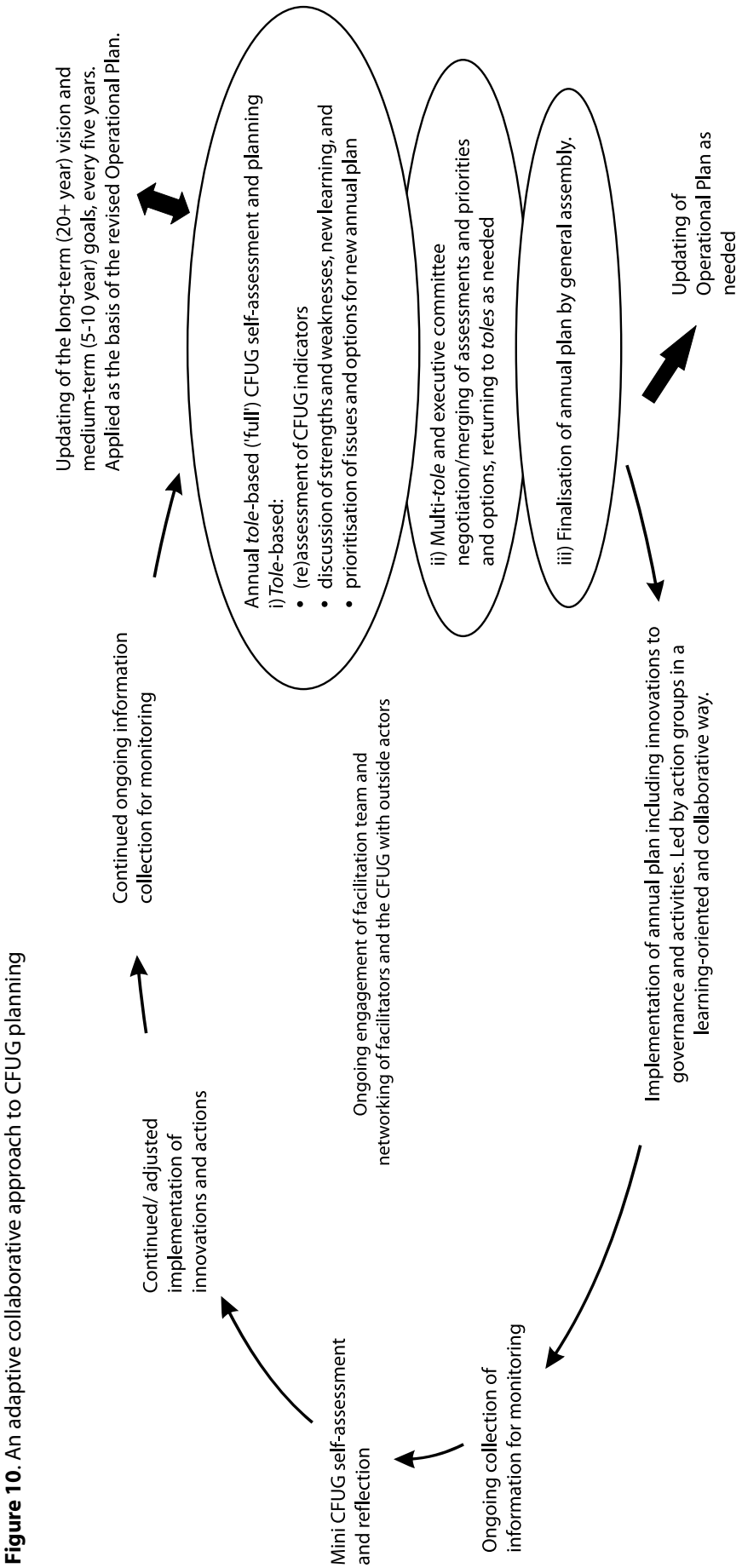


Figure 10. An adaptive collaborative approach to CFUG planning

This cycle or series of steps is also illustrated in Figure 10. The circular flow emphasises the feedback loop created by the self-monitoring and reflection processes that occur every six months, alternating between full and mini assessments. Note the nested nature of the annual assessment as it moves from the *tole* to the executive committee and general assembly. The model also flags the annual planning connection with medium- and long-term planning.

Remember that this model and these steps are not a blueprint. As emphasised earlier, each CFUG needs to decide what steps, processes and arrangements work best in practice in its context. As a facilitator, help the group develop an appropriate model, and one that can change over time, always ensuring that:

- the spirit of active co-learning and collaboration is understood and applied;
- the processes, arrangements and steps are enabling and logical; and
- the facilitation is empowering and inclusive.

Task

Task 19.1. Prepare for the next self-monitoring and annual plan adjustment or development process

How:

Planning meeting and communication with CFUG members and others

a. About one month in advance of the next CFUG self-monitoring session, meet with executive committee and *tole* representatives, and others as appropriate, to refresh everyone's understanding of the approach, including self-monitoring. Revisit the goals of self-monitoring and the role it plays as a tool for reflecting on progress, determining priority areas for annual plans, and signalling the need to adjust ongoing annual plans.
b. Determine whether this will be a full self-assessment (used to prepare a new annual plan) or a mini self-assessment (used for smaller adjustments in the ongoing annual plan). Remember that the full *tole*-based self-assessment is used to develop the annual plan (once per year); the less time-consuming mini self-assessment is used to check on progress, and adjust as needed, halfway through the implementation of the annual plan.

c. Design the self-assessment and the subsequent annual plan adjustment or development process (which will apply the learning from the assessment). In designing, keep both the assessment and planning process based in the approach, including consideration of:
   - How will the process and facilitation ensure that everyone has a voice in the planning and that there is shared (joint) learning?
   - How will learning be applied as the basis for concretely improving decisions, plans and practices?
   - What need is there for collaboration with/involvement of additional CFUG members or external actors (e.g., as additional *tole*-level facilitators or resource people) in these processes, if any?
d. Discuss, negotiate and finalise the proposed self-assessment and CFUG annual planning/plan adjustment process with CFUG members and others as needed.
e. Divide roles and responsibilities. Prepare as needed—for example, by practising explanations, exercises or facilitation—and organise the logistics. Organise the selection and training of additional facilitators for *tole*-based or other processes, as needed.

Resources: Any existing ideas/plans regarding self-monitoring from the workshop and its followup; flipchart paper, markers and tape.

Time: 2–4 hours, plus time to communicate with CFUG members and others as appropriate.

Task 19.2. Conduct the self-assessment and the annual plan adjustment or development process

How: Carrying out the self-assessment and using that learning to adjust or develop the annual plan

a. Implement the self-assessment and annual plan adjustment or development process as developed in Task 1.

