

The Reality of Trying to Transform Structures and Processes: Forestry in Rural Livelihoods

Mary Hobley
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Working Paper 132

Results of research presented in preliminary
form for discussion and critical comment



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Processes:**

Forestry in Rural Livelihoods

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As ever the views in this paper represent our understanding of reality and do not necessarily reflect the views of either the Karnataka Forest Department or DFID.

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Acronyms

CCF	Chief Conservator of Forests
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FD	Forest Department
FLS	Front-line staff
GO	Government Order
GOK	Government of Karnataka
GOUK	Government of United Kingdom
HRD	Human resource development
IFS	Indian Forest Service
JFM	Joint forest management
JFPM	Joint forest planning and management (addition of planning by the Western Ghats Forestry Project)
KFD	Karnataka Forest Department
PPST	Project Process Support Team
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (now DFID)
PCCF	Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
TACIRIE	Transparency, accountability, comprehensive, inclusive, representative, informed, empowered
VFC	Village Forest Committee
WGFP	Western Ghats Forestry Project

Summary

Within the forest sector, key constraints to improving forest-based livelihoods lie in the institutional environment and in particular in the relationships between and within the forest department, the forest users and the political (or enabling) environment. The Western Ghats Forestry Project, in Karnataka, India,¹ the focus of this working paper, is used to illustrate the processes and problems of supporting change in the forestry institutional environment in which rural livelihoods are constructed.

Although the project was not designed within a livelihoods framework, its emphasis on ‘people-centred, responsive and multi-level approaches’ (Ashley and Carney, 1999) means that it has much experience to offer to those interested in the livelihoods approach. The paper presents a framework to analyse and consider the nature and functions of different agencies in the forest environment of the Western Ghats and examines the relationship between these agencies and development of livelihood assets. It focuses in particular on experience with trying to change structures and processes within a forest sector delivery organisation. This is based on the premise that unless there is fundamental internal change within the main delivery organisation there will be little or no change in their external relationships with forest users, and thus no sustained change in access or influence over key livelihood assets.

We look at two dimensions of the project:

- The product (in this case new approaches – relationships, objectives and clients – to forest management), in terms of the vision – how things will look after the changes have been introduced; and
- The means, in terms of the process and pathway towards that vision.

In the second section of the paper we review the different levels of change, from process through to institutional change, to establish where we started and to help to explain some of the limitations we faced.

In the third section of this paper, after introducing the case study, we set out some of the principles underlying the vision for the end of the change process. We argue that changing the relationship between ‘users’ of forest resources and ‘delivery agency’ is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of empowerment but does ultimately determine the sustainability of livelihood outcomes. An explicit and active role for the individual and community as ‘citizens’ playing a wide role than that of the user is also critical.

In the fourth section of the paper, we develop a framework to encompass the relationships between different agencies and actors in the forest environment in the Western Ghats. We use this framework both as a vision of the types of relationships necessary to secure forest-based livelihoods and as a ‘yardstick’ by which to measure progress.

In the fifth section, we look at some of the early products of change. In particular, we examine the emerging elements of a new forest management approach. This is an approach that links a top-down strategic planning framework with a bottom-up planning framework with clear and explicit roles for each actor. In particular, it places the objectives of the forest user at the centre of the management process. It examines the necessary changes in relationships in order to support a multiple stakeholder, multiple objective approach to forest management.

¹ This project has been funded by the Government of Karnataka/Government of India and DFID since 1991 and is coming to the end of its first phase of implementation.

In the sixth section, we use the Kotter model (1995) of the dynamics of transformational change in organisations as a basis for analysis of the process of change, and to assess progress along the pathway to the vision set out in Section 4. We analyse the lessons learned and the importance of developing a shared understanding, skills and the systems necessary to implement these new approaches. Where any of these elements are missing or only partially developed, the changes induced are also fragile and partial.

The following are some of the major emerging lessons concerning the effectiveness of the internal change process:

- There is need for support from the enabling framework (both from within the political environment and from the senior management level) for a) process change at the frontline of the delivery agency, and b) institutional change at the civil society level to be effective and internalised. Without this support, major barriers to change become solidified rather than demolished, i.e. the five elements of relationship change that are identified as important are not evenly developed.
- There is need for wider involvement in the construction of, and better communication of the change vision as it evolves. This is particularly important when the tradition and implicit assumptions of the delivery agency are being challenged by the new policy and strategy. Resistance to the vision (policy objectives) is often articulated through and negotiated within the process of change. Management of this debate is essential especially where parallel changes in other areas of civil society have yet to become clear, or other pressures for change fully manifest.
- Conflict over objectives (final outcomes) is inherent and not to be shied away from. Some of the conflict may represent power struggles fomented by previous organisational and institutional structures. Even where this is not an issue, any process or product, where ‘values’ need to be managed, should be recognised as being inherently political. Resolution of conflicts over values need processes and mechanisms which enable people to explicitly negotiate and trade-off. This is a live process: it can neither be reduced to a single formula nor negotiated by proxy.
- The management of debate about the goals and vision has to be both deep (from top management to frontline) and wide within the delivery agency. Otherwise, those championing change within the delivery agency will be isolated from the mainstream culture of the organisation which will become both resistant to and suspicious of what is being fostered at a pilot level.
- The debate must be managed across agencies and stakeholders and not limited to those within the traditional delivery agency. This includes politicians, government, press and NGOs. This reflects the pluralism and transparency of the vision. More pragmatically, it is essential to build external accountability.
- However, it must be recognised that change is never easy, and that the main delivery agency requires space to make adjustments, not just to processes, but also to attitudes. Change is slowed down by ‘undue’ and heavy pressure from external bodies and by myriad reviews, audits, evaluations all of which demonstrate and show up serious problems in current practice. Without space, without time to rebuild new processes and attitudes, and under pressure to deliver, staff inevitably become defensive and practice returns to the old process and attitude.
- There is a need for long-term commitment and trust between all actors including the donor to ensure that senior management in the main delivery agency is prepared to take risks and support

change. Otherwise, they feel exposed and vulnerable. There are few incentives within the current structures to support those who take the high level of risk that change implies.

- The donor agency, also with its internal demands and interdisciplinary conflicts, needs to manage the signals it sends. Essentially, debate should be conducted within a relationship of trust and commitment. For the donor, in practice, this often boils down to searching for projects with a single client/single purpose. Projects with multiple objectives and multiple goals are deemed to be complex and too difficult to manage. This search for a single goal/purpose results in partners receiving mixed signals (environment goals versus social objectives, wholesale institutional change versus process change). In addition, where ‘conditionality’ is applied in a confrontational manner, the key relationship between the donor and partner government, as sponsors, becomes strained and the focus returns to the language and spirit of blueprint: ‘compliance’ and ‘product’; ‘threat’ rather than ‘opportunity’ and eventually spirals into misunderstanding and mistrust.
- The terms ‘process’ and ‘relationships’ are virtually synonymous. These relationships need to be maintained and managed especially given the high turnover of staff in senior positions of both donor and government partner. In the context of project cycle management, a ‘process project’ means the management of relationships. Management of process and relationships are never easy: pressure has to be played off with support, speed with space. There is no substitute for building good relationships, based on contact, understanding and successful agreements. This requires a sharing of each partner’s framework and pressures, discourse and agenda.
- Many projects, such as the case study described here (Western Ghats Forestry Project), have been rightly accused of ‘tinkering at the edge’. The necessary pressure on the policy environment (in particular as a result of the lack of an effective relationship between the donor and the partner government) was not forthcoming. Thus, there was no sustained downward pressure on the main delivery agency (forest department) to substantially change its mode of operation.
- The need to work within alternative agendas and to understand resistance and corruption are in themselves substantial challenges. The new systems and processes bring transparency, demand accountability and put the needs of the forest user at the centre of the process. However, the direct user is not the only actor with a stake. For changes to users’ livelihoods to be realised and to be sustainable, there is a need to open up and involve wider society in setting out higher level objectives and priorities. This also requires new processes. However, even relatively small process changes, that affect the relationship between user and frontline staff provide fundamental challenges to existing power bases and, in turn, these confrontations cannot be won simply through changing some of the forest planning processes.
- There is no golden bullet for either the ‘product or process’ of change. Further, it does not necessarily happen quickly. There are substantial and real barriers to change that take time to overcome. A slow pace is often required that is contrary to the level of delivery expected by a donor from a project. However, there is a also risk in going too slowly and losing both momentum and the critical mass necessary for change. There is a delicate balance to be judged at the particular time, there is no formula that says when the pace is too fast or too slow. There are moments too, when there is a need to ‘tread water’ and in some cases there may be an apparent movement backwards. This all needs to be accommodated, again a risky environment that donor organisations may feel uncomfortable supporting.
- However, there are principles which can guide practitioners in constructing the change agenda, vision and pathway. These principles are not particularly new, although they may challenge

current and deeply held assumptions. The need for a wider voice and greater civil inclusion in local decision-making requires the application of these principles in different circumstances and settings.

Finally with reference to the forest sector, there are several particular lessons to be learnt:

- In terms of institutional processes, forestry is more similar to social sectors such as education and health than to other more privately manageable NR sectors. Firstly, there is a clear public dimension and justification for collective action: the benefits of a forest impact globally – in the same way that public health affects society as a whole. Forestry investment and maintenance is rarely economic in the face of competition from private agriculture, without a public dimension, representing the non-local benefits. The same arguments apply to state provision of health or education services.
- The benefits of a forest exceed the sum of benefits from individual trees and this creates an interest not just to the local community but also to a wider community who are affected by water catchments, micro- and meso-climates and the global environment. These values and interests must be factored into decision-making and hence the importance of an explicit strategic framework, within which devolved, decentralised user-driven decisions can be made. Without this framework, bottom-up decision-making will not necessarily be convergent with wider interests and planning reverts to centralised imposed decisions and priorities. The need to develop civil society institutions and the associated social capital applies to forestry in the same way as to other social sectors.
- The portfolio of benefits from forestry is both diverse and varied and often highly site-specific. Standard packages of services, i.e. ‘solutions’ looking for sites and clients are rarely appropriate over the wide areas involved. This diversity of clients and variation in interest, for any particular site, is enormous and varies over time: timber is sold to merchants, royalty goes to government and a revenue-share to local committees, wages to labourers. Further, each forest management decision affects not just timber growth but determines the offtake of non-forest products by collectors and the opportunities for herders.
- The variety in products and services has distributional effects. In general, trees, compared to other sectors are a slow growing investment with long delayed benefits – of interest to wealthier groups who can defer returns. However, this masks the regular income, often derived as a ‘by-product’, and earned by the poorest groups, in particular, in the collection of fuelwood and NTFPs. Headloading of fuelwood is only carried out by those without alternative income earning opportunities and frequently by women. Forestry, therefore, has major livelihood implications for the group with fewest livelihood options, least scope for diversification and often the hardest group to target with alternative programmes.

In the seventh and last section, we take stock of progress and identify outstanding issues. This is especially important since while the change process is at the time of writing neither complete nor at an end it is also true that it is far from certain that it will succeed either in the form set out in this paper or in any other form!

1. Introduction

1.1 Livelihoods, institutional structures and governance

The DFID ‘livelihoods’ framework (Figure 1) identifies 5 dimensions² that determine the ability of ‘users’ to respond to both endogenous and exogenous pressures (known as the ‘vulnerability context’). However the specific outcome of any intervention designed to improve livelihoods depends not just on the existing stock of livelihood assets and the vulnerability context, but also on the structures and processes through which the intervention is delivered.

The scope for strengthening the robustness and sustainability of livelihood strategies often lies most directly with empowerment of the primary stakeholder or user. This almost certainly requires a change in the relationship between the service delivery agency and the user. Frequently, this involves less intervention and a reduction in the power of the delivery agency to determine outcomes. This re-positioning of the delivery agency is not just in terms of its relationship with users, but also in terms of the type of services provided and the manner in which they are delivered.

Institutional structures are ‘capital’ passed down from history.³ They directly determine the overall governance arrangements and, more specifically, determine (a) the power relations between state and citizen and (b) equity distribution between citizens, as well as having an indirect effect on social and economic livelihoods. They set out the lie of the land (the architecture) in the same way as canals and pipes determine the flow of water in an irrigation system.

Without change in these structures, it is unlikely that there will be the desired changes in livelihood outcomes. Thus the opportunities presented to individuals are highly conditioned by the institutional environment in which they operate. This paper focuses on the reality of trying to transform structures and processes within the forest sector – in particular increasing the responsiveness of state forest departments to the poor.⁴ It unpacks the box known as ‘transforming structures and processes’ and looks at the relationships between this box and those livelihoods, which are at the centre of this transformation process.

Within the forest sector, key constraints to improving forest-based livelihoods lie in the institutional environment and in particular in the relationships between the Forest Department (in this case – Karnataka Forest Department (KFD)) and the forest users. The Western Ghats Forestry Project, the focus of this working paper, is used to illustrate the processes and problems of supporting change in the forestry institutional environment in which rural livelihoods are constructed. The project has focused on addressing the structures and processes that determine the behaviour and performance of the forest sector institutions and agencies that in turn govern people’s access to forest-based livelihood assets. In particular, it has focused on changing relationships between the different

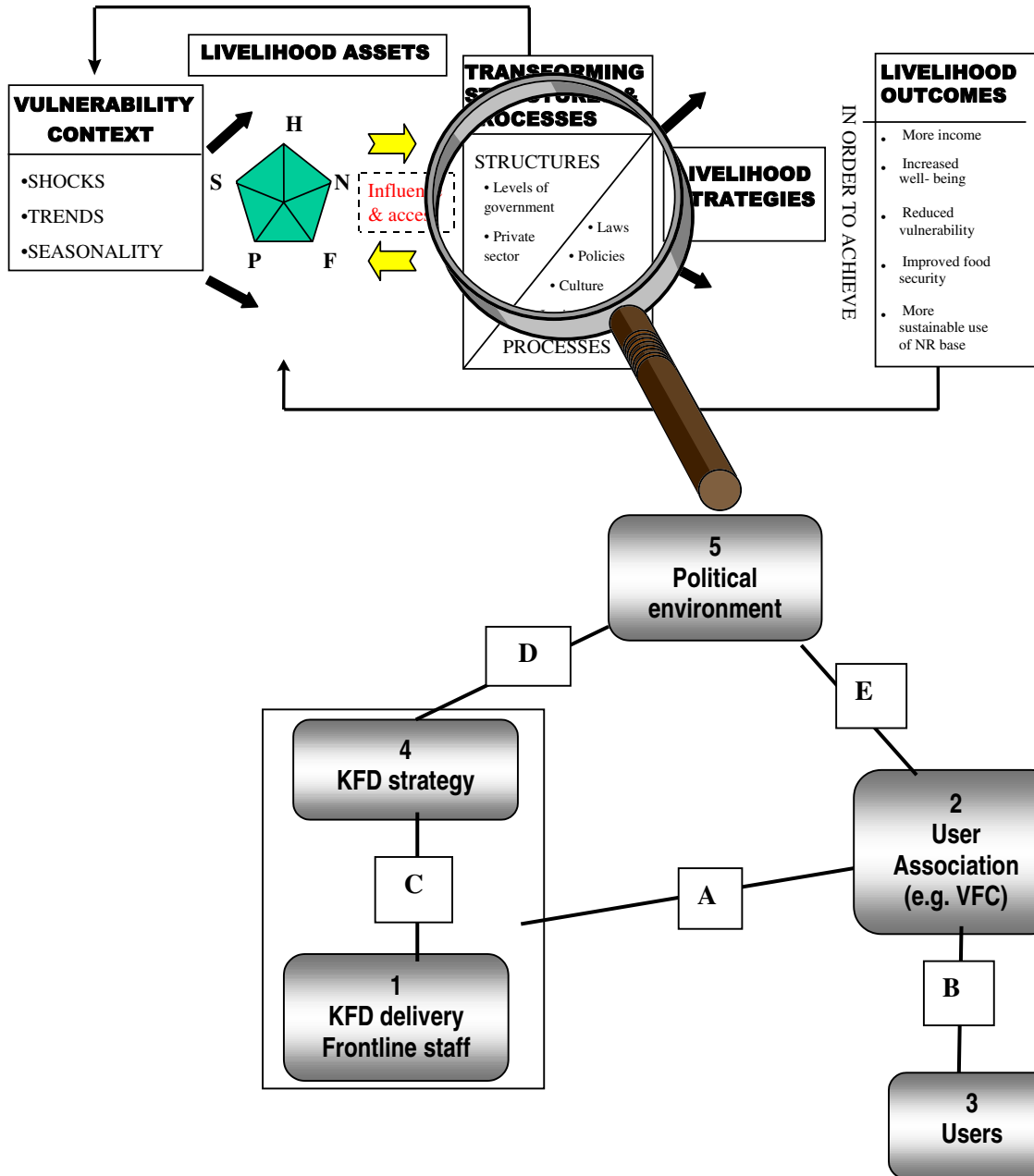
2 The five dimensions are (1) Human capital (H): the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health; (2) Natural capital (N): the natural resource stocks from which resource flows useful for livelihoods are derived (e.g. land, forests, water) (3) Physical capital (P): the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, water, energy and communications) and the production equipment; (4) Financial capital (F): the financial resources which are available to people (whether savings, supplies of credit or regular remittances or pensions); and (5) social capital (S): the social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust, access to wider institutions of society) (DFID, 1999).

3 ‘In the beginning, we build our institutions, thereafter they form us’ (attributed to Winston Churchill, during discussion about the layout of the Houses of Parliament, as it was rebuilt after the 2nd World War).

4 ‘Transforming structures and processes within the livelihoods framework are the institutions, organisations, policies and legislation that shape livelihoods...They operate at all levels, from the household to the international arena, and in all spheres, from the most private to the most public’ (DFID, 1999). Transforming structures and processes are now being renamed ‘Policies, institutions and processes’ within the DFID framework.

players in the forest sector, as depicted in Figure 1 where A and E illustrate different sets of relationships.

Figure 1 Exploring ‘transforming structures and processes’ – relationships between Forest Department and users of resources



KEY

A = change at the interface between KFD and the users (new relationships built through participatory approaches to forest management; B = change between users which involves shifts in power relationships; C= change within the forest department organisation (structures, skills, systems, style, strategy, staffing and shared vision); D = change between the forest department organisation and the wider political structures; E = development of a relationship between VFCs and the political structures.

This paper describes the processes followed by the WGFP in order to illustrate and provide guidance on how to tackle reform in other sectors.⁵ The project has explored some of the relationships between the key actors in the forestry institutional environment, as depicted in Figure 1. It has focused on supporting internal change within the state forest organisation and the development of new relationships between the forest users and the state organisation. However, as this diagram illustrates there are a number of other key relationships that need to be developed in order to help secure and sustain forest users' access to elements of their livelihoods dependent on forests.

