POWER TOOLS

The four Rs

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Summary

The Four Rs is a tool which can be used to clarify the roles played by different stakeholders and the nature of relationships between them. Assessment and negotiation amongst stakeholders of these roles and relationships is necessary before developing the capacities needed for improving policies and institutions. The Four Rs tool aims to operationalise the concept of 'roles' by unpacking these into *Rights, Responsibilities, Revenues* (benefits) of stakeholders, and the *Relationships* between stakeholder groups. This is particularly useful in contexts where roles need re-thinking, negotiating and developing.

The Four Rs may be seen as a complement to stakeholder power analysis, and may form a useful tool to apply as part of it, since it can:

- **Explore stakeholders' relative powers, by proxy assessment**
- **Assess stakeholders' mutual relationships**
- **Pave the way for role negotiation by establishing stakeholder dialogue and agreement**

While the Four Rs was developed as a framework and tool for working towards better forestry, it has good potential for use in other aspects of natural resource management and the policies and institutions associated with them.

What are The Four Rs?

'The Fours Rs' is a name given to a tool for looking at stakeholder roles. Roles are patterns of behaviour, routines and responses, like parts in a play. Actors in a play cannot act out any old part and say what they like. They have to speak the lines written. However, even if roles are written we can improvise and interpret our roles, although there are constraints. So roles are not the same as job-descriptions, which are highly specific, handed out and often 'cast in stone'. Roles evolve and become more effective over time as role players discover new opportunities and dimensions in them. To play a role well the role-player needs to interpret the role, to identify with it, develop it and work towards owning it. Thus, roles need to be steadily internalised and strengthened through practical actions.

The Four Rs framework provides a step towards internalising and strengthening stakeholder roles by first 'unpacking' them into 'rights', 'responsibilities' and 'revenues' (which could also be described as returns, rewards or benefits), and then assessing the 'relationships' between them. This unpacking enables clarity to develop about the nature and objectives of roles and relationships, and identification of the capacity needs for reconciling different interests.

Stakeholder Roles

Rights	Responsibilities
Relationships	Revenues

Why and when to use

Most people would agree, these days, that the sustainable use and management of natural resources requires collaboration between different stakeholders. However, collaboration does not develop merely through people agreeing that it should; there are often considerable differences in power amongst those using or dealing with natural resources. These aspects of natural resource

management is often weakly dealt with by government departments, local institutions and development agencies, in part due to a lack of tools to assess stakeholders' roles, and lack of capacity to manage role changes.

Furthermore, as the range of stakeholder groups concerned with natural resource management broadens, the complexity of the inter-linkages between them increases, as do the pressures on natural resources at local, national and international levels. In such contexts, the potential for conflict is high, and tools are needed to examine and address these relationships. Only then can capacities be developed for reconciling different interests in the hope of transforming 'battlefield' natural resource use into shared assets capable of meeting divergent needs. Moving towards shared decision making requires an unashamedly political approach capable of engaging with the complex links between policies, markets, institutions and capacities. The Four Rs framework can be a useful addition to the toolbox for this. Situations where it may be particularly useful include:

1. *To analyse multi-stakeholder situations and diagnose problems.* The framework has been used to identify, and open discussions on, imbalances between private operators' responsibilities and their rights and benefits, and the health of relationships between the State and other stakeholders.

2. *To assess and compare policies* - e.g. an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of policies, carried out in Zambia, revealed a lack of harmonisation of the different forest regulations in terms of both formal and actual rights and responsibilities.

3. *In role negotiation processes.* To date this framework has not been widely used in negotiation processes, but experience of its use in this way in, for example, the DFID-funded Mount Cameroon Project suggests that it can be usefully adapted and developed for this.

4. *As an evaluation tool in the project cycle.* The framework can be used as a tool to evaluate natural resource management projects in terms of their performance on the Four Rs. For example project objectives and results can be compared in relation to the Four Rs; or a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the Four Rs can be carried out.

