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Solomon Islands: Essential aspects of governance for Aquatic Agricultural Systems in Malaita Hub



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Solomon Islands: Essential aspects of governance for Aquatic Agricultural Systems in Malaita Hub

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Executive Summary

In late 2012, a governance assessment was carried out as part of the diagnosis phase of rollout of the CGIAR Aquatic Agricultural Systems Program in Malaita Hub in Solomon Islands. The purpose of the assessment was to identify and provide a basic understanding of essential aspects of governance related to Aquatic Agricultural Systems in general, and more specifically as a case study in natural resource management.

The underlying principles of the approach we have taken are drawn from an approach known as “Collaborating for Resilience” (CORE), which is based on bringing all key stakeholders into a process to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented (a listening phase), that local actors have opportunities to influence each other’s understanding (a dialogue phase), and that ultimately commitments to action are built (a choice phase) that would not be possible through an outsider’s analysis alone.

Four major governance issues were identified at three main levels of governance (local, sub national and national):

1. family and community decision-making;
2. poor links between community and national governance;
3. little capacity for provincial government to provide services to support CBRM; and
4. lack of impact or government presence at local level.

The design process for research in the Malaita Hub has identified a series of research initiatives that the program will tackle that are based on concerns, strengths and visions of Malaita community representatives and other hub level stakeholders. All of the governance levels and issues will need to be considered to different degrees in each initiative. In addition an “enabling” initiative entitled “cross scale governance and scaling” was identified as a priority area for research.

The participatory diagnosis and planning approach employed in the AAS Program Rollout has enabled the governance assessment to complete the listening phase of the CORE process and to start to address the dialogue phase. The process will be taken further during 2013 as the Hub research design is finalized.

1. Introduction

Governance, broadly speaking, is about how decisions are made on matters of public importance. Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS)¹, like many complex socio-ecological systems, tend to involve a wide range of resource users with many competing interests. Understanding the governance context and promoting improvements in governance where possible are critical to achieving progress with regards to equitable resource allocation, access to markets, improvement of public services such as health and education, women’s empowerment and other factors that affect poverty, food security, and livelihood resilience.

The CGIAR Research Program Aquatic Agricultural Systems (AAS) (hereafter referred to as “the Program”) will target five countries, including Solomon Islands. In all countries, “Hubs” have been designated and defined as “geographic locations providing a focus for innovation, learning and impact through action research”. The first hub to be rolled out in Solomon Islands was the Malaita Hub. Rollout comprises a planning, scoping and a diagnosis phase prior to designing research activities for a hub (CGIAR Research Program on AAS, 2012b). The diagnosis step of the rollout of the Malaita Hub in Solomon

Islands included a specific focus on the governance context affecting AAS dependent households. It aimed to identify and provide a basic understanding of essential aspects of governance primarily, but not solely, related to natural resource management.

In accordance with Ratner (2012), we identify the concerns of local actors about conflicting agendas, power, and politics beyond the local scale; the disconnected efforts or unclear division of responsibilities; and the poor responsiveness to local needs on the part of government, private sector, and civil society groups as indications of governance issues that need to be assessed. As an input to program design, we and the stakeholders have sought to understand how governance functions in practice, who influences key decisions around AAS systems, what the key issues and potential collaborative ways forward are.

Over the years, researchers have slowly developed some understanding of the complex governance interactions at community level in AAS-dependent Solomon Islands communities, but this has often been obtained within a sectoral lens (fisheries, agriculture or forestry, for example). This report begins to address governance from an AAS perspective, using input from AAS households and other networked stakeholders. We attempt to summarize governance issues that are found not only within the community but also, and especially, those that are beyond the local level, both of which may need to be addressed by the AAS program.

We identify key issues that emerged from scoping and diagnosis within the Malaita Hub between February and September 2012, including the outputs from a stakeholder consultation workshop and a community consultation workshop, and explore the applicability of several frameworks for characterizing governance in relation to AAS. While the analysis is focused on AAS in Malaita Province, it also places the governance topics within a national context.

The Malaita Hub Development Challenge

The scoping phase resulted in the identification of Malaita Province as the first hub where implementation of the Program would occur in Solomon Islands. A hub development challenge statement was articulated to focus the design of the Program in the province:

“Rural people in the Malaita Hub of Solomon Islands face major challenges from rising population and declining quality and availability of marine and land resources. The development challenge is to improve their lives through more productive, diversified livelihoods that empower communities to be better able to adapt to change and make more effective use of their resources. The research challenge we will address with the people of Malaita Hub is to develop and test alternative approaches to livelihood diversification and resource stewardship that will accelerate development and restore the productivity of their resources.”

2. Methods of governance assessment

Governance has been highlighted as a key factor in the planning, implementation and ultimate success of development interventions and has received attention at the global and national scale. This is further reflected in a wide range of approaches used to conceptualize governance (Pahl-Wostl 2009, ODI 2006). The underlying principles of the approach we have taken are drawn from a process known as “Collaborating for Resilience”

¹ AAS are defined as systems in which the annual production dynamics of freshwater and/or saline or brackish coastal systems contribute significantly to total household income (CGIAR Research Program on AAS 2012a).

or CORE (Ratner and Smith, 2013). The CORE method is based on bringing all key stakeholders into the process to ensure that multiple perspectives will be represented, that local actors will have opportunities to influence each other's understanding and that commitment to action that would not be possible through an outsider's analysis alone will be built.

The approach entails active listening to deepen awareness of the problem, the possibilities, and the perspectives of different groups; sharing and debating competing points of view to ensure a full understanding of the forces at play; and, finally, narrowing in on the particular realm of actions within an individual's or group's control. As applied to governance assessment, these three phases focus on:

1. identifying obstacles and opportunities in the governance context (the listening phase);
2. debating alternative courses of action or strategies that address these obstacles or take advantage of these opportunities (the dialogue phase); and
3. planning and undertaking collaborative actions (the choice phase).