Although the project was not designed within a livelihoods framework its emphasis on 'people-centred, responsive, and multi-level approaches' (Ashley and Carney, 1999) means that it has much experience to offer in further developing and understanding the issues surrounding how to transform structures and processes through a single sector entry-point. Early experience has been gained on how to build local-level capacity to plan management of natural resources and access funding – and in particular processes to develop inclusiveness of different interest groups. The strengths and weaknesses of the approaches used are discussed and pointers made for others involved in change in complex institutional environments.

1.2 Analytical framework and structure of paper

This paper presents a framework to analyse and consider the nature and functions of different agencies and examine the relationship between these agencies. It analyses the relationships between the transforming structures and processes and development of livelihood assets but focuses in particular on experience with trying to change structures and processes within a forest sector delivery organisation (Figure 1 above). This analysis is illustrated with a case study of the GOK/DFID funded Western Ghats Forestry Project in Karnataka (WGFP), India.⁶ It draws on the work supported by the four-person consultant support team, of which the authors of this paper were members. The team, engaged by DFID and selected individually by KFD, had a contractual mandate to support the development of new approaches to forest management in one forest circle (a geographical unit for management and administration within the Forest Department) in the Western Ghats – Uttara Kannada. The paper will attempt to analyse the process of change, since new structures and processes are not designed in a vacuum, but have to be built on or fight against existing processes and structures.

Despite the underlying sense of change which pervades all development projects, most reviews evaluate progress against pre-specified progress indicators and therefore against a pre-planned programme. However, where change programmes consist of constant negotiation with their environment, such an approach fails to capture the essence of the project. It is therefore necessary to set out a higher level framework against which to evaluate both the means and the end. This we would suggest is true for all 'meta-process' projects, where process is not defined as being either project cycle processes or incremental blueprint i.e. it is larger than just the project-bounded environment. The need for 'models' rather than indicators to measure progress was realised very early in the project and was seen as being necessary for several reasons: (a) to interpret the process to the implementers; (b) to explain events to funders and (c) to guide the team supporting change.

⁵ The work described here draws on the experiences of the multi-disciplinary consultancy team composed of four individuals – Peter Branney, Mike Harrison, Mary Hobley and Dermot Shields. Short-term support was provided by this team (known as the Project Process Support Team (PPST)) to the Forest Department staff working in Uttara Kannada over a four year period from 1995-1999.

⁶ This project has been funded by the Government of Karnataka/Government of India and DFID since 1991 and is coming to the end of its first phase of implementation. Possibly there will be no second phase of WGFP – so this may all be history and up to posterity to judge the effectiveness of our work!

There is no shortage of frameworks to use to guide and interpret progress. The frameworks selected are to some extent ‘arbitrary’ in the sense that they were selected because they appeared to be useful. They were not comparatively evaluated. That said, there was a surprising unanimity amongst the models.

The benchmark for such projects consists of two dimensions:

- The product, in terms of the vision – how things will look after the changes have been introduced; and
- The means, in terms of the process and pathway towards that vision.

In the second part of the paper we review the different levels of change, from process through to institutional change, to establish where we started and to help to explain some of the limitations we faced.

In the third part of this paper, after introducing the case study, we set out some of the principles underlying the vision for the end of the change process. We argue that changing the relationship between ‘users’ of forest resources and ‘delivery agency’ is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of empowerment but does ultimately determine the sustainability of livelihood outcomes. An explicit and active role for the individual and community as ‘citizens’ playing a wide role than that of the user is also critical. Here, this role comprises citizens’ involvement in strategic-level decisions about high-level objectives for the forest sector in the Western Ghats. This ‘governance’ function cannot be reduced to or subsumed under that of ‘user-participation’. In the same way that the ‘participation’ debate emphasised and highlighted the role of the ‘user’ as distinct from the ‘delivery agency’⁷, so this new ‘governance’ debate must separate the ‘user’ from the ‘citizen’ and the ‘citizen’ from the ‘delivery agency’. Only by so doing, can the relationship (or processes) between the different functions be analysed and deconstructed.

In the fourth part of the paper, we develop a framework to embrace the relationships between different agencies and actors in the forest environment in the Western Ghats. We use this framework both as a vision of the types of relationships necessary to secure forest-based livelihoods and as a ‘yardstick’ by which to measure progress.

In the fifth section, we look at some of the early products of change. In particular, we examine the emerging elements of a new forest management approach. This is an approach that links a top-down strategic planning framework with a bottom-up planning framework with clear and explicit roles for each actor.

In the sixth section, we use the Kotter model (1995) of the dynamics of transformational change in organisations as a basis for analysis of the process of change, and to assess progress along the pathway to the vision set out in Section 4.

Finally, in the seventh and last section, we take stock of progress and identify outstanding issues. This is especially important since while the change process is at the time of writing neither complete nor at an end it is also true that it is far from certain that it will succeed either in the form set out in this paper or in any other form!

⁷ The distinction between delivery agency and user was frequently blurred. For example, extension officers took responsibility for increasing yields on farmer fields. A responsibility that they could not fulfil since they did not control most elements of the farmer’s environment. In the process the agent removed the farmer from a position of ownership and responsibility for the outcome from the intervention. The term used to describe the relationship between extension officer and farmer was ‘motivation’ when in practice the relationship was often one of threat and command. The participation debate emphasised ‘negotiation’ and, therefore, explicitly recognised ‘parties’ to the negotiation and thus a change in relationship. However, the debate rarely went further to recognise the relationship between ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice’. Again, this is a major theme of the governance debate.

2. Levels of change: definitions and theories

2.1 Introduction

Often change is read to mean institutional change without distinguishing its component parts. In order to develop clarity and appropriate action, the level at which change is to be supported, within the institutional environment, should be identified. There are three levels contained within the term 'institutional change' which have different implications in terms of the degree of change to be promoted and the means by which support is provided:

1. Institutional change (architecture: agencies and relationships)
2. Organisational change (capacity building, repositioning within agencies)
3. Process change (reengineering)

In terms of the WGFP project, the focus of change was at the micro-level of processes and systems and not at the macro-level of organisational change or institutional change. Change at other levels was neither initially mandated, through the negotiated project agreement, nor allowed to evolve. However, reality does not allow such discrete boundaries, and as a consequence the project did tackle elements of all three forms of change. In order to set out the ground for this discussion it is useful to define terms and set out this hierarchy of change.

2.2 Institutional change

The changing nature of civil society is driving an explicit need for greater accountability, for more transparent processes and for information to aid public debate and decision-making. In this context, *institutional [and policy] change* focuses on the rules and processes that govern relationships between organisations and the public, and between different organisations (North, 1990; Ostrom, 1990)⁸. It refers to changes in the architecture and relationships **between** agencies and organisations. It addresses issues in the wider environment such as policy, laws, governance structures as well as issues of co-ordination between agencies (for example, contracting-out services).

The main instruments of institutional change are:

- Pluralistic delivery systems (e.g. privatisation of State roles, explicit roles for NGOs and private companies, new organisations);
- The strengthening of civil society by creating or supporting new civil organisations (e.g. village forest committees and other membership community-based organisations); and
- Newly defined, often contractual, relationships between organisations (e.g. increased provision of services through contracting and service agreements, competitive tendering arrangements) or in the case of joint forest management partnership agreements between state and local forest users.

⁸ We follow Kiser and Ostrom's definition where they define an institution as: 'rules used by individuals for determining who and what are included in decision situations, how information is structured, what actions can be taken and in what sequence, and how individual actions will be aggregated into collective decisions....all of which exist in a language shared by some community of individuals rather than as physical parts of some external environment'.(1982: 179).

2.3 Organisational change

Institutional changes in turn have an impact on the internal structure and functioning of individual organisations or agencies. Organisations, like projects, have boundaries and centralised management and are, therefore, relatively easy to conceptualise and treat as targets for change and reform. Organisational change aims at changes in all aspects *within* a whole agency or organisation (e.g. addressing, processes, structures, people and cultural norms of behaviour).

Organisational change has two dimensions:

1. **Capacity building**, which assumes that the limiting factor in an organisation is its staff resource base, so change programmes aim at strengthening the capacity of staff; and
2. **Re-positioning**, which assumes that more radical repositioning may be required to ensure that the organisation responds to the new strategies and realities and is better placed relative to its clients and towards new institutional realities (i.e. structural change).

2.4 Process change

Process change focuses on the systems and procedures that enable an organisation to function, the ‘software’ of an organisation as opposed to the ‘hardware’ of structural change. It is more narrowly focused on those elements within an organisation (or parts of it) that are concerned with processes and ‘how things are done’. There are many categories of process which can be reengineered. It is useful to distinguish between:

- Primary (or driving) processes which are at the interface between the client and the ‘front-line staff’ (FLS) of the organisation. (Front-line staff are all those staff who deal with the users of the services (clients);
- Secondary processes are all other processes which support FLS, including planning, budgeting and HRD systems. These should be aligned with and in support of the primary processes.

Changing the processes does not guarantee organisational change or necessarily lead to institutional development, as is demonstrated from project experience. New processes require new skills (capacity building), new attitudes, new structures, new management styles.

2.5 Links between institutional, organisational and process change

These 3 levels of change are inter-linked but not necessarily in a linear fashion, one type of change does not automatically lead to the next level of change. For any support process therefore, the two major challenges are:

- To identify the correct entry level for change according to a reading of local conditions
- To facilitate the transition from one level of change to the next

The starting point for any change at any of the levels identified above is usually found in the external environment. Hence the importance of policies which result in institutional change as a driving force. However, this is rarely the whole picture. External institutional policy changes may lead to process change. This, in turn, necessitates change at the organisational level and then frequently changes in the institutional architecture. The question to be assessed is whether there is sufficient degree of external institutional change to provide the rationale, context and drive for change within an organisation. It is of course, perfectly possible for change to follow a process of linear steps starting from decisions about organisational change, leading to process change. In

practice, if the change is indeed 'institutional' there will be a need to demonstrate the feasibility of new relationships. This requires at least the testing of new processes, since otherwise change will undoubtedly be deemed to have failed since there would not have been any change in outputs or services.

3. Project background

3.1 Public sector reform

Public sector organisations are undergoing change all round the world, in response to the demands placed on them. Forest Departments are all facing similar pressures to change, to reorient themselves to new sets of clients and objectives (Hobley, 1996; Anderson et al., 1997). More widely, governments are responding to a pressure for greater local decision-making, through increased decentralisation and regionalism, and to pressure for increased public choice and individual decision-making often through economic liberalisation.

The public sector context in which the project was to operate can be characterised by major problems (identified by Saxena, n.d.), each of which would have to be addressed in the change processes, if there was to be any substantial and sustainable change induced:

- **Rigidity** too large and slow, extremely rigid and mechanical, and consequently not flexible and adaptive to cope with change. As a result there is a lack of innovation and enterprise;
- **Low accountability** due to a merger of bureaucratic and political culture, and an alienation from the public particularly the poorer sections. Lack of democracy and growing corruption at all levels;
- **Declining performance** characterised by lack of expertise and a tendency to expand functions beyond the core competence of the organisation with the attendant problems of poor performance as a result of lack of skills and understanding;
- **Low motivation and low morale** as a result of the above.

3.2 Pressures on forest departments

The State Forest Departments in India, which were established in the nineteenth century when demands on the forest estate were radically different from today, are no exception. Again, Saxena (n.d.) (see Box 1) identifies specific issues as major areas for change in a trenchant critique of the Indian Forest Service and state forest departments. He identifies several particular problems of forest departments:

- Rigid hierarchical structure
- Internal culture of fear and rigidity
- One-way communication
- Centralised planning
- Declining cohesiveness and increased factionalism
- Absence of long-term planning and frequent changes of leadership
- Lack of public contact

Box 1 Strengths and weaknesses of the Indian Forest Service (adapted from Saxena, n.d.)

Rigid hierarchical structure – instilled in trainees – service discipline often interpreted as suppression of professional opinion. Subordinates carry out instructions (often without reference to local conditions). Often the head of the organisation is involved in highly detailed day-to-day execution instead of releasing this level of decision-making to those at the most appropriate level. Thus leaving little or no time for strategic planning.

Internal culture – the departments are characterised by rigidity and prescription leaving little or no room for flexibility, site-specificity or innovation. For many the culture can be characterised by ‘fear’, where failure to fulfil an order can lead to unpleasant consequences. As Saxena notes – ‘unless this culture of fear and rigidity changes – it will and is translated into the culture of relationships with local people. Where in many instances, forest committees are seen as adjuncts of the Department to be ruled in the same way through prescription and rigidity’.

The notion of partnership becomes the translation of internal relationships. Until a culture of listening within the organisation becomes the norm it is highly unlikely that there will be a truly learning relationship between the department staff and local people. Hence there cannot be any positive impacts on local livelihoods until the culture of the organisation is substantively altered.

One-way communication – lack of a feedback culture. This again is a symptom of the culture and structure of the organisation. In a system based on command and orders there is no need for feedback from subordinate staff. Thus orders remain based on a distant understanding of field reality divorced from the current concerns and understanding of field staff.

Centralised planning – yet another characteristic of command organisations. Planning is centralised at the state and national level (depending on where a particular funding source emanates from). This leads to the setting and imposition of targets again removed from field reality. This leads to the often seen problems of field staff implementing activities that are inappropriate to the social and ecological conditions in which they operate.

Declining cohesiveness – strong factional behaviour is now emerging to replace what used to be a strongly identified organisation with a sense of belonging, where most staff had been trained in the same college. The unhealthy and unproductive split between officers of an all-India service (Indian Forest Service – IFS) and state recruited staff in the state service (State Forest Service) has led to claims of favouritism, glass-ceilings and a major decline in staff morale. This in turn is acted out in relationships with people outside the Forest Department.

Absence of long-term planning - Frequent shifts in leadership without an apparent agreed strategic and long-term framework leaves the organisation open to often ad-hoc and whimsical decision-making. Again having a direct impact on the interface relations between the organisation and forest users. Field staff consider their role to be ‘order-execution’ with a sense of ‘no-participation’ in the development of the programme, and hence no ownership over its rationale or utility. This leads to the often-heard claims that, for example, Joint Forest Management is imposed from outside and does not respond to field realities.

Lack of public contact – the long history of custodianship of the resource and effective debarring of local people from large areas of forest land succeeded in removing the forest staff from public contact other than through punitive relationships. Thus at the outset of support these relationships often based on fear need to be reversed and new relationships developed based on mutual understanding and a trust that this would be secure into the future.

3.3 Drivers for change in the forest sector

Forestry institutions in India have recently come under increasing pressure to change, from three sources.

The first was the new Forest Policy of 1988, which shifted the emphasis in forest management away from timber production and revenue generation towards meeting the needs of local people and the environment. This shift from single to multiple objective management has major implications for both structures and processes within forest organisations and for relationships between forest departments and local forest users. The Policy together with a central government resolution of 1990 to foster the development of joint forest management (JFM) approaches between the state and forest users, have been important driving forces for change.⁹

The second factor has been the growing demand internal to forest departments for change towards a more people-friendly approach and the introduction of new management systems and new technology.

The third inexorable pressure for change has been the growing role of civil society in decisions which govern people's lives. In particular, the 1993 Constitutional Amendment to strengthen local government (Panchayati Raj institutions) was accompanied by a schedule which gave them responsibility over a wide range of natural resource management and planning functions at local level. This Amendment has been ratified at varying speeds by the different States. Experience with them in Kerala has been particularly positive, but this may be attributable at least in part to the strongly socialist character of politics within the State (Isaac & Harilal, 1997; Franke & Chasin, 1997 and Varghese, 1997). This change is founded on recognition of the primacy of the voter, the user, the purchaser or the consumer and recognises that irrespective of wealth, gender, age or race/caste, everyone has the capacity and the right to contribute directly to decisions which impact on their current or future livelihoods. This is leading to an increasing demand for greater accountability and transparency in public institutions, and greater participation of civil society in the processes which are currently the exclusive preserve of these institutions. Notable recent examples include the increase in judicial rulings as a result of public interest litigation some of which has had a particular impact on the forest sector (Paul, 1997). For example, results of recent rulings by the Supreme Court have put pressure on forest departments across India to ensure that all forest areas come under management plans.

What is emerging from these three pressures is the need for an institutional structure that goes beyond the rather crude interpretations of integrated approaches to development and to operationalise the fundamental dimensions of these relationships within a governance framework, which in turn will have an impact on people's livelihoods. In particular, to develop mechanisms that allow individuals and groups to engage as 'major actors' in the decision-making process both individually and separately as citizens and as users.

⁹ 'Joint Forest Management is the sharing of products, responsibilities, control and decision making authority over forest lands, between forest departments and local user groups, based on a formal agreement. The primary purpose of JFM is to give users a stake in forest benefits and a role in planning and management for the sustainable improvement of forest conditions and productivity. A second goal is to support an equitable distribution of forest products'. (Hill and Shields, 1998). In Karnataka Joint Forest Management has been expanded to include planning and is known as Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM). We use this term throughout the paper rather than just JFM which implies a narrower conceptual base.

The challenge faced by the WGFP project is to establish the mechanisms both internally and externally to foster new relationships between delivery agencies, their managers and frontline staff with a) citizens at a more strategic level and b) with users at a more specific and local level.¹⁰

3.4 The project

The Western Ghats Forestry Project (WGFP) emerged from a proposal to DFID from the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) in 1987. This proposal focused on securing forest conservation objectives in the high biodiversity forest areas of the Western Ghats¹¹. This was a response to widespread concern in KFD that these areas of the state were being neglected in the centralised scheme-driven approach to forestry (see tabular comparison of approaches to forest management in Appendix 1).

3.4.1 *Pre-project history*

The antecedent project, Karnataka Social Forestry Project, supported by the then ODA (DFID) and World Bank, although important in developing new relationships, new plantation resources and understanding between local people and the Forest Department was a scheme-based, target-driven approach focused mainly on land outside state forest reserves. The social forestry project had neither created new agencies nor developed new relationships for forest management. It continued to deliver its services according to the same highly centralised, command-driven approach with little responsiveness to the needs of its clients. This problem continued to dog the development of new approaches in the WGFP.

There was little funding available, during this period, for conservation activities in the last remaining areas of natural forest in Karnataka. The WGFP proposal was therefore an attempt to redress this imbalance and was seen as a means to move beyond partnerships on non-forest owned land to partnerships between the Department and local people on forest land. It was presented to ODA as building from the experiences gained in social forestry but taking this into the heartland of the Forest Department's activities – the conservation of high biodiversity value forests of the Western Ghats.