Resources: As needed.

Time: For a mini self-assessment and adjustment: 3–4 hours for the forum, plus time for feedback from the *toles* and to plan adjustment; for a full self-assessment: sufficient time for half-day meetings in all *toles*, negotiations and general assembly.

Task 19.3. Continue with adaptive collaborative governance and management cycles into the future

How:

Continue to cycle through implementation of new/revised actions and innovations, self-monitoring, reflection and adjustment

a. The CFUG implements its new/adjusted plans and governance processes and continues to gather the necessary information for self-monitoring.
b. Approximately six months after the previous self-assessment (Task 2), the CFUG carries out its next self-assessment and reflection. This establishes a cycle of a new annual plan being generated each year (at about the same time) on the basis of a full *tole*-based assessment; halfway through the year, the CFUG checks and adjusts as needed through a mini assessment.
c. The CFUG continues into the future—using the learning from its self-assessments to adjust its plans, implementing its innovations and activities in a learning and collaboration-oriented way, gathering information for monitoring, and so forth—continually seeking improvements in understanding, processes, practices and outcomes.

Resources:

As needed.

Time:

As needed.

PART III

Annexes

Contents of Part III

ANNEX A
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A1
Addressing equity and livelihoods

Addressing equity and livelihoods

The challenges of equity and livelihoods

Nepal's Community Forestry Programme has achieved significant successes, including in terms of the handover of nearly 25 percent of Nepal's forestlands to community groups (DoF 2008). Yet community forestry still faces several critical challenges. One of these challenges relates to livelihoods: CFUGs often generate less income, and fewer forest products and other opportunities than their members desire.

The other challenge that we address through this guidebook relates to equity: economically and socially marginalised CFUG members, such as women, the poor and *dalit,* often receive small shares of benefits relative to their needs and have a relatively small voice in decision making. Because low-income families usually have the fewest private resources, they are often more directly dependent than other families on community forests for their subsistence or income needs, and thus for their wellbeing. Consequently, these families are the most vulnerable to changes in forest condition and access.

Many factors affect community forest benefits and equity. This guidebook focuses on addressing two aspects of common CFUG practice that are especially influential:

- decision making tends to be 'top down' and power relations are often unequal; and
- planning is often relatively 'linear' (i.e., based on standard plans) or conducted in an *ad hoc* way.

In our research, we observed that these two factors commonly created governance patterns that limited equity and excluded marginalised members from decision making. The domination of more powerful members, such as men and so-called 'high caste' and wealthier people, was reinforced by the central role of executive committees, the limited information exchange, marginalised members' absence from and/or low effective engagement in general assemblies, and nontransparent processes. Long- and medium-term plans were often somewhat generic (rather than context specific) or shaped by outside actors and/or committee leaders. Annual plans tended to reflect committee views and priorities. Tensions or conflicts over boundaries, benefits, CFUG fund use, or membership were often unresolved.

In terms of management patterns, CFUG planning tended to have few clear links to shared future visions and little feedback (learning) from CFUG experience to new or revised plans.

Influenced by this, by the above governance patterns, and by the Community Forestry Programme's historical orientation towards forest protection, CFUG management tended to be relatively passive or focused on protection and subsistence fuelwood and timber use, with fairly little development of non-timber forest products for income. The CFUGs were often uncertain about their options for livelihoods development.

Furthermore, in most cases, the relations between the CFUGs and meso (rangepost and district-level) agencies were weak and the CFUGs perceived these agencies as not being sufficiently responsive to their needs. (The nature of these CFUG–meso connections are significant because it shapes networking, support, information sharing, linking to markets, and policy interpretation and implementation.)

Addressing the challenges through an adaptive collaborative approach

An adaptive collaborative approach addresses the challenges of equity and livelihoods by making the decision-making process more inclusive, by basing decision making in intentional shared learning, and by enabling constructive connections among actors. When marginalised members of the community can contribute more directly to decision making, the resulting rules and benefits are more likely to reflect their needs. In using the approach, management plans become linked to the community's own vision, rather than to a generic plan or an outsider's ideas. This contributes to members' sense of ownership and willingness to participate, and thus groups are increasingly likely to implement their plans.

The intentional shared learning that characterises the approach means that groups jointly and regularly reflect on equity issues. This helps the group bring underlying conflicts to light and address them. In our experience, with effective facilitation, actors with different perspectives can begin to better understand one another's views as they engage in joint visioning, self-monitoring, and reflection. By using a CFUG self-monitoring system as the basis for planning, group decisions are based on constantly updated information, knowledge and understanding. In their activity-level planning, members identify and address uncertainties and gaps in their knowledge. This helps make community forestry institutions more resilient and effective (see 'Outcomes of the approach in the research sites' below).

The approach also emphasises reflection about connections with outside actors. CFUGs thereby become more aware of how outside agencies can help support their goals, and—based on our research experience—they begin to take the initiative in pursuing collaboration with them, rather than being the passive recipients of aid. As they engage agencies more proactively, they are likely to attract more appropriate and effective support from external actors.

Outcomes of the approach in the research sites

In the participatory action research on which this guidebook is based, the CFUGs that applied an adaptive collaborative approach began to demonstrate the following:

- **Stronger governance**. Women, the poor and *dalit* people had more input and gained recognition in decision making; accountability and transparency increased; and CFUGs and their members became more active.
- **Improved social relations.** Underlying conflicts within the CFUGs surfaced and were more effectively addressed than they had been previously; members developed more trust and respect for one another; connections with outside actors improved; and attention to equity issues increased.
- **Enhanced human capital**. Facilitation, leadership and participatory decision-making skills grew; and members expressed that they had a greater sense of ownership and understanding of their community forest's condition and rules.
- **Improved forest-related capital.** Forest-related activities were established and/or expanded, such as planting bamboo and developing nurseries for future replanting; members expressed that they were more motivated to manage the forest sustainably; and compliance with CFUG rules increased, including by elite members.
- **Developing financial capital.** The approach started to lay the foundation for enhanced financial capital and more equitable distribution of forest benefits. For example, the CFUGs involved all either reduced fees for poor families, started pro-poor or pro-women activities to generate income from non-timber forest products, changed the rules to allow poor families to sell firewood, or targeted employment and small loans for poor families.

A2
Facilitation: A more in-depth look

Facilitation: A more in-depth look

Facilitator comes from the French word *faciliter,* meaning 'to make easier'. A facilitator makes it easier for a group to achieve its goals by helping shape a conducive process and social environment, including respecting the diversity and value of all participants.

