



# *Stakeholder influence mapping*

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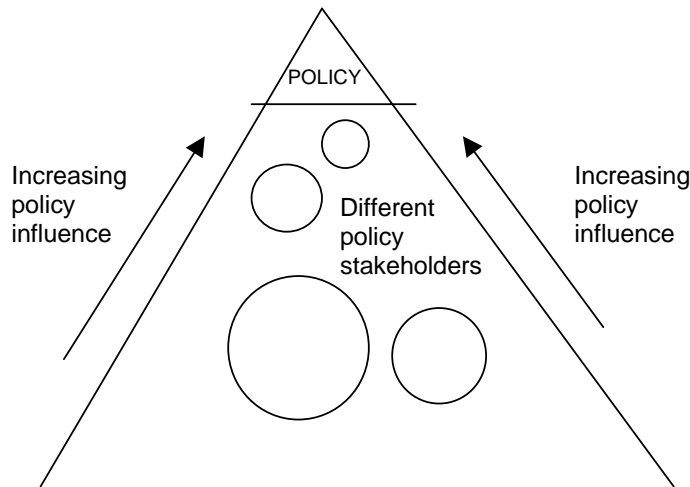
James Mayers ([james.mayers@iied.org](mailto:james.mayers@iied.org)) and Sonja Vermeulen ([sonja.vermeulen@iied.org](mailto:sonja.vermeulen@iied.org)) have prepared this tool, from work in the forestry and land use sector

## Summary

**Stakeholder influence mapping is a tool to examine and visually display the relative influence that different individuals and groups have over decision-making. This paper describes one approach to doing this and presents several examples from its use.**

### ***What is stakeholder influence mapping?***

Many techniques can be used to display the relative influence that different individuals and groups have over decision-making. The tool presented here is one simple approach to stakeholder influence mapping. It is a visual technique and it is especially useful as an aid for discussion among several people. Participants arrange different policy stakeholders within a triangle or 'pyramid'. The closer a stakeholder is to the policy at the top of the pyramid, the more influence they have over the policy in question.



### ***What is stakeholder influence mapping for?***

This tool enables better understanding and explicit discussion of who influences policy. Various stakeholders in any chosen policy issue or policy arena are sketched or 'mapped' out according to the size of their group, the degree of influence that they hold over the policy, and their relationships with each other. Maps can be made of sequential time periods to give a picture of the direction of change in policy – its origins, current status and possible future.

Stakeholder influence mapping helps reveal what brings about change in decisions and prevailing wisdom over time, and how they might be shaped in future. The process of visually mapping these changes provokes and encourages participants' experiences and ideas on further tools – approaches and tactics that can influence others.

### ***How is stakeholder influence mapping used?***

To use influence mapping, take a look at the following step-by-step guide and the examples that follow of how it has been used in different contexts.

The process of using the tool is divided into nine steps below. The first four steps can be done together by all participants, or alternatively facilitators may want to reduce the time needed for group work by doing one or more of these beforehand (especially preparation of materials). Steps five to eight need to be done together by participants.

1. *Define policy focus.* Influence mapping is applicable to almost any decision-making ('policy') scenario. The choice of policy focus depends on the aim of the discussion among the participants – the overall problem or questions about policy that they are confronting. The tool can be applied to all sorts of policy contexts, from specific local policies to very broad positions involving government agencies and others such as the private sector.
2. *Define one or more key time periods.* Most simply, stakeholder influences at one time (usually the present) can be mapped. To explore policy change, more than one time period can be chosen, based for example past/present/future, or based around a key event (before/after).
3. *Identify policy stakeholders.* Some of the main individuals and groups that have an impact or interest in the policy's formation and implementation need to be identified and listed – either by participants in the mapping exercise, or perhaps with some pre-identification by the facilitators with the participants completing the process.
4. *Prepare materials.* One pyramid, drawn and labelled on a large sheet of paper, is needed for each time period. Other materials required are a selection of cardboard or paper circles in different sizes (different colours too if possible), some marker pens, and boards to pin up the pyramids so that all participants can see them. Alternatively the pyramid and circles can be laid out on the ground. The circles will be used to represent the various stakeholders over time, so that roughly the minimum number to prepare is the total number of stakeholders identified multiplied by the number of time periods. Having multiples of the same size and colour is useful.
5. *Fine-tune the stakeholder list.* If there is a long list of stakeholders, a relevant subset can be selected from the full list for each time period under discussion. Don't spend too long on this step – keep the full set of stakeholder groups if participants disagree on which to include.
6. *Estimate stakeholder group size.* Different sized stakeholder groups can be represented by different sized paper circles representing the number of people in the group (smallest=fewest, biggest=most). If there are a large number of stakeholder groups, different coloured circles could be used to represent different types of stakeholder groups (e.g. to differentiate government, private sector and civil society groups).
7. *Map stakeholder influence and relationships.* This is the key step in the process – arranging the circles within the pyramid to display influence and relationships. Influence is shown by the relative closeness of circles to the policy apex, while relationships (degree of cooperation or conflict, and shared or divergent views) are indicated by the relative proximity and overlap of the circles. Most of the participants' time should be allocated to this step.
8. *Identify key moments and mechanisms.* Policy events, notable moves made and key external changes that have helped or hindered the process can be noted as they occur during the mapping exercise. Make sure to allocate some time to capture this useful information – one tactic is to select a note-taker or rapporteur among the participants.
9. *Keep record of map for future reference.* Sketching or photographing the map provides a useful record, especially if the notes and comments made by participants are also recorded.

### ***Examples of stakeholder influence mapping in practice***

Each of the three examples below demonstrates a different use of the influence mapping tool. The first example provides an easy-to-follow account of how the steps above have been used in a real setting to discuss a real policy process – changes in the UK's international development policy.

The second example has less explanatory text on the method, but tells a story and illustrates a more complicated process, in which participants from different backgrounds, representing many of the stakeholder groups under discussion, weighed up long-term changes in influence over Costa Rican forestry policy. The third example is from a debate among local stakeholders about policy influences on a wildlife-based enterprise in Kenya.

