

Lessons learned: managing shared resources

Validated RNRRS Output.

In India, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, participatory forest management projects have conducted studies to help us better understand how and in what way the poor depend on shared resources. The results of this research can be used to improve policy and prevent future conflicts arising over shared resources. The projects involved produced a range of useful outputs. Examples include conflict management strategies that were developed in partnership with local target institutions and an analytical framework to help decision makers recognise and understand the implications of possible policy options. The outputs produced by these projects are now being used by a range of in-country partners.

Project Ref: **NRSP24:**

Topic: **6. Promoting Success: Partnerships, Policy & Empowerment**

Lead Organisation: **University of Cambridge, UK**

Source: **Natural Resources Systems Programme**

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Description

NRSP24

A. Description of the research output(s)

Research into Use

NR International
Park House
Bradbourne Lane
Aylesford
Kent
ME20 6SN
UK

Geographical regions included:

[India](#), [Tanzania](#),
[Zimbabwe](#),

Target Audiences for this content:

[Crop farmers](#), [Livestock farmers](#), [Fishers](#), [Forest-dependent poor](#),

1. Working title of output or cluster of outputs.

Common Pool Resource Management and Poverty

2. Name of relevant RNRRS Programme(s) commissioning supporting research and also indicate other funding sources, if applicable.

R7973 and R8280 were both funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) under the Semi-Arid Production System (SAPS) of the Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP).

3. Provide relevant R numbers (and/or programme development/dissemination reference numbers covering supporting research) along with the institutional partners (with individual contact persons (if appropriate)) involved in the project activities.**R7973: Policy implications of common property resource (CPR) knowledge in India, Zimbabwe and Tanzania.**

Bill Adams: Department of Geography, University of Cambridge (Project Leader)

Bhaskar Vira: Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

Daniel Brockington: Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

Kanchan Chopra: Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi

Marshall Murphree: Centre for Applied Social Science, University of Zimbabwe

Issa Shivji: University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

R8280: Incorporating stakeholder perceptions in participatory forest management in India.

Bhaskar Vira: Department of Geography, University of Cambridge (Project Leader)

Purnamita Dasgupta: Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), New Delhi

Anirban Ganguly, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi

Sushil Saigal: Resource Unit for Participatory Forestry, Winrock International India (WII), New Delhi

Manish Shankar: Sanket Information and Research Agency, Bhopal

R K Singh: Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal

Sanjay Upadhyay: Enviro-Legal Defence Firm (ELDF), New Delhi

4. Describe the RNRRS output or cluster of outputs being proposed and when was it produced? (max. 400 words). This requires a clear and concise description of the output(s) and the problem the output(s) aimed to address. Please incorporate and highlight (in bold) key words that would/could be used to select your output when held in a database.

R7973

The purpose of R7973 was to review current knowledge about **common pool resource (CPR)** management in three target countries (India, Tanzania, Zimbabwe); to understand the relative dependence of the poor on CPRs for their livelihoods; and to identify the policy implications of this

knowledge.

Outputs:

1. Academic and policy knowledge of CPRs and poverty reviewed to identify opportunities and constraints of policy interventions to benefit the poor.
2. **Analytical framework** created to allow **decision makers** to understand opportunities for, and implications of, possible **policy** options.
3. For each target country –
 - (i) Status of, and pressures on, CPRs and changing patterns of their use assessed.
 - (ii) Policy, legislative and governance environment affecting CPRs assessed.
 - (iii) Priorities for policy intervention in CPR management reviewed.
4. **Policy research** community among donors, research groups and NGOs reviewed in each target country which -
 - (i) Identified key policy partners and engagement in policy dialogue.
 - (ii) Supported, challenged and enhanced understanding of CPRs and poverty by key decision makers.
5. Opportunities for influencing and supporting policy dialogue on CPRs and for research and action to contribute to CPR management strategies that benefit the poor identified.

