

# The four Rs

## Tool

### Purpose:

Most people agree that sustainable management of natural resources requires collaboration among different stakeholders. However, collaboration does not develop merely through people agreeing that it should; there are often considerable differences in interests and power amongst those using or dealing with natural resources. This tool helps stakeholders assess and negotiate their relative roles by unpacking these into rights, responsibilities, revenues (benefits) and relationships.

### Stakeholder Roles

Rights	Responsibilities
Relationships	Revenues

Situations where it may be particularly useful include:

- To analyse multi-stakeholder situations and diagnose problems.
- To assess and compare policies.
- In role negotiation processes.
- As an evaluation tool in the project cycle.
- In institutional re-structuring and decentralisation.
- As a training methodology.

### Keep in Mind

★ Progress with *The four Rs* tool hinges on developing the quality of stakeholders' relationships, politics and culture, and the influence of outside pressures.

★ Assess rights, responsibilities and revenues together, because it is their balance that indicates the underlying power structures and current incentives or disincentives to achieving sustainable use of natural resources.

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### Activities:

- 1 Prior to analysis of the four Rs, background research of the area in question should be carried out with respect to historical factors and current geographical, political, legal and fiscal context.
- 2 The understanding phase aims for clarity and agreement on the actual roles of primary stakeholders. The four Rs analysis comprises two components: assessment of the balance of three Rs (rights, responsibilities and revenues/returns) both within and between stakeholders; and assessment of the status of the fourth R - relationships - between stakeholders. At this stage the role of the facilitator becomes important, as all the 'stakeholders' have a role, or a vested interest, or may have more than one role.
- 3 The role negotiation phase aims to reach agreement on a successful future scenario, the desired four Rs to achieve this scenario and finally, the changes needed in the current four Rs in order to move towards the desired situation. Direct negotiation among stakeholders may be impossible at first, so a range of participatory processes are built towards the final goal.
- 4 The capacity mapping phase aims to identify and agree the capacities needed to bring about the desired four Rs as identified through the role negotiation phase.
- 5 Recording and using the findings of each phase, often through simple tables and matrices supplemented with notes on arising issues. At the end of the process these can be revisited, modified and summarised.

### Further information

Find full tool and other related tools and resources at: [www.policy-powertools.org](http://www.policy-powertools.org)

The four Rs complements the power tool *Stakeholder Power Analysis*

Dubois, O. 1998. *Capacity to manage Role Changes in Forestry: Introducing the 'four Rs' Framework*. Forest Participation Series No. 11, International Institute for Environment and Development, London

★ The quality of any agreement concerning these three Rs hinges on the quality of the relationships among the stakeholders involved – yet this is often the hardest to assess.

★ *The four Rs* works well in practice because it is simple and practical – but issues around the four Rs are often very sensitive and less powerful groups may find it difficult to discuss them in public.

★ In general, the four Rs should be used on an experimental basis first, building to tackle more intractable issues as stakeholder confidence grows.

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