### 1. Three phases in the UK's international development policy

This exercise was done to explore the usefulness of policy tools with a group of 60 Natural Resource Advisors in the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK.

Before the session, two *facilitators* did the following:

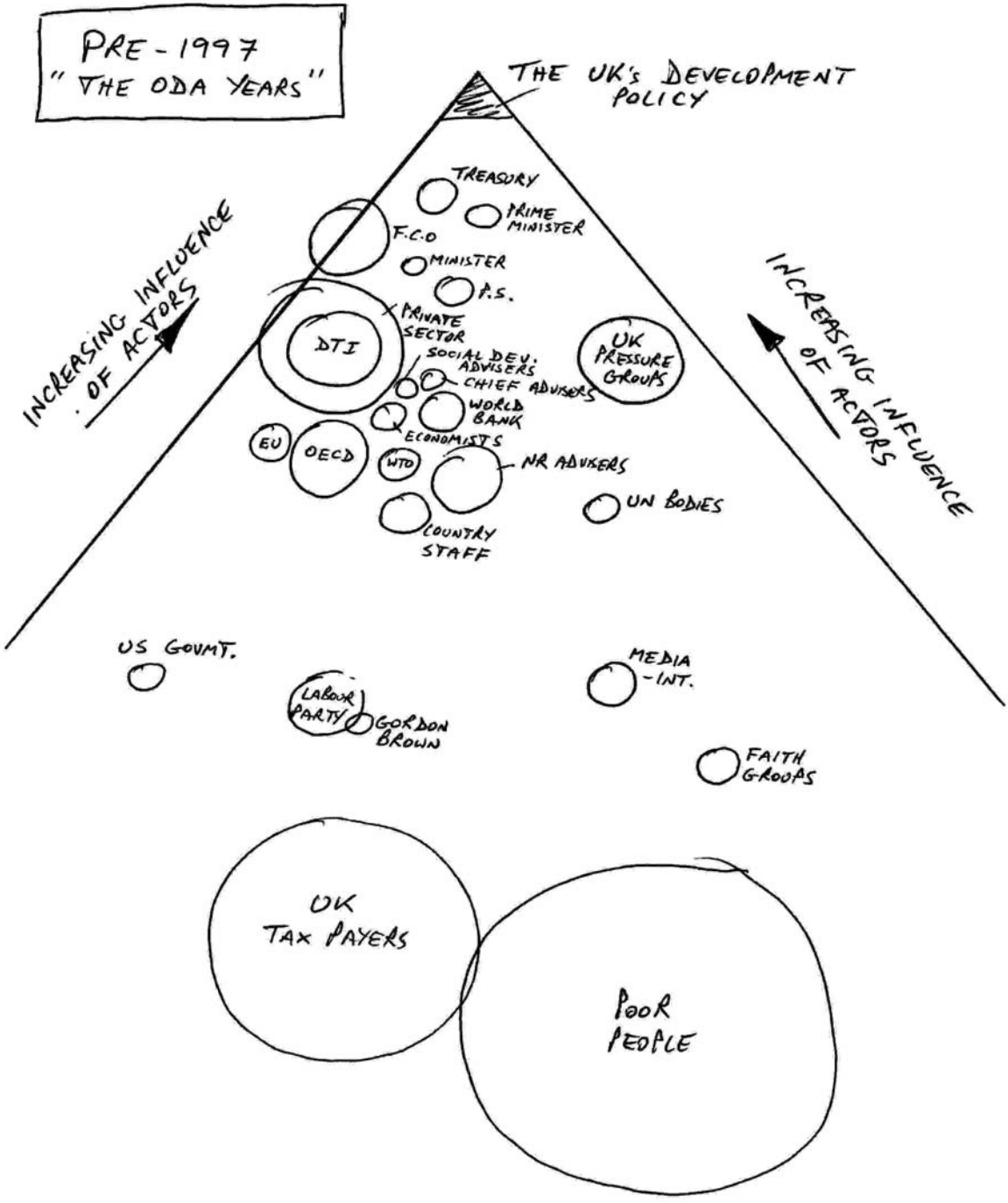
- *Define policy focus.* They chose the broad DFID policy agenda of *Making Globalisation Work for the Poor* (a UK government White Paper published in 2000) as the case example.
- *Define one or more key time periods.* Three time periods were selected: pre-1997 'the ODA years' (policy/agenda formation), '1997 to the present' (policy making), and 'the next five years' (policy implementation?).
- *Identify policy stakeholders.* Some of the main individuals and groups that have an impact or interest in the policy's formation and implementation were pre-identified and listed by the facilitators. The participants completed the list in plenary, as follows:

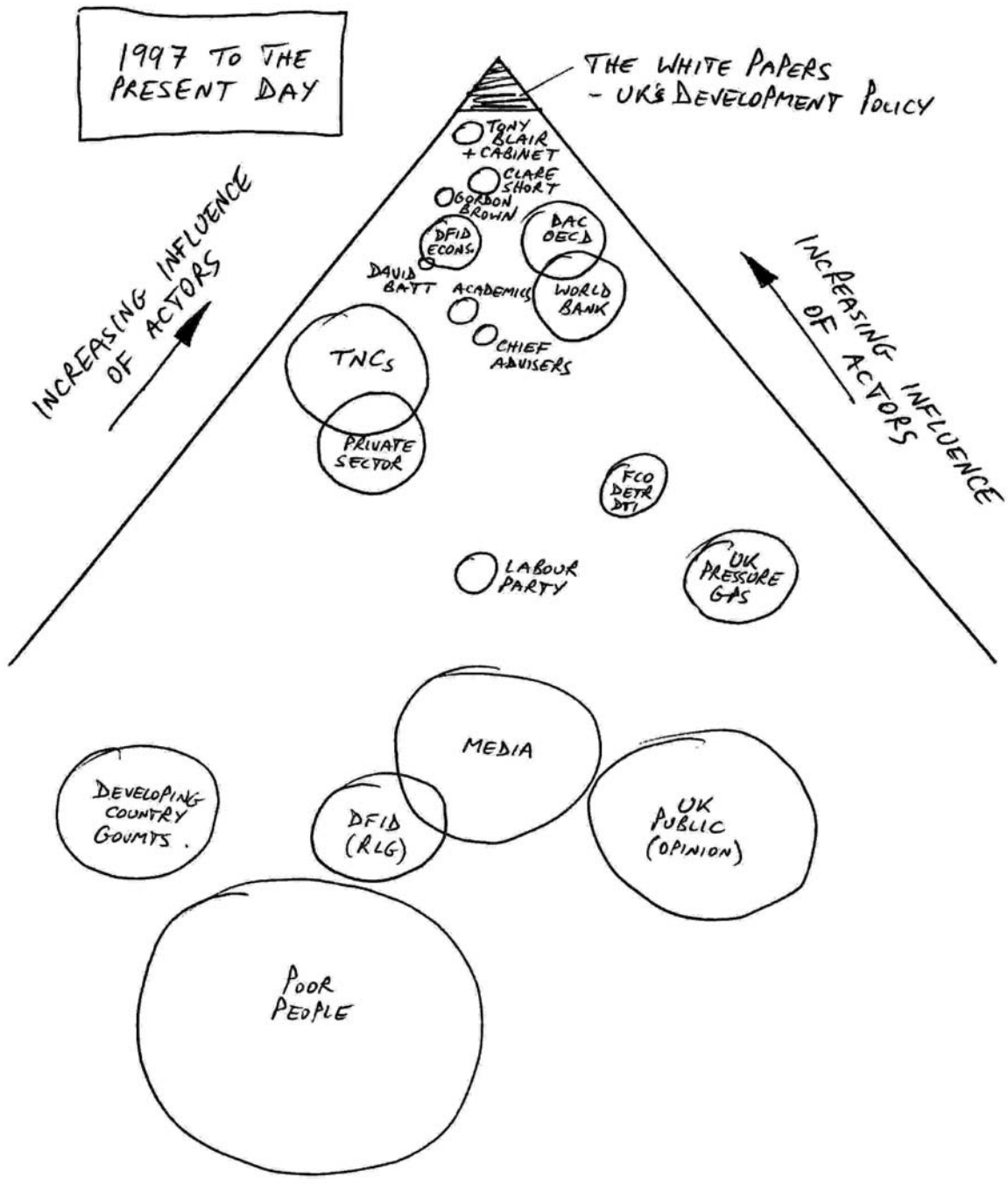
Policy Stakeholders		
Internal – DFID	National	International
1. Minister/DFID head	1. Treasury	1. World Trade Organisation/GATT (WTO)
2. Country-based DFID staff	2. Gordon Brown	2. UN Bodies
3. DFID economists	3. UK Taxpayers	3. World Bank
4. Natural Resources (NR) Advisers	4. Labour party	4. NGOs
5. David Batt	5. Private sector – national	5. European Union (EU)
6. Chief Advisers	6. UK pressure groups (Jubilee 2000 and others)	6. Private sector – international
7. Permanent Secretary (PS)	7. Media – national	7. Recipient country governments
	8. Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)	8. US government
	9. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)	9. Internet users
		10. Poor people
		11. Rich people
		12. Media – international
		13. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC)
		14. Faith groups

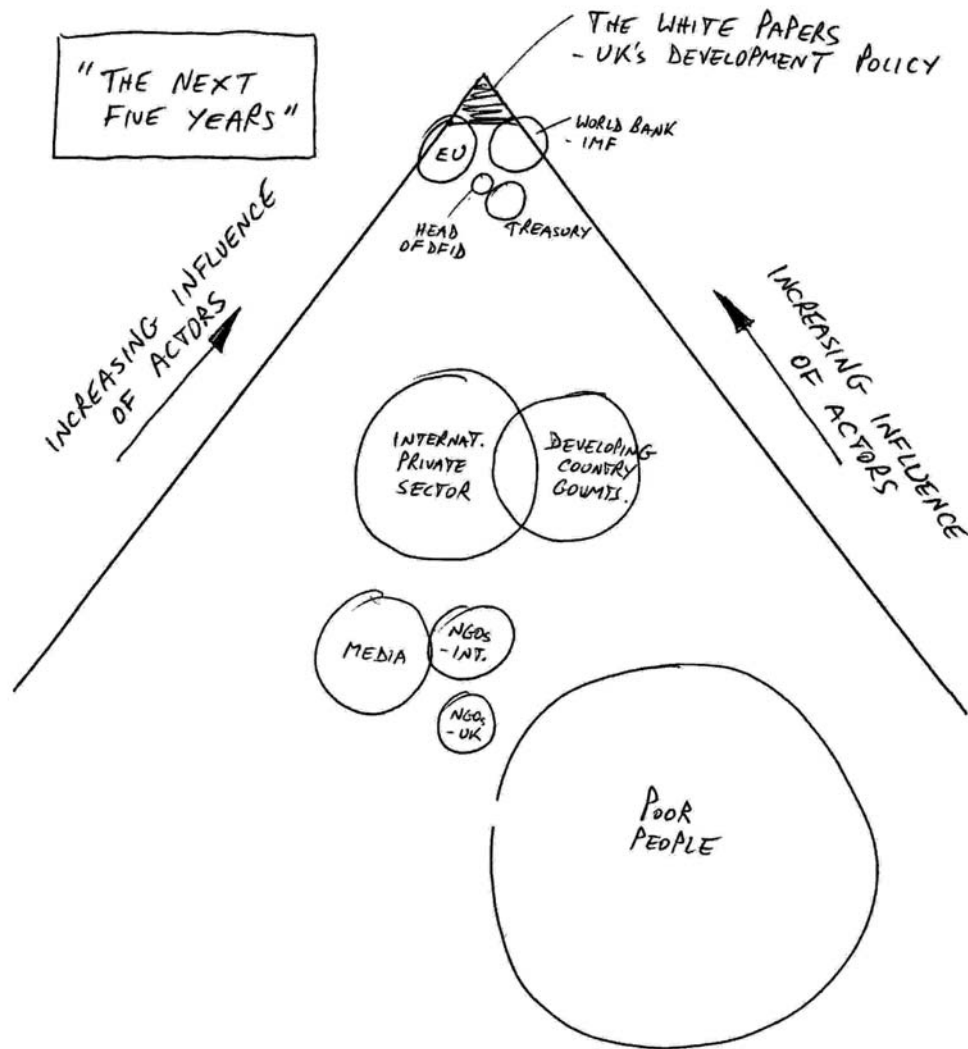
*Participants* were then split into three groups – one for each period, each with a rapporteur. Thirty minutes were allocated for the group session, with some extra time at the end for the report-back. Participants followed these steps:

- *Fine-tune the stakeholder list.* For each of the three time periods, the participants chose a relevant subset of stakeholders from the long list.
- *Estimate stakeholder group size.* Paper circles were allocated to each group relative to the number of people in the group (smallest=fewest, biggest=most).
- *Map stakeholder influence and relationships.* Stakeholder circles were positioned on prepared poster-sheet 'pyramids' with 'UK's development policy' at the apex. Proximity to the top of the pyramid showed relative influence, while proximity to other circles showed relationships among stakeholder groups.
- *Identify key moments and mechanisms.* Policy events, notable moves made and key external changes which helped or hindered were noted as they occurred during the exercise.
- *Keep record of map for future reference.* The exercise ended with a report-back session. Rapporteurs very briefly highlighted key points – the key influencers, the key excluded parties, and what this said about the links between policy processes and poor people.

The 'maps' produced by the three groups are shown below.







Some of the points made by the groups were as follows:

- ❑ **Pre-1997: the ODA years (Policy agenda forming).** The private sector was highly influential in this period through the aid-and-trade provisions. ODA was generally 'in bed' with the DTI and the FCO, whilst the Treasury held considerable influence through budgetary decisions and processes such as the Fundamental Spending Review. UK taxpayers were not consulted much in those days and poor people had even less influence than UK tax payers. Key external events which shaped policy in this period included: the end of the Cold War, the Ethiopia famine and Band Aid response, the Rio/UNCED conference in 1992, the Pergau Dam affair, the Tiannenmen Square stand-off and the GATT Uruguay Round.
- ❑ **1997 to the present: the DFID White Papers (Policy making).** Key influences on the shaping of the White Papers included several key individuals – Clare Short, Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and the writer David Batt. DFID economists were the most influential of the DFID advisers. The OECD/DAC had a major influence through the International Development Targets. The very low influence of poor people remained, and developing country governments were less influential than those in developed countries. Public opinion in the UK remained much less influential than commercial interests. Some key moments were noted in the period, such as Clare Short recognising the need to 'ride the dragon' of economic growth. Economists were strong in the years before the first White Paper – then shrunk into the background only to return centre-stage with the second White Paper's emphasis on well- channelled growth. There

was considerable rear-guard action by the Rural Livelihoods Group, but their role was at times ambiguous – some were keen that growth was back on the agenda, whilst others supported the re-statement of the importance of public goods and services, and others again were less happy with either.

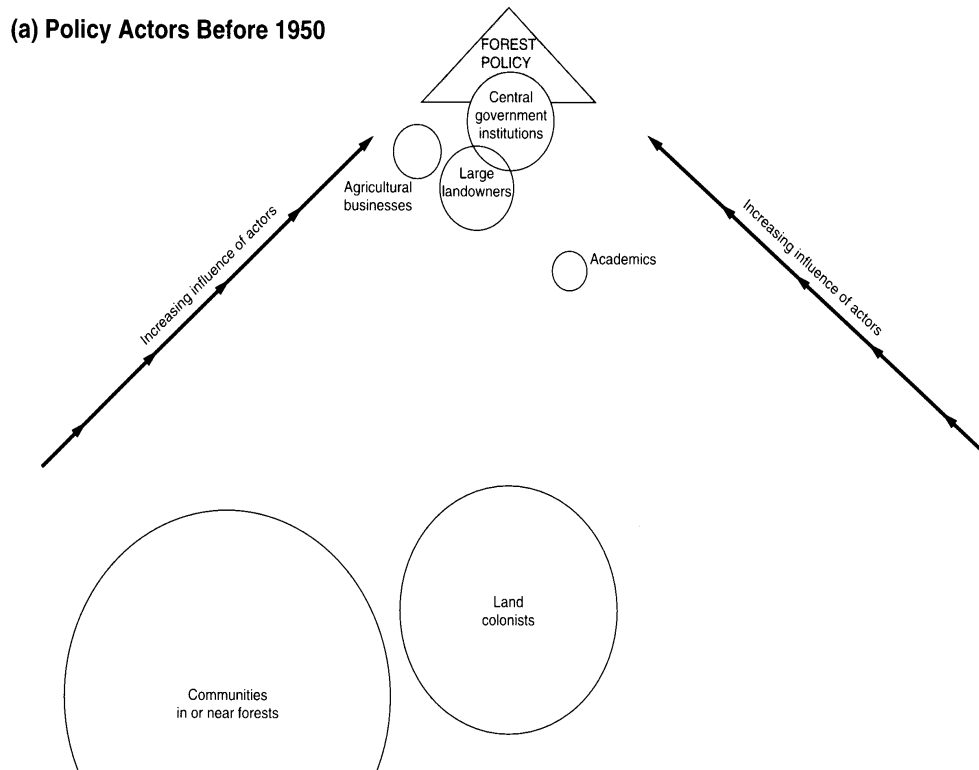
- ***The next 5 years: the likely future (Policy implementing?)***. Key influences on the likely (rather than the desirable) practice of policy captured in the globalisation in the next 5 years were predicted to be the international finance institutions, the EU, and the international private sector becoming more increasingly influential – and shaping what developing country governments can themselves put into effect. Poor people look set to continue to be effectively excluded from the process, with NGOs having less influence than some might expect. The group also predicted that governance programmes would tend to rise, whereas livelihoods programmes *per se* may decline. Difficulties were predicted with budget structures in some circumstances militating against delivery of the White Paper, including some aspects of the decentralised structure (e.g. it is difficult to work on influences stemming from international dynamics like WTO with country-based budgeting). It was noted that adaptable tool kits will be needed to meet changing circumstances.