R8280

R8280 evolved out of R7973, in order (in part) to test the **analytical framework** and to assess its utility in informing policy dialogue over **common pool resources**. The project aimed to convert the framework into a useable primary research method and utilise it to increase learning about differences in **stakeholder** perceptions over participatory forest management (in Harda district, **Madhya Pradesh, India**); to generate policy relevant findings that could be used to formulate inclusive policy for **participatory forest management**; and to communicate these findings to key stakeholders and policy actors.

Outputs

1. Enhanced learning about differences in stakeholder perceptions and sources of conflict over participatory forest management in Harda District developed using the analytical tools from R7973.
2. Strategies to manage conflict discussed and promoted with local target institutions.
3. Improved dialogue between key stakeholders and policy actors over participatory forest management strategies, at the local, state and national levels. This was achieved to a limited extent due to existing polarisation among key protagonists in the local Harda context.
4. Learning about the utility of analytical frameworks and tools as inputs into the policy process and for conflict management over participatory forest management.

Both projects contribute to the overall output of NRSP's Semi-Arid Production Systems Programme by promoting more inclusive policy processes for the management of common pool resources.

5. What is the type of output(s) being described here?

Please tick one or more of the following options.

Product	Technology	Service	Process or Methodology	Policy	Other Please specify
			X	X	

6. What is the main commodity (ies) upon which the output(s) focussed?

R7973 and R8280 focused on common pool resources (CPRs), including grazing resources, woodland and grassland products and wild foods. Most CPRs exist outside individually-owned farmlands and are central to livelihoods for landless, asset-poor or labour-poor farming households, pastoralists and hunters. CPRs are therefore an essential element in poverty-reduction strategies in many contexts, particularly in semi-arid and moist forest contexts.

7. What production system(s) does/could the output(s) focus upon?

Please tick one or more of the following options. Leave blank if not applicable

Semi-Arid	High potential	Hillsides	Forest-Agriculture	Peri-urban	Land water	Tropical moist forest	Cross-cutting
X							X

8. What farming system(s) does the output(s) focus upon?

Please tick one or more of the following options (see Annex B for definitions).

Leave blank if not applicable

Smallholder rainfed humid	Irrigated	Wetland rice based	Smallholder rainfed highland	Smallholder rainfed dry/cold	Dualistic	Coastal artisanal fishing

9. How could value be added to the output or additional constraints faced by poor people addressed by clustering this output with research outputs from other sources (RNRRS and non RNRRS)? (max. 300 words).

R7973 and R8280 form part of a cluster of projects concerned with common pool resources and their management. There are close links (developed during R7973 with R7304), which studied the management of CPRs in a semi-arid catchment in southern Zimbabwe. Value could be added by drawing together conclusions about CPRs and poverty across production systems. R7973 R8280 and R7304 focused on the semi-arid production system, but there are clear synergies with projects in forest systems (e.g. R7889, R7975 and R6368). There are also synergies with projects exploring the management of water resources (e.g. R8116). R8501 has done some work synthesising conclusions about CPRs across production systems. Value could be added by reviewing multi-stakeholder frameworks for conflict resolution in different CPR management systems, for example work in coastal zones (R8317 and R7408).

Listing of CPR projects

R8195: Integrated floodplain management - institutional environments and participatory methods.
 R7304: Zimbabwe: Micro-catchment management and common property resources.
 R7889: Dissemination of research findings regarding community forestry in Nepal.
 R7975: Social structure, livelihoods and the management of CPRs in Nepal.
 R8116: Improving management of common pool resources in rainwater harvesting systems.
 R7562: Methods for consensus building for management of common property resources.
 R7857: Review of common pool resource management in Tanzania.
 R8501: Synthesis of new knowledge generated by RNRRS research on common pool resources.
 R7408: Trade-off analysis for coastal zone conservation and development
 R8317: Institutional arrangements for coastal zone management
 R6778: Community forestry in Nepal: sustainability and impacts on common and private property resource management.
 R7877: Common pool resources (CPRs) in semi-arid India – dynamics, management and livelihood contributions.
 R6386: Review of common property rights, tenure and access rights in relation to land use management and planning at the Forest Agriculture Interface.