3.4.2 *Conflict over objectives*

The project submission, with multiple objectives and activities supporting those objectives, reflected an inability to reconcile all the divergent objectives supported by groups within DFID and KFD. This divergence, although with hindsight often criticised, should not be considered surprising as it reflects the reality of forest management globally, where the task is to develop processes to negotiate and prioritise between different interest groups' objectives at both the agency and forest-levels.

The project document set out a vision for the future where the principles of joint forest planning and management underpinned a new process of forest management focused on a reconciliation of the four major objectives of management for forests (as described in policy):

¹⁰ Pioneering work and experience has been gained during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and institutional change is now seen as vital to unfreezing rigid and moribund bureaucratic structures (see in particular Korten, 1987; see example of change in New Zealand Forest Service in Brown & Valentine, 1994).

¹¹ The Western Ghats constitutes one of 18 global hotspots for biodiversity conservation (Chandran, 1997).

Ecology	focusing on the conservation of the unique flora and fauna;
Environment	protection of environmental resources represented by Western Ghats Forests;
Society	assurance of sustainability of living standards of those people whose livelihoods currently derive, in whole or in part from the forest;
Economy	assurance of the sustained yield of all categories of forest produce proper to the natural forest.

The challenge for the project was to find mechanisms and processes to manage these objectives in harmony. It was stated in the project document (GOK/GOUK, 1991) that the project would achieve these four objectives through a strategy based on four processes:

- Assisting institutional development in KFD;
- Ensuring poor people, women, tribals and other disadvantaged groups who are substantially dependent on the forests are not worse, and preferably better off;
- Minimising further loss of forest cover and resources, and the service they provide;
- Increasing understanding of the Western Ghats ecosystem.

The purpose of the project was explicitly refocused onto an organisational transformation process in the mid-term review, 1995. From this period onwards, project interventions focused on piloting approaches to transformation of the major service delivery agent – the Karnataka Forest Department and its relationships with local users in one area of the Western Ghats – Uttara Kannada District.

3.4.3 Basis for project activities

It was also recognised that these multiple objectives could not be reconciled at the strategic level but systems needed to be built for their reconciliation in the forest. This is the fundamental principle on which the new forest management systems are built and follows the approach described in the original project document:

‘Joint planning – a consultative process by which KFD, local people and other forest users jointly discuss the ecological and environmental condition of a specific area of the forest, and the scope for it to meet one or more of their specific needs. The plan that emerges should as far as possible reflect all the views expressed. However, the weight given to the different views will depend on the location of the area of the forest in question and the types of vegetation it contains’. (GOK/GOUK, 1991: 5).

The major instrument through which to effect these changed relationships and to achieve sustainability was to become known as Joint Forest Planning and Management (JFPM) and followed closely the Central Government Resolution of 1990 which was adopted and developed by the Government of Karnataka in 1993.

In order to internalise these new approaches to forest management the project document identified two aims:

- To improve the management capability of KFD; and
- To enable it to respond to the conflicting demands from different users for access to the products and services of the forest areas.

The Institutional Impact Assessment Study carried out in 1998 captured the rationale and the relationship of institutional development to JFPM in the following way:

'The logic of the WGFP framework (in its initial and current form) is that the goal of SFM [Sustainable Forest Management] in the Western Ghats is only achievable if local forest dwellers and users are made partners in the planning and management of the forest resources on which they depend for their legitimate needs. This requires a re-orientation of KFD's relationship with local communities through development of new institutional structures and changes in KFD's operational systems and procedures at the field level.' (Ram et al., 1998: 6).

3.4.4. *Project focus (area and support)*

In the first phase of the project (to be completed in March 2000) support from the consultant team was focused initially in one district and forest territorial circle in the Western Ghats, Uttara Kannada (their territorial boundaries coincide which is not the case for most forest circles¹²). Shimoga forest circle was added to Uttara Kannada and the process of introduction of new approaches was started.

Uttara Kannada district has several distinctive features which together with the characteristics of the Forest Department outlined above, contributed to the form and entry-level of change that was possible:

- Uttara Kannada District is 80% forest land (under the custodianship of the Forest Department).
- Uttara Kannada was the largest forest revenue earning Circle in India, producing timber and non-timber products for distribution all over India.
- Uttara Kannada used to be a forest administered district i.e. it did not have the usual civil administration structures. Historically and currently the forest department is considered to be the custodian of these large areas of land such that virtually all aspects of agricultural-based activity are dependent on a relationship with the Department.
- Because of the pre-eminent role of the Forest Department in Uttara Kannada the interface between forest user and Department is a critical relationship. It impacts on individual livelihoods in diverse ways (from those who are 100% dependent on continued access to forests and its products to those whose livelihoods are indirectly dependent on the continued existence of forests).
- The Forest Department is also a major employer in Uttara Kannada and this also determines the form of relationships between itself and local people.
- Uttara Kannada has a diversity of landscapes and flora and fauna (with a high level of endemic species in the evergreen forests), ranging from the Arabian Sea coast to the montane heights of 2000m. Rainfall varies from less than 1000mm to over 6000mm. This diversity provides challenges and opportunities for different livelihood responses but has also constituted a major challenge to centralised, uniform, scheme-driven approaches to forest intervention.
- Because of the high and internationally recognised biodiversity value of these forests the need to manage the interface between conservation of forests and the needs of local livelihoods is a complicated balancing act.

¹² A Forest Circle is a geographical area for forest management and is administered by a Conservator of Forests (it may or may not coincide with the geographical area of the district administrative unit).

4. The golden bullet?

4.1 Approaches to delivery of livelihood environmental services

The basic premise underlying the case study presented here is that without change in the institutional environment and to the delivery mechanism, there will be little real change in livelihood outcomes. This is the lesson of many previous projects and approaches.¹³ However, change should not necessarily imply ‘more’ or even ‘better’, but rather ‘different’. The rationale for promoting institutional and governance ‘changes’ is driven by different schools of thought and it is important to distinguish these approaches before interpreting particular actions or reactions. Different approaches have been categorised as follows:

- **‘Provision’ approach**, which emphasises (a) improved understanding of the livelihood environment and (b) changes in the institutional arrangements in order to enable the delivery agency to improve the quality and fit of their service delivery. The concerns with this approach include the danger of ‘dependency’ on the provider, the *de facto* empowerment of the provider rather than the user, the tendency to rigidity and inflexibility and doubts over the longer term sustainability of service provision.
- **‘Public choice’ approach**, which emphasises the role of the individual or community group in making decisions (choices) within a clear and transparent framework. Concerns here are of two sorts: for some there are concerns of whether individuals will make socially desirable choices; for others there is the problem of ‘voice’ and equity, especially for the poor who often, but not always, suffer some form of social exclusion.
- **‘Governance’ approach**, which recognises the importance of both of these approaches but argues that there is an explicit role for the citizen, as well as the user and the delivery agency, in determining the direction and nature of services provided.¹⁴ Concerns here are less well articulated since there is considerably less experience. However, there are additional costs associated with the creation of new governance structures (rather than incorporation into some form of participatory democracy, which combines the roles of ‘governing’ and ‘using’). Another constraint is that meaningful governance (unlike management) structures have to provide real alternatives to current structures and, therefore, often have limited relevance within a single sector, requiring much wider transformation.

The argument for a governance approach in the forestry sector is especially strong and can be made from a technical as well as political economy perspective. The costs and benefits of forestry are not limited to a private, community or state ‘owner’. They arise from the forest being more than the sum of its trees and the distribution of benefits are clearly wider than just those that accrue to the ‘owner’. The nature of the product – a multi-service forest – is such that governance can not be left to the user, the expert or the citizen alone.¹⁵ Structures are required which enable all these parties to factor in their values and preferences.

4.2 The governance framework

Under the governance approach adopted by the project, ‘change’ focused on the roles and functions of different agencies. It was important, firstly, to define and understand the nature and role of each

¹³ For further information reference should be made to the Shields, 1990 ODA Evaluation of Social Forestry Projects.

¹⁴ The citizen derives this right from merely being a member of society.

¹⁵ See Dryzek (1997).

agency and, secondly, to understand the relationship between the agencies responsible for different roles.

4.2.1 *Agencies, roles and functions*

The main agencies involved in the project were analysed. This was undertaken by means of a modified stakeholder analysis in which different stakeholder agencies were categorised by functions (see Appendix 2 for a detailed breakdown). The functions identified were:

- Clients or users (Primary stakeholders)
 - Broken down into sub-categories
- Delivery services
 - Delivery agency
 - Partners of the delivery agency
 - Subcontractors of the delivery agency
- Enabling services
 - Sponsoring/governing agency
 - Partners of the enabling agency

The ‘agency analysis’ also helped in understanding the functions of each agency. These include (see Figure 2):¹⁶

- KFD as a coordinating or strategic agency
- KFD as a delivery agency
- the political structures within which KFD operate, which are to some extent also managed by KFD
- VFCs or user representative agency and, finally
- Users

Since the emphasis was on functions rather than simply focusing on agencies, some organisations were responsible for more than one function. This was illuminating in its own right: for example, for many decisions, the Forest Department was both the promoter and adjudicator.

Each agency or group requires a different form of support – from the front-line staff delivering new types of services, to senior managers and above providing the enabling environment in which new pluralistic relations can develop. Outside the forest department organisation, users and their representatives at local-level require inputs and support according to their levels of empowerment and ability to represent themselves.

4.2.2 *Relationship between agencies*

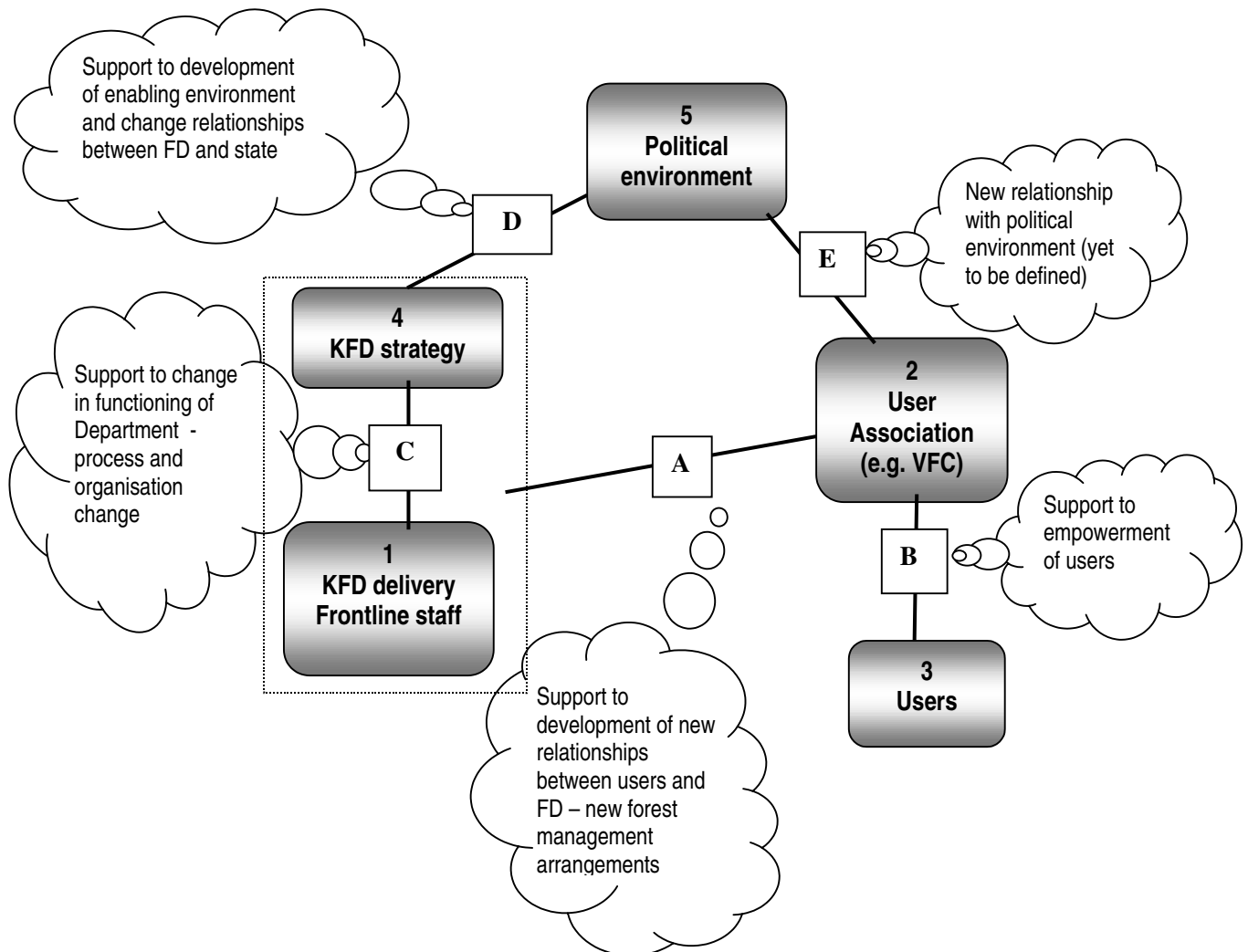
The major series of relationships we are considering, within a programme of support to securing forest-based livelihoods, are also shown below in the ‘governance map’ (Figure 2). This is not an approach that is restricted to forestry – these relationships could be described in any sector or groups of sectors and the user could have any number of these relationships with different delivery agencies.

¹⁶ Other agencies will be introduced later, in particular NGOs, but for simplicity at this stage we limit the basic model to these agencies.

The important features of this approach are to achieve:

- Clarity about who is responsible for what, and
- Transparency to whom and how services are delivered and accessed

Figure 2 Governance map showing relationship between civil society and the state



The major mechanism for this is to ensure strong representational and feedback mechanisms to the enabling agency. Such an approach forces us to focus on the interfaces between the different sets of actors and the means by which to develop these interfaces.

Five key relationships were identified from the governance map (Figure 2), some within the forest department organisation and others outside between and within civil society, as follows:

- Change at the **interface between KFD and the users** (i.e. new relationships built through participatory approaches to forest management);
- Change **between users** themselves which involves shifts in power relationships particularly those constructed through gendered relationships (changing in particular access to elements of the different livelihood assets);
- Change **within the forest department** organisation (structures, skills, systems, style) – Karnataka Forest Department – shifting from a steep hierarchy of command and control (Savage, 1996) to team-based enabling structures (a long term vision); change between the front-line staff and management;

- D. Change between the forest department organisation and the **wider political structures** (strategy and policy);
- E. Development of a relationship between VFCs and political **structures**.

The main assumption is that unless there is significant change within the organisation it is highly unlikely there will be any changes in relationships between the organisation and its clients i.e. change in client relationship is an output of the internal change process. These relationships will continue to reflect the old systems, style and culture and will not reflect changed policy. Thus although all five elements are critical for long-term change, the assumption is that they do not all need to be tackled at the same time and that a sequencing of support at different levels can achieve the desired outcomes. However, it is also clear that all five elements must be tackled over time and hence the need for long-term support in order to fully articulate each of these interfaces. (See Figure 2).

4.3 Changes in relationship

4.3.1 *Between KFD and users ('A')*

In order to respond to the two main pressures for institutional change – changes in civil society and in forest policy – KFD needed to change the nature of its relationship with the primary stakeholders in forest management. These primary stakeholders are the people who live closest to the forest and are most dependent on its resources for their livelihoods, and also those with an interest in the wider environmental benefits of the forest. These stakeholders may collectively be called clients, to mark the understanding that clients expect support, services and partnership from KFD as a government agency.

The KFD-client interface is thus the key relationship, which is being addressed through the support of this project and the introduction of participatory forest management. It is the primary process at the heart of the process change programme. All other elements of the change programme are subservient to this aim, including those concerned with internal change in KFD.

4.3.2 *Between user and user representatives ('B')*

The project recognised through its activities that relationship 'B' – those relationships between users and in this case the village forest committee are also critical. Indeed in the early stages of implementation there were (and still are) serious problems due to the lack of 'real' participation of all forest users (particularly women) in the formation of village forest committees and identification of their objectives and activities. These problems were well highlighted in the independent review study (Saxena et al., 1997). The recommendations from which were used to inform a new process for group formation based on identification of key forest interest groups and a more informed understanding of resource needs and resource capacity to meet these needs. (See Section 5.2.3).

These changes alone are insufficient to address deep structural inequalities between groups and require additional elements of support that cannot be provided by a state forest organisation. These elements were later provided through NGO support to women in particular, through the formation of self-help groups which provided women with access to revolving funds and training for new income-earning opportunities. More importantly where self-help groups have been operational, there have been demonstrable changes in the ability of women to represent themselves and their priorities in village forest committee fora (Hobley et al., 1998a & b). In addition to the work supported through MYRADA, other local NGOs and individual activists operating in Uttara

Kannada focused on trying to address these areas of inequality. In particular through direct support to some of the more marginalised groups and through the support to federations of village committees. These federations provided an alternative and independent voice to the committees outside the structures provided for feedback by the Forest Department. The strengthening of these areas of support are key to the continued empowerment of the users with respect to the state.

4.3.3 Between frontline staff and management ('C')

In order to address this relationship the project supported experimentation and piloting of new styles of interaction between middle management and front-line staff. This included support to new forest management approaches. These approaches were based on the principles of partnership, separation of planning from funding; and the need for bottom-up client-based planning structured within strategic frameworks. Shifts were made in middle management away from command and control to an environment which supported mentoring of front-line staff and responsiveness to bottom-up planning based on analysis of what the client (the forest user) and a particular forest site wanted and could support.

In order to develop these relationships between the delivery agency (KFD) and the primary clients a number of significant changes were required:

- Developing a shared vision of participatory approaches to forest management – in particular a shared vision with the middle managers (divisional forest officers) responsible for setting the work programmes of the front-line staff (shared vision);
- Training of front-line staff in participatory processes and tools (skills);
- Developing a bottom-up approach to forest planning and management based on identification of the livelihood needs of the primary clients (new systems);
- Development of new strategic frameworks and guidelines (through the forest working plans set at divisional level) to guide the bottom-up planning process (strategy);
- Changes in style of interaction between middle management and front-line staff (style).

4.3.4 Between Forest Department and political structures ('D')

This relationship between the Forest Department and the political environment, as is shown later, is a key element for pressure for change within the organisation. It sets out the enabling environment in which change can be fostered. Some elements of this were in place as a result of the new forest policy and the Government Order on Joint Forest Management adopted by the state government. However, the project relationships at this level were poorly developed. Thus there was no support provided for creation of a relationship that enabled senior management to foster more radical changes to internal structures and systems and to feedback experience from change in the field to change in policy. As with relationship 'E' described below, this remains a poorly explored and largely unwritten chapter whose lack of exploration may indeed be the crucial limiting factor to change in the short term.