A facilitator is…

A facilitator is a co-learner in the group process.
A facilitator is *not* a 'dictator', nor is he or she infallible.

Facilitator roles and responsibilities relating to the approach are outlined in the 'Facilitation, Teamwork and Challenges' chapter. Within individual meeting processes, a facilitator normally also has these responsibilities (from Hartanto *et al*. 2003):

- starting the discussion and keeping it on track, clarifying and focusing on participants' goals and expectations;
- enabling and promoting norms and means of communication that encourage effective participation by all members of the group, making sure that the discussion is not dominated by a few individuals;
- deepening the discussion and learning by asking probing, sometimes challenging questions;
- pacing the discussion so that it moves along, neither too fast nor too slow for participants;
- keeping track of time and helping the group meet or adjust its timelines;
- supporting participants' understanding by clarifying and paraphrasing ideas and checking that everyone is 'on board'; and
- drawing meaning from the discussion by illuminating links between ideas, synthesising major points, and summarising learning at the session's end.

Building blocks for facilitation

A facilitator of an adaptive collaborative approach needs basic facilitation skills and a commitment to creating positive change. We draw from Hartanto *et al*. (2003) to highlight the attitudes, skills and other factors that support effective facilitation.

Attitudes

- commitment, motivation and enthusiasm to work for positive social change;
- openness to new ideas;

	• honesty and transparency; • humility and willingness to use the facilitation to support rather than dominate the group; • sensitivity to gender and diversity issues and a genuine commitment to acting in a respectful and socially just manner; and • attentiveness to people and process.
Skills	• Social skills to bring the group together and provide structure without controlling the discussion; • organisational skills to sort out administrative and logistical arrangements, such as booking rooms, preparing supporting documentation, and inviting participants; • analytical skills to help participants identify, understand and analyse issues, and synthesise information and learning; • communication skills to explain and paraphrase points both verbally and visually so that they can be understood by all participants, regardless of education and literacy levels; • listening skills to hear ideas as well as read nonverbal messages and body language; • interpersonal skills to be supportive, encouraging, accessible, enthusiastic, flexible, and responsive to people's needs and ideas; and • knowledge of community forestry policy and practice to inform the facilitation and keep the process moving forwards. When approached with a 'learning' mind, the experience of facilitating an adaptive collaborative approach actually helps build the necessary skills. Doing a check of one's own skills (and attitudes) at the beginning and throughout the process can be very helpful. A realistic self-assessment is especially important in facilitation because the facilitator is asking for people's trust in dealing with important and often sensitive issues. Facilitators who don't have the essential skills or attitudes might compromise the goals, frustrate group members, or even worsen local conflicts. Whether new or experienced, facilitators can always strengthen their capacities. One important way to enhance capacity is to share ideas, support, positive critical feedback, and mentoring with other facilitators. Another essential way is to get feedback

and guidance from the most important members of the process, the participants.

Factors affecting success of facilitators

Three key factors that significantly affect success in facilitating an adaptive collaborative approach are the facilitators' available time, their position in and support from their own organisation, and their ability to build trust and respect. For this reason these factors need to be included as criteria in selection of facilitators (see Stage One, Step 1).

Time available

The time commitment depends on the size and complexity of the CFUG, but facilitators should anticipate spending time in informal discussions and support work, as well as facilitating formal processes. Balancing the facilitation team's available time and the CFUG's needs and expectations is essential so that the CFUG is satisfied and the facilitation team is not overstretched.

Local facilitators may find it difficult to commit time to the process, especially if they are uncompensated. Whether facilitators should or can be paid depends on the context and situation. Our research project did not pay any facilitators. Some were volunteers; in many cases, their facilitation roles became a part of their existing work or volunteer responsibilities with other institutions, such as executive committees or FECOFUN. Some CFUGs acknowledged their facilitators by honouring them publicly in the general assembly.

Institutional position and support

The explicit consent and support of facilitators' own institutions to take on the facilitation role are important. We found it helpful if at least some members of the facilitation team held influential positions in their respective institutions, whether the executive committee of the CFUG or a meso organisation. Such actors can relatively easily generate 'whole organisation' energy from their institution for the transition to the adaptive collaborative approach.

Trust and respect from local people

Facilitators earn the trust and respect of CFUG members in several ways:

- having a clear understanding of the adaptive collaborative approach to management and governance;
- using the adaptive collaborative approach in their own behaviour and practices, by being genuinely inclusive and

flexible, seeking learning through critical reflection, and applying that learning;
- having strong motivation and a commitment to the local group;
- having leadership skills and the ability to initiate innovation and mobilise others;
- possessing good basic facilitation and participatory process skills, and being willing to improve; and
- understanding the local community forestry context.

Guideposts for strengthening facilitation

Here is a more in-depth look at the guideposts for facilitation noted in the 'Facilitation, Teamwork and Challenges' chapter (adapted from Chambers 2002 and based our own experiences).

Balance flexibility with direction

Each process undertaken with each group will be different (as will the outcomes). The differences are an opportunity for learning. Although experience will provide insights about what is necessary to make processes effective, there is no one 'right' way of doing things. At the same time, good facilitation is not 'letting people just get on with it'. A facilitator needs to keep an eye on the goals of the session or process so that the group can see how close they are to achieving their aims. The facilitator thus guides the process without directing it.

Be a learner

A successful facilitator approaches each new experience as an opportunity to learn. One aspect is improving one's understanding and skills. Another is learning about the unique context of the community or group with which the facilitator is working. Facilitators should never assume that they understand a context or people's perceptions, but instead enter with a learning mind.

Be an active listener

Listening actively—with focus and the ability to accurately and dispassionately paraphrase the speaker—can be challenging. Taking the time to practise and develop this skill will contribute to having a strong foundation as a facilitator. Listening actively not only deepens understanding and permits the synthesis of ideas, it also conveys the message that the opinions of the speaker are valued. This kind of listening is especially important in situations involving misunderstandings, tensions or conflicts.

'Sit with people' and honour commitments

Sometimes there is a tendency for groups to 'put facilitators on a pedestal', especially if they are from outside the community. Facilitators should be aware of this dynamic and try to engage with community members as equals. In doing so, facilitators need to be aware of nonverbal messages regarding power. This means, for example, sitting on the floor if that is where everyone else is, even if a chair is normally provided for visitors. Facilitators must also never promise, directly or indirectly, more than the facilitation team can deliver and always follow through on commitments to the group.