5. *In institutional re-structuring and decentralisation* – e.g. the Four Rs framework has been used by peasant associations in Senegal to help them to reposition themselves *vis a vis* government bodies in the context of recent progress towards decentralisation.

6. *As a training methodology* - e.g. again in Senegal the Four Rs framework has recently been used as a training methodology to help civil servants at different administrative levels to understand their roles.

Who should carry out The Four Rs?

The Four Rs framework may be applied at different levels: for example in a project or local initiative; in a district or local area planning initiative; or at national level. It becomes most effective when used as a participatory tool for stakeholder dialogue, although the main elements of the framework can be used by individual analysts working on their own. It may be used by 'outsiders' or by those directly involved in the local context in question, for example policy workers who wish to increase their own understanding of a particular situation; individual stakeholder groups wishing to understand their own situation with respect to others' prior to negotiation; or multi-stakeholder groups as a precursor to negotiation.

In all cases where the stakeholder dialogue approach is used, there is likely to be a need for **facilitators** who are seen to be neutral parties. Since the analysis concerns power relations it can touch on sensitive issues, and successful analysis and negotiation can hinge on the facilitation of a respected third party. Facilitators who are respected, enthusiastic and skilled in the necessary fine arts of gender and cultural awareness, consensus-building and conflict management are often few

and far between. This may be the main constraining factor in making progress with the Four Rs, and a focus on locating, hiring or training up such facilitators may prove to be the vital precondition for improving the effectiveness of stakeholder roles.

How to use The Four Rs

The Four Rs framework is best applied in phases:

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. The necessary depth of this analysis may depend on the degree to which it is necessary for 'outsiders' such as policy analysts to understand the local context.

2. The ***understanding phase*** aims for clarity on the actual roles of primary 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. Generating a clear, and agreed, understanding of stakeholder roles requires highly skilled and diplomatic mediation.

3. The ***role negotiation phase*** aims to reach agreement on desirable changes in the Four Rs required to achieve sustainable natural resource management. Participants are asked to start by envisaging and agreeing a successful future scenario for natural resource management, 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. As well as considering the Four Rs according to current reality and the desired future scenario, this phase may also consider the Four Rs in relation to stated formal policies – to see if there is a wide gap between the two.

   Negotiation on stakeholders' respective Four Rs often cannot start directly given, for example, the typically poor quality of relationships between government agencies and other local stakeholders. Therefore it is advisable to start by using a range of participatory approaches to apply the framework to specific issues. For example, piecemeal negotiation first around hunting issues, then tree rights, then product processing and marketing relationships, can build up towards a more general picture, and gradual improvement in collaboration, for roles in natural resource management.

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. The capacities needed to manage role changes are likely to be better assessed once roles are clarified and agreed – perhaps through the establishment of a neutral forum for mutual learning and recognition. This phase considers what each stakeholder group can achieve by itself, and where other stakeholders can provide assistance.

5. **Recording and using the findings**. Each of the above phases may need to record its outputs in different ways. Background research may result in detailed reports and/or short briefing points whereas the participatory phases 2 to 4 may be best recorded through use of simple tables and matrices (see Appendix for examples). At the end of the process these can be revisited, modified and summarised. In addition to summary tables and matrices, however, emphasis should be placed on recording the wealth of issues likely to emerge along the way. It is often the insights, memories and new thinking sparked off by stakeholder interaction which provide the means and momentum to move forward. Options and agreed next steps developed through the process should be clearly recorded, and all participants should receive this record. Follow-up is then crucial, and may take the form of generating and pursuing commitments, and monitoring progress, using the Four Rs framework.

How to ensure quality findings from use of the Four Rs

In practice 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. The three Rs may be seen as the stakeholders' 'means' but progress often hinges on the quality of local stakeholders' relationships, local politics and culture, and the influence of outside pressures.