Participants were keen to discuss some of the many issues raised by the exercise, such as the ways different groups acted to make their influence felt, and the internal and external contexts that have shaped, and will shape, policy.



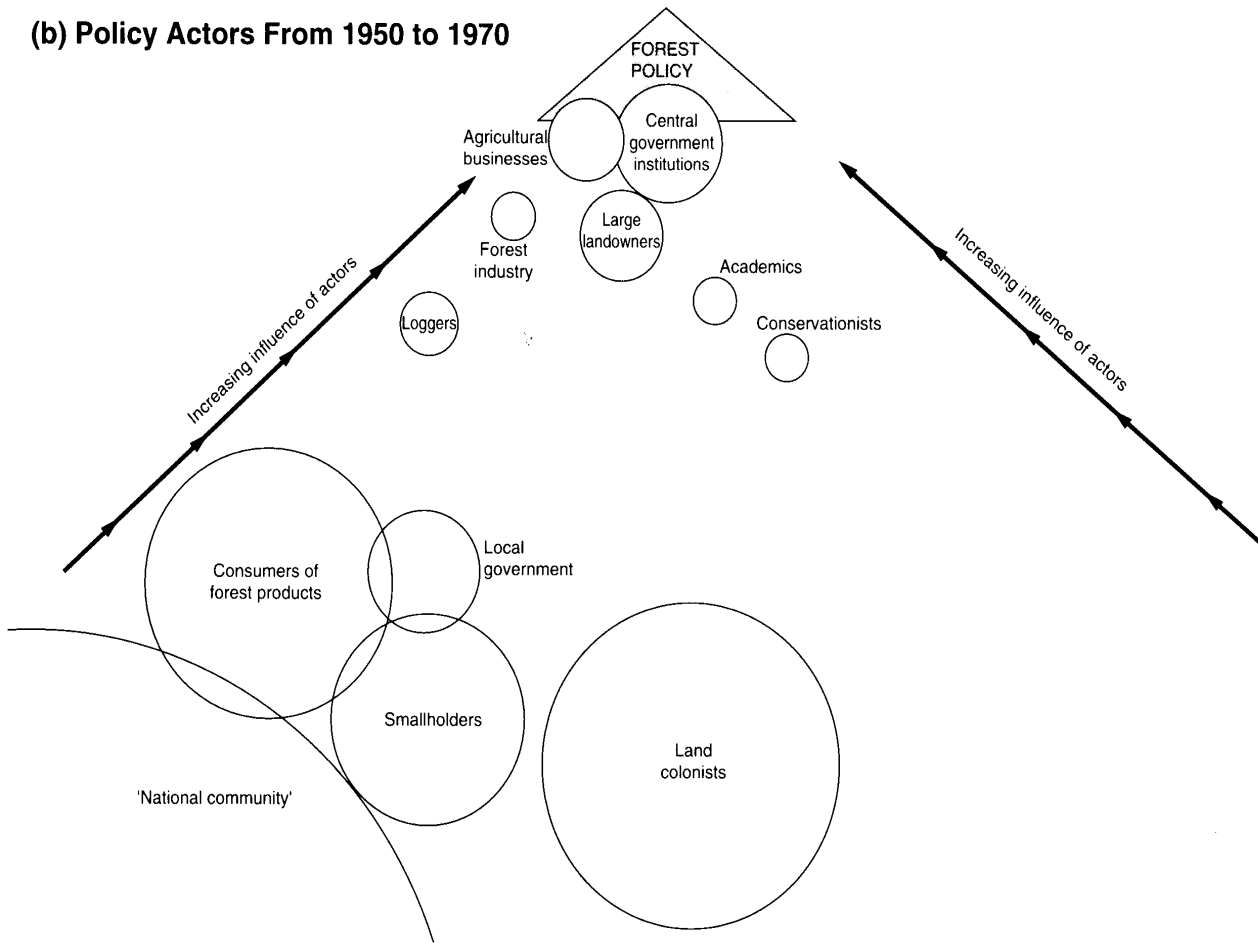
## 2. Half a century of changing power in Costa Rica's forest policy

An exercise was carried out with a multi-stakeholder group in Costa Rica to understand the changing policy environment affecting forests and livelihoods. It was done over the course of several days during a workshop on these issues. The mapping exercise served as a means to characterise historical periods, to demonstrate points about influence and changing relationships and to raise issues. The 'maps' were frequently re-arranged and developed at periods during the course of the workshop – always with heated discussion! Some of the 'story' that is demonstrated in the following four maps is summarised below each one.