Recognise, value and empower individuals

Each person—male or female, rich or poor, old or young—holds unique and valuable knowledge. Just as a group may know little of what the facilitators do outside the community each day, so facilitators may know very little of what happens in the community each day. Letting people speak about their reality demonstrates awareness that they possess valuable knowledge. Showing respect for people's knowledge means not criticising or otherwise diminishing the importance of what they say. The more valued a person feels, the more he or she will be likely to contribute. Facilitators can 'disempower' themselves by encouraging group members to take the lead in recording images and words on the flipchart. It is important that the recorder note down either everyone's ideas or an agreed synthesis, not the points of only a select few—just as the professional facilitator strives to do.

Let participants set the direction

The community members are the ones who decide what, why, when, how and where things happen. Although the facilitator may design processes to enable the group, the design is useful only if it meets the group's needs. The members are the ones who will ultimately work out what they want to do and how they want to do it.

Use inclusive and creative communication

Different language and communication tools make sense in different settings. A good facilitator avoids jargon and expressions that are unfamiliar to the group and instead follows the group in using local terms to ensure local understanding. If not all members speak the same language fluently, the process and schedule should accommodate this, through translation if necessary. If some people are not literate, drawings or symbols can substitute for the written word. In fact, using multiple forms of communication has benefits beyond reaching people marginalised by literacy or language. Drawing pictures and diagrams helps people approach issues from a

more creative perspective, and the images can often express ideas in ways that words sometimes cannot. Furthermore, diagramming promotes enthusiasm and participation—and drawing can have the added value of bringing humour into a group process.

Be a part—and be apart

Facilitators need to work closely with—and in some cases may even be—CFUG members. At the same time, facilitators need to maintain their perspective as outsiders and keep a bird's-eye view on the group's situation, progress and learning.

Develop and use a support network

Support and capacity building for facilitators were important reasons for the success of the facilitation in our cases. We suggest that facilitators connect with other people engaged in an adaptive collaborative approach or other learning-based approaches for ideas, reflection and support. A visit with a group that is already implementing the approach can help crystallise understanding of the concept and generate ideas. Here we offer some strategies.

- **Training and reflection workshops.** Seek out training in facilitation and in an adaptive collaborative approach and related areas, such as conflict management, as needed (see Annex C). In our experience, facilitators found it valuable to take training on the adaptive collaborative approach twice: before beginning facilitation, and then again once they had been working with their groups for some time. This second workshop helped them reflect on experience, fine tune their skills, and address any gaps in their understanding.
- **Sharing and networking among facilitators**. Creating and maintaining linkages between facilitators from different CFUGs within or across districts can create a network of skilled people who can help develop capacity and solve problems, and also help forge links among CFUGs for similar purposes. Exchange visits and joint learning tours combined with workshops were especially useful for creating such connections.
- **Backstopping and mentoring by outsiders.** We found it helpful for facilitators to connect regularly with a 'critically reflective' outsider who is knowledgeable about the adaptive collaborative approach and about facilitation. (In our project, this role was played by the researchers.) These outsiders observed the facilitators, offered feedback, and occasionally co-facilitated sessions. Their outside perspective can help them troubleshoot

situations by strategising with the team or talking with community members.

- **Ongoing reflection meetings** about facilitation. We routinely followed up main facilitation events and ACM processes with facilitation reflection meetings. Facilitators compared the planned and actual processes with the principles and their goals, then refined and revised their facilitation plans accordingly. These reflection sessions sometimes involved just the facilitation team members, but often also included a 'critically reflective' outsider to ask questions, offer feedback, and generally support the facilitators' learning.

A3
Choosing a CFUG

Choosing a CFUG

In this Annex we offer suggestions to help facilitators choose which CFUG(s) to work with. Even if facilitators are already engaging professionally with many CFUGs, it is a good idea for them to start by trying out the approach as a learning experience in only one or two groups. Once comfortable with the approach and the time and skills required, they can expand to other groups.

In deciding which CFUG(s) to work with, facilitators need to consider several factors or criteria, such the following:

- **Accessibility.** Can facilitators travel there easily enough to engage regularly?
- **Focus**. Will the CFUG have the required time and energy to engage in a new approach? If a CFUG is in the start up phase of several other new initiatives, its members may be 'pulled in too many different directions' to commit.
- **Need for innovation.** Is there perceived need for improvement in the CFUG? In our experience, groups that relied directly on the forest for their livelihoods and had some level of dissatisfaction with the current outcomes or governance of the CFUG were most likely to be interested in engaging in the approach.
- **Existing support**. Does the CFUG already have sufficient facilitative or related support from other actors? If a CFUG already has a high level of facilitative input then, from an equity perspective, it may be worth considering supporting a CFUG with less.

Facilitators might draw on a number of sources to help in their preliminary decision making, including their own knowledge and that of staff of the district forest office, area networks, NGOs, or projects. In discussion of the facilitators' criteria and other factors, these stakeholders can help identify a shortlist of two to five potential CFUGs.

Next, facilitators should meet with members of each short-listed CFUG and discuss the possibility of working together on a transition to the adaptive collaborative approach. The meetings should be with marginalised people as well as leaders and could be a series of small–group discussions, possibly with separate subgroups (such as women only, poor users only). In the discussions, facilitators should describe the adaptive collaborative approach and their interest in finding a CFUG to work with, and invite group members to share information relating to the criteria. Note that facilitators need to express

clearly that these discussions are preliminary only and avoid raising hopes or making commitments. Members should be encouraged to ask questions and share potential concerns and interests about working together. Facilitators need to keep in mind that the decision about whether to work with a certain CFUG rests with the CFUG members themselves. If the group is not interested, then the facilitator needs to respect that and find a better match.

After visiting all shortlisted groups and reflecting on the information, the facilitators should make a preliminary decision and return to that CFUG in person to discuss further and—if all goes well—confirm the plans together. Both the stakeholders who were consulted and the other shortlisted CFUGs should be informed of the decision and the reasons for it.

A4

Using the approach to revise and renew an Operational Plan

Using the approach to revise and renew an Operational Plan

A CFUG Operational Plan specifies what forest products can be used and harvested in a specific CFUG in a given time period. Currently in Nepal, each CFUG revises and renews its Operational Plan with its district forest office every 5 to 10 years. Additionally, it updates the Plan if its action plans change significantly in the interim.

In common practice, Operational Plans are usually written or revised by a combination of district forest office staff, actors outside the CFUG, and some CFUG executive committee members. The Operational Plan—and often the Constitution as well—thus rarely reflects the direct contributions of general members, including marginalised people. As a result, many CFUGs are legally bound by a document that may not directly reflect their unique situation and members' aspirations. Furthermore, CFUG users are often unaware of the contents of the Operational Plan. Members' sense of ownership in the CFUG is limited, and meaningful benefits are often limited, too.