4.3.5 Between political structures and users ('E')

It should also be pointed out that the fifth key relationship – that between the user representative and the enabling authority – was not addressed. In this case the village forest committees and the state (either at local or state government level). This is the forgotten wing of the good governance

debate, but as there was no project mandate and arrangements for local government in Karnataka were evolving, there were few certainties to which to respond. However, this is clearly an important set of relationships to be developed whose neglect leads to the continued lack of voice for forest users outside those channels mediated by the Forest Department

4.3.6 *Priorities for relationships*

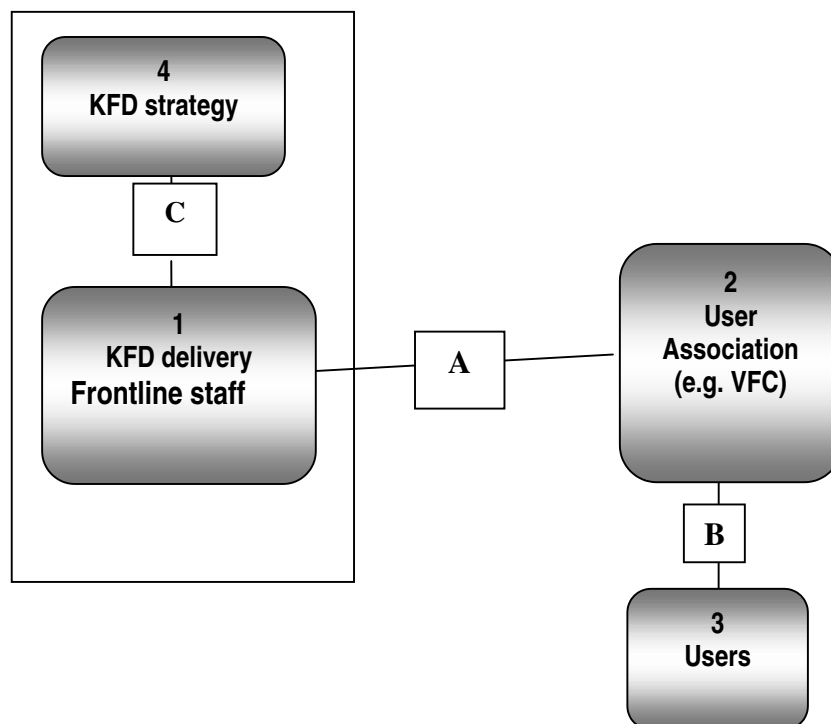
In order to achieve the aim of forest user participation in forest management, the project, in rough sequence, focused mainly on the internal changes (relationship ‘C’) necessary to achieve an effective interface (relationship ‘A’) between the primary client and the forest department staff. Later through the participatory forest management planning process emphasis was placed on changing relationships between users (particularly women and poorer groups) and the village forest committees.

The strategy, in the first phase of the project, to achieve these changes was based on two elements:

- Support to new systems, skills and strategy internal to the Department; and
- Support to new arrangements for joint management of forest resources between the Department and forest users.

As already stated, it was clear that unless there was significant internal cultural change (C) there would be little or no change in the external relationships (A) between staff and forest users (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Relationships to be changed through participatory forestry approaches



5. The product of change

The new agencies, roles and relationships envisaged by the new policy have to be implemented in practice. The entry point, identified by field and HQ staff,¹⁷ was to change the internal systems that constrained their ability to fully implement the new policy i.e. as described in Section 2 – to start process change as distinct from organisational or institutional change.

Process change should create an appetite for organisational change – which transforms processes, structures and people – but is not the same.¹⁸ Nor is it institutional change – which encompasses organisational change together with organisational structures, rules and relationships. Although this may be the logical long-term outcome of a process change programme, there was understandable anxiety within KFD about launching into a full-blown institutional change process and hence their desire to stay within the more ‘bounded’ process change environment.

Through workshops facilitated by the consultant team, it was agreed that to make the new relationships and processes successful the systems could not be developed in isolation. The term ‘process change’ was, therefore, taken to mean the new systems as well as the associated shared vision and new skills required to make them work. In the rest of this section we set out the elements of this approach.

5.1 The nature of ‘process change’

The product of ‘process change’ was new forest management and, in particular, planning systems. These systems were at the interface between the users and the delivery agency, the forest department, and were therefore core to enabling the new VFC agencies and to re-orientating the Forest Department. The whole process was consistent with the principles, advocated by the Total Quality Management approach to management, viz.:

- Involving users (participation)
- Making decisions as close to the action as possible
- Designing systems in order to ‘get it right first time’¹⁹.
- Defining internal and external clients

The reasons for focusing first on the planning systems were fourfold:

1. There was more or less universal agreement amongst field staff concerning existing problems. (See comparison of forest management planning approaches in Appendix 1 much of which was derived during early workshops exploring changes in approaches to forest management);
2. A high profile review of existing problems in order to form a basis and rationale for change would have discouraged staff from learning and reinforced the feeling of defensiveness that results from outside scrutiny. (The donor agency, at the time, would have preferred to start from a stance of monitoring and evaluating operations of the Forest Department and to incorporate

¹⁷ WGFP PPST (1995).

¹⁸ It is important to note that the consultant team supporting WGFP Phase I considered it to have been a process change project - focusing on the 'way things are done' at the interface between KFD and forest users and not an institutional change project which would have considered all the five elements and interfaces described at the same time.

¹⁹ ‘Getting it right first time’ does not imply that there should be no experimenting; rather that ‘systems’ should be well thought through prior to their introduction and documented to aid review and analysis.

lessons learnt into future operations i.e. a distant observer role rather than the process facilitator role adopted by the consultant team);

3. The proposed new systems to implement the new policy were sufficiently different to demand more than tinkering; in fact the existing systems worked well in one sense, the problem was they were inconsistent with the new strategy and policy, and finally;
4. Improved management systems were already agreed as an output of the original project document.

However, as staff changed in HQ and as the implications of the changes were understood more widely, the consensus as to the rationale for change was challenged and to date has not been fully reconstructed. A major lesson from this is the need to establish the rationale and to revisit this rationale throughout as new staff arrive into the debate (see Section 6.3 – development of shared vision).

5.1.2 The change framework

The change envisaged by the project was that internal change within the Department would lead to

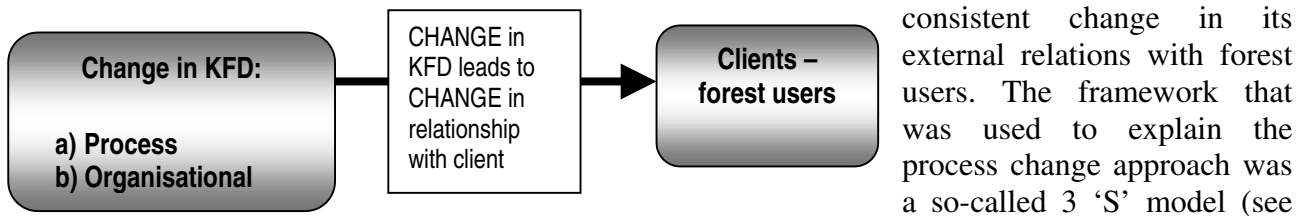


Figure 4) depicted as a three-legged stool, consisting of three legs: systems, skills and shared vision, all of which had to grow together. The 3 'S' model was adapted from ideas in Savage's Fifth Generation Management (1996) which emphasised a process of negotiated relationships between internal and external parties. The terminology of the well known Peters and Waterman (1982) 7 'S' model was retained but not used explicitly (see Appendix 3 for full diagram and Box 2 for an explanation of the 7 'S's).

Box 2 7 'S' framework (Peters and Waterman, 1982)

Strategy The approach to be followed to achieve the goals.

Shared values Explicit and common understanding together with shared assumptions and meaning within the organisation

Systems The processes, protocols and systems for (a) dealing with clients and (b) supporting frontline staff.

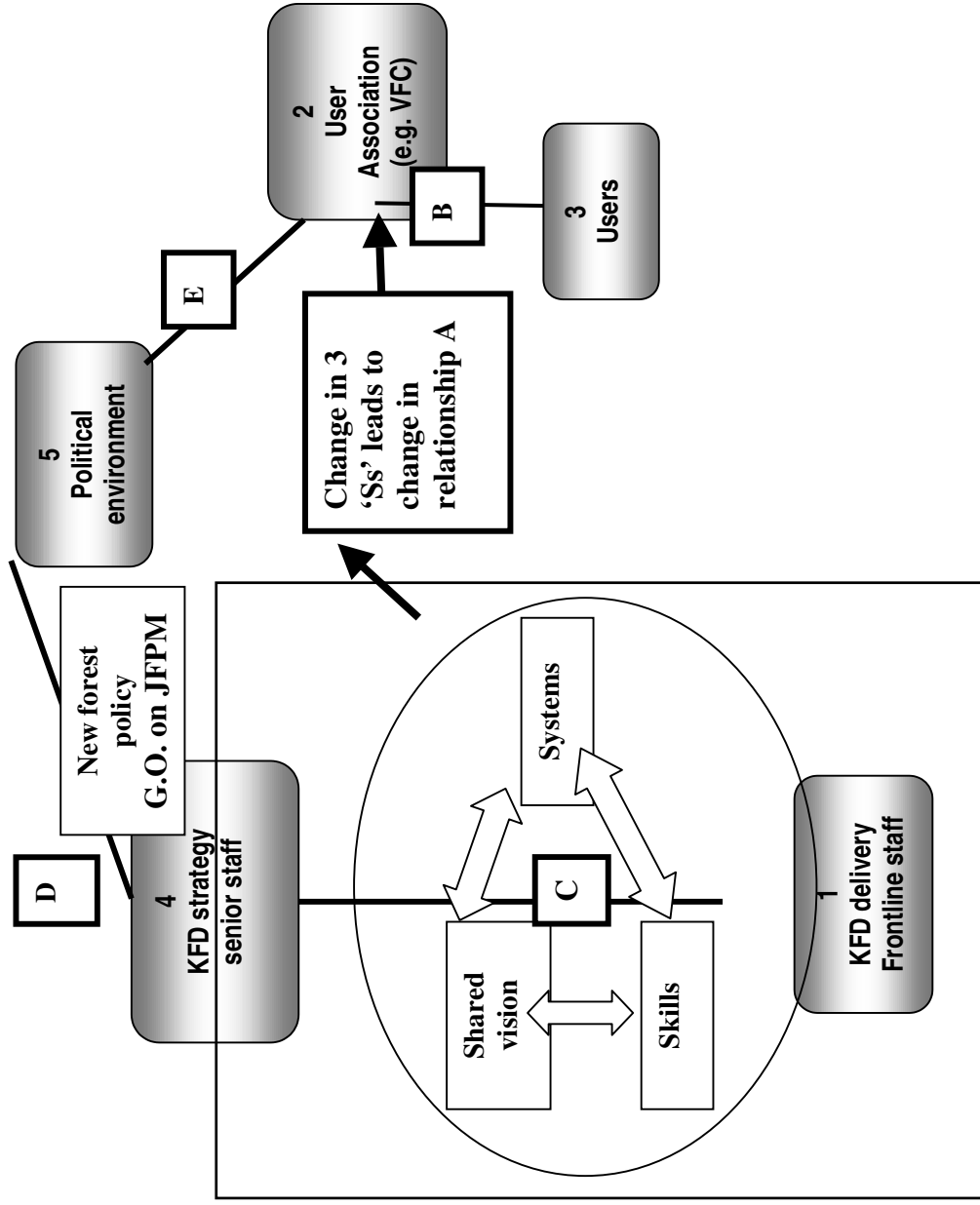
Skills The skills and organisational competence to implement the strategies and systems

Style The nature of the relationship between boss and subordinate and the way in which staff are involved in setting goals. The overall cultural style of the organisation.

Staffing The motivation and attitude of staff.

Structure The salient features of the organisational chart and how each unit and level is linked together and coordinated.

Figure 4 Internal change 3 'S' model leads to change in external relationships



The main idea behind this framework was that all managerial thought and activity could be categorised into seven key factors. All the 'S's are seen as being equally critical but priorities for each would change based on specific circumstances. Further, the factors are not seen as being independent of each other, but as interlocking and interacting with each other.

In the first phase, it was considered that the focus for support should be restricted to three elements of the 7 'S' model – systems, skills and shared vision, and support to these to be restricted to the one pilot forest circle and district (Uttara Kannada).

Although these frameworks identify many of the issues that need to be considered and handled by managers in both a day-to-day basis and during more radical transformation projects, they do not identify the critical factors along the pathway to change. The project supported the development of these pathways.

The reason for the focus on only three of the 7 'S's in the Waterman model was threefold:

1. There was only a mandate (in the project agreement and for the consultant support) for process change – i.e. support to new forms of forest management;
2. These 3 'S's were considered to be the critical entry-points which would bring the most immediate gains; and
3. It was thought that as debate was stimulated based on experience with new forest management approaches the other issues would be addressed in their own turn.

This is not to say that the other 4 'S's of the model are less important but that at the start of consultant support these three were considered to be the most appropriate entry-points for change, and would bring the most immediate gains. We return to this question of sequencing, short-term gains and levels of influence later.

Uttara Kannada presented a working environment where some elements necessary for institutional change were in place i.e. commitment from national government to a different set of policy objectives and a state government resolution to support joint forest planning and management. However, other requisite elements for full-scale institutional or organisational change were not in place including a lack of mandate (as provided through the project document and subsequent negotiation between project partners) for the project or consultant support to go further than support to development of new processes in one forest territorial circle – Uttara Kannada. Hence the focus for this first phase of the project and the entry-point became 'process change' in this one circle. The rationale for this approach was developed through a series of interactive workshops with members of the forest circle and senior members of the Department and agreement was reached (PPST, 1995):

'Government policy has changed (New Forest policy) and this has resulted in a new and radical strategy. The key element of this new strategy was a new relationship between the State Forest department and local people (namely, Joint Forest Planning and Management, or JFPM). The existing systems (in particular forest management planning systems), shared vision (assumptions and culture of the department) and core skills were consistent with the old strategy, but not with the new. Hence, these three 'S's needed to change in order to implement the new strategy and policy'.

This argument was reinforced by reference to the experience with social forestry projects throughout India, where the goal of community managed forests had not been realised, because of inappropriate systems, attitudes and skills within forest departments (World Bank/FAO, 1992; Shields, 1990). Entirely consistent with current systems, attitudes and skills the forest department delivered plantations on community land. The development of the necessary community capacity to

manage and address issues of equity and access to the resources were both beyond the capacity and the paradigm of the Forest Department.

The project focused on developing empirical field experience of ways in which the new policy could be delivered through new planning systems and skills. It was considered that these field experiences could be used as a pilot for development and change throughout the Department in later phases of the project (although an early opportunity was provided with the adoption of a second circle and some trialing of the approaches under development in Uttara Kannada).

5.2 Planning systems (the first of the 3 'S's)

The key elements of the new forest management framework emphasised the importance of bottom-up planning frameworks within a strategic framework (Figure 5). Each element of this planning system involves active participation of the primary clients and ensures that their interests and needs drive the objectives set. It is a radical departure from previous planning practice, where primary clients were at best involved as passive recipients of benefits from plantation schemes.²⁰

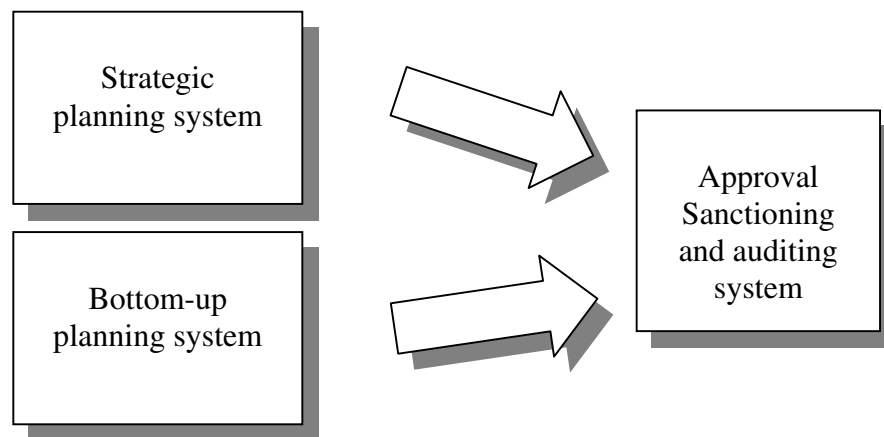
The second critical element of the framework was to ensure the integrity of the plan as a statement of intent, as a document of record and as an outcome of agreement, and therefore as a basis for monitoring. The framework should have more correctly been called a 'planning and monitoring' framework.

The strategic planning system frames the relationships between the political environment, the forest department and civil society (see Figure 2 i.e. relationship D); whereas the bottom-up planning system frames the relationships among users and between users and the state (mainly relationships A and E). The major elements of this framework are:²¹

- New approach to working plans (the major strategic management tool in forestry that interprets policy into strategic guidance for action i.e. formalises the relationship between the political environment and the Forest Department and between senior management and front-line staff within the Department);
- Participatory forest management plans (main element of the bottom-up planning process);
- Site specific plans (detailed activity plans for each site of intervention);
- Governance arrangements (feedback and monitoring – both to the Department and also to the political environment);
- Approval mechanisms.

²⁰ A note of caution – these systems are still being piloted and are currently being reviewed by the KFD as a whole to assess whether they can be taken on more widely in the Department – see Section 6.7.

²¹ For further detail about any of the systems in this framework refer to the KFD (1999) *Forest Management Planning Handbook* produced by the Project.

Figure 5 Planning systems framework

5.2.1 *The top-down or strategic framework*

Many of the problems associated with the current forest planning system relate to the introduction of short-term and single focus schemes (see Appendix 1 for a comparison of different planning and funding schemes). This is not restricted to the forest sector but is a widely recognised problem, Isaac and Harilal (1997) note:

‘Even though decentralisation was a national ideal.. Panchayati Raj Institutions were never endowed with the real power or financial resources to enable serious development intervention.....The central government also contributed to the process by refusing to devolve more powers to the States and by thrusting on them a plethora of centrally sponsored and planned schemes.’