❑ *Analysis of the balance of stakeholders' three Rs:* It is important to assess the three Rs together rather than separately, and both within and between stakeholder groups. This is because it is the *balance* between stakeholders' rights, responsibilities and revenues which provides a good indication of the underlying power structures and of the current incentives or disincentives to achieving sustainable use of natural resources. For example:

- High levels of responsibility (e.g. in the form of regulations) without a parallel increase in incentives (returns, revenues and rights) has proven unworkable in practice through a lack of enforcement capacity on the part of the regulator (often the state)
- Private operators often have rights to and revenues from natural resources, but these are often associated with a low burden of responsibilities, or with responsibilities not being met.

❑ *Analysis of the relationships between stakeholders (the fourth R):* The quality of any agreement concerning the three Rs hinges on the quality of the relationships between the stakeholders involved. Yet this is often the hardest to assess. Relationships may be analysed according to the following factors:

- *Quality* of relationships (e.g. good, moderate, conflictual – based on convergence of stakeholders' opinions); which might indicate that a stakeholder could play an intermediary role between two currently conflicting parties in the negotiation phase
- *Strength* of relationships, relating to the frequency and intensity of contact
- *Formality* of relationships; certain types of informal relationships may allow stronger groups to impose their views on more vulnerable groups, and may make external interventions less likely to achieve tangible impacts
- *Dependence* between stakeholders, for example: in a business-type dependency, a 'referee' may be required to ensure that parties with less bargaining power are not cheated; a regulatory-type dependency may need to be accompanied by incentives to be effective; technical dependency may require attitudinal changes as when training results in 'teacher-student' behaviour between outsiders and villagers; and social dependency (some social capital may be unwanted 'social baggage') can be the most complex of all.

There is often an imbalance between the Four Rs of key stakeholders. Dialogue around initial findings from the framework then needs to concentrate on issues of: what kind of balance do we want? Should it be perfect balance at all - or should it be tipped in favour of certain interests?

Towards criteria for analysing stakeholder relationships

There are a number of ways in which relationships between stakeholders can be categorised which might prove useful in developing criteria to help make progress to stronger relationship outcomes. For example relationships might be categorised by ***function*** e.g.:

- service
- legal/ contractual
- market
- information exchange
- interpersonal links
- power-building

Another dimension would be relationship *quality* e.g. stakeholder perceptions of each other's:

- awareness
- relevance
- timeliness
- accessibility
- communication media
- control

Sources: drawing on FAO 1995, GTZ 1996

Strengths and weaknesses of The Four Rs

As a tool for tackling a difficult and sensitive subject, the Four Rs framework complements other tools like *Stakeholder power analysis* because it:

- is simple to understand;
- makes the concept of stakeholders' roles more operational;
- can assist the transition from community participation to multi-stakeholder negotiation;
- carefully opens up issues of power and makes them amenable to scrutiny by stakeholders, and
- can indicate capacity changes needed to enhance sustainability.

Issues related to the Four Rs are often very sensitive. Marginalised groups may find it difficult to discuss them in public. This may mean that small social groups/ individual interviews are preferable to assembly meetings, in order to elicit the opinion of less vocal groups. Related to this:

- The role negotiation phase may disturb existing social structures. Whilst this may, in some cases, be desirable in the long term, great care is needed to manage the disturbance. An able neutral facilitator, and a gradual approach, is particularly important.
- The Four Rs framework can raise expectations regarding potential changes in power structures, and attainment of 'desired' future scenarios. It is recommended that it be used in negotiation only if there is a reasonable hope that analysis can be followed up by effective change in the Four Rs, even if this is only on a pilot basis

In general it is recommended that the Four Rs be used in a step-wise fashion, starting on an experimental basis, then building to tackle the more intractable issues as stakeholder confidence grows.

Links/sources of further information

The Four Rs framework was developed as part of a project ('Capacity Development for Sustainable Development in Africa') carried out by IIED and collaborating partners in six African countries, supported by DANIDA. IIED and its partners developed and tested the framework with a view to clarifying the roles of stakeholders as a prerequisite to developing capacity needs. The framework has been applied in specific contexts associated with charcoal production, non-timber forest products, national parks and agriculture in Senegal, Niger, Zambia, Cameroon and Uganda, with communities, private operators and government stakeholders. The Appendix to this tool sheet gives an example from one use of the tool, and some further thinking on the relationships theme.