An adaptive collaborative approach to revising and renewing the Operational Plan breaks from this pattern by enhancing members' contributions to—and ownership of—the CFUG's guiding documents. In using the approach to renew the Operational Plan, the document can become more locally appropriate and understood, and thus more likely to be successful. The most straightforward way to apply the approach for Operational Plan revision and renewal is to link it directly to the planning process described in Part II of this guidebook.

Pointers

Keep the big picture in mind

The Operational Plan should be a long-term planning document based on the CFUG's vision. It should reflect CFUG members' own perspectives and priorities.

Encourage ownership

Although the Operational Plan requires certain technical information (which may be collected by technical actors from outside the CFUG), it does not need to remain only a technical document developed by outsiders and unfamiliar to the members. When the Operational Plan is due for revision, make sure that CFUG members are aware of this opportunity to take ownership of the process and the document. Explain

what an Operational Plan is, how it influences their future decisions, and how much flexibility is available in it (e.g., through requests for adjustments/updates).

Mind the formal requirements

The adaptive collaborative approach to revising and renewing the Operational Plan and Constitution fits within the overall plan preparation process outlined by the Department of Forests (Annex Box 1). Be sure that you and the CFUG are aware of all specific current requirements for submitting the revised Operational Plan to the district forest office.

Annex Box 1. Operational Plan preparation process as per the Guidelines for Community Forestry Development

Planning with the executive committee for Operational Plan preparation should involve:

- forest demarcation, forest resource assessment and information analysis;
- organisation of *toles* and interest group meetings to incorporate the needs/interests of different users including women, the poor and other marginalised people;
- finalisation of Operational Plan at the general assembly; and
- Operational Plan writing and submission to the district forest office for approval.

Community Forestry Division,
Department of Forests
(2058 *BS*)

Integrate the renewal with annual planning processes

In practice, the Operational Plan renewal process can be directly integrated with the annual CFUG planning process described in Stage Four of this guidebook. Specifically, approximately every five years, the CFUG can directly ground the reworking of its Operational Plan and Constitution in a process of shared visioning and goal setting; these can be used as the basis for checking and adjusting the CFUG's indicators before continuing with self-assessments and annual planning. The following is a suggested sequence of steps for using the approach in Operational Plan renewal. The steps that dovetail directly with the ongoing annual planning processes are marked with an asterisk (*).

1. Contact the district forest office (and other community forestry service institutions as necessary) for the latest guidelines and requirements related to Operational Plans, including those for resource assessment.
2. The CFUG undertakes/organises the resource assessment according to regulatory guidelines, through or with the support of a technical resource person, as required. The technical, 'expert' assessment should ideally involve some participatory assessment of forest resources by users, or at least be shared with them in an accessible way, such as a forest walk to highlight findings. The awareness of resources and forest condition developed through this participatory assessment can foster awareness of needs and opportunities, such as the need for protection of sensitive areas or species and the potential for non-timber forest products.
3. Facilitate *tole*-level development or updating of long-term (20+year) vision and medium-term (5- to 10-year) goals.*
4. The *tole* representatives meet with the executive committee to negotiate an adjusted CFUG vision, goals and indicators, and assess the indicators to develop draft priorities for the next 5- to 10-year period. Make sure that marginalised users are included in this group. At the same time, the group can use the medium-term goals as the basis for shaping their annual plans.*
5. The *tole* representatives return the vision, goals, indicators, assessment and ideas for priorities to their *tole*s for input and refinement. They can also refine annual priorities and plans at the same time.*
6. The *tole* representatives and executive committee members use the *toles*' input to create a final vision, goals and priorities. These form the basis for the new draft Operational Plan (and also a revised Constitution, if needed). They can also finalise annual priorities and plans at the same time.*
7. The draft is submitted to the *tole*s for discussion and then returned to the executive committee for final revisions and ultimately to the general assembly for approval; the assembly can also approve the annual plans at the same time.*
8. The revised Operational Plan and Constitution documents are sent to the district forest officer for approval.

ANNEX B
EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

B1

Participatory mapping and Transects over Time

Participatory mapping and Transects over Time

Participatory mapping and Transects over Time are two exercises supporting situation analysis.

Objectives

- To spark discussion and critical reflection about the community forest and related resource systems, the local resource management system, and governance and equity, including rights and responsibilities of CFUG members.
- To develop shared understanding of whether the CFUG needs to adjust its approach and try an adaptive collaborative approach.

Critical reflection on the current situation is very useful in illuminating the areas of governance and management in need of change. Here we suggest two participatory activities that can add depth to that reflection: participatory mapping and Transects over Time.

Group size and composition

These activities are best done in small groups—4 to 7 people for mapping and up to about 10 for the walk. The composition of each group depends on the level of cohesion or divisiveness in the CFUG. Groups divided by gender often work better. Because these can be relatively informal exercises and the sharing of different perspectives can be illuminating, it is useful to have a mix of perspectives. For example, each gender group could include people of different ages, wealth status and *toles*. In a highly divisive context, it may be smoother to work with groups that are less diverse. Include people who have firsthand knowledge of the landscape; for the forest transect walk, this should include knowledge of the history of the landscape. Multiple small groups doing the same exercise simultaneously with cross-sharing is also a good option.

Participatory mapping

Method

Each small group creates a map of the community forest area to develop shared insights into the current situation, including CFUG governance. This is adapted from Colfer *et al.* (1999a).

a. Explain that the goal is not to draw a perfectly accurate map of the community forest area, but rather to use the drawing process to illuminate the current situation of many aspects of the CFUG.

b. Start with a large sheet of blank paper or a simple outline map of the CFUG area that everyone can see and work on. Have the group chose one person—either a facilitator or a group member—to take notes.
c. Hand out the markers, suggesting that people take turns with the drawing. Encourage them to draw a map of the community forest area and its resources, including whatever they view as important—different forested areas, other vegetation, landslide areas, homes, roads, contested areas, areas of religious importance, and so forth.
d. As the drawing progresses, help spark and focus discussion on governance by posing questions such as these:
    - What are the most important resources in the area? Why?
    - Who controls them and decides about them? Who benefits from them? Who doesn't?
    - Are people satisfied with this control and sharing of benefits? Why or why not?
    - How do CFUG decisions and management affect people's livelihood needs? Why?
    - What are the effects on the forest and its health? On other resources, such as water?
    - Based on these reflections, what changes are needed?
e. Ask the note taker to share the recorded points with the group; adjust the notes as needed and synthesise any key points of learning.