There is a need to return to an integrated long-term supply-driven planning system which is driven by site and client considerations rather than expediency. The main changes required relate to:

- Multiple-stakeholder forestry – this requires multiple objectives to be resolved at the local-level, and so requires site-specific planning through participatory processes. Central standard models are no longer appropriate.
- Site-specific planning cannot take place in a vacuum. There needs to be a strategic framework that provides a long-term, integrated overview. Hence the need for strategic working plans which set out a framework for bottom-up participatory and site-specific planning.
- The ‘multiple-stakeholder, multiple-objective forestry’ requires the forest sector to be viewed at a higher level. This means that the achievement of goals at a strategic level should not be limited to technical operations but to a range of other policy instruments, including:
 - a) Institutional arrangements (VFCs, NTFP collector groups, Forest Labour Cooperatives);
 - b) Economic levers (subsidies, costs etc.).

This points again to the need to support different relationships between the Forest Department and the wider political environment.

The strategic planning system ensures that wider state, national and international criteria policies and needs (particularly with respect to an internationally recognised area of high biodiversity), as well as local needs are met and negotiated through the planning process. It also provides a framework for expenditure and for ensuring that works are carried out in accordance with an agreed strategy that takes these wider interests into account. The strategic planning system needs to be based on good information and priorities identified at lower levels – in particular the local (or

village) level. Some needs such as local needs for NTFPs, urban fuelwood and biodiversity, may also be better expressed at a strategic level since their management normally involves several villages working together.

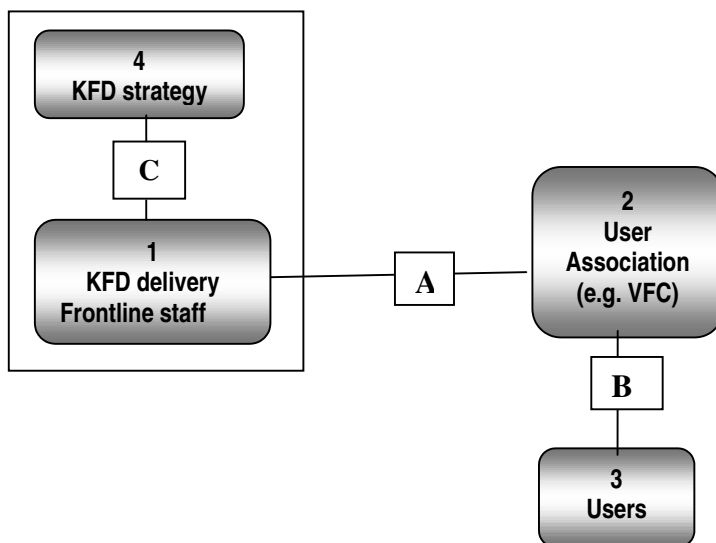
The basis for strategic planning is the working plan which is itself informed by policy and based on information from the forest division (a territorial area of operation). The new working plans, being developed with support from the project, are the major instrument for transformation of forest policy into forest activity; they are strategic rather than prescriptive plans and provide both the policy and institutional framework for forest management intervention.

The planning process for working plans has to provide a framework for the different institutional arrangements within the forest sector and frames the relationships between the KFD and these various sectors:

- The public sector (KFD or Forest Corporation managed lands)
- The ‘joint sector’ (jointly managed lands with KFD and local users)
- The ‘community sector’ (Revenue lands that include forestry activities)
- The private sector (private lands and commercial forestry)

5.2.3 The bottom-up planning process: participatory forest management planning

Participatory forest management plans (PFMP) are the anchor for the bottom-up planning process.



They focus on the development of the internal relationships between users (B) and a negotiated agreement between forest users and the state forest organisation (A).

PFMPs emerged out of the micro-planning process developed during the early stages of the project. Microplans are plans for those areas of degraded forest that fall under the criterion for joint forest management i.e. they had a canopy cover of less than 25%. It was in these areas that cash-benefit sharing (from the final harvest of plantations) with forest

users would be allowed and thus at the beginning this is where the project and the Department focused its attention. The Department continued to follow the approach developed under social forestry where the Department was responsible for all inputs, decisions concerning species selection (in the main restricted to a few species) and support to plantation creation. At this stage there was no attention paid to those areas that fell outside the JFPM criterion, which in the Western Ghats included large areas of high biodiversity forest which supplies large elements of some groups' livelihoods. Due to this narrow focus on degraded lands a whole tranche of forest users were effectively excluded from the process – particularly poorer groups such as firewood and NTFP collectors.

Based on these experiences new approaches were developed that used the principles in Box 3 as their basis:

Box 3 ‘TACIRIE’ principles to guide bottom-up planning process

Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everyone sees how decisions are made and who makes them
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decision-makers (both local and governmental) are procedurally and periodically answerable to those they represent
Comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all interest groups are consulted from the outset in defining the nature of the problem or opportunity prior to any decisions about management being taken
Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all those who have a legitimate interest (in particular forest livelihood dependent groups) are involved
Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decision-makers are representative of all interest groups
Informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all interest groups understand the objectives of the participatory process and have adequate and timely access to relevant information
Empowered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all interest groups (women and men) are capable of actively participating in decision-making in a non-dominated environment • all interest groups can participate in a voluntary manner without being compelled, constrained or otherwise left with no other choice

Adapted from: Adnan et al., 1992 quoted in Bass et al., 1995

The learning process approach developed with Forest Department staff to provide a more structured and inclusive approach to forest management planning is explained in more detail in Appendix 4. The objective is to help staff to focus on the quality of the process rather than achievement of the product. Critical elements of this change include bringing in quality assessment criteria based on the principles above. Box 4 illustrates the main characteristics of the PFMP approach.

Effects of new processes on forest-dependent groups

The PFMP process, as can be seen in Box 4, is focused on developing inclusive and representative village forest committees. The PFMP process is one element of empowering the forest users, in particular women and poorer groups, to be able to represent their interests in decision-making forums (and thus focuses on relationship B in Figures 2 & 4 above). However, it is recognised that this process in itself is insufficient to ensure full and informed representation of these groups and to prevent the elite capture of resources. It is also reliant on the facilitatory skills of front-line staff in the Forest Department (i.e. relationship A). This itself is dependent on the degree of internal change that has been fostered and the development of the competence of these staff to cope with conflict between different forest interest groups (i.e. changes in systems, skills and shared vision (the internal relationships represented by ‘C’)).

In addition, other mechanisms outside the interface between the Forest Department and the users need to be developed. These support mechanisms have been put in place through the work of NGOs in Uttara Kannada District. There has been quite appreciable change in the voice and role of women in those village forest committees where these issues have been addressed through specific NGO focus (Saxena et al., 1997; OUTREACH, 1998). However, there is still much to do to ensure the protection of those whose livelihoods are most dependent on continued and secure access to forest products (Correa, 1996). Box 5 illustrates how potential livelihood improvements can be achieved through substantial institutional change in the management of NTFPs.

Box 4 Characteristics of Participatory Forest Management Planning Process

Plan for all forests

PFMPs jointly plan for *all* forest areas *but* benefit-sharing in cash is restricted to areas of canopy cover less than 25% (as per the Government Order)

Plan for needs of all stakeholders

PFMPs expressly recognise the needs of all stakeholders

Agreed management plan for all forests

All forest areas will be planned and managed under an agreed management plan guided by the strategies described in the division working plan

Sustainable management for all forests

PFMPs ensure that sustainable management practices cover all forest areas within a village boundary (or other agreed local boundary)

Plan for all forest users

PFMPs identify all forest users, and their rights and privileges including customary use rights, that use a particular area of forest to come under management

Focus on forest-livelihood dependency

PFMPs place particular emphasis on involvement of poorer more forest dependent groups (artisans, landless) and women

Based on local knowledge

PFMPs compile all local knowledge

Joint management objective setting

PFMPs involve all users or their proxy (KFD) in deciding management objectives

Link management with responsibility

PFMPs link management objectives with responsibility for forest protection

Holistic planning

PFMPs ensure holistic planning of all forest lands and not just degraded areas

Enumerate resource

PFMPs enumerate the resource and its ability to meet local and external demand

Different areas and different management objectives

PFMPs develop clear understanding of the need for different areas of forest to come under different management objectives, according to the identified needs of each client group

Integration of need with capacity to supply

PFMPs are based on a full understanding of the needs of interest groups and the ability of the forest to meet these needs

Box 5 Non-timber forest product management

The issues surrounding non-timber forest product management are used as an example to show the importance of:

- a) understanding the linkages between forest product usage and livelihood security;
- b) the relationships between NTFP collectors and KFD; and
- c) the role of contracting systems and their links with livelihood insecurity of NTFP collector households (i.e. elements of the institutional framework that constrain access to natural resources)

Non-timber forest products (NTFP) are an important element of poorer households livelihood systems through food security and employment. Many fruits, flowers mushrooms and leaves are collected for subsistence food preparations. Poorer people also hunt wild animals and wealthier people who practice traditional medicine collect medicinal plants. NTFPs also provide an important part of the family income throughout the year, especially in poorer communities. Depending on other employment opportunities, NTFPs can provide an economic activity to fill seasonal gaps in other work, or become the activity of choice during the season for collection of high value NTFPs.

The general picture is that poorer forest dwellers and landless, marginal and small farmers are more dependent on marketed NTFPs for income and subsistence. Typically a poor household will earn Rs.600–5000 per year from NTFP collection, representing on average 15–30% of total income.

One of the most negative aspects of the current monopoly contracting system for NTFPs is the debt relations that develop between contractors and collectors. Poorer NTFP collectors often suffer in ‘debt bondage’, receiving loans from contractors’ agents in lean times and subsequently being forced to repay through distress sales of NTFPs. With weak bargaining power, illiteracy and lack of knowledge of the wider NTFP markets, distress sales can result in very low prices for NTFPs. The exploitation by agents can also take the form of cheating on weight, threatening collectors, or forcing low prices by suggesting that outside labourers will be brought into the area to harvest.

Poor forest dwellers and landless or marginal farmers are the most dependent on NTFPs for their livelihoods. Having such an important stake in the forest, they have the most to gain from better protection of NTFPs and forest resources. These are the groups with the strongest potential reasons for protecting the resource, given sufficient support and incentives.

This rationale formed the basis for testing of new management and marketing arrangements for NTFPs based on the principles of participatory forest management planning and a reformulation of the relationships between KFD and NTFP collectors, and NTFP collectors and the contractors. These systems are still under development and review but they do provide the opportunity for significant change in livelihood security for a group of poor forest-dependent households²², illustrating the importance of understanding the institutional framework and the power relations between different groups in order to effect change in access to livelihood assets.

Site specific planning

As a result of the participatory forest management planning process a series of action plans would be developed for particular sites. In logical framework language the PFMP sets goals, objectives and negotiates between stakeholders, the site specific plans set outputs, activities and inputs (Hobley and Shields, 1998c). Each of these site-specific plans would be developed on the basis of analysis of the site potential and the particular client objective for management. This reflects a change in

²² For more detailed information about the processes developed see Harrison and Gaonkar (1998).

relationship between forest user and the Forest Department. Under the previous systems packages of technical input were applied with little site analysis and no client consultation leading to poor survival rates for plantations, particularly where they were planted on land under other forms of land use (such as grazing). Other problems included poor species selection for the particular site conditions or use of plantation when it would have been more appropriate to support natural regeneration. Hence a host of social and technical problems arose from poor initial site and client analysis. In a sense what has been changed is the linear flow of command from headquarters (hence relationship 'C' in Figure 6 (formerly Figure 2) and thus the relationship between the forest user (the client) and the forest organisation – relationship 'A'). A change from schemes with particular targets and technical prescriptions, to a negotiated process where both the capacity of the site and the needs of the user are brought together to decide the best intervention for that area.

5.2.4 Approval, sanctioning, monitoring and auditing systems

The approval, sanctioning, monitoring and auditing systems provide the only 'physical' link between the top-down and bottom-up planning systems (as shown in Figure 5). The approval system builds on and consolidates the basic principles underlying the approach taken to the project – primarily the need for transparency, accountability and separation of the funding process from planning. However, as with all the systems discussed, there is still much to do both to explore and test these approaches and to begin to internalise them into mainstream systems.

The **approval system** operates at all levels of the strategic and bottom-up planning processes. It sets criteria against which plans are judged and approved. These criteria consider the social, institutional and technical viability of the plans and provide a platform to ensure that only plans of a particular level of quality are approved. In particular, under this approach bottom-up plans are approved against the higher-level strategic plans (which reflect the broader needs of society, as stated through policy and commitments to international conventions). Box 6 illustrates the elements against which approval would be given.

It has been proposed (although trialed only to a limited extent) that approval should be through a publicly constituted approval panel. This panel should be either a neutral 'disinterested' body, or a body that represents higher-level stakeholder (citizen) interests. This would create an explicit structure to factor in governance issues and importantly demonstrate the notion of the citizen role as opposed to the user role.

Sanctioning is another element of this administrative system which approves particular levels of expenditure against a plan. Again this decision is based on best professional judgement and cost norms established by the state.

The final element of this system provides the check that all expenditure that has been planned is **audited** against the works carried out.

Box 6 Approval criteria

1. Compliance with departmental standards
 - Process (planning)
 - Technical considerations
 - Cost ceilings
 - Management arrangements
2. Acceptability to local stakeholders and users
3. Consistency with higher level plans (all of which should be consistent with law, Government Orders and stated departmental policy) and in particular:
 - with participatory forest management plans
 - with divisional working plans

The final link in the system is the monitoring arrangements. These systems are again built on the fundamental principle of putting the forest user at the centre of the process and developing

transparent and accountable approaches. The monitoring systems, at an early stage of development, provide information to increase transparency and build trust (they support the development of the relationship between the Department and the forest users). They provide forums for joint review and learning and include 5 main components:

1. Departmental activity monitoring (monitors Departmental outputs using activities planned and actually implemented as a measure of achievement);
2. Physical and financial monitoring (matches physical inputs (labour and materials) and financial expenditure against activities carried out);
3. Standards monitoring (ensures that activities carried out meet specified quality standards – technical and process);
4. JFPM monitoring (used as a basis for review, joint learning and future action planning);
5. Strategic and policy monitoring (to assess overall changes in forest cover as an indication of effectiveness of planning and management approaches).

The governance structure is the part of the overall planning and monitoring system which deals with accountability. As forest management under the new planning systems becomes more multi-objective, many more groups and agencies have an interest in accessing the monitoring information. There is therefore a need to widen the traditional bureaucratic accountability structure (which previously lay within the KFD) to include VFCs and other bodies. Although the governance structures lie outside KFD, there is a critically important role for KFD to play within these structures. In broad terms, KFD as a facilitator and not simply a co-ordinator, would therefore undertake the following functions:

- Grassroots level outreach
- Exploration of relationships between VFCs and the gram panchayats (lowest level of local government)
- Partnerships with local NGOs

It has become apparent from experience that KFD is not in a position to offer any services other than those directly related to forestry. This means that KFD's role with respect to other government departments should be one of facilitation and not co-ordination. KFD staff cannot command the activities of other line departments, but staff have successfully undertaken the facilitation of access by VFCs to the Panchayati Raj institutions.

The main forums for feedback to KFD remain KFD controlled environments in which VFC representatives can discuss problems and experiences with KFD staff. Initiatives by NGOs in Uttara Kannada have focused on setting up independent forums or federations in which VFCs can come together in a more neutral environment. However, there is need to develop strong, independent feedback mechanisms where VFC members feel empowered to challenge the practices of KFD and to provide feedback on quality of services (i.e. the critical 'E' relationship that remains under-explored between users and the political environment).

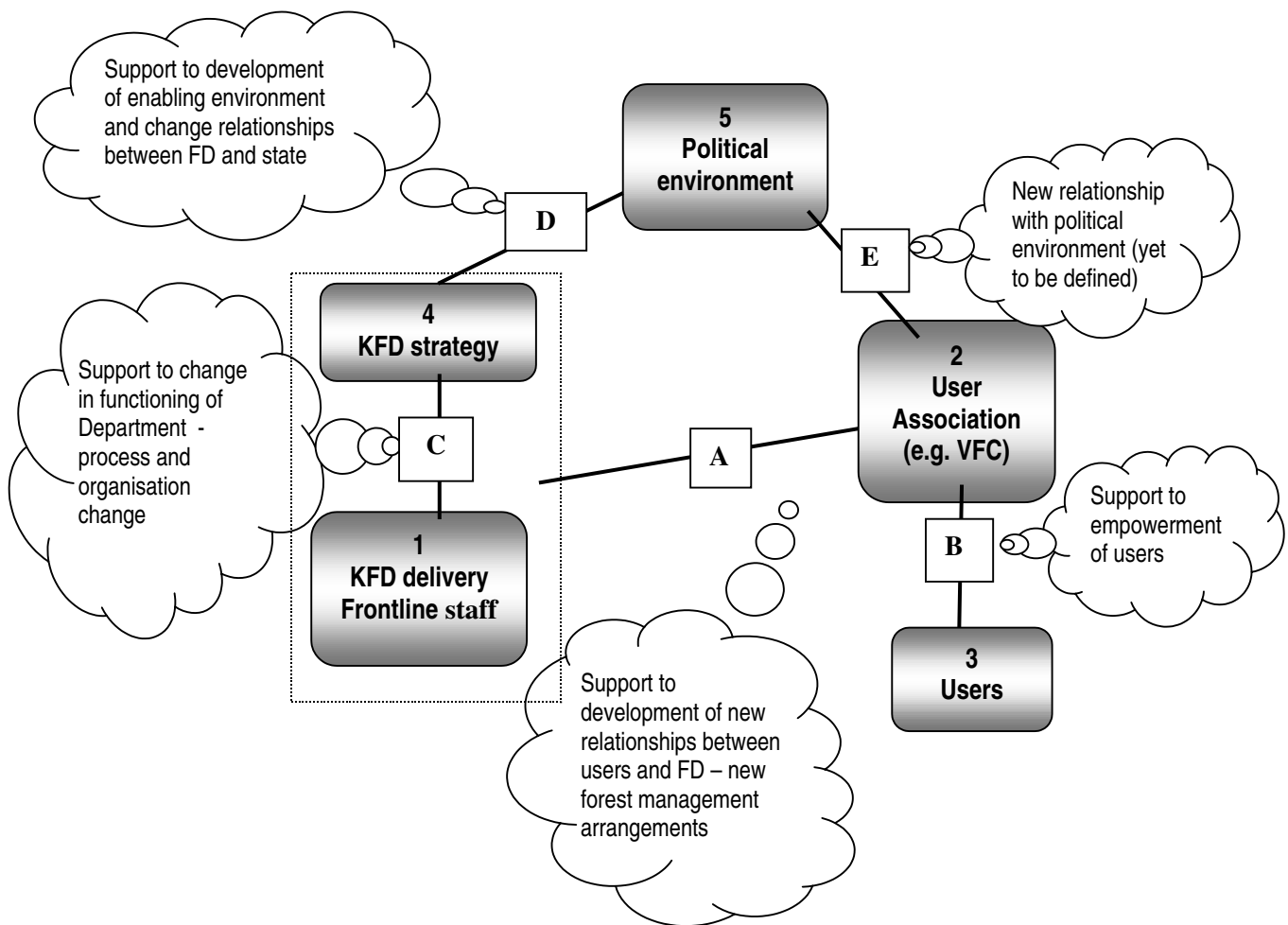
5.3 Lessons

From experience thus far and reflection on the relationships between the different elements of the governance map, the work on new forest planning systems has had the following effects on the interfaces in Figure 6 and illustrated again here for ease of reference (formerly Figure 2).