Validation

B. Validation of the research output(s)

10. How were the output(s) validated and who validated them?

Please provide brief description of method(s) used and consider application, replication, adaptation and/or adoption in the context of any partner organisation and user groups involved. In addressing the "who" component detail which group(s) did the validation e.g. end users, intermediary organisation, government department, aid organisation, private company etc... This section should also be used to detail, if applicable, to which social group, gender, income category the validation was applied and any increases in productivity observed during validation (max. 500 words).

R7973

Research was reported at workshops in the UK and within the three target countries. In country reports on the state of the art of research, knowledge and practice concerning CPR management and policy were produced and a final report presented drawing on the expertise and experience of the target countries giving implementable policy recommendations. Key decision makers and advisors named within government and donor networks with influence over the formulation of policy and strategy important for CPR management attended the workshops and project proposals for research and action to take findings forward were circulated and discussed. This process was subject throughout to critique and review by experts and practitioners from the target countries and the UK.

At every workshop and consultation, the analytical structure and overall approach of the project

has been received with enthusiasm, and clearly stimulated new thinking. The stakeholders who have been involved range from the academic community, to senior policy makers, donors, NGOs, and local villagers. The senior in-county collaborators remain active members of the research and policy networks identified during this study.

R8280

The project was established as a specific follow up action to test and refine the framework developed in R7973 with a multiplicity of stakeholders, ranging from donors to central and state planners to local level resource users.

Meetings and workshops were held with key local stakeholders and policy actors to identify priorities for participatory forest management and conflict management. Policy-relevant insights were generated interactively from stakeholder and target institution dialogue and the potential for policy intervention discussed and promoted with target institutions. The main elements of the application of the framework tool were discussed between the research team and with key stakeholders - confirming the framework as a useful tool for understanding policy conflict. A field manual was produced and training used to promote the framework method and build research capacity in the sector. The framework was used to structure a management development programme at the Indian Institute for Forest Management, and was validated by the participants on the programme. Feedback at the state and national workshops confirmed that the project findings reflected the ground reality in other parts of India, and that the project framework and methods were broadly replicable for similar sorts of conflict situations in other areas.

11. Where and when have the output(s) been validated?

Please indicate the places(s) and country(ies), any particular social group targeted and also indicate in which production system and farming system, using the options provided in questions 7 and 8 respectively, above (max 300 words).

As part of R7973 National policy seminars were held in each of the three target countries (India, Tanzania, Zimbabwe). Research was generated by local research institutions and validated by review at these seminars by policy leaders from governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Communication of findings of project R8280 was done through meetings and workshops at local (Harda), state (Bhopal) and national (Delhi) levels that were attended by local policy actors, NGOs, and politicians. The project team worked with Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS) in Bhopal, to produce the 'street' play Jungal ki Katha. The play was performed in the sample villages in Harda district, and for an invited audience in Bhopal. The songs that were written for this play have been recorded and are being distributed on CDs and cassettes. The play itself has been separately filmed by Moving Images, and is available on DVD/VCD.

Other communication products targeted at a less specialised audience were prepared, including a documentary film, and a comic aimed at school students. The Documentary 'Forest Dialogues' (34

minutes) made by Moving Images explores the difficult challenges involved in developing an inclusive model of forest management in the face of multiple demands and pressures. The film captures the wide variety of views expressed by different stakeholders during the research process – especially giving voice to local villagers, local and state officials, as well as leaders of mass tribal organisations working in the area. *The Spirit of the Forest* (English)/*Jungal ki Ruh* (Hindi) is a comic book targeted at school children produced with The Viveka Foundation that tells the story about the plight of tribals and other communities that depend on the forest for their livelihoods. This has been widely distributed using the existing networks of the project partners, and has also been adopted by Development Alternatives (a Delhi-based non-governmental organisation) for their educational programmes at school level.