Prior to carrying out a Four Rs analysis, the following tools may be productively used: The Four Rs can complement *Stakeholder power analysis* and may need following up with further detailed forms of influence mapping and *Stakeholder influence mapping.*

The following *references* are useful:

Dubois, O. and Lowore, J. 2000. *The journey towards collaborative forest management in Africa: Lessons learned and some navigational aids.* Forestry and Land Use series No 15, International Institute for Environment and Development, London

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

FAO. 1995. *Understanding farmers' communication networks – an experience in the Philippines.* Communication for development case study 14, FAO, Rome

GTZ. 1996. *Process monitoring – work document for project staff.* Doc. No 402/96 22e NARMS Deprt 402, GTZ, Eschborn

Hobley, M. and Shields, D. 2000. *The reality of trying to transform structures and processes: forestry in rural livelihoods.* ODI Working Paper 132, Overseas Development Institute, London

Makano, R.M., Sichinga, R.K. and Simwanda, L. 1997. *Understanding stakeholders' responsibilities, relationships, rights and returns in forest resource utilisation in Zambia: what changes are required to achieve sustainable forest management?* Final report. International Institute for Environment and Development, London

Tekwe, C. and Percy F. 2000. Rights, *Responsibilities, Revenues and Relationships with a focus on community forest benefit sharing: A Case Study of the 4Rs from Bimbia Bonadikombo, Mount Cameroon Project.* Unpublished report. DFID Mount Cameroon Project. DFID, London

Appendix. Examples and Case Studies

1. A summary of rights, responsibilities, revenues and relationships in Lukolongo, Zambia

Stakeholders	Responsibilities	Rights	Revenues
Subsistence farmers	Custodians to land	Forest harvesting Cultivation of the land	Income from forest & agricultural products
Emergent farmers	Some land management	Land cultivation	As above
Charcoal producers	None	Wood harvesting	Income from forest products
Charcoal traders	None	Charcoal marketing	Income from trade
Curio-makers	None	Wood harvesting	Income from forest products
Fishermen	None	Fishing	Income from fishing
Forestry Dept.	Forest management, forest law enforcement	Collection of revenue from forest taxes	Revenue from forest taxes
ECAZ (an NGO)	Facilitator of development	To facilitate development	Indirectly, creation of employment

Relationships	Subsistence farmers	Emergent farmers	Charcoal producers	Curio-makers	Fisherman	Forestry Dept.	ECAZ
Subsistence farmers							
Emergent farmers	Good						
Charcoal producers	Good	Good					
Curio-makers	Good	Good	Fair				
Fisherman	Good	Good	Good	Good			
Forestry Dept.	Fairly good	Fairly good	Poor	Poor	Fair		
ECAZ	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Good	Good	

(Source: Makano *et al*, 1997)

2. Methodology Case Study of the Four Rs: Mount Cameroon Project

Tekwe and Percy (2000) describe a Four Rs exercise which took place during a 2-day workshop in Cameroon. The Mount Cameroon Project (MCP) team were the facilitators and local Ministry of Environment and Forest (MINEF) staff took part as technical advisors to the Operations Committee (OC). The OC were asked to brainstorm what benefit sharing meant to them, and then to define rights and responsibilities, to allow for a common understanding of what is meant by them before going into analysis.

A brainstorm of important clients of the community forest was done, arriving at a list of 18 stakeholder categories. Participants divided into 2 groups, each taking 9 stakeholders for analysis. Analysis of the present situation was done by the groups, discussing and agreeing each stakeholder's *current and actual* rights, responsibilities and revenues (benefits) in relation to the forest fully, before moving on to the next. The groups recorded key points and gave a relative score (0 = none, 5 = high/maximum) for each of these 3Rs in a table. Where stakeholders with a policy or legal responsibility were not actually being responsible, the description reflected the policy and the score reflected the reality.