The participatory diagnosis and planning approach employed in the AAS Program Rollout has enabled the governance assessment to complete the listening phase and start to address the dialogue phase. The dialogue and choice phases will be taken further during 2013 as the Hub research design is finalized. An action plan will be an outcome of the Design workshop choice phase.

As part of adaptive learning, additional cycles will occur to produce more detailed plans and actions. Learning from these (listening again), debating what to do next (dialogue), and adapting (choice) will be an ongoing process.

In preparation for further dialogue, the analysis presented here draws on two frameworks: the analytical framework for collaborative governance assessment in AAS (Ratner et al. 2012, Ratner 2012), and the FAO forest governance assessment tool (PROFOR 2011, Kishore and Rosenbaum 2012). In both cases, the framework includes guidance on participatory diagnostic processes which, although not adhered to explicitly in this case, are not incompatible with the "best practice" participatory AAS process.

Collaborative Governance Assessment

CORE is a process designed to build dialogue among local actors that enables collaborative action aimed at transforming multi-stakeholder competition and conflict over natural resources. It provides a framework for understanding stakeholder interaction and for organizing social and institutional change. CORE is distinguished by its emphasis on whole systems, its open search for solutions, and its explicit treatment of power (Ratner and Smith 2013, Ratner 2012).

Building on the CORE process, the framework for collaborative governance assessment in AAS (Ratner et al. 2012; Ratner 2012) focuses on three dimensions of governance — stakeholder representation, distribution of authority, and mechanisms of accountability. Under each of these dimensions the characteristics of different governance arrangements are assessed using key questions to help orient analysis (Figure 1). The assessment includes both formal and informal mechanisms that emphasize how decision-making works in practice, which may differ significantly from how it works in principle.

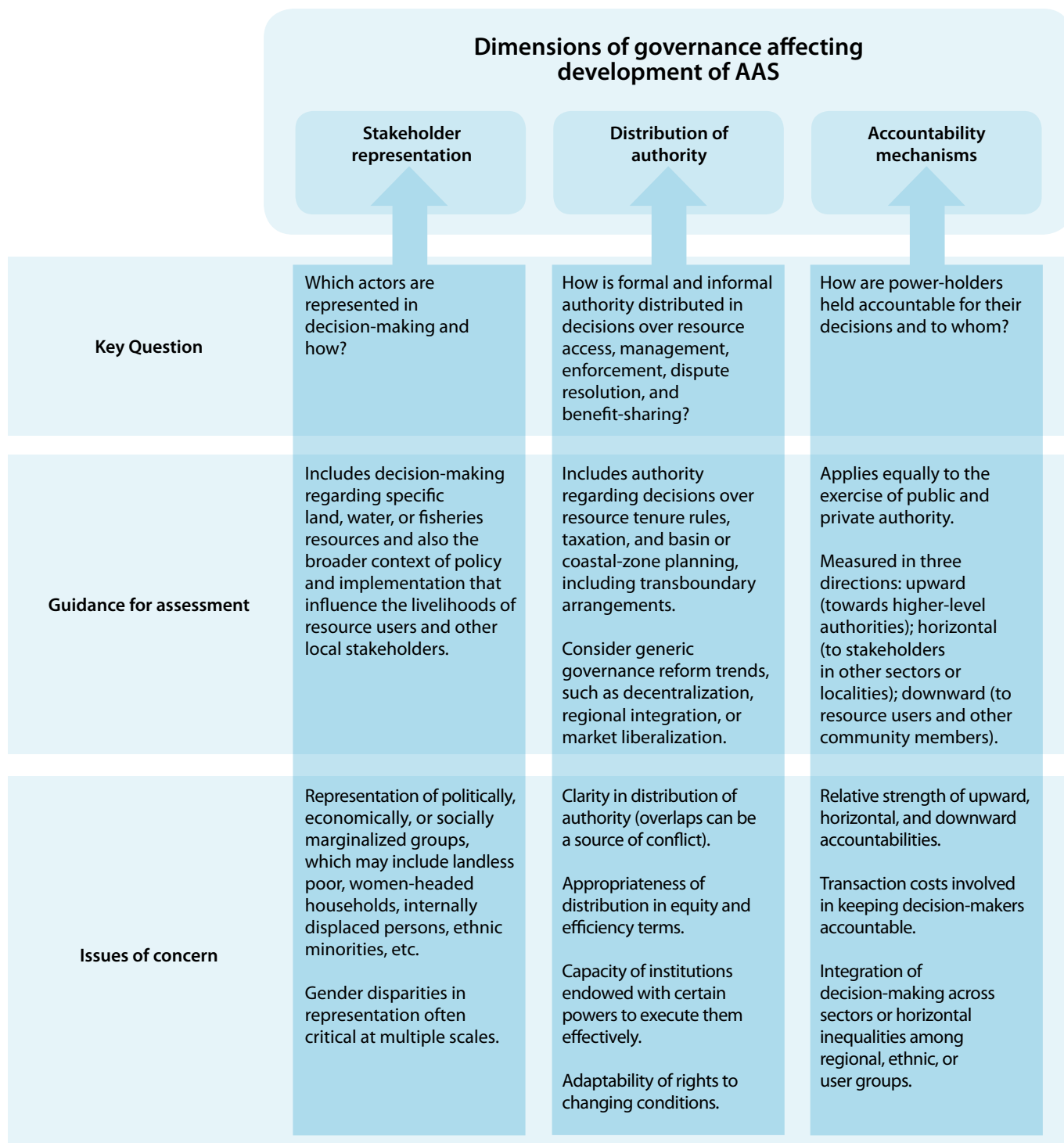


Figure 1. Key questions and considerations in analyzing the governance context for development of aquatic agricultural systems (Source: Ratner et al. 2012).