Resources

Flipchart paper, tape, and markers; simplified map of boundaries/key features if desired; paper and pen for note taking.

Time

Approximately two hours for each small group; time for sharing across groups as needed.

Transects over Time

Method

Each small group walks a transect of the community forest and draws an image of that landscape in three time periods: today; in the past and, in the likely future. This is done to develop shared insights about the direction that the CFUG is heading. This exercise is adapted from Colfer *et al.*'s 'historical transects' (1999b).

a. Have the small group plan and carry out a group walk through the CFUG. The walk should 'transect' the CFUG, travelling in an approximately straight line across a section or the whole area. Choose an area that includes different kinds of forest, land use and conditions. Have the group chose one person—either a facilitator or a group member—to take notes of key discussion points.
b. During the walk, or at the end if needed, have the group draw the transect showing the present situation (a transect drawing looks like a 'slice' of the landscape, seen from the side); include variations in forest species, condition, ownership, and so forth.
c. As the group walks and discusses, focus learning by posing questions such as these:
    - What are the most important resources in the area? Why?
    - Who controls them and decides about them? Who benefits from them? Who doesn't?
    - Are people satisfied with this control and sharing of benefits? Why or why not?
    - How do CFUG decisions and management affect people's livelihood needs? Why?
    - What are the effects on the forest and its health? On other resources, such as water?
d. At the end of the walk, draw and discuss two additional versions of the same transect:
    - the past (a period selected by the group, such as when the elders were youths or at the time of CFUG formation); and
    - the likely future (assuming the CFUG continues its current practices).
e. Facilitate a discussion comparing the current, past and likely future transect images. Solicit group members' thoughts about the lessons from these transects and insights for the CFUG, including in terms of changes needed in governance or management.
f. Ask the note taker to share the recorded points with the group; adjust the notes as needed and synthesise any key points of learning.

Resources

Water and optional snacks for the walk; flipchart paper, tape, and markers; paper and pen for note taking.

Time

Approximately 2 hours for each small group; time for sharing across groups as needed.

B2
Proverb Pairs

Proverb Pairs

Proverb Pairs is one example of an 'icebreaker' for the beginning of a workshop.

Objectives

- To give participants opportunity to interact and get to know each other.
- To set the tone for an interactive and thinking-oriented session.

Group size

This activity can involve a plenary group, divided into pairs or threesomes.

Method

Partners' finding each other, paired discussion and sharing.

N.B. This icebreaker, as described, is based on the use of written statements. For a group in which some people are not completely literate, use drawings or symbols (to be torn in half) instead of sentences, and adjust the discussion as appropriate.

Pre-session

a. Before the session, write down sayings (proverbs) about learning and collaboration on small pieces of paper. You will need half as many sayings as you have group participants (e.g., five sayings if you have 10 participants). Here are some example sayings:
   - To know where we are going, we have to know where we have been.
   - A rolling stone gathers no moss.
   - Silence is not the same as agreement.
   - Good negotiations start when counterparts say no.
   - Good ideas arise from our dreams.
   - Where there is a will, there is a way.
   - More haste, less speed.
   - Experience is worth more than a textbook.
   - Possibilities arise from our mistakes.

b. Cut each proverb in half. For example, cut 'Possibilities arise from our mistakes' into 'Possibilities arise' and 'from our mistakes'. Check that you have enough proverbs for each participant to have half a saying. If you have an odd number of participants, cut the longest saying into three pieces. Put the papers in a box or bag.

During the session

c. To start the icebreaker, have each participant select a piece of paper.

	d. Ask participants to search for the person who has the other half of their saying. e. When they have found their partners, ask the pairs to introduce themselves, share something interesting or exciting they have done, and explain their reason for participating in the workshop. Ask them also to discuss their saying and how it relates to community forestry: What does it mean? Do they agree with it or not, and why? f. Bring the participants together in a circle. Ask them to introduce their partners and share an insight about their saying in relation to community forestry. g. To wrap up the session, highlight insights from the discussion that will be carried forward to upcoming sessions.
Resources	Paper, scissors, and a bag or other container.
Time	1 hour.

B3
The Mirror Game

The Mirror Game

The Mirror Game is a demonstration exercise relating to self-monitoring. This was introduced to our team by Ghanendra Kafle.

Objective

- To explore the concept and significance of self-monitoring.

Group size

Unlimited (takes place in front of a plenary).

Method

The facilitator paints colours on the face of another volunteer, but does not allow the latter to see the colours or correctly interpret where he or she has been painted. The 'painted' volunteer's need for a mirror to see his or her situation accurately is used to signal the importance of self-monitoring and reflection.

N.B. Sometimes participants may spontaneously seek to confuse the painted volunteer, by having some people suggest to the volunteer that he or she (the volunteer) has been marked with black paint and others saying yellow paint. If you want to be sure this will happen to further reinforce the learning, ask the volunteer to leave the room briefly before beginning; then share this idea with the group before bringing the volunteer back to start.

a. Invite a volunteer to come to the front of the group. Ask the volunteer to close his or her eyes and then (with his or her permission) mark the volunteer's face with red powder or washable marker—but do not show or tell the volunteer what colour has been used. Ask the volunteer, 'What is different about your face?' and, specifically, 'Can you say what colour is painted on your face?'
b. Show the painted volunteer a second powder or marker before asking that he or she close his or her eyes and be painted again. You can tell the volunteer this is a different colour from the first paint. This time, however, use only a clean finger or a dry marker on the volunteer's face, so as to actually leave no mark. Again ask the volunteer what colours are used on his or her face. When the volunteer admits that he or she doesn't know for sure, ask what he or she would need in order to find out. The volunteer will likely ask for a mirror.
c. Hold up a mirror so that the volunteer can see what colours were used and where. Lead a debriefing discussion by asking the volunteer and the group about the lessons

	from this game, moving from the game experience to the broader sphere of community forestry. Ask for example: • Why did the volunteer need a mirror? What did he or she gain by using the mirror? • How does this relate to the CFUG? Specifically, why are self-assessment and reflection important to a CFUG? What kinds of things do CFUG members need to see clearly, and why? d. Emphasise that self-assessment is different from outside assessment. Although outsiders may have important insights that can enrich local understanding, the group's own knowledge and perceptions are the foundation for decision making.
Resources	Something to mark the volunteer's face (such as face paint, washable coloured powder, or washable markers in different colours) and a mirror.
Time	15–30 minutes.

B4
The Human Knot

The Human Knot

The Human Knot is an experiential game to encourage collaboration and problem solving.