Current Rights, responsibilities and revenues table for 9 of 18 forest stakeholders

SH	Rights	Score	Responsibility	Score	Benefit	Score
Charcoal Burners	Part access	2	Registered with OC	2	Direct income	4
Timber Exploiters	Part Access	0.5	None	0	Direct income – timber	4
Firewood collectors	None	0	None	0	Direct income, resource	4.5
CDC (a parastatal plantation company)	Rightful leasehold owners	5	Ensure proper land management	1	None	0
Chiefs	Authorize access to all resources	3	Custodians; Monitor	2	Fees; Gifts	1
Farmers	Access to land Participation/decision making	2	Implement land use plan (Tree planting); Registration	1	Crop sales; Crop consumption	5
MINEF	Supervision; Management	4	Control exploitation; Collect govt taxes Community forest procedure	2	Auction sales revenues; Exploitation fees	3.5
BBNRMC (local management council for the forest)	Management Authority; Negotiate on behalf of the community; Sanction	3	Implement land use policy; Monitoring and control; Establish community forest	3	Allowances; Training; Gifts; Informant fees	2
Traditional Doctors	User right; Participation	1	-	0	Consultation fees; Treatment; Herbs sales	5

Each group presented their table in plenary, and participants together checked the results. This was done by checking across each row, and checking down each "R" column, for consistancy and final agreement. The description and scores were analysed. For example, do MINEF actually take less responsibility than the BBNRMC (the local management council for the forest concerned), and the same amount as chiefs? Are chief's benefiting almost nothing and yet taking responsibilities? Are timber exploiters and fuelwood and charcoal burners all benefiting to the same extent? Are the descriptions given really the actual situation, or what should be happening? – which if very different was also noted outside the table (eg MINEF should be taking more responsibility than they are). These comparisons led to some adjustments to the scores to make them comparisons between stakeholders meaningful, and agreement was reached on the relative "weight" of different types of rights, responsibilities and benefits.

From the table, it was clear that those who benefit currently are resource users. Most of these stakeholders are illegal users who are not registered either with MINEF or the BBNRMC. On the contrary, those with much responsibility and rights benefit very little, and are not direct forest users. This was not a sustainable situation! Below is a ranked summary of the current situation of stakeholders in the forest revealed by the completed table.

Stakeholders with highest Rights	Stakeholders with highest actual Responsibilities	Stakeholders with highest Benefits
1. CDC 2. MINEF 3. MCP 4. BBNRMC/chiefs	1. MCP 2. BBNRMC 3. MINEF/villages/chiefs/elites/ charcoal burners/LUC	1. Farmers / fishers 2. Firewood / traditional doctors 3. Timber/charcoal

The future vision
The same exercise was repeated, but this time participants were asked to envisage the community forest as it would be in 5 years time if it was successful. The table produced, once agreed, provides a negotiation tool and reference point or target for the OC for the community forest, it's necessary rules and regulations, and needs for management and control of stakeholders. It provides a basis for dialogue and negotiation with the other stakeholders to reach an agreement supported by all.

Relationships matrix
Next the OC analysed the existing relationships between each of the clients, using a pair wise matrix, and colour codes for different relationship types (B = blue = excellent, G = green = fair, R = red = poor/conflictual, - = no relationship, or not known)

	Farmers	MINEF	BBNRMC	Villages	Admin	LUC	Trad. Doc	Charcoal	Timber	Fuelwood	Hunters	MCP	MINAGRI	CDC	Elites
Chiefs	G	B	B	B	B	G	-	G	R	R	-	B	G	G	G
Farmers		G	G	G	G	-	-	G	R	R	-	B	G	G	G
MINEF			B	G	B	G	-	G	R	R	R	B	B	G	-
BBNRMC				B	B	B	-	B	R	R	R	B	G	G	G
Villages					B	B	-	-	R	R	R	B	G	G	B
Admin						B	B	-	R	R	R	B	B	B	B
LUC							-	-	-	-	-	B	G	B	-
Trad Doc								-	G	G	G	G	-	-	-
Charcoal									B	B	-	G	-	-	-
Timber										B	-	R	-	G	R
Fuelwood											-	R	-	R	R
Hunters												-	-	-	G
MCP													B	G	G
MINAGRI														B	G
CDC															B
Elites															