PROFOR forest governance assessment tool

The Program on Forests (PROFOR) framework (PROFOR 2011, Kishore & Rosenbaum 2012) emerges from major forest governance assessment approaches spurred on by the challenges presented by REDD+. The framework draws on the World Bank's Framework for Forest Governance Reform, the World Resources Institute's Governance of Forests Initiative and the proposed draft UN-REDD/Chatham House Framework for Monitoring REDD+ Governance. It also builds on existing national forest governance-related monitoring systems.

The tool aims to provide a diagnostic assessment that identifies areas of governance needing reform. It can also identify priorities, encourage discussion of specific steps to be taken, and aims to help build consensus for reform. The tool includes core

parameters that are shared by many processes and initiatives that are not necessarily in the forest sector and may facilitate discussion across them.

The PROFOR framework adopts three generally accepted pillars of governance:

- a. policy, institutional and legal frameworks,
- b. planning and decision-making processes and
- c. implementation, enforcement and compliance.

These pillars frame questions that are inspired by experiences documented in the governance literature and are guided by principles of good governance (accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, participation, transparency) (Table 1).

Table 1. Framework for assessing and monitoring forest governance including components of each of the three pillars (PROFOR-FAO 2011).

Policy, regulatory, institutional and legal framework	Planning and decision-making process	Implementation, enforcement and compliance
1.1 Resource-related policies and laws 1.2 Legal framework to support and land tenure, ownership and use rights 1.3 Concordance of broader development policies with resource policies 1.4 Institutional frameworks 1.5 Financial incentives, economic instruments and benefit sharing	2.1 Stakeholder participation 2.2 Transparency and accountability 2.3 Stakeholder capacity and action	3.1 Administration of natural resources 3.2 Resource management law enforcement 3.3 Administration of land/sea tenure and property rights 3.4 Cooperation and coordination 3.5 Measures to address corruption

Additional considerations for choice of tools

There is an abundant literature on approaches to assessing governance and a few points from that literature are relevant to note here as the research questions around governance of AAS in Solomon Islands begin to be better defined. We note that many of the stakeholders we have consulted have no experience with a functioning government that is effectively addressing their needs, hence they may struggle to pinpoint aspects of government service delivery that are lacking.

In a comprehensive review, Pahl-Wostl (2009) introduced the following four dimensions as a basis for analyzing the characteristics of environmental governance regimes:

- institutions and the relationship and relative importance of formal and informal institutions
- actor networks with emphasis on the role and interactions of state and non-state actors
- multi-level interactions across administrative boundaries and vertical integration
- governance modes—bureaucratic hierarchies, markets, networks

The degree to which informal and formal institutions are addressed through the CORE and PROFOR approaches may not adequately cover these dimensions. More emphasis on aspects relating to different levels of governance and interactions between and across these, including networks and modes of governance in the private sector, would seem warranted.

These reviews suggests that identifying key governance issues and the way forward in the Malaita Hub should ensure that participatory consultations and analysis include explicit consideration of:

- functional networks for governance and information dissemination;
- institutional capacities including budgets, human resources and limiting factors; and
- governance functions of formal and informal actors at different scales.

Approach used

Characterization of governance in the hub: The analytical framework of Ratner et al. (2012) was used to provide a first characterization using inputs primarily from the Scoping/National reports and primary literature and focuses on the three dimensions of governance concerning stakeholder representation, distribution of authority and mechanisms of accountability.

Identification of issues and opportunities: The issues and opportunities raised by those interviewed and consulted regarding hub resource governance were scrutinized using a modified PROFOR framework. Thus the three PROFOR pillars of governance—Policy(institutional and legal frameworks); Planning (including decision-making processes and Implementation) and Enforcement and compliance—were further subdivided into three levels of governance: community, sub national (district as well as provincial) and national. These have been identified as relevant levels at which resource governance decisions are taken in Solomon Islands (Govan et al., 2011) (Figure 2).

1. **Community level:** Most coastal management is implemented and enforced at the community² level.
2. **Sub national level,** an intermediary level that includes:
 - District/catchment/community cluster levels:** Neighboring communities that share social and ecological systems and concerns (e.g. upstream effects, catchment areas, areas key to the life cycles of target species or social and cultural obligations, language and heritage).
 - Provincial level:** Provincial government and other institutions that formally/informally coordinate and implement management functions at a provincial scale and that may facilitate interactions between communities.
3. **National level:** National government and formal/informal institutions (including NGOs and networks) that operate at a national scale.

² For the purposes of this analysis “community” refers to one or more settlements that consider themselves one community and would tend to work or plan together.