Current Situation

C. Current situation

12. How and by whom are the outputs currently being used? Please give a brief description (max. 250 words).

The conceptual model from R7973 was published in *Science* (Adams, W.M. Brockington, D., Dyson, J. and Vira, B. (2003) "Managing Tragedies: Understanding Conflict over Common Pool Resources", *Science* 302: 1915-1916 (12 December 2003).

The outputs of R7973 were taken up and developed by R8280. Various reports prepared under the project have been uploaded on the project website, and are publicly accessible. A paper based on project findings was published in *Economic and Political Weekly*, and has stimulated debate within India about the 'Harda model' of participatory forest management (Vira, B. (2005) "Deconstructing the Harda Experience: the limits of bureaucratic participation", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (48), 5068-75). Another paper based on the project's use of Q-methodology has appeared as an IEG Working Paper, and is being presented at the International Society for Ecological Economics meeting in Delhi in December 2006. The comic books have been adopted by Development Alternatives in Delhi, for their work with schools. The film *Forest Dialogues* was screened before an invited audience consisting of national-level environmental and development NGOs, other civil society groups, government officials, donor agencies, and other interested individuals.

The outputs and methodologies developed under R8280 are continuing to be used by local partners. TERI used several tools developed under R8280 while conducting a micro-level field-based study on "Economics of Forest Livelihoods" for the DfID-supported Himachal Pradesh Forest Sector Reforms Project. WINROCK is using the project reports and other outputs (documentary, comic book, songs and documentary recorded on CD) as part of their information dissemination strategies. ELDF is using Q-methodology as one component of its ongoing socio-legal research in the NR sector.

13. Where are the outputs currently being used? As with Question 11 please indicate place(s) and countries where the outputs are being used (max. 250 words).

R7973 worked in India, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. There is extensive use of outputs from R8280 (and derivatively R7973) by local Indian project partners (detailed below).

In Tanzania, Professor Issa Shivji has continued to play a leading role in discussions about land and CPRs. He has continued to publish extensively on constitutional and lands issues, and to lecture (e. g. at Cornell University in September 2005).

Political change in Zimbabwe since the end of R7973 has prevented effective follow-up work by UK or in-country partners, and has substantially eroded capacity for research and policy implementation in that country. There has been no funding available to support use of outputs.

The outputs from R8280 are being used by partner institutions as part of their research and outreach activity in the forestry sector. The comic book "Spirit of the Forest" has been distributed in many schools in Delhi and Bhopal by the project partners and by Development Alternatives. Project findings have also been cited at major policy seminars and workshops such as in the National Level Workshop on JFM organised by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in New Delhi, July 14th and 15th, 2005; and in a workshop to disseminate the World Bank forest sector report titled 'India: Unlocking Opportunities for Forest-Dependent People' in New Delhi on 9th June, 2006. The National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune (India) contacted one of the local project partners for project outputs, which they planned to use while designing an action research project on "impact of globalisation on governance and land, forest, and water in central India". LEAD-India used the material on Harda as part of their training materials for a global training programme on environmental governance for LEAD-International Fellows organised in February 2006.

14. What is the scale of current use? Indicating how quickly use was established and whether usage is still spreading (max 250 words).

Project outputs (reports, documentary, comic book, street play, folk songs) have been used by project partners in information dissemination on forestry issues in general and participatory forestry in particular. The project report is amongst the most-frequently cited contemporary research documents on participatory forestry in India. INFORM, a journal on participatory forestry with a circulation of approximately 1000 copies, published an article highlighting findings from the project, as did the widely read social science journal, *Economic and Political Weekly*. The use of a comic book as a medium of dissemination and awareness generation was one of the most successful strategies, and there has been continued interest in this communication product, many months after its launch. For instance, the Winrock publication and outreach division has been receiving several such requests from schools and students.

Although the scale of current use is relatively modest as there was limited opportunity for follow-up work after project end, usage continues to spread, and there are good indications that the methodologies used in the project are easily replicable and adaptable. By working with well-

established in-country partners, R8280 has been able to capitalise on their continuing involvement in debates on inclusive and pro-poor natural resource policy in India, thereby ensuring the longer-term impacts of project outputs and methods.