Relationships between front-line staff and forest users (relationship 'A')

- Restriction of planning activities to degraded forest resources led to a lack of attention to the major livelihood resources – natural forests.
- Benefit-sharing from degraded forests provided insufficient incentive for involvement of local people in the planning process.
- Both these experiences led to a major reorientation in approaches with an inclusive forest management planning process for all forest areas, forest users and forest-based livelihood needs.
- New institutional arrangements for the management and marketing of NTFPs has the potential to bring real benefits to poorer households.

Figure 6 Governance map showing relationship between civil society and the state



Relationships between users and village forest committees (relationship 'B')

- Poor quality processes led to poor group formation and inequitable outcomes – review led to development of new processes – PFMP.
- Initial lack of identification of forest interest groups led to their subsequent exclusion i.e. emphasising the importance of relationship 'B' and the need to provide adequate support at this level.
- Simply identifying women as forest users is insufficient to ensure their active participation – support to other empowerment activities such as through self-help groups has helped women to gain confidence in their abilities and rights to speak in public forums (provided through NGO support).

Relationships between middle management and front-line staff (relationship ‘C’)

- Poor understanding, skills development, and support from bosses led front-line staff to ‘skimp’ on process and deliver the expected product (usually a target number set at the outset of the year) – in the shortest time possible i.e. re-emphasising the need for support to the 3 ‘S’s.
- New internal relations have led to front-line staff being able to exercise best professional judgement on a site’s ecological capacity and to work with the forest users to identify the best intervention according to their requirements.

Relationships between political environment and Forest Department and the lack of feedback mechanisms (relationship ‘D’)

- Certain policies act as a major constraint to development of secure forest-based livelihoods, for example fuelwood subsidies that reduce the real price of fuelwood and thus decrease the income available to fuelwood headloaders. These still need to be resolved.
- A single sector focus is not in itself a ‘bad thing’ as long as it is clear to the forest user from the outset that the processes being supported by the Forest Department will deliver only on forestry activities that support secure livelihoods; it is also clear that the Forest Department can deliver only certain elements of an empowerment process – there is a clear need for other support mechanisms to ensure that more marginalised groups gain secure access to forest benefits.

Relationship between forest users and political environment (relationship ‘E’)

- Feedback mechanisms to the delivery agency are essential. However, it is also necessary to have independent forums in which members of forest users organisations can meet with others, share experiences, clarify problems and put forward concerted proposals to the government agency. These are at an early stage of development.
- Development of open approval systems for forest plans, where there is representation from Forest Department, citizens, NGOs etc., has a long way to go before there is widespread acceptance.

The planning systems described here are a mechanism for the operationalisation of the key relationships between KFD and its clients. They provide an important entry point for changing the relationships both within KFD and between KFD and the forest users. Overlaid on these systems are the monitoring and governance frameworks that ensure transparency and accountability. However, as we keep reiterating, these systems are still not fully operational or designed, there is much to do and much to be tested.

With hindsight, it is clear that the initial focus on changing forest management planning systems would necessarily be limited in effectiveness if the other two elements of change – i.e. skills and shared vision – remained unaddressed. As will be seen in the next section, the process of internal change necessary to support these new planning systems that frame the external relationships is still very fragile. This in itself places pressure on the quality of the planning process and thus the quality of the products, as is reflected in the analysis above.

6. Progress along the pathway

There is no shortage of frameworks describing the critical factors of the change process (Kotter, 1995; Belasco, 1990; and Kanter et al., 1992) and surprising unanimity among them. The Kotter model, which we have chosen for this analysis, is a useful summary of current understanding. It identifies eight conditions for organisational transformation based on empirical research. We have used this model (see Box 7) to analyse the project's experiences of supporting change within the Forest Department (i.e. focusing on relationship 'C' in our governance map – the interface between middle management and front-line staff – shown earlier with the 3 'S's – shared vision, systems and skills).

Although the Kotter model is one of the more helpful frameworks on institutional change processes, the implied sequential nature of this and other models has not been easy to relate to actual experience in the Western Ghats, where progress has been periodic and of variable speed. One of the reasons for this is that reality rarely matches the virtual reality of academic theory or development administration – it is difficult to package reality into neat bundles. The following discussion, although presented sequentially, illustrates that each element of this transformation model is intricately connected to the others.

Box 7 The Kotter model of transformation

Sense of urgency

Without a sense of urgency, often based on a (potential) crisis, there is little incentive for change.

Form a powerful change team

This should include a powerful and influential champion at the top and a taskforce to undertake the detailed work. A team approach is essential

Creating a vision

The vision should be built up explicitly - not just a listing of the problems to be addressed. Strategies to achieve the vision need to be developed

Communicating the vision

This vision should be communicated widely throughout the organisation, to all levels including frontline staff. The Guiding coalition should set an example of new attitudes and behaviour

Develop systems which empower staff

Old systems act as blockages and need to be replaced. The new processes and systems must replace the old systems. Encouraging risk taking

Planning for and creating short-term wins

Change is often a long-term process. Consequently, short-term targets and objectives need to be set. There should be clear and visible 'wins' for key stakeholders.

Consolidate change

New systems are the starting point for change. They need to be developed, tested, reviewed and modified. This is a lengthy stage. Commitment needs to be obtained and maintained throughout.

Institutionalise the changes

The links between the new systems and overall organisational success must be articulated frequently and continuity ensured through a deliberate strategy for leadership succession.

6.1 A sense of urgency

The underlying sense of crisis and therefore of urgency for change was less apparent in KFD than in other Forest Departments in India, or indeed in other sectors. This is particularly true in Uttara Kannada, where officers felt that the forest was under little pressure and, because of the revenue earned each year, funds were more available than in other Forest Circles.

The initial sense of urgency that drove KFD was the need to upgrade the Department (new tools, new systems and increased professionalism) and to make KFD the leading Forest Department in India. This undoubtedly drove the senior management in their quest for support from DFID. For others, there was a residual feeling of shame, not about the forest as a whole, but about the state of parts of the forest in Uttara Kannada. Previous bad practice, both before and after Independence had led to increased degradation of the forest. A sense of pride drove other officers' involvement in what they considered to be an opportunity to re-establish forest in these areas.

At the Divisional and Circle level, the fuelwood market dominated concerns; the green felling ban meant that fuelwood was becoming less readily available and there was an urgent need to develop new plantation resources to meet the demand. This provided an additional impetus to plantation creation as opposed to silvicultural activities in the natural forest.

Developing a sense of urgency amongst KFD officers, in Uttara Kannada, has been an uphill task. From the start senior managers identified individuals interested in pursuing new approaches and fostered partnerships particularly with local NGOs to drive the development of new approaches. The consultant team supporting the project (see footnote 5) realised the need to build an environment in which change could be fostered and attempted to develop an understanding of the different pressures at work within and on the forest department. This understanding was used to support a process of reflection and problem analysis which allowed KFD staff to reflect on the current situation and to develop sound action plans (see table comparing approaches to forest management in Appendix 1 – an outcome of this reflection process). The fundamental principles of action-reflection-learning approaches were used in all elements of the project work (again an approach that was alien to the culture of the Department accustomed to a culture of command and control within a highly packaged and 'certain' environment). The approaches supported by the project were focused on dealing with complex reality (social, institutional and ecological) rather than on providing simple packages that could be applied irrespective of the local context.

Initially the 'urgency' which lay behind the project's focus on process change came from three sources:

- *Firstly*, from a recognition that forest resources were rapidly becoming degraded;
- *Secondly*, from a growing raft of criticism by NGOs focusing on poor people's insecure access to the forest resources on which they remained heavily dependent; and
- *Thirdly*, from changes at a broader strategic and policy level, notably the new Forest Policy of 1988, Panchayati Raj (local government) Amendments to the Constitution and increasing support to decentralisation, and (later) the Green Felling Ban and Supreme Court ruling on Working Plans.

Once in place, the consultants tried to maintain a sense of urgency by engaging with forest officers. They underlined:

- The greater demands for accountability to the public arising out of decentralisation and civic change, and the need to understand problems internal to KFD, including forest management challenges such as encroachment and poaching, low morale, and concerns about professional standards. Here, they were able to draw on a widespread (but implicit) anxiety within KFD

about recent failures. Without sensitive handling, however, this process of introspection could easily have backfired.

- To help the learning process to start and to encourage a sense of ‘bite-sized’ urgency, the consultants supported the forest department staff to work with deadlines based on seasonality, the annual planning and budgeting cycles, DFID monitoring missions, and the consultant team’s visits, workshops, and other events. The slow pace of implementation during the initial three years of the project (prior to the consultant team) also lent urgency to their task.

Lessons: sense of urgency

- No serious sense of crisis was ever generated, particularly at middle management level; there is therefore little real incentive to change. This is particularly true in Uttara Kannada where the pressures are to retain the status quo.
- The seeds for change were unevenly sown and the desire for change at critical levels was absent.
- The pace of change depends on the level of crisis and subsequent sense of urgency that it engenders.
- The project pursued an opportunistic approach building on a number of self-motivated individuals. This enables piloting and testing but is not sufficient to create the critical mass needed, nor for internalisation of these approaches to occur.

6.2 Form a powerful change team

6.2.1 Leadership

Leadership of change was spasmodic, with high points where progress was fast, but gaps and low points where enthusiasm was lost. With hindsight, the importance of securing and maintaining the full support of the overall head of the Department – the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) was not fully appreciated. The PCCFs (there were at least 3 during the 4 year period of support by the consultant team) should have been brought more directly into the process. Ownership over the change process shifted from being very internal, high-level and centre-stage to the Department to being held by some forest officers in Uttara Kannada circle and the consultants for a period, including the most senior forest officer in charge of the forest circle (the Conservator of Forests).

At the time progress was being made, there was full, visible support and ownership from the top and an agreement that change could be facilitated at the bottom. However, change from the bottom also requires support and commitment from middle management. This was not forthcoming for the reasons described above in Section 6.1. The Divisional Forest Officers, in the main, had little or no incentive to seek change, even though staff beneath them were actively seeking changes in the systems and structures.

This level of middle management inertia that later became a layer of resistance was a critical element that needed to be brought into the change process. There are only two mechanisms through which to do this in a hierarchical organisation: 1) by building support for change at the top and 2) building pressure for change outside through the NGO sector, through politicians and local government. Subsequent to the period of high level support enjoyed by the project there was a period when there was little interest in the work of the project in the circle from senior management or indeed from the donor partner. This lack of leadership and vision allowed resistance at the middle management level to harden and made it more difficult for junior staff to take risks and innovate.

Parallel analysis in other states shows that the Government (Forest Secretary, Rural Development Commissioner, and even Chief Secretary) have to be involved and that there needs to be political support for such change. Another driving force for change in some states has been the strengthening of local government (the panchayati raj institutions) which in their turn have been demanding greater accountability from agencies such as forest departments. This is one of the five elements of relationships ('D') depicted in Figure 2 that has not been developed in Karnataka and probably has been a major element in the absence of high-level support for the project.

Thus the change team initially formed was composed of both senior management and circle level staff and below, and later disintegrated to one that was composed of the head of the circle and individuals at different levels from within the circle. However, without strong support from senior management, it was difficult for this team to continue to fight the resistance from the powerful middle managers in the circle who had their own arenas of political support and power.

At this stage the project focused on supporting the few interested individuals to develop new planning systems as described above (particularly focusing on external relationships with forest users). This was in the hope that over time, senior management would change and a new set of leaders would emerge who were supportive of the approaches being piloted in the circle. Clearly this is a high risk approach but given that the consultant team was contracted to provide support only to the circle, it was not possible for them to support a change process at senior management level.

Lessons: change team

- Piloting new approaches can only work when there is senior management support.
- Occasionally there are 'stellar constellations' of the right people, in the right positions at the right time – identifying these moments and having the flexibility to act to support them is essential. Missing these opportunities leads to the need to 'tread water' and carry on with low profile support activities until the 'stars' align themselves again.
- Policy level changes required for new approaches requires the development of informed relationships with State government and the political environment.
- The role of local government and its relationships with line agencies needs to be explored and developed.
- Support to change at one level alone is not effective without an articulated support programme to the other key levels.
- Who is involved in the design process is critical for the future development of the project – if the project is envisaged as an institutional change project then the highest level of government support is required.
- Ownership over the form, pace and direction of the change process must be maintained internally within the organisation at different levels – once one level is outside the process, resistance to change builds.

6.2.2 Champions of change

In WGFP, the approach to identifying and supporting influential champions of change was based on the level at which the consultants were contracted to operate i.e. the Circle. It consisted of finding supporters, often at middle management level (although as stated above this was also the level of greatest resistance). Most progress was made when risk-takers and 'plain-speakers' were identified

and supported – although support from the consultants, as outsiders, necessarily had to be limited to promoting a more relaxed environment for debate.

Where individuals showed little enthusiasm for change, the team preferred to tread water until altered circumstances made progress possible. ‘Treading water’ is a tool and not an avoidance mechanism. It implies an art of knowing when proposed activities lie beyond those for which an appetite has been created, and backing off as necessary. Since the relationships with the state had not been developed there was little legitimacy to push for change.

The initial project design process engaged primarily with CCFs (Chief Conservators of Forest – the next tier of management beneath the PCCF). Without the full involvement of the PCCF and GoK (particularly the Forest Secretary), the chances that WGFP would be an institutional or organisational change process were slim. There is no doubt too that the project partner (KFD) was extremely resistant to large-scale change. Thus perhaps the most appropriate level for change still remains that chosen – Uttara Kannada district and forest circle.

6.2.3 *Engines of change*

Kotter’s model also suggests that champions need to be complemented with ‘task forces’ or change teams to carry out detailed analysis and develop new processes. The original design proposed a Project Management Unit at HQ and a Project Monitoring Cell at the Circle and JFPM staff in the field. However, these were not attractive posts, roles were not clearly identified and line managers not trained to use these new structures and personnel. In practice too they were counter-cultural appendages and were effectively trying to tack-on parallel structures rather than reforming existing structures that were working in opposition to the new policy mandate of the Forest Department. However, before dismissing them as design mistakes, we should consider why one of the objectives of the project – to introduce new working arrangements – failed so dismally.

One of the major reasons for their failure was the initial failure of the project to provide the rationale for these new units within the Forest Department. This was compounded by the fact that staff had not been provided with the necessary skills to carry out tasks which would have begun to facilitate a change process within the organisation. However, ultimately the units failed because they did not become the champion and engine for change as had been envisaged in the project design; instead the consultants under the jointly agreed work programme often played this role in concert with groupings of circle staff. The outcome of this vacuum filling is that there is still no change team in place in Uttara Kannada or indeed in any other part of the KFD (Ram et al., 1998). Couple this with the fluctuating support from senior management and the process change approaches can be seen to be very fragile and exposed. Kotter suggests that a recognised team charged with the responsibility for supporting change is a prerequisite for transforming structures and processes within an organisation. The experience from WGFP supports this proposition.

Lessons: leadership and change

- Apart from the initial design period and a period of strong leadership under one project director, there has not been consistent leadership.
- Leadership at the top has not been deliberately fostered and serviced, and partnerships nourished; instead mistrust, competition and sectional interests have flourished.

The lack of an identified and supported internal team for change has meant that there has been sporadic and highly personalised commitment to change which does not provide the necessary enabling environment for front-line staff to operate with confidence.

6.3 Creating a vision

Change occurs as a response to a need or vision. Acceptance of change requires not just dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, but also an enabling environment in which new processes and structures can be developed. In steep hierarchies with command and control structures, where the front-line staff translate orders from above into action in the field, fundamental change is required in all the relationships of the nature described in Figure 2.

If change is a product of dissatisfaction, a clear pathway and a vision, then – in an ideal world – a ‘vision’ of where process change should lead would have formed a secure mandate for the consultants’ work. Unless this vision is present, it is difficult to attract champions for change and to form consensus around the *need* for change. Without an agreed vision there is a danger that there will be many perceptions of what an effective forest department might look like which all pull in different and unclear directions. The counter-argument to this is that early definition of the vision without clarity of what the implications of it will be, and without some prior development and testing of new processes, may lead to an inappropriate pathway being chosen.

There are two parts to the vision that were developed during this project: *firstly*, the changed relationship between KFD as a delivery agency, and its clients, the users of forest resources (Figure 2), and *secondly*, the relationships between bottom-up and strategic planning systems (as depicted in Figure 5).

But a vision is more than a general principle: it also encompasses relationships, processes, systems, policies, and linkages. The core principles followed by the project from the start were:

- A client-led and objective-led approach to planning (based on objective-oriented project planning);
- Total Quality Management approach i.e. fitting services to the needs of the primary client, participation of users and frontline staff, making decisions close to the action; getting it right first time (designing systems);
- A critical analysis of working plans as a) providers of a strategic definition of clients and objectives for forest management and b) the active conduit for policy;
- A separation of functions – the ‘purchaser/provider split’ particularly for provision of research and training support from one part of the Forest Department to another;
- The separation of planning and funding i.e. those who plan do not allocate the funds for the plan;
- The importance of feedback and accountability mechanisms; and above all;
- Focus on primary clients – the forest-dependent communities.

Beyond this, the pathway by which to achieve the two elements of vision was somewhat unclear and emerged over time through empirical experience and discussion. Thus there was no neatly packaged solution or blueprint to the change process required within KFD and with respect to its external relationships.

Consistency was developed by the team through the application of these general principles to on-the-ground problems, avoiding the danger of backtracking which comes with piecemeal change. The focus was placed on front-line staff’s own problem analyses and building of action plans from this based on the general principles above. These action plans then formed the basis for developing process change approaches and focused on key elements constraining change at the front-line. For example, by developing quality processes for joint partnership between front-line staff and local people; developing technical skills to plan for the site-specific requirements of an area rather than

implementation of a packaged set of inputs (which had been the norm under the scheme-based approach).

Although the vision was not clear at the outset, the consultant team believes that they were able to generate confidence and commitment from key circle-level players to the process of developing the vision (although this became shaky as higher-level support disappeared). This mandate was based on trust between the consultants and the forest department staff and is a key element in the change process. When trust disintegrates the change process will also dissolve.