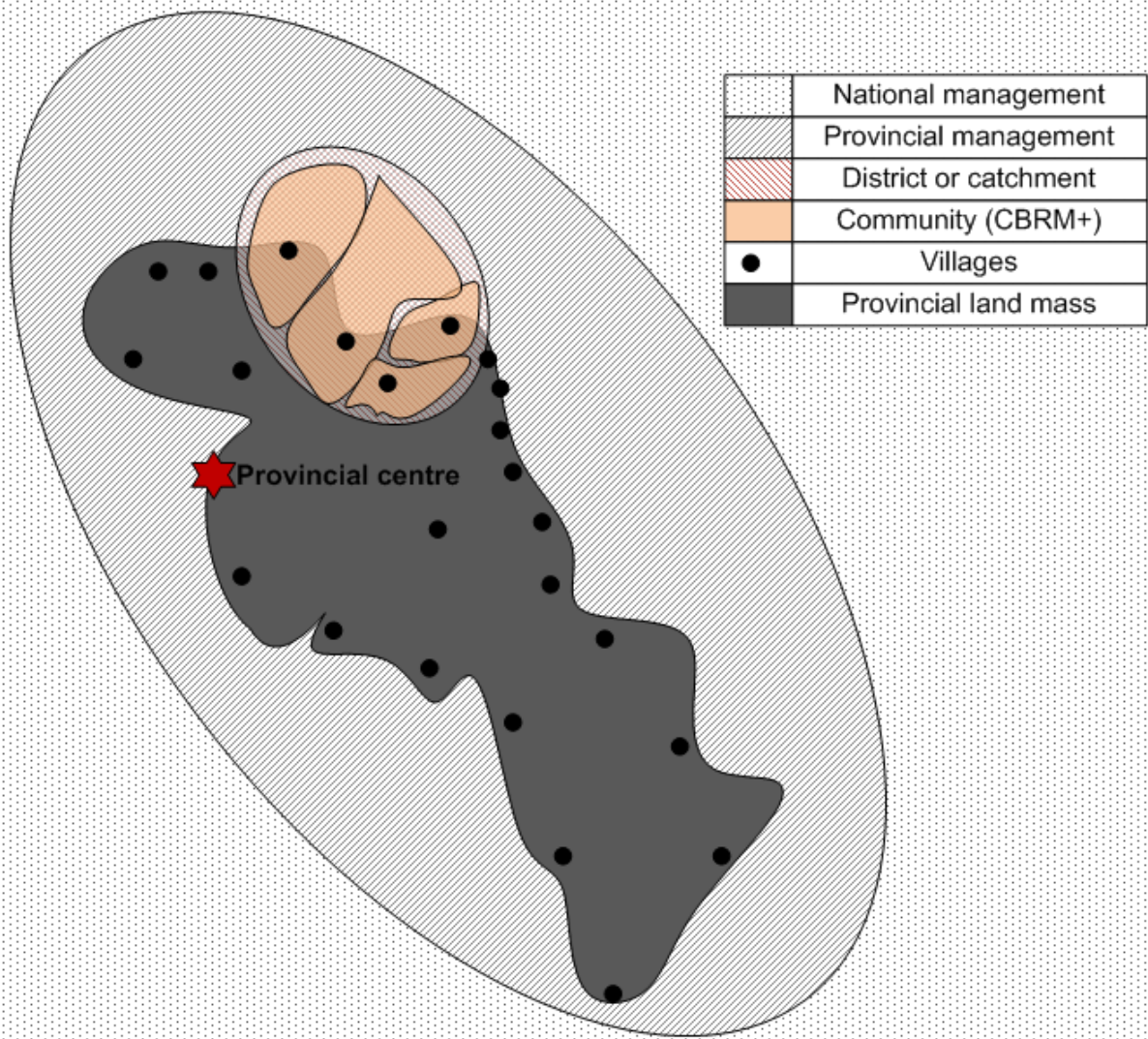


Figure 2. Design for proposed Community Based Resource Management (CBRM) governance structure in Solomon Islands (Govan et al 2011) which illustrates institutional and social organization scales at which resource governance decisions are taken in Solomon Islands.

3. Characterization of AAS governance in the hub: coastal resources as a case study

A summary of literature on coastal resource governance in Solomon Islands (Lane 2006, Healy 2006, McDonald 2006, SILRC 2012, MECM/MFMR 2009, Govan et al. 2011) (Table 2) describes the Solomon Islands' coastal resource governance system as one which is weak in formal stakeholder representation and mechanisms of accountability, but that is tempered by informal local or civil society mechanisms. The strong *de facto* and, to a slightly lesser extent, *de jure* acknowledgement of community rights, including over resource tenure, provides a strong basis for informal accountability processes. But this strength has not been supported by adequate formal mechanisms for community representation in provincial or national policy and decision-making, or by instruments that ensure accountability of government agencies to community groups.

Table 2. Characteristics of formal and informal mechanisms for coastal resource governance context in the Hub using the CORE framework. Summary observations are highlighted: key strengths (+), weaknesses (-) and **priority issues**. Information derives from references cited (Govan et al 2013)

	Stakeholder representation	Distribution of authority	Accountability mechanisms
Formal mechanisms	<p>Weak representation of citizens through national parliamentary and party political system¹</p> <p>Poorly functional environmental impact assessment and monitoring procedures^{3,4}</p> <p>Slow progress in effectively reflecting rural concerns in national policy⁷</p> <p>Lack of representation of women in national and Hub provincial government^{5,6}</p>	<p>+ Strong acknowledgement of local resource owners' rights⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customary land tenure and rights • De facto customary inshore tenure <p>Some government sectoral policy e.g. National laws regulating fisheries bans and moratoria¹¹</p> <p>Provincial delegated responsibilities on fisheries and natural resources^{11,12}</p> <p>Slow emergence of district or village decision-making bodies, e.g. village development committees or district councils¹⁴</p> <p>Scanty provincial ordinance and by laws¹³</p>	<p>- Weak or poorly enforced mechanisms of accountability of government and elected representatives to communities</p> <p>Occasional national enforcement of laws (eg ban on export of BdM, dynamites) – MFMR, police^{14,15} Rare use of complaints to Public Solicitors Office</p> <p>Constituency development funds (handled by MPs) disburse far more public money than provincial governments but are not effectively monitored²</p>
Informal mechanisms	<p>+ Strong community institutions⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional leaders • Councils • Committees <p>+ Heavy reliance on civil society networks and ad hoc mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional leaders • Church⁹ • Gatherings for market, clinics, schools • NGO projects and others • SILMMA network • NGO participatory projects <p>- Weak women's representation in community decisions relating to marine resources*</p>	<p>+ Authority concentrated locally in resource owning units – families or tribes⁸ and traditional leaders and institutions</p> <p>Authority exercised to a lesser extent by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village management committees • Councils of leaders or chiefs (district/province) • Church leaders and groups^{9,10} 	<p>+ Customary and community enforcement, conflict resolution and sanctions⁸</p> <p>Civil society mediation–church, NGOs, networks</p> <p>Newspapers and other media for airing public grievances</p>

