



Towards community based biodiversity conservation policies and actions: Learning from actual and potential practices in Benin, Bhutan and Costa-Rica

Concept note for a partnership project

Project objectives

The aim of the project “**Towards community based biodiversity conservation policies and actions: Learning from actual and potential practices in Benin, Bhutan and Costa-Rica**” is to learn from past experiences on conservation policies and on strategies designing, managing and implementing protected areas. Stakeholders platforms involved in such protected areas are formed at a local level in specific sites (2-3 sites) and at national level. In such arenas, past experiences and potential options for a better protection are discussed. A discussion group on the web also shares experiences from Bhutan, Costa Rica and Benin. Results from learning sessions on local and national experiences, as well as from experiences from abroad are fed back to platform members in appropriate formats. Media are also mobilised for a contribution and a scaling up of the debate.

First experiences in Benin with this project approach, although very new, reveal that many stakeholders involved in co management of protected areas feel uneasy facing the outcomes of the experiences they were involved in. Illegal logging, poaching, corruption contributed to enhanced destruction of some of the “protected” areas in spite of a so called co management strategy or maybe because of it, as an institutionalized corruption. In better protected areas (national parks), a lot of efforts have been put in allocating employment and shares of the park benefits to local populations. If the story may become a success from a social and organisational point of view, from an economic point of view, it remains a drop of water in a sea. On the other hand, the idea that conservation could rely on traditional institutions, which have been regulating and protecting some protected areas in the past, seemed bright but in a commoditized society with trends towards social differentiation and decline of traditional authorities, it is not as efficient as it first seemed and many efforts towards community conservation face opportunism and rent seeking behaviour. Many stakeholders feel a need to express their uneasiness, their disappointment as inhabitants relying on the resources or as protectionists who are conscious of the sometimes irreparable destruction of natural resources and biodiversity. They seek to find out ways out these negative trends as well as new reasons for hope.

The project team offers the interested partner organisations its expertise in stakeholder analysis, especially in situations where the interests of different categories are contradictory. It also offers expertise to deal with the various ways in which some stakeholders of forest conservation happen to develop strategies to bypass the rules and regulations. To this end, the project team has developed methodologies for participatory appraisal and facilitation of discussion platforms with different types of participants (from high level decision makers to illiterate voiceless inhabitant groups).

According to the context of the partner concerned, some of the failures or confiscated successes analysed in the Benin context might also be of interest.

In return the Benin team gratefully learns about experiences in other social and cultural contexts, about (at least partly) success stories and “policies that work”, so that these experiences can feed the on going national debate.

At the end of the (short) process, lessons learnt should be processed into proposals for national policies and operational strategic changes. Proposals will be relevant because they are derived from experiences of national stakeholders. But they will also be more credible if they can be backed up by experiences elsewhere.

Activities

Activities for the partner have been planned over one year.

Activities for CEBEDES have been planned for the first 6 months of the partner which are the last 6 months of its pilot project.

The partner would conduct following activities:

- identify stakeholders concerned with and interested in participating in the debate on conservation policies at a national level
- organize a workshop launching the discussion in this national platform and giving suggestions as to cases to be selected
- choose 2 typical situations with typical successes and failures
- conduct participatory analysis and stakeholders assessments in these sites and facilitate stakeholders proposals for a change
- organize regional workshops feeding the results back to the stakeholders and working out the proposals for a change
- organize the debate in the national platform and working out some recommendations

CEBEDES would join the partner in the field study phase and bring its experiences in participatory methods.

Field of experiences of CEBEDES

CEBEDES-xudodo is the organisation submitting the proposal and who could act as a facilitator in the process.

CEBEDES is a Beninese NGO founded in 1990 and active in three main domains

- environment (with expertise in participatory management of commons and ecotourism promotion), sustainable agriculture (with experiences in agro forestry, green manure and soybean promotion; analysis and promotion of periurban farming and derived clusters), and land rights issues (studies);
- development policy analysis and promotion of citizen participation in local and sector development planning and monitoring (with experiences in facilitating sectoral and communal development plans; setting up citizen control and participatory community evaluation procedures);
- food security (with experiences in nutrition, family health and farm planning; income generating activity diversification; microfinance; literacy);

Most of the members of the NGO are also involved in socioeconomic research and academic training.

The NGO is based in Benin, especially in 3 locations (Savè, Abomey, Cotonou; administration is in Calavi).

Relevant skills and knowledge for this project concern on one hand, on the other hand knowledge on proven skills in facilitating stakeholders debates, consultation and joint planning at various levels (community, communal, and national), on the other hand on environmental issues related to biodiversity conservation and protected areas.