The pathways developed through these relationships had a clear set of action plans, allocation of responsibilities, a focus on genuine engagement and ownership of KFD, and on learning through reflection. The change induced through these action plans was ultimately constrained by lack of progress on policy and headquarters change, and ultimately a lack of ownership of the change process and its products at this level.

Workshops, as a tool for change, have played a very important part in developing the vision. They provided an interactive forum in which ideas could be developed and challenged. In the early stages of vision development, most interaction was through highly public and inclusive workshops. No decisions were taken unless as a result of an agreed public process. This continued whilst there was senior management support for change but began to fall away when this support disappeared. A new approach was taken based on detailed task-force work. Although individuals who were part of these task forces developed their understanding and commitment, those outside the task force were alienated. During this period understanding and commitment to change were deepened in a few but did not spread more widely.

Lessons: creating a vision

- At the beginning of consultant support (and subsequently as new players came into position) there was a confusion of expectations. As a team we did not provide packaged solutions to expressed problems, we placed emphasis on joint learning. This was contrary to the culture of packaged delivery that has become a hallmark of the public sector in India – thus there was confusion and unease that the consultants were not delivering products, but only process that would lead others to develop products. This particularly emerged as a problem when higher-level support was no longer in place.
- A clear detailed vision at the outset is not necessarily helpful but it is important to have a clear and consistent set of principles that can guide the development of appropriate pathways.
- An overall agreed vision of the type of organisation that is desired is important.
- Obtaining agreement for change and developing pathways cannot be restricted to only one level of the organisation; the vision needs to be negotiated, agreed and owned at all levels including Government of Karnataka.
- The details through which the vision is to be implemented should be negotiated at appropriate levels.
- Rooting the pathway development in the staff's own problem analyses was an important element of creating ownership over the action plans and the outcomes.
- An important element of developing consistency, trust and understanding is maintenance of long-term support arrangements which offer a mix of skills and competencies; the counter-balance to this is that facilitation by a support team can become too directive and ideas then become associated with the team rather than as an outcome of a joint learning process.
- Workshops provide an important element of the change process since they foster an interactive environment where the normal structures of steep hierarchies can be challenged; they also provide a forum which through careful facilitation helps to legitimise the knowledge of marginalised voices within KFD; conversely workshops can also be tools of exclusion, where those who are not present can feel marginalised from the change process.

6.4 Communicating or sharing the vision

Perhaps one of the most important elements of facilitating a change process is to ensure that the vision for change is widely communicated, understood and shared. If the vision is restricted to a few individuals then the potential exists to create resistance to the vision from those who have not been part of its construction.

Tools for communication are many and varied and may include workshops, study tours, seminars, training, exchange visits to other organisations undergoing change, newsletters etc. This is perhaps one of the weakest areas of the support provided to the Forest Department and indeed has led to some of the major problems faced today by the project. Since the mandate of the support team was restricted to the circle. (This was a contractual agreement where the consultant team was contracted to provide support to the circle and DFID field management provided support to the enabling environment (relationship 'D' in Figure 2)). The need to develop upward and outward linkages although recognised by the consultant team was not acted upon. This resulted in a number of blockages to change.

These blockages resulted in *either* unwillingness to accept the new ideas proposed *or* inability to put them into practice. In WGFP, the development of skills training has been slow. As a result, KFD staff, particularly at the front-line, lack the skills to experiment with or implement new systems and principles. Except for those staff who were involved in active development of the new approaches other staff were expected to engage in testing with insufficient skills to carry out the work. This led to frustration and disillusionment and again points to the need for wide communication and involvement in developing the vision for change in order to mobilise the necessary support mechanisms to allow staff to develop and innovate. In terms of outward impact, staff without the necessary skills were involved in forming non-representative village forest committees which had limited understanding of their own mandate and roles.

In general, forest service reporting systems do not favour innovation or critical and public review of experience, particularly by front-line or mid-level staff. This too leads to the situation where staff are unwilling to admit to difficulty and inability to understand what is being asked of them. Thus there were no formal mechanisms to resolve contradictions between existing systems for doing things and the new systems developed by the project. A further threat to some staff was posed by the emphasis on developing outwardly accountable and open systems.

Project-imposed structural divisions further reinforced this cultural barrier and hindered development of shared vision. A new cadre of staff for JFPM had been appointed to oversee JFPM activities in the divisions of territorial Divisional Forest Officers. As has been discussed earlier (Box 1) the cultural divide between Indian Forest Service (IFS) and State Forest Service Officers is extreme and based on perceived and real differences in power and influence. Communication ordinarily between these staff is often dysfunctional. In all cases, the JFPM DFOs were promoted from within the state forest service, no IFS officer was appointed to one of these posts, holding instead the mainstream positions that were not dependent on project funding. This instantly led to the marginalisation of both the post and the process it was to support and serious personal and professional difficulties for the post-holders. For example the JFPM DFOs had none of the usual establishment associated with such a position. Neither staff nor budgets were provided, it was expected that these would be provided by the mainstream DFOs. Thus in one division there were two staff of apparently the same level where one held both control over funds and staff and the other was totally reliant on developing a relationship with the other to access either money or staff to carry out JFPM activities. In some cases a highly productive relationship did develop but this was entirely dependent on the personalities and interest of the two concerned DFOs.

In addition to this internal cultural and power division, these were project-created posts, and thus the consultants were seen by others outside the project to have the right to work with project staff only. The mainstream territorial officers who hold the key to power and decision-making within a division did not consider themselves to be part of this project. Unless these officers share the vision for change there can be no space provided to junior staff to innovate with new approaches. Where the territorial officers did not share the interest in JFPM or change on a broader scale, there was an effective blockage to activities, with subordinate staff responding to the orders from the territorial DFO rather than the JFPM DFO.

There are also other subtle forces at work which restrict many officers' space for manoeuvre. These may well lie behind what is often referred to as 'poor communication channels' within KFD. Caste groupings, the culture of interaction within the organisation and 'bureaucratic norms' of behaviour (including the divide between national and state forest cadres) all determined who was able to become an effective change agent and also how much they became part of and owned the new vision for the Department.

Language or for some 'jargon' has an important role to play in communicating or blocking vision. Each piece of language summarises complex sets of ideas. For those on board, language ritualises change. It creates a group of insiders, and reminds them to challenge assumptions and to consider how things can be done differently. Existing language is, of course, 'old jargon' and carries a great deal of baggage itself. But to 'outsiders' to the change process – within KFD and among stakeholders external to the forest department – it was clear that more effort was needed to make documents accessible, and to communicate new ideas through workshops and coaching which emphasise practical problems and use a language that is also accessible. New language can be very threatening to those who do not have the vocabulary, particularly when this language is being used by subordinates and senior management cannot engage with it or challenge it. However, the importance of new language cannot be underestimated as a way of binding people into the change process and providing them with the words to challenge the old assumptions underlying the structures and systems of engagement.

Lessons: sharing the vision

- Language can be both a barrier and an opening to a new way of thinking;
- Exclusion of key individuals from developing the vision for change leads to alienation and resistance to the change process;
- Poor understanding of cultural and power differences within the KFD at project design stage led to serious problems of marginalisation of the most important element of the project – introduction of joint forest management systems;
- unless those who hold the power to opening up space within the hierarchy for innovation share and own the vision for change, no change can happen and junior staff will be dissuaded from innovating despite their desire to change.

6.5 Creating systems to empower staff

Many of the 'S's are needed to empower staff: shared vision, structures and a new approach to HRD, skills, and the new systems themselves. It is not just a question of proposing alternative systems and then expecting staff to adopt them. The key task is to remove blockages by clearing out other, unhelpful systems. For example, the comparison of different forms of forest management planning that have occurred over the last 100 years (presented in Appendix 1) shows how many of these systems are still in place. This is particularly the case for those centrally constructed scheme-

based approaches that by their very presence prevent the development of new approaches to forest management. As can be seen from the extract of Appendix 1 presented in Table 1, the new working plans system under development is a radical departure from a scheme-based approach. However, systems, structures, skills, performance appraisal and the culture of the organisation are all oriented around these old systems and styles of engagement. As long as these continue there will be a series of real barriers to change that prevent staff from moving forward.

To take one example, site specific planning introduced under the project empowers staff to assess the ecological and social requirements for a particular intervention at a site. It allows staff to use their professional judgement, to consult widely with the users of a site and to negotiate the objectives for management. However, in the course of developing these approaches a number of blockages, some obvious and others discovered by chance, have emerged. As well as inappropriate funding mechanisms which still require staff to achieve set targets against particular models, there were also another set of project imposed (unwittingly) constraints. These blockages include the models and tables in the project proposal set out for budgetary purposes which have since become rigidly applied as targets and models for implementation in the field. Since this steeply hierarchical organisation is structured around control systems that allow very little flexibility and responsiveness at the local level, the flexibility offered by site specific planning is perceived by some as a direct challenge to their positions of authority.

Table 1 Political environment (strategic/policy framework) and forest planning systems

Forest Management approach	Traditional working plans	Forestry scheme	New working plans (currently under development by Project)
Forest sector objectives	Conservation State revenue Industrial supply	Employment Welfare provision Asset creation	Conservation Joint management to meet local needs Market supply
Client	Government industry	Labour Investment	Local people (priority) Biodiversity and environment (priority) distant users (secondary)
Role of forest department	Organising and controlling supply Protection of forest	Mobilisation of labour Creating new assets	Facilitation of institutions (VFCs and others) which jointly – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan ● Fund ● Manage forest assets

Lessons: empowering staff

- New systems alone cannot challenge the existing orthodoxies;
- Unless the old systems and structures are over-turned they will continue to act as effective barriers to change;
- Old systems and structures have their own power relationships – they are not neutral and cannot easily be dismissed. Again pointing to the need to engage effectively at all levels to build solid commitment to change;
- Project design can unwittingly reinforce the very structures and systems it is aiming to change.

6.6 Short-term wins

Change is a difficult and slow process. As has been shown earlier to move from process change to full institutional change could take a long time. In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of being involved in a change process and to develop commitment to the benefits of change it is necessary to achieve some short-term gains for those involved.

New systems have brought some short-term wins to staff. The introduction of site specific planning has provided some short-term wins to junior staff. It has allowed them responsibility and control over important areas of activity and has empowered them to use their professional judgement to develop appropriate interventions. Similarly the development of mid-level staff, previously with unclear roles, as the mentors and coaches of junior staff has brought significant benefits both in terms of their own job satisfaction and ensuring quality processes are implemented by front-line staff. The development of participatory forest management approaches based on more inclusive methods and planning for all forest areas has led to tangible improvements in levels of local participation and interest.

New strategies of engagement with local forest users have brought benefits to some forest users and for many front line staff. VFC formation and benefit-sharing has provided some cash benefits to users but perhaps more importantly has led to demonstrable improvements in relationships between forest users and the Department (Mallikarjuna, 1999). In some cases too it has brought other developmental activities to villages that tended to be isolated from support. Some staff whose innovative work in this area has received widespread recognition have achieved particular gains.

The focus on development of skills for front line staff has been an important area of gain, as evidenced in the results of a Staff Attitude Survey (PPST, 1998). Although, as mentioned earlier, there is still a need to develop greater internalisation of these skills through widespread application of participatory approaches. In addition, overseas study placements certainly helped to attract support amongst KFD staff, and offered an opportunity to introduce new language and concepts to officers, away from the daily pressures of work. Again, however, this understanding then needs to be reinforced through practical application of new approaches.

Lessons: short-term wins

- Perhaps the primary lesson from experiences here are that short-term gains will remain just that unless there are significant other changes to internalise these approaches across the organisation.
- Similarly short-term gains just within the organisation are insufficient. The primary clients need to see some immediate benefit from the changes in order to sustain the new relationships.

6.7 Consolidating change and institutionalising change

The new systems are the starting point for change. They need to be developed, tested, reviewed and modified. This is a lengthy stage and may not now be completed under the project. Currently, the systems are under development and there is still much to do in terms of testing and reviewing them. This first phase of the project was seen as a systems development phase, the widespread testing and review for adoption across the State was an important element of the end of this phase which has since become mired in uncertainty. Much of this can be traced to some of the earlier issues raised about the inadequate development of shared vision, ownership and commitment to the change processes under development in the circle. This commitment is neither shared by senior

management of KFD nor by DFID and therefore has left serious question marks about the future consolidation and internalisation of the work carried out in the first phase of the WGFP.

If this work is to be taken forward the problems and lessons learnt in the other steps of change would need to be addressed. Other elements of the 7 'S' model would also need to be fully addressed (strategy, structure, staffing and style). In addition the key relationship between the Forest Department and the political environment would need to be developed, without this it is uncertain as to whether there could be any institutionalisation of the changes and principles supported by the first phase of this project.

6.8 Overall lessons

Overall, using the Kotter model to help assess the progress with process change there are some clear lessons that emerge and pointers for the future:

- There is need for support from the enabling framework (both from within the political environment and from the senior management level) for a) process change at the frontline of the delivery agency and b) institutional change at the civil society level to be effective and internalised. Without this support, major barriers to change become solidified rather than demolished i.e. the five elements of relationship change that are identified as important are not evenly developed.
- There is need for wider involvement in the construction of, and better communication of the change vision as it evolves. This is particularly important when the tradition and implicit assumptions of the delivery agency are being challenged by the new policy and strategy. Resistance to the vision (policy objectives) is often articulated through and negotiated within the process of change. Management of this debate is essential especially where parallel changes in other areas of civil society have yet to become clear, or other pressures for change fully manifest.
- Conflict over objectives (final outcomes) is inherent and not to be shied away from. Some of the conflict may represent power struggles fomented by previous organisational and institutional structures. Even where this is not an issue, any process or product, where 'values' need to be managed, should be recognised as being inherently political. Resolution of conflicts over values need processes and mechanisms which enable people to explicitly negotiate and trade-off. This is a live process: it can neither be reduced to a single formula nor negotiated by proxy.
- The management of debate about the goals and vision has to be both deep (from top management to frontline) and wide within the delivery agency. Otherwise, those championing change within the delivery agency will be isolated from the mainstream culture of the organisation which will become both resistant to and suspicious of what is being fostered at a pilot level.
- The debate must be managed across agencies and stakeholders and not limited to those within the traditional delivery agency. This includes politicians, government, press and NGOs. This reflects the pluralism and transparency of the vision. More pragmatically, it is essential to build external accountability.
- However, it must be recognised that change is never easy, and that the main delivery agency requires space to make adjustments, not just to processes, but also to attitudes. Change is slowed down by 'undue' and heavy pressure from external bodies and by myriad reviews, audits,

evaluations all of which demonstrate and show up serious problems in current practice. Without space, without time to rebuild new processes and attitudes, and under pressure to deliver, staff inevitably become defensive and practice returns to the old process and attitude.

- There is a need for long-term commitment and trust between all actors including the donor to ensure that senior management in the main delivery agency is prepared to take risks and support change. Otherwise, they feel exposed and vulnerable. There are few incentives within the current structures to support those who take the high level of risk that change implies.
- The donor agency, also with its internal demands and interdisciplinary conflicts, needs to manage the signals it sends. Essentially, debate should be conducted within a relationship of trust and commitment. For the donor, in practice, this often boils down to searching for projects with a single client/single purpose. Projects with multiple objectives and multiple goals are deemed to be complex and too difficult to manage. This search for a single goal/purpose results in partners receiving mixed signals (environment goals versus social objectives, wholesale institutional change versus process change). In addition, where ‘conditionality’ is applied in a confrontational manner, the key relationship between the donor and partner government, as sponsors, becomes strained and the focus returns to the language and spirit of blueprint: ‘compliance’ and ‘product’; ‘threat’ rather than ‘opportunity’ and eventually spirals into misunderstanding and mistrust.
- The terms ‘process’ and ‘relationships’ are virtually synonymous. These relationships need to be maintained and managed especially given the high turnover of staff in senior positions of both donor and government partner. In the context of project cycle management, a ‘process project’ means the management of relationships. Management of process and relationships are never easy: pressure has to be played off with support, speed with space. There is no substitute for building good relationships, based on contact, understanding and successful agreements. This requires a sharing of each partner’s framework and pressures, discourse and agenda.
- Many projects, such as the case study described here (Western Ghats Forestry Project), have been rightly accused of ‘tinkering at the edge’. The necessary pressure on the policy environment (in particular as a result of the lack of an effective relationship between the donor and the partner government) was not forthcoming. Thus there was no sustained downward pressure on the main delivery agency (forest department) to substantially change its mode of operation.
- The need to work within alternative agendas and to understand resistance and corruption are in themselves substantial challenges. The new systems and processes bring transparency, demand accountability and put the needs of the forest user at the centre of the process. However, the direct user is not the only actor with a stake. For changes to users’ livelihoods to be realised and to be sustainable, there is a need to open up and involve wider society in setting out higher level objectives and priorities. This also requires new processes. However, even relatively small process changes, that affect the relationship between user and frontline staff provide fundamental challenges to existing power bases and, in turn, these confrontations cannot be won simply through changing some of the forest planning processes.
- There is no golden bullet for either the ‘product or process’ of change. Further it does not necessarily happen quickly. There are substantial and real barriers to change that take time to overcome. A slow pace is often required that is contrary to the level of delivery expected by a donor from a project. However, there is a also risk in going too slowly and losing both momentum and the critical mass necessary for change. There is a delicate balance to be judged at the particular time, there is no formula that says when the pace is too fast or too slow. There

are moments too, when there is a need to ‘tread water’ and in some cases there may be an apparent movement backwards. This all needs to be accommodated, again a risky environment that donor organisations may feel uncomfortable supporting.

- However, there are principles which can guide practitioners in constructing the change agenda, vision and pathway. These principles are not particularly new, although they may challenge current and deeply held assumptions. The need for a wider voice and greater civil inclusion in local decision-making requires the application of these principles in different circumstances and settings. In particular, experience shows that, as depicted in Figure 2, some degree of change is necessary in each of these relationships in order to be able to secure real change in access to forest-based livelihood assets.

6.9 Questions: top-down versus bottom-up change

The question that underpins the whole of this paper is whether the entry-point and level selected were appropriate. Should we have worked for change in a top-down fashion, in addition to the bottom-up changes supported? What is clear from an analysis of the different factors is that to take forward the experience gained thus far, process change must broaden out to include organisational and institutional change. This can only happen if the environment for it can be developed, the need to work on the other major relationships cannot be over-emphasised.

Was process change the right or most appropriate starting point? Is failure to make progress on process change due to lack of pressure for organisational and institutional change? For example, UK reforms of the National Health Service and local government started with policy, institutional and organisational change, but perhaps failed to achieve their objectives because there was a lack of attention to process change. The (erroneous) assumption is that if rules are changed, people will understand, accept and follow new rules. Perhaps, therefore we cannot be so categorical and say it was either the right or wrong decision. What was wrong was the failure to engage at all the levels and with all the actors in order to create the right environment for change.