Sources: * National Scoping Report, ¹ Clements and Foley 2008, ² World Bank 2011, ³ Thomas 2006, ⁴ Berdach and Llegu 2007, ⁵ World Bank 2012, ⁶ IFC 2010, ⁷ Haque 2012, ⁸ Wairiu et al 2003, ⁹ RAMSI 2011, ¹⁰ Bird 2007, ¹¹ McDonald 2006, ¹² Lane 2006, ¹³ Healy 2006, MECM/MFMR 2009, ¹⁴ Govan 2013, ¹⁵ Pakoa 2012.

The Solomon Islands government provides some essential services to provincial communities, such as education, health care and sanitation, but for the majority of Solomon Islanders there is limited interaction with national or even provincial government. The deficit in staffing and budgetary allocation for Solomon Islands environmental governance at national and provincial levels (Govan et al 2011) is reflected in most other sectors (ARDS 2007, World Bank 2011), resulting in relatively little formal capacity to exercise authority in rural areas.

Recognizing the above, there have been recent moves to increase the institutional and financial capacity of provincial governments (PGSP/MPGIS 2011). There are early indications of progress in terms of increased budgets and administrative capacity (e.g. in Govan 2013) and, on paper at least, there is a strengthening of policy (if not institutions) supporting community based coastal

resource management (MFMR Corporate plan 2012, MECM/MFMR 2009). Examples include the focus on community-based fisheries management of the Inshore Fisheries Strategy, emphasis on community and provincial engagement in the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy and community emphasis in environmental policy such as NBSAP or NAPA (see MECM/MFMR 2009 for review). This represents an opportunity for increased support to community approaches to development and natural resource governance, however at this stage there is still insufficient government capacity (in terms of logistics, skills or personnel) for implementation. Thus the practical aspects of effective support for community based resource management approaches are largely still to be defined. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity.

Currently, coastal resource management decisions are largely made at the community level based on customary rights and local governance mechanisms. These informal governance mechanisms are to some extent bolstered by civil society, including churches or NGO projects and networks (National Scoping Report). Churches can form a major axis of interaction between communities.

The community governance systems are increasingly under stress. Commercial market pressure on fish and invertebrate stocks has led to a breakdown in their traditional management (cf. National Scoping Report). Forestry, mining and the effects of modernization (including improved communications) are leading to increased consumerism and diverging aspirations within communities. Growing urban areas demand increased input from natural resources at the village level, with an expectation of increased access for traders and developers. Major developments such as logging and mining are one area where government and communities have some interaction with each other in terms of seeking consent from legal land-owning groups. However procedures for these have not worked smoothly in the past and have seldom included environmental and social impact assessments and mitigation.

National networks form around projects such as the TNC Rapid Assessment (Green et al., 2009), although these are predominantly comprised of NGO representatives and if they are project funded, they tend to be short lived. The oldest national marine resource network is the Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Area (SILMMA) network which began in 2003 and focuses on exchange of experiences between communities and NGOs. SILMMA has also served to some extent as a forum for policy discussion and the development of best practice guides that include community perspectives. Sub national networks have emerged, often linked to longer running projects such as the University of California Santa Barbara-sponsored network of villages in Roviana Lagoon (also linked to the Christian Fellowship Church), which has had some success in socializing models of community resource management. Other subnational networks that connect a small number of villages include the Central Islands Province Natural Resource Management Network (GERUSA) and MINBALT in Marovo Lagoon. Notably, none of these resource management networks has a presence or is active in the Province of Malaita. In the agricultural sector, local NGO Kastom Gaden Association administers a planting material network, which has over 3000 members nation-wide including Malaita.

Many of these networks can be described as functioning sub-optimally, at best. Nevertheless, their existence does provide a venue for information sharing, opportunities for improved decision-making about local resources and opportunities for more strategic engagement with government, either in seeking support or influencing policy.

4. Identification of governance issues and opportunities in AAS in Malaita

The hub stakeholder consultation workshop (with provincial and national government and NGO representatives in attendance)

highlighted broad natural resource issues concerning mangrove management, including the integration or coordination of support from government and donors, poor land use planning, land disputes and the lack of information and knowledge at the community level. Opportunities identified by stakeholders included various strategies for improving awareness, sharing of experience and education, increasingly incorporating community concerns into provincial government planning, and utilization of existing networks (e.g. churches, women's wards and councils).

From a specific governance session in the hub community consultation workshop, greater detail was obtained on decision-making mechanisms at levels near or at the community. In general, the male heads of family have a predominant role and at the wider community level this encompasses chiefs and other leaders. There is general consensus that provincial authorities and representatives need to be much more involved in providing services (extension), developing provincial level legislation that takes into account people's concerns (e.g. around resource management) and enforcing such legislation. There was little awareness of the role that national authorities have in environmental governance. In part, this reflects the fact that there are no national environment staff based on Malaita, and the one fisheries officer who is a national appointee is (along with the provincial fisheries officers) rarely resourced to travel outside the provincial capital Auki except to accompany NGO's or donors. In the opinion of the participants, national environmental and fisheries legislation is removed from the reality of rural people and their experience is that it is seldom enforced. Participants feel that citizens have little or no voice or influence at the national level. This statement derives from their feeling of a disconnect with current legislation and its lack of enforcement and it may be related to their impression that "Provincial government agencies need to be involved in decisions [*around resource management and planning*]. Community participants felt that the provincial government is probably not involved enough because they are not necessarily the custodians [*of resources*] however they do have the right, because national government allocates budgets for that purpose". Though women are reported to have a role in some land management decisions, it is generally felt that they are excluded to a greater or lesser extent from coastal and marine resource decision-making.