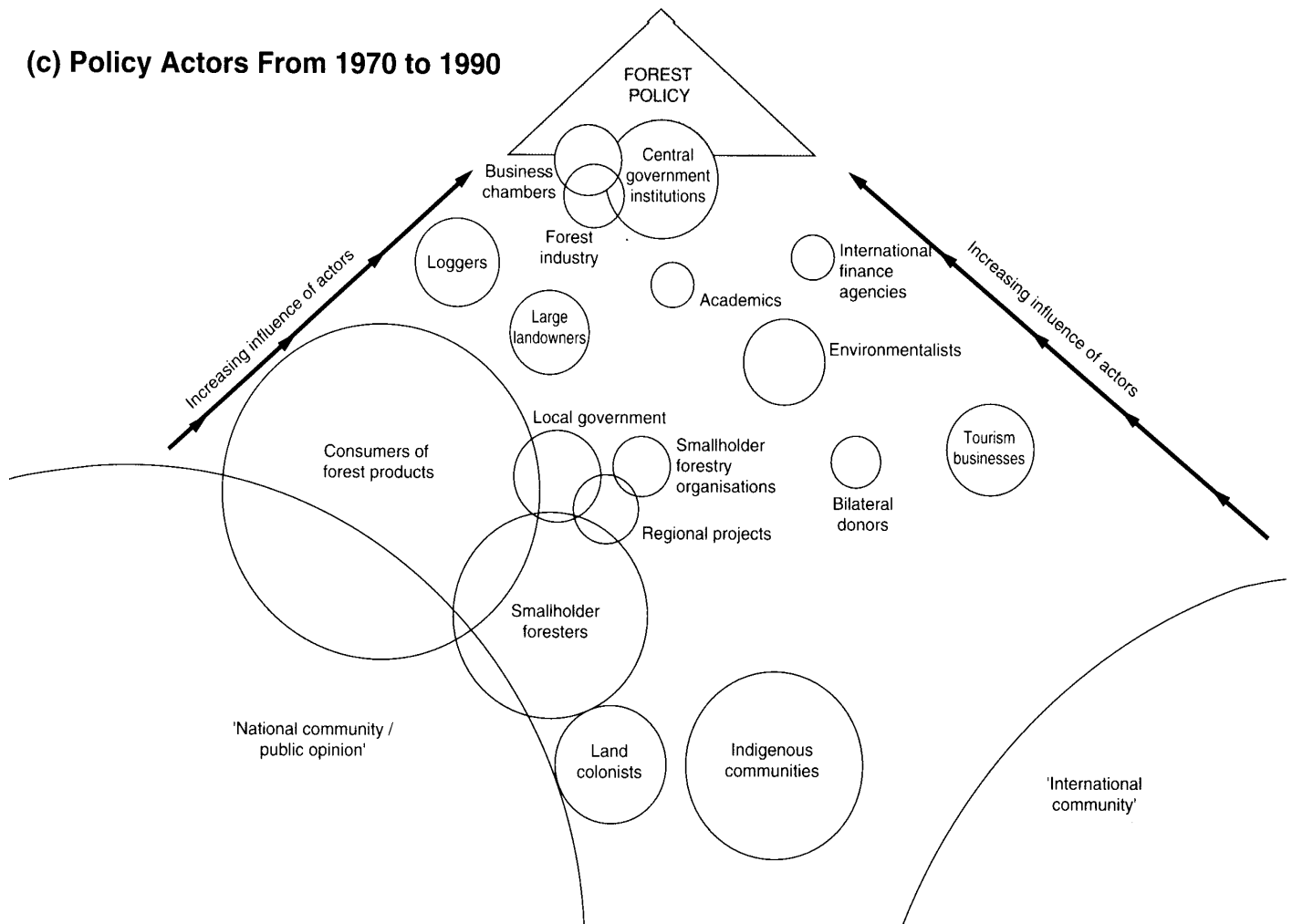
Before the 1950s, forest had slowly declined in area as the country's agricultural society emerged. Large coffee-producing landowners dominated, and a collection of laws had been passed which, on the one hand, tried to mitigate certain impacts of agriculture on the forest, and on the other hand, set the scene for dramatic deforestation. Amongst an educated elite there was also a growing sense of concern that efforts to protect the environment were needed.

**(b) Policy Actors From 1950 to 1970**



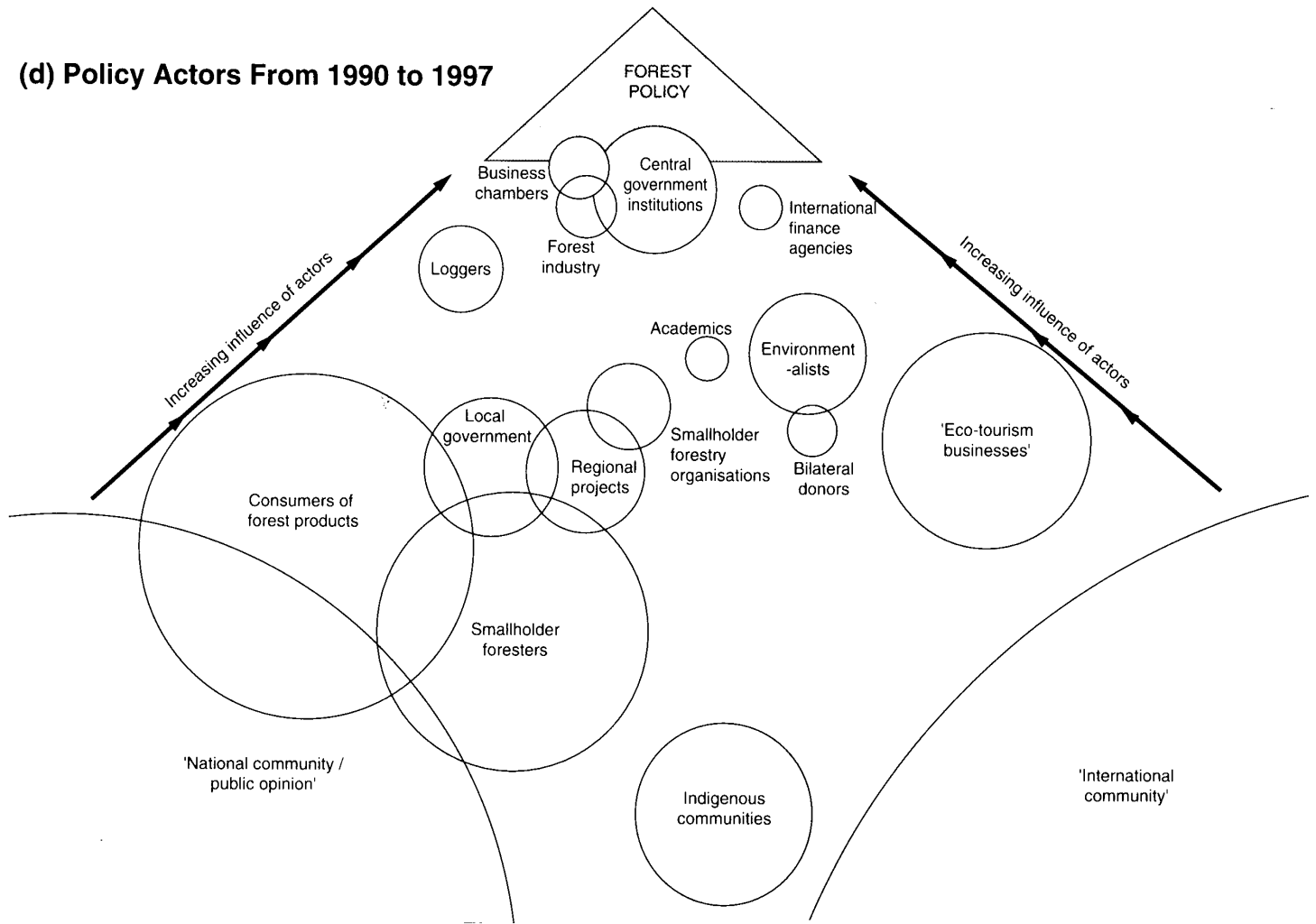
Wholesale conversion of forest was first stimulated by government policy in the early 1950s, when a new government sought to build a power base through a policy of extending low-interest credit to cattle ranching. Colonists were able to secure lands outside the Central Valley by clearing the forest. Some of these colonists were displaced smallholders; others were wealthier interests seeking extensive lands for cattle ranching. Timber industries benefited through a surplus of low-cost timber created by the conversion of forest land to grazing lands, while coffee growers in the Central Valley and the new plantation owners in the southern areas of the country profited from an increase in prices on the international market.