The NGO has a strong focus towards marginalized groups, especially women, who are main beneficiaries in food security (food storage and processing, nutrition, soybean promotion), saving and credit groups, and functional literacy programs.

The actual facilitation team of the project includes a project coordinator (Dr Anne Floquet, agro economist and agronomist, head of the department for sustainable agriculture and environment) two part time assistants and three part time NGO members with expertise on the issues and facilitation skills (Dr Roch Mongbo, socio anthropologist and agronomist is the executive director of the NGO and a specialist in land rights and questions related to the commons; Ig. Peggy Tohinlo, agronomist is a specialist in natural resource management and skilled in facilitation; Cyrille Eteka, sociologist, is skilled in stakeholder analysis and facilitation). Students join the team for the time of their field research.

Budgeting

The budget of the counterpart is tentative; it will of course have to be adjusted to the country realities. CEBEDES budget is mainly a support budget including a relatively joint field phase together with the partner.

Tentative budget of the partner

Activities	Resources		Unit	Qty	Unit Value (US dollars)	Total (US dollars)	Requested PSC Contribution (US dollars)
	Code	Items					
A1 set up a national facilitation team & equip it	1.1	Fixed charges project assistant	Monthly wage brutto	12	1 000,00	12 000,00	12 000,00
			Monthly wage brutto (25% time)	3	2 700,00	8 100,00	24 300,00
	1.2	fixed charge project coordinator	Unit	1	2 500,00	2 500,00	2 500,00
	4.4	Computer equipment	Unit	1	2 500,00	2 500,00	2 500,00
	4.6	Visual equipment	Unit	1	2 500,00	2 500,00	2 500,00
		<u>Workshop 1</u>					
A2 present the initiative at a national level and set up a national platform	2.4.1	Project team facilitation	Man day	4	250,00	1 000,00	1 000,00
			Meal and coffee pause	40	20,00	800,00	800,00
	3.1.1	Dining	Transport allowance	40	20,00	800,00	800,00
	3.1.2	Transportation	Project documents	40	2,50	100,00	100,00
	3.1.3	Documents	Conference room	2	125,00	250,00	250,00
	3.1.5	Rental Workshop Area					
A3 conduct on site participatory appraisals	2.4.2	Project team consultancy	Man day	12	250,00	3 000,00	3 000,00
		Per diems	Man day	14	80,00	1 120,00	1 120,00
	2.2.1	Mileage	Kilometer	2 000	,75	1 500,00	1 500,00
		Translators and survey items		12	35	420,00	420,00
		<u>Workshops 2.1 & 3.2</u>					
A4 facilitate regional platforms and work out proposals for a change	2.4.1	Project team facilitation	Man day	8	250,00	2 000,00	2 000,00
		per diems	Man day	10	80,00	800,00	800,00
	2.2.1	Mileage	Kilometer	2 000	,75	1 500,00	1 500,00
	3.1.1	Dining	Meal and coffee pause	50	20,00	1 000,00	1 000,00
	3.1.2	Transportation	Transport allowance	50	20,00	1 000,00	1 000,00
	3.1.3	Documents	Project documents	50	2,50	125,00	125,00
	3.1.5	Rental Workshop Area	Conference room	4	125,00	500,00	500,00
		<u>Workshop 3</u>					
A5 facilitate debates in the national platform and work out proposals	2.4.1	Project team facilitation	Man day	4	250,00	1 000,00	1 000,00
			Meal and coffee pause	40	20,00	800,00	800,00
	3.1.1	Dining	Transport allowance	40	20,00	800,00	800,00
	3.1.2	Transportation	Project documents	40	2,50	100,00	100,00
	3.1.3	Documents	Conference room	2	125,00	250,00	250,00
	3.1.5	Rental Workshop Area					
06. Contingencies						2 691,68	
07, Administrative Costs						4 486,13	
08, Audit						1 196,30	
Total costs of the partner						68 189,10	

CEBEDES budget

Activities	Resources		Unit	Quantity	Unit Value (US dollars)	Total (US dollars)	Requested PSC Contribution (US dollars)	
	Code	Items						
A3 participate in the on-site participatory appraisals (training on the job)	2.2.4	air travel costs	units	2,00	6 500,00	13 000,00	13 000,00	
	2.4.2	local consultation	MD	20,00	250,00	5 000,00	5 000,00	
	2.3	per diem	MD	20,00	600,00	12 000,00	12 000,00	
Total CEBEDES							30 000,00	