Box 1. Example from community consultation workshop.

"The village of Walende's experience with Earth Island Institute had made them realize they could have a direct line to NGOs and even though they thought the government (provincial and national) should be involved in decision-making around the dolphin issue for example, they just are not. So why bother with government they asked?"

The issues and opportunities raised in the stakeholder consultation workshop and the community consultation workshop were framed using the modified PROFOR tool for each of the three identified levels of governance (Tables 3-5).

Table 3. Analysis of AAS governance issues using PROFOR (2011) framework at the community level as discussed in the text. Features and issues raised by participants in the SCW or CCW are italicized, others were identified during scoping. Symbols: strengths (+), weaknesses (-) and **priority issues**.

	Policy, regulatory, institutional and legal frameworks	Planning and decision-making processes	Implementation, enforcement and compliance
Community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Strong recognition of customary tenure and rights over resources.</i> + <i>Traditional and community leadership institutions recognized but eroding</i> + <i>Customary reciprocity and benefits sharing mechanisms</i> - <i>Tenure and leadership undocumented and areas of confusion or dispute increasing</i> - <i>Little representation of communities in policy development and higher level planning</i> - <i>Hard to control financial incentives towards unsustainable resource exploitation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Relatively strong customary and community processes for planning and decision-making</i> + <i>Traditional and local knowledge is a major asset</i> + <i>Some communities have NGO support for planning</i> +/- <i>Customary conflict management processes vary in effectiveness and are eroding under pressure</i> - <i>Lack of participation of government or provincial authorities</i> - <i>Lack of information provision from higher levels of government (eg mangrove management)</i> - <i>Some areas of traditional knowledge concerning management of resources under pressure are inadequate (need education, info etc)</i> - <i>Lack of participation of women in marine resource and garden planning decisions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Customary and community enforcement, conflict resolution and sanctions are carried out in many/some communities without external support</i> + <i>Local observations and knowledge used for M+E</i> - <i>Local enforcement faces challenges from some community members and from commercial/artisanal fishing interests from other communities.</i> - <i>Local management is not necessarily supported by government or police, though it can in legal principle</i> - <i>Little or no support from national or provincial agencies</i> - <i>Increasing land disputes and lack of land use planning hard to handle at local level</i> - <i>Local courts need more support or encouragement</i>

Table 4. Analysis of AAS governance issues using PROFOR (2011) framework at sub national level as discussed in the text. Features and issues raised by participants in the SCW or CCW are italicized, others were identified during scoping. Symbols: strengths (+), weaknesses (-) and **priority issues**.

	Policy, regulatory, institutional and legal frameworks	Planning and decision-making processes	Implementation, enforcement and compliance
District level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Traditional networks and relations between communities</i> - <i>No formal district political institutions, potentially ward development committees</i> - <i>Often large differences between coastal and terrestrial social groups</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Some informal or civil society mechanisms for discussion (church, traditional links, NGO projects or networks, councils of chiefs/leaders)</i> - <i>No formal district level processes – potentially under forthcoming provisions for ward development plans</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Some use of traditional and revived networks (e.g. council of chiefs, church) to address wider area issues and rule breaking from outside individual communities (alluded to slightly by CCW)</i> - <i>In some places, no functioning Council of chiefs although a recognized desire amongst some for this to be formalized</i>
Provincial level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Provincial government with delegated responsibilities for fisheries and natural resources</i> - <i>Provincial government lacks resources</i> - <i>Lack of provincial ordinance and/or integrated management plans</i> - <i>Inadequate revenue raising provisions esp. from natural resources</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Increasing commitment of donors and government to strengthen provincial governments</i> - <i>Inadequate provisions and resources for management planning</i> - <i>Inadequate flow of information from government and communities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Increasing capacity and budgets an opportunity for a greater role in resource management</i> + <i>Provincial and sub provincial networks (mainly civil society) provide avenues for information sharing and some collaboration on enforcement</i> - <i>Little current provincial coordination or support for resource management, land use planning, extension services</i>

Table 5. Analysis of AAS governance issues using PROFOR (2011) framework at national level as discussed in the text. Features and issues raised by participants in the SCW or CCW are italicized, others were identified during scoping. Symbols: strengths (+), weaknesses (-) and **priority issues**.

