

Strategies to resolve problems of the Leasehold Forestry Program

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Key Words

Stakeholder Identification, Social Analysis CLIP, Forum, Nepal, Natural Resource Management, Stakeholder Analysis, Forestry, Conflict Management, Participatory Action Research, Rural Development

Context

- The Leasehold Forestry Programme (LFP) was launched in 1993 by the Department of Forestry in Nepal. The main objective of the program is to reduce poverty by providing landless families below the poverty line with access to forestry plots.
- Leasehold Forest User Groups (LFUG) made up of 5 to 10 members have been formed. They are granted leases on marginal lands under government control.
- Over the years many non-governmental organizations have proposed different ideas, approaches, and resources to help the groups. A recurring constraint in their work is a lack of clarity about who needs to have a say in the program and how to strengthen working relationships among key local actors.
- Tensions have developed between LFUG and better-off larger Community Forest User Groups (CFUG) that have historically controlled community forests.



Objectives

- Identify the groups and individuals with a stake in LFPs.
- Identify potential coalitions and strategies to make the programs more efficient and effective, especially with respect to managing tensions among key local actors.

Participants

More than 30 people in two separate meetings. Each meeting had representatives from most of the potential stakeholder groups in LFPs.

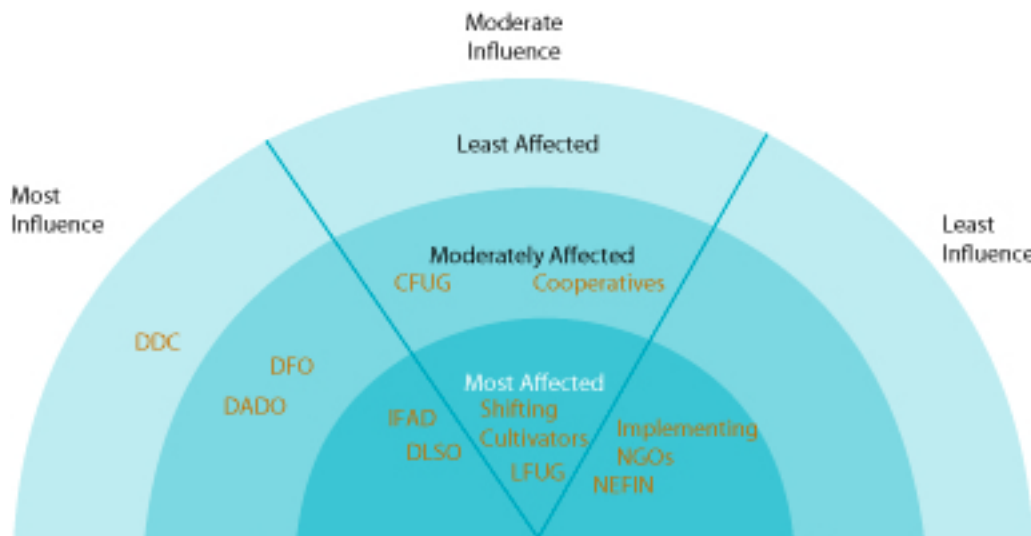
Tools

- Stakeholder identification (Rainbow)
- Stakeholder Analysis CLIP

Example Results

Stakeholder identification (Rainbow)

- Participants identified 15 stakeholders in Leasehold Forestry Programs.
- The stakeholders were both affected by the programs or had varying degrees of influence over the programs.
- They included eight government agencies, several local organizations, and umbrella groups representing the interests of indigenous peoples.

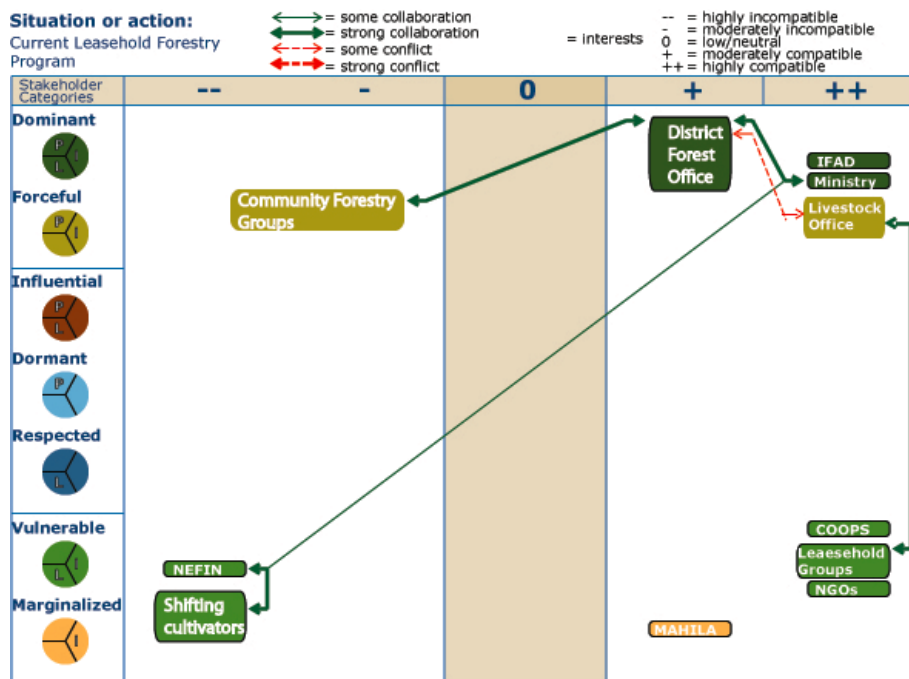


Social Analysis CLIP

- The position of stakeholders on further development and implementation of the leasehold program brought to light important tensions, particularly between government agencies and donors promoting the programs, and key local actors (see Figure).
- Certain forest communities, including ethnic groups involved in shifting cultivation and members of established CFUGs, are opposed to the program. Shifting cultivators, and a national indigenous peoples organization that represents their interests (NEFIN)

are excluded from the program because of their land use practices. CFUGs are concerned that governments will move from granting control of lands to CFUGs to granting control to LFUGs.

- By contrast, landless households currently organized in LFUGs benefit directly from the program and would benefit further if the program were developed and implemented more widely.
- Agencies such as the cooperatives, the District Livestock and Services Office, the District Development Committee, the donor (IFAD) and the non-governmental organizations involved in social mobilization processes also benefit from the program.
- The main implementation agency for the program (District Livestock and Services Office) is a relatively weak government agency overshadowed by the more powerful District Forest Office.



Outcomes

Participants agreed on these proposed actions:

- Integrate those involved in shifting cultivation more effectively into LFUGs, possibly by working with the NEFIN.
- Create flexibility in implementing current laws that restrict shifting cultivation on forest lands. Begin a process at the Ministry of policy review and revisions to laws that regulate the rights of farmers to grow annual crops in leasehold plots.
- Provide CFUGs with the support and training needed to build confidence that their rights will not be undermined by the LFP.

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- Encourage closer collaboration between the District Forest Office responsible for working with the CFUGs and the District Livestock and Services Office responsible for working with the LFUGs.

Contributions of SAS²

- The methods offer a reliable and effective way to identify important stakeholders in specific settings, and to assess their relationships with each other.
- The methods support the development of strategic actions to enhance collaboration and reduce conflict.
- Multiple stakeholders can be engaged simultaneously and separately.
- The methods complement other research methods.