Objectives

- To encourage communication, collaboration and leadership.
- To increase collaborative spirit through simple collective problem solving.
- To relate concepts of collaboration to community forestry.

Annex Box 2 offers a participant's reflection on the experience, which illustrate the kind of learning that can emerge from this game.

Group size

Unlimited group size, although smaller groups make for easier challenges. Approximately 8–12 people is a good, mid-level size. Because the game involves physical contact, the group may want to play in separate groups of women and men.

Method

The circle of participants has to problem solve and use leadership and collaboration to solve the challenge of their 'tangled' hands.

a. Optional: Invite one or two volunteers to be observers (rather than engage in the game) and then share their observations during the debriefing discussion. Ask them to focus on what is happening, especially in relation to the learning objectives for the game: communication, working together, leadership and solving problems. Inviting dominant members in the group to be observers can shift them into a silent role during the problem solving, and may encourage them to relate to the group in a new way, using their observation skills rather than talking. This shift can also create space for new leaders to emerge.
b. Have participants stand in a small circle and raise their left hands. Then ask them to move their right hands towards the centre of the circle. Now have all participants lower their *left* hands and grasp someone else's *right* hand. Tell participants the one rule of the game: once this contact is made between hands, no one should break the contact until the game is officially over.
c. Give participants their group task: to untangle the 'knot' without breaking contact.

d. Once the knot is untangled, ask people to observe that the result of the 'untangling' is actually a circle, even though some participants are facing inwards and others outwards. Declare the game over and celebrate the accomplishment.
e. Facilitate a debriefing discussion about the problem-solving process. Include input from all participants, as well as from any observers. Move from the concrete experience of what happened in the game towards more abstract thinking about how to apply the lessons to the CFUG, using questions such as:
   - What happened in the game?
   - What actions, behaviours or communication helped solve the challenge? What hindered?
   - Did anyone break the contact? If yes, why?
   - Did people feel that they were contributing to the solution or just being moved around? What kind of leadership emerged, and what effect did that have on participants and on progress?
   - What lessons has this exercise generated about communication, working together, qualities of leadership, and solving problems?
   - Can these lessons be applied to community forestry and the CFUG? How?
f. If the group does not succeed in untangling the knot in a reasonable time, or frustrations are running too high, you can stop the exercise. Assure everyone that given patience and teamwork, all circle knots can be untangled (this is true). Debrief immediately, exploring strategies to address teamwork issues that were inhibiting and helping progress, and then have the group try again right away. Or you and the group may decide to try again later when more time is available. You can also try the exercise breaking into smaller groups; with fewer people the knots are less complicated and the solutions are more obvious. Continue with the game until the group feels it has achieved some success.

Resources

None.

Time

20–45 minutes or more (for one round with 8 to 10 people).

Variation: Human Knot with Helpers

To use the Human Knot game to develop leadership skills or highlight the value of an outside perspective, invite one or two volunteers to help untangle the knot. The helpers assist by offering observations and suggestions from outside.

In this variation, the group will do less sorting out of their own internal communication and leadership system because they will rely on the helpers. This difference between problem solving using all internal perspectives versus including external perspectives is worth discussing in the debrief discussion. Consider having the group play the game both the standard way and with this variation to access these insights—or have two small groups, playing different forms of the game.

Additionally, if your goal is to explore leadership versus facilitation or different kinds of leadership, instruct the helpers to take on a certain kind of role. For example, the helpers could first be 'directors' or 'dictators' and just tell people how to untangle; in a second game, they could facilitate the untangling by engaging all participants in sharing ideas. The differences in quality of process and in outcomes can then be discussed.

The choice of helpers will affect the game's outcome, process and learning. If recognised leaders are chosen, people are more likely to listen to them—even though they are not necessarily the best problem solvers. And they may be tempted to direct rather than involve people. You may want to invite volunteers who don't typically lead or get much recognition but whom you think could contribute well as problem solvers or facilitators. This gives them an opportunity to shine and gives others a chance to recognise their potential.

Alternative: The Circle Game

In this alternative to the Human Knot, participants form a circle, facing in and out alternately, and hold hands with their neighbours. The group's challenge is to reform the circle so that those who face in will face out, and vice-versa, without letting go of hands. This poses similar challenges to the Human Knot game—although people get less tangled up—and can be debriefed in a similar way.

Annex Box 2. Participant's reflections on the circle game

One participant's reflection:
It was very difficult for us for the first time to play the game. There was no coordination among participants. But in the second and the third try, we discussed each other and developed group strategy. We also observed other group's work that helped to develop some ideas. Two of us became the facilitator and gave instructions to the rest of the participants to perform the task in the exact way as it was instructed. Finally, we became successful.

We had the same problem while forming our Community Forest User Group in the beginning. But while seeing the other CFUGs work, we learned from them. Now we are doing well and have reached the stage of self-assessment of our community forest..

Workshop participant's quote, source: Shrestha (2001)

B5
No-hands Passing Game

No-hands Passing Game

The No-hands Passing Game is an experiential game that encourages reflection about intentional and applied learning and collaboration. This game was introduced to our project by Dr Shibesh Regmi.

Objective

- To spark thinking about the role of indicators, intentional learning and regular reflection, communication, and collaboration in strengthening processes and outcomes.

Annex Box 3 offers some participant and facilitator reflections on playing the game.

Group size

A team can consist of 5 to 10 people; the game can be played with multiple teams (each with the same number of members) playing at the same time.

Additional people can be observers and timers.

Because the game involves close physical proximity among participants, it may be appropriate to separate men and women.

Method

In each team, a line of people have to pass an object down the line as quickly as they can, without dropping it, and without using their hands.

N.B. If playing with multiple teams and the teams line up parallel to one another, they can see each other and will likely become competitive. If you/the group wants to make the game less competitive, have teams compete against themselves for a best time.

a. Divide the participants into teams of at least five people each.
b. From each team, or if there are 'extra' people, ask for a volunteer who will time the team, count how many times it makes an error or breaks the rules, and at the end, share observations about process, working together, and active co-learning.
c. Ask each team to form a straight line and, without using their hands, pass an object—such as a ball or a book—from the first to the last person in the line and then back to the first person without dropping it. Typically people will hold the object under their chins, but they could use elbows, knees or any strategy they chose. If the object is

dropped, the person who dropped it can pick it up with his or her hands but must then try again to pass it no-hands. Have the volunteer observer for each team report the team's time and number of errors.

d. Give the teams 3 minutes to discuss their strategy (within their own team), and then play the game again. Have the volunteer observer for each team report the team's new time and number of errors.
e. Give the teams five minutes to discuss (within their own team) and readjust their plans for the final round. Play again and have the volunteer observer for each team report the team's new time and number of errors.
f. Celebrate all teams' participation and progress. With everyone in a large circle, facilitate a debriefing discussion. Aim to move from the game experience to applying the lessons to the CFUG:
    - What happened in the first try at the game? Using their learning, did the groups try a different strategy the second and third times? Did that affect the outcome?
    - What information was used to assess whether the group was meeting its goals? What other indicators would have measured progress?
    - What factors led to improvement, and what factors did not help? Including:
        - How did people interact, communicate and work as a team? Did this change during the game? Why? With what effect?
        - Did having time to reflect and adjust plans between each effort improve performance?
    - How do these lessons relate to CFUG governance and planning activities, including in terms of tracking progress, working together, reflecting, planning, and trying new strategies based on learning?