	Policy, regulatory, institutional and legal frameworks	Planning and decision-making processes	Implementation, enforcement and compliance
National level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Clear legal recognition of terrestrial customary tenure + Supportive policy emerging in fisheries, environment and climate change sector for community governance of resources + National civil society networks (church, NGOs, SILMMA) +/- developing impact assessment frameworks - Institutions for coastal resource management lack capacity and appropriate structures - <i>Lack of functioning National coordination mechanisms for level government and donor support (poss. excep. NCC)</i> - Legislation in support of coastal resource governance inadequate or stalled - Forest and other natural resource policies only just beginning to move towards sustainable development - Weak or nonexistent marine resource management plans - Inadequate safeguards against corruption and perverse economic incentives - Ministry of Fisheries has not implemented gender in Fisheries strategy or policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Relatively strong civil society organizations for support and oversight +/- Emerging but still inadequate processes for national consultation and planning (e.g. NCC, recent fisheries policy meetings) - <i>Government procedures for supporting coastal resource management do not exist(lack of capacity and resources)</i> - Deficient mechanisms for transparency and access to information - <i>Weak provision of information and sharing of experiences by government to citizens</i> - No formal functional oversight mechanisms - Deficient corporate responsibility e.g. logging companies or sea food buyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Government support of partnerships and networks to local achieve resource management aims + National ministries of fisheries and environment undergoing institutional strengthening to provide better local services + Ministry of Agriculture established a network of women extension officers throughout the Provinces - Little capacity of ministry and police to enforce national or local resource management rules - <i>Little to no capacity of judicial system to enforce local coastal resource management rules</i> - <i>Challenges to handling of land disputes</i> - No cross sectoral collaboration mechanisms/no formal co-ordination between agriculture and fisheries (e.g. both currently have aquaculture initiatives)

5. Major AAS governance issues by level of governance

Four major governance issues have been summarized from Tables 3-5: family and community decision-making, poor community governance links to national governance, little capacity for provincial government to provide services to support CBRM, and lack of impact or presence of government at local level.

The design process for research in the Malaita Hub is identifying a series of research initiatives that the Program will tackle that are based on concerns, strengths and the visions of Malaita community representatives and other hub level stakeholders. One of the initiatives identified in a November 2012 Design Workshop was "Marine Resource Management", which includes CBRM (Figure 2). All of the governance levels (Tables 3-5) and issues must be

considered in this initiative. To help direct thinking with respect to strengthening governance, governance issues and opportunities have been related to the Marine Resource Management initiative in recognition that there will be cross-overs to other initiatives that can be modified accordingly during the design process.

Example of AAS governance context from an AAS community in Malaita, Malaita Hub. Source: Fidali-Hickie and Whippy-Morris (2005).

The people of Langalanga lagoon are highly dependent on shell money (products derived from naturally occurring marine shells) for cash and in some cases for daily survival. "The people... strongly believe that the industry will survive up to the moment they pull the last shell from the ocean. Because people are culturally attached to the craft and because they have few economic alternatives it is not easy for them to stop making shell money, even though returns are meager as costs rise"

Shells are now scarce and becoming more expensive; all evidence suggests that current harvesting rates are unsustainable. The resource status and the threats to it have long been widely recognized from household level, to national government and outside the country amongst regional organizations and researchers; and yet, few alternative livelihoods and no management initiatives have been sustained.

Some villagers maintain the industry will only be sustained if harvest is controlled; some have suggested re-stocking and many recognize the need for regulations and enforcement around general reef habitat destruction. The appropriate governance environment to enable this is not universally agreed. "Men tend to support the idea of chiefly taboos whereas women are more likely to suggest that government should enact laws to govern harvesting ...One of the factors handicapping the use of taboos is the heterogeneous makeup of some communities and the absence of a tribal chief. Resources are treated as common property. No one in particular has the right to control access..... There is widespread concern and a good deal of good sense is evident in people's suggested remedies. Yet no one suggested that shell money producers on their own could collectively manage the resource/marketing/pricing etc. Everyone looked outside of his or her family unit for leadership-to the government or to their chiefs."

Local level

1. Family and community decision-making

Community decision-making and implementation are the basis of hub AAS governance at present. Although this will remain key for the foreseeable future, workshop participants suggest that decision-making at this level is not as robust as it once was. In the absence of more centralized governance alternatives, this could have serious environmental and social impacts. Traditional decision-making processes may not have previously had to deal with the current high pressures on subsistence resources or with decisions related to major developments that can be expected to have long term consequences.

Stakeholders have identified that decision-making at the family and community level has changed over time (e.g. reduced role of elders). They suggested that improving or widening the participation of local stakeholders in decision-making could be expected to improve the quality of information available to people in the community and result in more inclusive decisions that take into account all stakeholder concerns. This is important for AAS goals such as better land use planning and adopting sustainable cropping practices (e.g. fixed gardens, implementing resource management plans).

Key issues:

- Community stakeholders say that within the household both men and women participate in decision-making. Beyond the household however, participation of women varies between regions. In some areas women have no further say in any decision-making (according to the men who attended the workshop). In others (where women were represented), women are variously involved in community level decision-making around AAS issues (what and when to plant and land use issues), but among these groups there is universal agreement that women are only involved on the periphery and should be more involved in the future.
- In the absence of any formal mechanisms or frameworks for community governance, many villages have continued to use traditional mechanisms. However, these do not always enjoy the support they formerly had for a variety of reasons, including that they cannot respond adequately to modern or external threats, they fail to link to the evolving ambitions of the younger generation, they cannot address the increasing influence from the outside world and the loss of traditional governance, and they fail with the formally educated younger generation that has lost respect for the traditional knowledge and practices of uneducated elders (*stakeholder consultation workshop*).
- In some places the quality and functions of leadership are deteriorating, with leaders absent or perceived to exhibit excessive self-interest, thus reducing community understanding and/or acceptance of traditional governance.

Suggestions from stakeholders:

- decision-making can sometimes include more involvement of extended families
- the knowledge of resource people and older people could be better acknowledged and more widely utilized
- decision-making would benefit from a general increase in participation of resource owners, tribal leaders, women and youths
- there is need to ensure that knowledge is passed on to the next generation

Opportunities

Opportunities would appear to center around improved community decision-making processes and increased representation or participation by marginalized or sidelined groups. The evolution of community and traditional organizations in the face of the upper level governance vacuum presents opportunities for improvements in community and sub-national level governance derived from experiences elsewhere – in Solomon Islands, but particularly Vanuatu and PNG. Research questions center on who should be involved in decision-making and how to ensure that the structures communities put in place to manage their development are sustainable.