15. In your experience what programmes, platforms, policy, institutional structures exist that have assisted with the promotion and/or adoption of the output(s) proposed here and in terms of capacity strengthening what do you see as the key facts of success? (max 350 words).

- 1) The availability of funding for a project that could develop the work of R7973 in India (R8280) has been critical in ensuring follow-up. The extension to R8280 which allowed a specific focus on communication products allowed for the development of innovative media, such as the documentary and comic books, which have had a significant impact.
- 2) Continuity of funding for in-country research partners is very important in enabling them to select from project outputs and take them on. R8280 made this possible in India, where existing research capacity is relatively strong. In Tanzania, that capacity is more stretched, and without external support, valuable possibilities are not realised. In Zimbabwe, wider political and institutional problems precluded effective action by local partners. Funding to support those partners was not available from any source.
- 3) The ability of projects to plug into local DFID capacity is important. It was an uphill struggle to draw the attention of DFID country programmes to the potential of this research or to achieve any active involvement in its outcomes.
- 4) R8280 was implemented with a range of well-established in-country partners. This helped in disseminating project outputs widely through the existing networks of the partner organisations. Project partner's websites, annual reports, fliers and other dissemination tools have also been useful for reaching a wider audience. The Resource Unit for Participatory Forestry (RUPFOR) at Winrock and the outreach division of Winrock have distributed the comic books and other project outputs at various events organised by them.
- 5) Periodic coverage by the national print media in India significantly increased the impact of R8280. The project workshops at district, local and national level were covered by local and national newspapers, and the launch of the comic book was featured in Delhi's "Times of India".

Current Promotion

D. Current promotion/uptake pathways

16. Where is promotion currently taking place? Please indicate for each country specified

detail what promotion is taking place, by whom and indicate the scale of current promotion (max 200 words).

Project materials are all publicly accessible on the project websites for both R7973 and R8280. The comics are being distributed by all the project partners, and also by Development Alternatives as part of their schools programmes. Methodologies developed by the project are being adopted by project partners in other work. ELDF is using project methods for socio-legal research being conducted in Rajasthan. Winrock is using the communication and information dissemination strategies throughout its portfolio of work in the NR sector in India, especially documentary films, street plays, stakeholder workshops, and the use of vernacular language as a medium for dissemination. Project findings have been discussed by partners at a number of major national policy seminars. TERI organises a range of short training courses, including for officers from the Indian Forest Service, which have used project outputs as resource materials. The dual role of the Indian project partners – researchers as well as stakeholders in the policy process – is likely to be a considerable asset to future policy dialogue over participatory forest management in the country.

17. What are the current barriers preventing or slowing the adoption of the output(s)? Cover here institutional issues, those relating to policy, marketing, infrastructure, social exclusion etc. (max 200 words).

A key finding from the communication and uptake phase of both projects was that research projects can make no more than a limited contribution to on-going policy dialogue. The atmosphere for dialogue between policy actors reflects their longer-term interaction, and research projects are not in a position to change these relationships during their lifetime. This meant that the possibility of actually using the framework and project findings to encourage the key policy actors to engage with each other was limited. This was not a failing of the framework itself, but more a reflection on the context in which it was being deployed; arguably, other frameworks for conflict management and resolution would have faced similar challenges.

This raises important questions about the legitimacy and 'stake' of externally funded research projects as part of on-going policy dialogue. For research to have any real policy impact, it is clear that projects need much greater 'buy-in' of the key policy actors from the inception stage. In situations of conflict, this may not be straightforward. Indeed, in some cases, dialogue may be perceived as undesirable, if some actors believe that engaging in such negotiation undermines their credibility and effectiveness.

18. What changes are needed to remove/reduce these barriers to adoption? This section could be used to identify perceived capacity related issues (max 200 words).