**(c) Policy Actors From 1970 to 1990**



From 1970 to 1990 the protected area system became firmly established, and the forest industry continued its rise. Financial incentives for reforestation became government's main policy tool in forestry. These incentives mostly benefited larger landowners and were generally insensitive to people's motivations for forest management and conservation. The main losers were the smallholders, who collectively own about two-thirds of the country's land. However, the shortcomings of the incentives system generated considerable debate, and stimulated the formation of smallholder forestry organisations.

**(d) Policy Actors From 1990 to 1997**



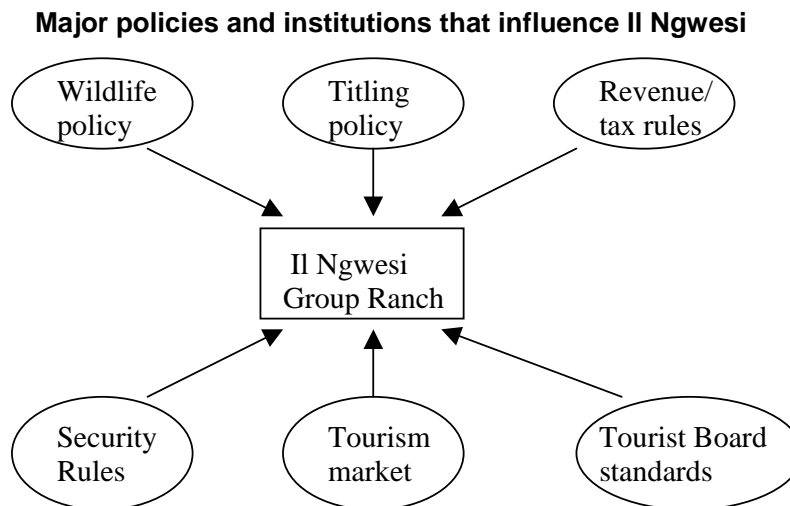
During the 1990s, the legal and institutional system changed considerably. Smallholders secured major benefits from incentives after the period of early monopoly by larger landholders. The main reforestation incentives were gradually eliminated, largely due to the influence of environmental interests, and payments for environmental services (which include CO<sub>2</sub> fixation, water quality, biodiversity, and erosion prevention) were introduced. The government established a 15 per cent tax on fossil fuels, of which 30 per cent was earmarked for these payments for environmental services. A National Forestry Finance Fund was launched – to coordinate administration of private sector incentives and to bundle environmental services for potential sale by the Costa Rican Office on Joint Implementation as Certified Tradable Offsets (credits for carbon fixation in forest land use).

### 3. Policy and local enterprise: Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, Kenya

This case was developed at the workshop *Learning from Community Action to Realise the Millennium Development Goals* in Kenya during July 2003.

Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, on Kenya's Laikipia Plain, is a 16,500 acre area rich in wildlife, including elephants, the endangered Grevy's zebra and a wide range of other species. Collectively owned by 499 local households, it aims to conserve the biodiversity of the area and improve livelihoods based on this biodiversity. The community-owned trust incorporates a Natural Resource Management Committee responsible for land management and a separate company that operates a 16-bed ecotourism lodge. Livelihood benefits stem from the redirection of tourism revenues back to the community – US\$80,000 to date – with the funds used for education, infrastructure projects, and medicines and salaries for ranch workers. Cattle rustling and banditry have reduced since the Group Ranch was established.

Members of the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch joined a mixed group of participants linked to other African community-based biodiversity initiatives to examine areas of policy that influence their activities, and to go on to examine how their initiative can influence policy. They began by identifying key policies and institutions that influence the community enterprise, i.e. that support or constrain it. These were shown graphically in the figure below.



Il Ngwesi's major policy battle was won in 1996 – succeeding after 10 years of trying to get secure title deeds for the Group Ranch (in the later stages of this it had the support of a member who is the current Speaker in the National Assembly). However, other policy constraints are still perceived by the community and its ability to develop enterprise. The major one is related to the human-wildlife conflict which has arisen, due in part to the success of the Ranch. The community would like to be able to deal with problem animals and to develop an enterprise based on limited and controlled off-take of certain wildlife species. But this is forbidden by government wildlife policy as practised by the Kenyan Wildlife Service.

The group aimed to better understand the power of different actors involved in the practice of wildlife policy that affects Il Ngwesi, and their power over policy decisions. It undertook the following steps:

#### *Steps taken to investigate the issues*

1. *Identify policy stakeholders.* These were: the community; Kenyan Wildlife Service; private sector; tourists; NGOs; Kenyan Tourism Board; local authorities.

2. *Estimate stakeholder group size.* A rough estimate of the number of people in each actor group was made and a coloured paper circle was assigned to each actor group – the size of the circle reflecting the actor group size. Each circle was labeled. The community was recognized as being the biggest group in size followed by, in descending order: tourists; private sector; NGOs; Kenyan Wildlife Service; Kenyan Tourism Board; local authorities.