2. Poor community governance links to national governance

Communities have little opportunity to interact with sub national or national government or to have their voices heard and acted upon. Traditional and more recent community institutions such as associations are not equipped to influence policy, request services or seek accountability.

Key issues:

- National government ministries have poor connections to communities
- Communities rarely see extension officers from agriculture, fisheries or environment ministries
- Community Associations and local political bodies can “confer power and be used for good and evil”

Suggestions from stakeholders:

- The role of other institutions (e.g. churches) could be used to better effect

Opportunity

The experiences of civil society organizations at various levels provide opportunities for increasing the links between communities and government. The opportunity exists to build and strengthen resource management related networks in Malaita (none of the resource management networks mentioned above are active in any way in Malaita). These could provide for a for communities to access and share information and services and communicate with and influence provincial and national decision makers. Research questions will be developed around whether and how these networks bring about change in communities and how such networks can be sustained.

Sub national level

The community level would benefit from certain services that could be most efficiently provided at sub provincial or provincial levels. Presently the key services have not been identified or prioritized and lack financial and human resources and, to some extent, clear policy or legal support. Other services that are less frequently identified by community stakeholders but would still seem important are coordination of AAS resource management at the provincial and sub provincial levels (ecosystem).

3. Little capacity for provincial government to provide services to support CBRM

Decentralized governance in Solomon Islands implies reforms at two key interfaces: between government and provinces and between provinces and communities. A provincial level governance structure is mandated on paper to fulfill resource management functions. It has been legally decentralized but does not have the support or the capacity to carry out its functions. The functions of the province need to be developed in accordance with their mandate and tested as part of an overall decentralization process.

Key issues:

- The role of representatives to the provincial assembly (PMPs) is unclear and needs improvement in terms of representation.
- Provincial government agencies are not involved enough in resourcing, providing legislation or enforcement.
- There is lack of provincial policy, ordinance and byelaws.
- Provincial government lacks staff, capacity and resources
- There is little or no flow of basic information from government to communities.

Suggestions from stakeholders:

- In the context of non-functioning Houses of Chiefs, some areas have a desire to re-empower traditional, not elected, chiefs.
- Networks could be used better to bridge levels of governance (e.g. SILMMA).
- The role of local courts should be explored, especially for dispute resolution relating to land or resources.
- Linkages between fisheries and agricultural research or extension should be made.

Opportunity

The way forward should contemplate joint identification by communities and provincial government of priority services and design of strategic minimum services within existing constraints and enabling environment considerations (e.g. policy or judiciary). There is potential for improved use of existing networks or mechanisms (church etc.) for delivery of services to communities by provincial government and other institutions at that level (there is potential for partnership with World Vision, a faith based development organization with the skills and resources to design suitable programs for outreach).

Opportunities may exist for using initiatives such as CBRM as a point of common focus for dialogue about perceived bottlenecks such as the House of Chiefs and Provincial ordinances and about clarification and development of the role of local courts.

National levels

Despite an increasing acceptance (reflected in policy) that community led resource management and indeed community involvement in all types of planning is a cornerstone of natural resource management, this is still to be reflected in viable operational strategies at the national level let alone in budgets and manpower. This will remain a major challenge as long as the current under-resourcing persists.

4. Lack of impact or presence of government at local level

Key issues:

- Some communities have a poor understanding of the roles of government organizations.
- MPs need to be more involved and to improve representation of citizens.
- Judicial systems need more involvement in land disputes (development).
- There are few bridging institutions to bring government and civil society together.
- Communities often undertake livelihoods in the absence of appropriate information.
- A national approach to CBRM has been drafted and discussed, but is yet to be effectively implemented.
- It is unclear how different levels of government can most effectively contribute to better marine and land resource management
- There is lack of information from government to communities.

Suggestions from stakeholders:

- Cross-sectoral fora and provincial networks are needed.
- There should be implementation of a nationally appropriate, strategic approach to support community based initiatives.

Opportunities

Key opportunities include building on current network analyses for Solomon Islands (Cohen et al. 2011) and ongoing institutional assessments (Govan et al 2011 and Govan 2013) to assist government in the design and implementation of sustainable decentralized strategies that support provincial and community based management. This would include providing information to the people that will promote an understanding of proposed government strategies to support community priorities and initiatives, thereby empowering communities to have a voice in the services they need from government.

6. Next Steps

The participatory diagnosis and planning approach employed in the AAS Program Rollout has seen the listening phase completed

for governance assessment and the beginning of the dialogue phase of the CORE approach.

Obstacles and opportunities for governance were identified during the listening phase. The dialogue phase will consist of debating alternative courses of action or strategies for addressing obstacles and optimizing opportunities. The choice phase will consist of planning for and undertaking collaborative activities.

In the AAS Solomon Islands Malaita Hub Design Meeting held in Honiara in November 2012, an enabling initiative entitled “cross scale governance and scaling” was identified as a priority area for research. The initiative identified key target outcomes based on this document and the contributing community and stakeholder consultations:

- traditional values and culture will remain central and basic to subsequent initiatives, and
- linkages will be made between communities, provinces, national government and service delivery systems.

The Research Approach will include:

- situation analysis and identification of potential governance approaches,
- research to understand what type of cross-scale governance are effective, and
- research to understand and learn about ways to scale up and out.

An action plan will be developed during 2013 as part of the choice phase. This plan will draw on the opportunities identified here as well as adaptive learning that will occur during 2013. Learning from actions (listening again), debating what to do next (dialogue), and adapting (choice) will be an ongoing process. A critical analysis of the processes for collaborative governance assessment and monitoring in the Solomon Islands context will be part of the learning process.

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