In order to get greater buy-in from key local actors, research projects need to be perceived as responsive to locally-articulated needs. This suggests that the process of initiating and commissioning research needs to become more 'demand-driven', so that projects can feed into national processes and priorities. This includes demands that are articulated by local and national governments, civil society organisations, as well as by bilateral and multilateral donor programmes.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that projects work within a well-established institutional and political context, and their ability to promote tools, methods and ways of working which challenge the status quo are quite limited. R8280 worked within a national context where 'capacity' was strong, but the political context for promoting constructive policy dialogue was not enabling. However, the medium term impacts of such projects can be more significant, both through the use of project outputs and methods by the project's identified communication stakeholders and target institutions, and their adoption by project partners who continue to play an important role in the natural resources sector in India.

19. What lessons have you learnt about the best ways to get the outputs used by the largest number of poor people? (max 300 words).

An important lesson from R8280 is that communication strategies should use vernacular languages and mediums as far as possible. The use of street plays and folk songs ensured that the project was able to communicate its insights to a large number of poor people. Involving local (village) people in the communication and uptake process improved the acceptability of the process as well as its reach. Sharing the findings or results of the research with the respondents was also important, not only as a validation tool but also to improve the rapport and trust between researchers and respondents.

The project has had some significant beneficial side effects, most notably in building capacity amongst the Indian project partners, and in establishing a foundation for networking and collaboration amongst these organisations, which had not cooperated in this manner in any earlier work. There was a real sense of teamwork amongst the project partners, who have all gained a great deal through the interaction during the project period. The project strategy of regular review meetings helped achieve this sense of common purpose. Replication of project methods and processes is highly likely by these research partners, and is likely to have a lasting impact on large numbers of poor people, as project partners are important players in the natural resources sector in India.

Impacts On Poverty

E. Impacts on poverty to date

20. Where have impact studies on poverty in relation to this output or cluster of outputs taken place?

No formal impact studies have been carried out.

21. Based on the evidence in the studies listed above, for each country detail how the poor have benefited from the application and/or adoption of the output(s) (max. 500 words):

- *What positive impacts on livelihoods have been recorded and over what time period have these impacts been observed? These impacts should be recorded against the capital assets (human, social, natural, physical and, financial) of the livelihoods framework;*
- *For whom i.e. which type of person (gender, poverty group (see glossary for definitions) has there been a positive impact;*
- *Indicate the number of people who have realised a positive impact on their livelihood;*
- *Using whatever appropriate indicator was used detail what was the average percentage increase recorded*

No formal impact studies have been carried out.

Environmental Impact

H. Environmental impact

24. What are the direct and indirect environmental benefits related to the output(s) and their outcome(s)? (max 300 words)

The widespread dissemination and application of research findings could lead to improved status of semi-arid ecosystems through enhanced management of common pool resources in the target countries.

The project relates to the creation of a more inclusive dialogue process for sustainable and participatory forest management in India. The dissemination and application of research findings and methods could impact positively on improved forest ecosystems and livelihoods in Harda district in particular, as well as more widely in the state of Madhya Pradesh and in India.

There has been substantial interest in project findings, as seen throughout the project's communication and uptake phase. The translation of this interest into improved strategies for ecosystem status and forest management, however, is a slower process and there is little evidence of this at this stage.

25. Are there any adverse environmental impacts related to the output(s) and their outcome(s)? (max 100 words)

The projects did not have any direct environmental impacts, other than those associated with travel and the production of research outputs (energy, printing materials, etc.)

26. Do the outputs increase the capacity of poor people to cope with the effects of climate change, reduce the risks of natural disasters and increase their resilience? (max 200 words)

The dissemination and application of research findings and methods could impact positively on

improved forest ecosystems and livelihoods and thus strengthen the capacity of those reliant on CPRs to deal with the variable impacts of climate change and/or natural disasters.

The translation of the research findings into improved strategies for forest management and thus improved ecosystem health is, however, a slow process and there is little evidence of this at this stage.