Resources

Objects for the teams to pass (notebooks, books, balls—the same for each team); stopwatch or watch with a second hand.

Time

Approximately 1 hour.

Annex Box 3. Reflections on the No-hands Passing Game

One participant's reflection on the concrete experience:
We are very much used to using our hands while passing any object. In the first try, we just played without group discussion; it took more time and we dropped the notebook. But in the second try, we discussed in the group and arranged our members on the basis of their height, gradually from the shortest to the tallest in a row. We found much better and did the task in less amount of time but still we had some faults. Again, in the third try, we discussed how to hold the notebook? What should be the pattern to pass on? We improved a lot. In this try we did accomplish our task in the least amount of time without any dropping.

A facilitators' reflection on the use of the game:
Developing concepts through experiential games is a really effective strategy in this kind of learning workshop. It would be very difficult (and inappropriate) to make participants understand adaptation and collaboration by lecture method only. The game's primary objective was to enable participants to experience firsthand the process of reflection and adaptation. Its secondary objective was to serve as an energiser. The challenging and iterative nature of the game (i.e., having several trials at an activity, with time for reflection in between, and established indicators of success) made it very easy to link with real-life situations, such as community forestry activities.

Source: Shrestha (2001)

B6
The Ball Toss

The Ball Toss

The Ball Toss is a small–group game that emphasises cooperation and problem solving. It is similar to No-hands Passing but slightly more challenging.

Objective

- To spark thinking about the role of intentional learning and regular reflection, communication and collaboration in strengthening processes and outcomes.

Group size

Groups of five to eight people are ideal; several small groups can play simultaneously or take turns playing and observing.

Method

One or more small groups try to pass a ball among their members as fast as possible without dropping it on the ground.

a. Ask each group to pass the ball among all its members as fast as possible without dropping it on the ground. Time each group and count the number of dropped balls, and share that information at the end of each turn. *Make sure each group remembers the order in which the ball was passed in its group.*
b. Each group gets three tries at the game, with 2–3 minutes between turns to reflect and adjust strategy. Each time, the ball must pass from one person to another in the *same order* as in the first round.
c. Close the game, celebrating improvements made and engage in a debriefing discussion with questions that flow from concrete experience to lessons for the CFUG. Questions could include:
    - What happened the first time? Using their learning, did the groups try a different strategy the second and third times? Did that affect the outcome?
    - What information was used to assess whether the group was meeting its goals? What other indicators would have measured progress?
    - What factors led to improvement, and what factors did not help? Including:
        - How did people interact, communicate, and work as a team? Did this change during the game? Why? With what effect?
        - Did having time to reflect and adjust plans as a team improve performance?
        - Did observation of other teams contribute to learning?

	• How do these lessons relate to CFUG governance and planning activities, including in terms of tracking progress, working together, reflecting, planning, and trying new strategies based on learning?
Resources	One ball for each small group; stopwatch or a watch with a second hand.
Time	30–60 minutes, depending on group size.

ANNEX C
RESOURCES

C1
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C2
Other useful resources

Other useful resources

Research partner websites

The Center for International Forestry Research: www. cifor.cgiar.org
ForestAction: www.forestaction.org
NewERA: www.newera.com.np

CIFOR and partners' research publications about an adaptive collaborative approach

Bhattarai, T., Rana, S.K., Maharjan, M., Banjade, M.R. and Ojha, H. 2008 *Sikai ko brikshya: Samawashi, garibmukhi, loktantrik samudayik ban. Samudayik ban bikas ma sikaimukhi samuhik byawasthapan paddati sahajikaran ka lagi sahayogi pustika* [Tree of learning: Inclusive, pro-poor and democratic community forestry. A guidebook for adaptive collaborative management facilitation in community forestry development]. ForestAction/CIFOR, Kathmandu, Nepal and Bogor, Indonesia.

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Information about facilitation, appreciative inquiry and participatory learning processes

Appreciative Inquiry Commons: http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/

Institute of Development Studies Participation, Power and Social Change Team: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/part/

International Association of Facilitators: www.iaf-world.org

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The Journal of Forests and Livelihoods (in English)
Hamro Ban Sampada (in Nepali)

There are many challenges in community forestry—including, in many cases, transforming the existing forestry and development (and research) professionals' paradigms and practices towards more inclusive and participatory democracy. I am sure the adaptive collaborative approach is one of the ways to address these challenges and to move effectively—and equitably—towards our country's livelihood and environmental goals.

Dr K.R. Kanel
Acting Secretary, Government of Nepal and
Former Director General, Department of Forests and Soil Conservation, Nepal

Community forest user groups face the critical challenges of engendering equity and generating livelihood benefits while sustaining the forest system on which communities depend.

This guidebook is a hands-on manual for applying an adaptive collaborative approach in order to meet those challenges. The approach is a way of enhancing the outcomes of, and equity in, community forestry user group (CFUG) governance and management. It does so through enabling processes, practices and attitudes that support socially just, inclusive decision making and planning, all based on active shared learning. The approach is especially significant as a strategy to contribute to the wellbeing of people who are often locally marginalised, such as women, *dalit* people and the poor.

The guidebook explores the key concepts of the approach and shares step-by-step suggestions for facilitating a user group's transition to, and continued use of, the approach. The steps encompass a CFUG using an inclusive, learning-based approach in long–term and annual planning as well as in each of its specific activities. Central to these steps are the CFUG's linking shared action, learning and monitoring to enhance their knowledge, interdependence, and capacity to adapt effectively. Facilitators will also find strategies for effective facilitation and instructions for experiential games and activities to support active shared learning and connections among diverse actors.

Based on six years of research in Nepal, the guidebook is a valuable resource for all facilitators working with forest users to realise the promise of community forestry.

ISBN 978-979-14-1283-4
9 789791 412834

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