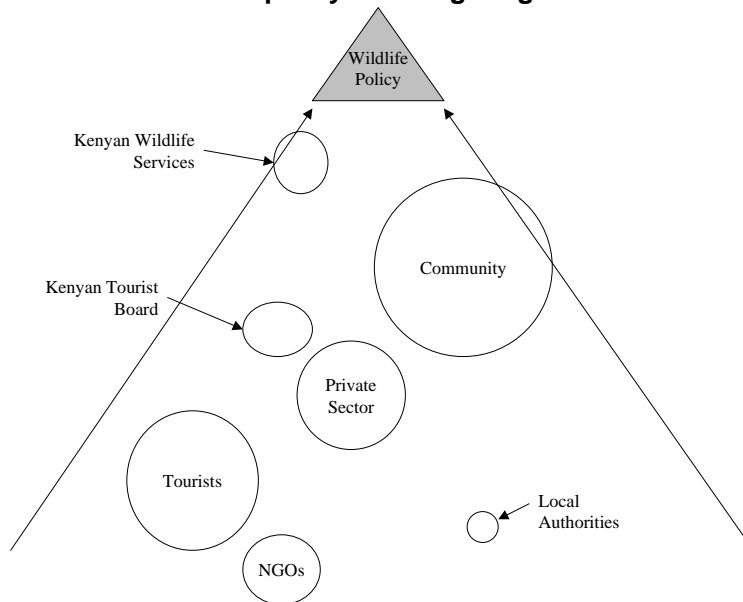
3. *Map current stakeholder influence and relationships.* A picture of ‘where we are now’ – the current influence of actors on policy – was created. The picture (below) shows the set of wildlife policy issues at ‘the top of the tree’ and the proximity of each actor group to the top of the tree shows their power to influence these policy issues. Furthermore, the positions of each group with respect to each other shows their relationship (near to each other indicating a close relationship; far from each other indicating a distant relationship).

This picture took the group about an hour to generate (discussing the issues and moving the circles about on the floor in relation to the fixed triangle representing wildlife policy). Throughout the discussion the facilitator and participants asked questions and made suggestions about the influences implied by the diagram, and about the key moments, events and changes that produced them – e.g. does the community really have more power over wildlife policy decisions for Il Ngwesi than the private sector? Why is this the case? Are NGOs really so irrelevant to us? Why caused the Kenya Tourist Board to be so influential? Notes were made.

Examples of comments made in the process of generating the diagram below:

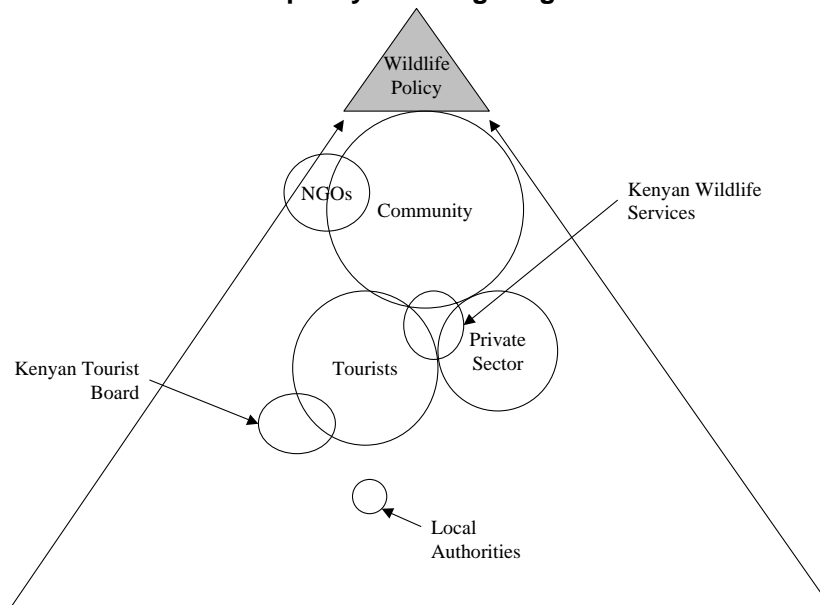
- ‘NGOs have done nothing for us and have no influence on policy’
- ‘That’s rubbish – NGOs have given us some money and helped argue the case our land use strategy’
- ‘Local authorities? All they want is to get their hands on the money we can generate’
- ‘Resources from the Kenyan Tourist Board are now helping us and they are helping to market our programme’

**Influence of actors on wildlife policy affecting Il Ngwesi – ‘where we are now’**



4. *Map desired stakeholder influence and relationships.* A picture of ‘where we want to be’ – the desirable future influence of actors on policy – was created. The group was asked to rearrange the diagram, or make a second diagram, to represent the powers and relationships of the actors in an ideal future. This is shown below:

## Influence of actors on wildlife policy affecting II Ngwesi – ‘where we want to be’



A partnership between actors is thus foreseen as the desirable future, with heightened influence of the community in decision-making over policy that deeply affects it.

5. *Identify ways of getting to the desirable future.* The facilitator urged the group to focus on the approaches, tools, tactics, channels of communications, and actions which might be taken to get from ‘where we are now’ to ‘where we want to be’.

The key elements discussed and highlighted to make progress were:

- A forum is needed, bringing together the II Ngwesi group ranch members with key NGOs, Kenya Wildlife Services, key tourism companies and the Kenyan Tourism Board – to air views, disagreements and proposals for progress.
- In time this forum should evolve into a formal partnership for II Ngwesi – with specific roles for different actors, and collective responsibility.
- The partnership would identify II Ngwesi’s strengths and weaknesses and develop sub-groupings on marketing, skills development and the like, and would work for improved rights, profile and conditions for II Ngwesi.
- The partnership would serve as an example which could be adopted and modified in other areas of Kenya, and a national association or council of related enterprise partnerships could be formed – to keep knowledge and negotiations moving at national level and to ensure constantly improving sustainability and livelihood benefits from local enterprise initiatives.

The diagrams and key issues raised in discussion were reported back to the plenary discussion of the workshop. The II Ngwesi participants in the group remarked that they hope to further develop the diagrams and some of the issues with their group members, whilst some other participants said they intend to use versions of the approach in their own community initiatives.