Rather than repeating this complex matrix for the future scenario, participants analysed and interpreted the matrix, using the colours to discover stakeholder trends and problematic relationships. Points raised and lessons learned were converted into recommendations of what the OC could do to improve relationships, and to make use of potential entry points for making new relationships or starting negotiations. For example, the OC is working collaboratively with charcoal burners, who in turn work with and depend upon timber exploiters for felling and cross cutting their wood. Hence a plan was made to bring timber exploiters into the community forest process through the charcoal burners group, and another to use the elites' good relationship with CDC to help release land to the community.

(Source: Tekwe and Percy, 2000)

3. Six Relationships of Importance to Policy Processes

Hobley and Shields (2000) provide some useful lessons from DFID's involvement in an institutional change management project in India. They describe six principle relationships which impact on poor peoples' livelihoods. Some relationships are internal to government organisations, some are between a range of stakeholders, and some take into account relationships between stakeholders in wider citizenship or political roles (see Table below). It is often necessary for a programme to take a multi-level approach to both policies and institutional relationships.

Levels	Relationships between structures	Entry to change
A	Interface between local groups and government front-line service delivery	Participatory approaches; living examples of pluralistic systems
B	Interface between different local groups	Access to information and political representation; inclusion in policy making; conflict management and boundary negotiation
C	Internal change within community and private organisations	Structure, management, information access and communications
D	Internal change within government organisations	Structure, skills, systems, management styles, planning and budgeting strategy, staffing, shared vision
E	Interface between one sector government organisation and other government organisations	Inter-department co-ordination mechanisms, shared vision, inter-sector strategy frameworks, more holistic/integrated terms of reference
F	Interface between executive government and wider policy environment or policy process	Improved information; participatory planning processes for developing strategy; transparent decision-making and communication
G	Interface between local level organisations and wider policy environment of policy process	Strengthening civil society and political structures (the press, political parties, parliaments) in relation to specific issues

(Adapted from: Hobley and Shields, 2000)

Relationships A and B: Many institutions and organisations impact on livelihoods. New attitudes within one organisations can be stimulated by other organisations, when living examples from the grassroots are fostered and fed into a shared multi-organisational learning process. A clearer opportunity to impact on people's livelihoods lies in focusing on *institutional changes which address relationships between actors,* such as: encouragement of pluralistic delivery systems (e.g. outsourcing services, privatisation of state roles, explicit roles for NGOs and new organisations); strengthening of new civil organisations (e.g. membership organisations and village committees); and experimenting with newly defined contractual relationships.

Relationships C and D: In the immediate future it is likely to be difficult to impact on livelihoods merely by concentrating on support to *internal organisational change* within state agencies, either via gradual internal capacity building or radical re-positioning of agencies and the "hardware" of structural change.

However, changes in the "*software*" *of organisations* (how things are done), in particular the process of building strategic planning frameworks, can impact on livelihoods particularly if they involve linkages to other planning bodies. These new processes require new skills, attitudes and management styles at senior and junior levels within organisations. The strengthening of community organisations is based on access to better information, improved negotiation skills, better links to markets and management skills for marketing.

Relationships E: Since many of the policies impacting on livelihoods are cross sector. The weak relationships and lack of co-ordination between government bodies is a key constraint in enabling more sustainable livelihood strategies.

Relationships F and G: Changes in C, D and E alone, ie, short-term change in planning frameworks, will not necessarily lead to sustainable impacts on livelihoods. It may be necessary for a programme to consider planning in a wider strategic context, that is the relationship of a

range of stakeholders to the policy process. It is important to support stakeholders in wider citizenship and policy actor roles with better information and communication so that they can: -

- generate better argued coalitions around particular issues
- articulate particular policies as part of a more coherent policy agenda
- encourage policy legitimisation (by consulted laws and public opinion)
- involve themselves decisions about policy resourcing

This requires "entry points" at different levels within and outside state or government organisations.

(Source: Hobley and Shields, 2000)