Was the emphasis on developing new approaches to forest management appropriate? In as much as this was an area in which all junior staff agreed there was a need to change, it was the most appropriate entry-point. In terms of policy and immediate gain for forest users, it potentially could also bring some of the greatest benefits. Again the constraints to effectiveness lay in the lack of engagement at the different levels and in particular with the political environment.

7. Conclusions

7.1 What change has there been?

Despite the limited extent of change that has been internalised within the Forest Department, if we look back to the starting conditions in 1991, we can begin to assess how far we have actually come.

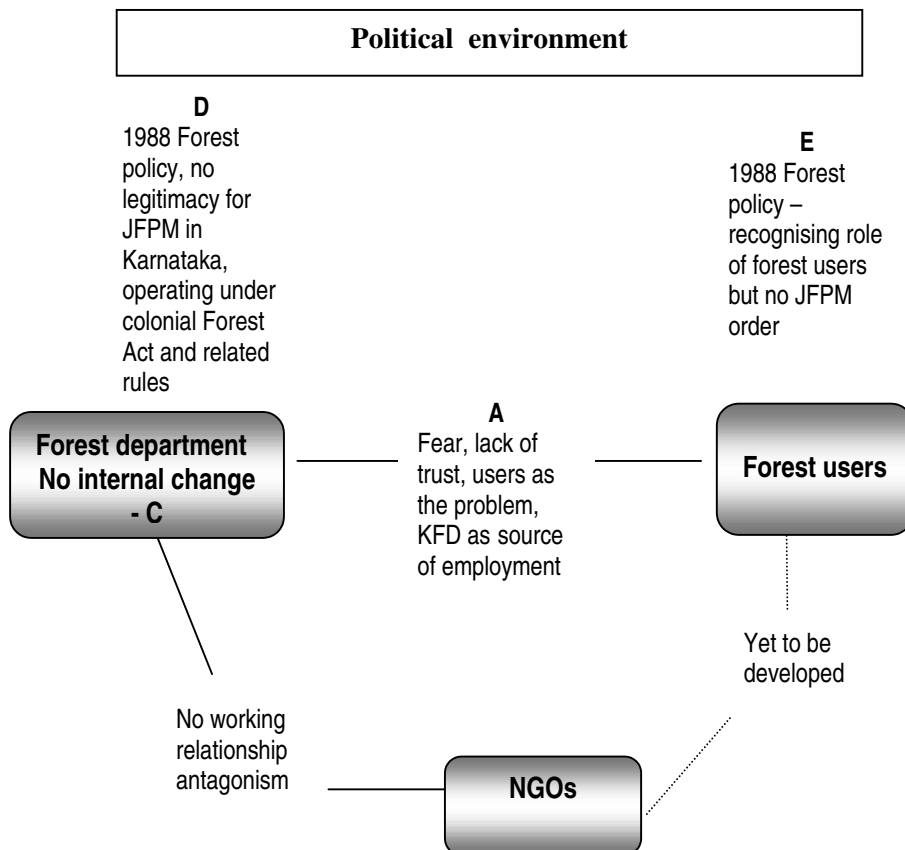
7.1.1 Where we were: 1991 (at the start of the WGFP)

From the perspective of the different agencies identified in the section on governance, let us consider what the relationships used to be:

Political environment and delivery agency ('D')

Forest Department continuing to deliver forestry as dictated by State and central government schemes. There was no notion of the need for external relationships with other forest users or their rights to representation in the planning process, forestry was considered to be entirely the preserve of the FD. There was no real implementation of the new Forest Policy and no fundamental changes in internal structures or cultural style.

Figure 7 Where we were: 1991



Forest user to Forest Department ('A')

Forest users were considered to be 'the problem', the degraders, a source of labour, where relationships with staff of FD were based on fear

NGOs (relationship with FD and with users)

NGOs were seen solely as lobby organisations and not 'doers' in the forestry sector. There were antagonistic relationships between KFD and NGOs. There was no forest-related relationship between forest users and NGOs, other relationships as deliverers of non-forest related services may have been in place but were quite underdeveloped

7.1.2 Where we are: end of Phase 1 (1999)

As can be seen from the very packaged diagram – Figure 8 – there are significant changes in relationships between the key actors, including the emerging and important role of the local NGO as a facilitator of change in the relationship between the users and the VFC. We have tried to show in this paper the importance of change in all five of the relationships described in this diagram. These are the relationships that underpin the DFID livelihoods framework but that are not made explicit in the box known as 'transforming structures and processes'.

The early indicators of change are in place and are described further in Section 7.1.3. However, they are tentative and easily reversed.

7.1.3 Progress achieved

Despite the limited progress in internalising change, there has been change in the circle in terms of outward relations between the KFD, forest users and NGOs, as can be seen from a comparison of the two figures above. It is always difficult to make direct attribution of change to particular interventions. However, in this case, the changes in internal relationship ('C') and those changes between Forest Department and users ('A') and elements of 'B' concerning the PFMP process and the NTFP collector arrangements) can be directly attributed to the project. The changes in relationships between NGOs and the Forest Department are in part attributable to the Western Ghats Forestry Project, in particular the training support provided by the NGO MYRADA to the front-line staff and the support to self-help groups. Other changes have been in part a result of a separately funded project, by DFID, to Oxfam which provided support to the local NGOs in Uttara Kannada district. Assessment of the effectiveness of this support lies outside the scope of this paper, since it was neither part of the support programme provided by the consultant team nor part of the WGFP.

In order to assess how far change is really beginning to contribute to securing livelihoods, a review of the status of the project and its contribution to DFID's sustainable livelihood objectives is presented in Table 2. Clearly not all the objectives are equally appropriate to the project. However, as can be seen some of the key building blocks are in place, but significant work still needs to be carried out to secure the advances made thus far. The table assesses progress as opposed to the gaps that have been highlighted in other parts of this paper. This is in recognition of the ease with which one can criticise the early faltering steps of change, and use the gift of hindsight to illuminate what should apparently have been so obvious to predict and therefore avoid but at the time is so difficult to know.

Figure 8 Where are we end of Phase 1 of the WGFP (1999)

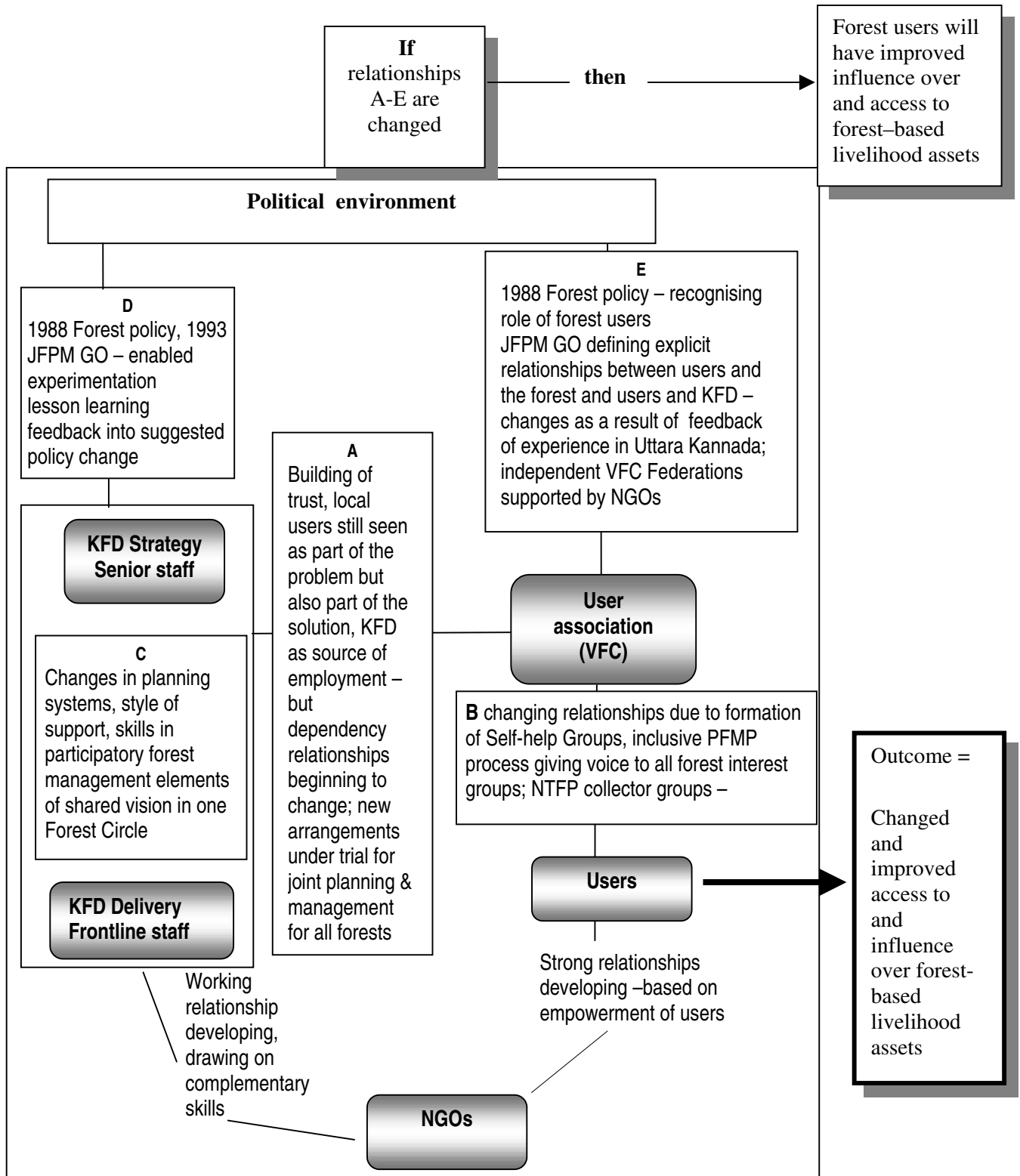


Table 2 Positioning of WGFP against core DFID Sustainable Livelihood objectives

DFID core objectives for SL (DFID, 1999)	Positioning of WGFP
<p>To promote sustainable livelihoods through the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More secure access and better management of natural resources 	<p>Policy change JFPM provides a framework for formalising joint management arrangements to secure local access to some areas of degraded forest.</p> <p>Planning systems Site specific planning allows forest department staff to work with primary users to identify their needs and the ecological capability of the site to determine the best management regime for that site.</p> <p>The participatory forest management planning process being developed in Uttara Kannada is a means to secure local access for sustained use of agreed products and better management of all natural and plantation forest against an agreed set of management objectives according to stakeholder needs. This is a major step in beginning to secure access for those whose livelihoods are most dependent on forest resources.</p> <p>Reform of the working plan system is bringing new practices into line with new policy as opposed to previously where old practices responded to an old implicit policy (WPST, 1998).</p> <p>Approaches being developed are based on consultation with key stakeholder groups and assessment of strategic needs of a range of different stakeholders.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more supportive and cohesive social environment 	<p>Support to self-help groups under development by NGOs working in partnership with KFD. This is leading to growing involvement of women in public decision-making processes.</p> <p>Development of federations of VFCs – strengthening their capacity to provide independent voice for change to practice.</p> <p>Development of new relationships between governmental and non-governmental organisations for the more effective delivery of services.</p> <p>Development of capacity of local NGOs to work in service support roles (on-going).</p> <p>Investigation into possible relationships between new civil society institutions (VFCs) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (investigation still on a very tentative and limited scale).</p> <p>Testing of new approaches for more inclusive and empowered VFCs (gender and equity programme and PFMPs).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More secure access to financial resources 	<p>Investigation by the Conservator of Forests into financing arrangements through agricultural banks for VFC plans.</p> <p>Much more needs to be done here – including looking at financial sustainability of VFCs; mechanisms for devolving forest management funds to VFCs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to high-quality education, information, 	<p>Regular programme of case studies (now to be published more widely); project-focused newsletter.</p> <p>PFMP focused on developing high quality information about social and natural systems derived through participatory planning processes between local people and</p>

technologies and training and better nutrition and health	<p>KFD; sharing of local knowledge on resource base between forest users.</p> <p>Training of staff and VFC members in new participatory planning skills, leadership skills for women.</p> <p>Communications strategy focused on developing improved access to information for different groups of stakeholders.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better access to facilitating infrastructure 	<p>Supply of inputs such as seedlings. However, need for more work on devolving infrastructure such as nurseries to VFCs and other local organisations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A policy and institutional environment which supports multiple livelihood strategies and promotes equitable access to competitive markets for all 	<p>Focus on process change – led to development of new forest management systems. Potential fundamental impact on the way forests are managed and for whom. Recognition of multiple stakeholders and differential dependencies. Development of systems to negotiate and resolve at the level of the forest different stakeholder interests – i.e. processes to manage conflict and trade-offs. However, as stated above these changes are tentative and fragile.</p> <p>Trialing of new approaches to management and marketing of NTFPs with increased benefits flowing to NTFP collectors; policy debate on institutional arrangements for NTFP management and marketing.</p> <p>Working plans provision of forum for strategic debate on key market issues – fuelwood subsidies; supply of raw materials for distant users (including artisans, industry etc.). Working plans as a major entry point to fundamental change across the whole Department and not just within the project circles; provision for citizen involvement in definition of working plan strategy (WPST, 1998).</p> <p>Review and reform of Karnataka Forest Act – informed by experience from the project circles.</p>

7.2 Lessons

At one level change along a path towards more inclusive and secure access to forest products has started. This change is so fragile and vulnerable that it is unclear whether it can be sustained, if there is not continued support and facilitation from outside.

The difficulties of facilitating change within an organisation that at many levels is resistant cannot be underestimated. There are significant major barriers that need to be overcome, as described by Saxena (n.d), many of which cannot be overcome by a project pitched in one part of the Forest Department with limited mandate to develop the necessary relationships. Clearly, there needs to be engagement at the political level.

Returning to Figure 2 and following the analysis of empirical experience it is clear that change within only one of these five elements will not bring the changes required in livelihoods. Sequential change in any one of these elements will also lead to difficulty and barriers to further development. In essence, action needs to be focused at each of these levels, with the ability to know when to support and when to ‘tread-water’. The implications for facilitation of such approaches are the need for flexibility and responsiveness both from those facilitating and from the donor. This in its turn requires significant changes in structures, systems and style of operation within the donor itself.

What emerges from experience is the absolute importance of engaging at senior management and Governmental level (state and central) in order to build the enabling political environment in which change can be fostered. Money does not buy these relationships but a deep understanding of the

sector, the culture and the political environment all help to facilitate the development of relationships based on mutual understanding. The lessons from this indicate that the use of aid conditionality or large amounts of funding are not necessary but it is necessary to develop strategic alliances with key players across a wide variety of institutional environments. Again, this takes us back to the five key sets of relationships and the need too to develop relationships with NGOs, and the private sector. Coalitions of different organisational relationships need to be brokered.

As was stated at the beginning of this paper, there are significant opportunities for cross-learning from WGFP to other public sector reform processes and vice-versa. Indeed, the purpose of this paper is to share an analysis of the experience of trying to transform processes and coping with resistance from the structures. Because reform is difficult and slow there is a need to provide long-term support to change through a careful and phased approach e.g. in WGFP the first phase was focused on opening up the space for change with some process change. If there is to be any further support to the processes underway, change would have to shift to those elements of organisational change and wider institutional change that are currently hampering the transformation of the sector. The recent update of sustainable livelihood experience by Ashley and Carney (1999) emphasises the importance of this where they state: ‘prematurely disengaging from current activities is counterproductive and will not maximise the value of investments’. There may, however, be a counter-argument that the road has been travelled as far as is possible and a dead-end reached. However, in change processes it would be surprising to have achieved success at this stage within such a difficult environment and from a starting point of serious institutional problems.

An incremental and measured approach allows relationships to be developed within a controlled environment and identification of appropriate entry-points as they emerge. Although it is clear that reform is difficult and slow, it is clear too that reform is necessary. This is particularly the case in a sector where the role of the state in management of forest land will remain and thus the impact of its actions on access to resources and securing of livelihoods will also remain. Therefore the need to work with state institutions to improve the institutional arrangements for management remains an imperative. This is particularly the case if there are going to be significant local-level winners in terms of securing the forest-dependent aspects of their livelihoods.

In WGFP greater focus needs to be placed on the five critical elements of relationships. In order to achieve this there needs to be change within the delivery agency (in this case both governmental and non-governmental); change within civil society institutions and change within the political (enabling) environment/agency. Without support to each element change in one part will lead to resistance and frustration if there is not change in other parts.

7.3 Is there a golden bullet?

Despite the variety of experience, much of it emphasising diversity, many development agencies and planners are seeking instruments (or blueprints) to be able to mainstream the process in various sectors and countries. This search for higher level ‘blueprints’ is driven by the need to enable funding agencies and development professionals to function using replicable and sustainable tools than can easily be monitored. However, can the reality of change be captured by a single model?

We have sought to argue, and demonstrate, that:

- The search for blueprints is inappropriate (change cannot easily be boxed into blueprints) – there is no ‘golden bullet’;
- The use of institutional change ‘models’ can be helpful to make sense of reported experience and to guide change, but such models cannot be used as blueprints; and above all;

- Process change is a long journey which requires certain critical principles to be maintained, and where signposts and menus of options can assist with choices which have to be made along the route.

A final note of caution, change over access to forest resources is not won over night and the levels of resistance and inertia to change are extremely high. Support to transforming structures and processes needs to be provided in a long-term context where the difficulties and struggles can be placed against the potential for long-term and sustained change in the security of forest-dependent livelihoods.

Appendix 1: Comparison of forest management systems and their organisational and managerial implications

The new approach is not dissimilar to the traditional approach to forest management in India, but sharply in contrast to the scheme-based approaches which have operated in the recent past. The differences between the three approaches are set out below and summarised in Table A1.1:

- Traditionally, management was based on a document called a **Forest Working Plan**, prepared for a contiguous area of forest. This document was prepared by experts (senior and experienced forest officials) and based on empirical survey of ground conditions and analysis of demand. The objective of forest management was sustainable yield and this determined the prescriptions of the Working Plan. The sole agency responsible for the implementation of the Working Plan and the protection and regulation of the forest was the State Forest Department.
- **Scheme-driven forestry** followed the breakdown of state funding for working plan forestry.²⁴ Increasing funds were provided from schemes where the primary objective was employment generation and welfare provision and under which Forest department staff sought to fund forest asset creation. These schemes were not based on empirical site-specific data, but on centralised models. In practice, the officer had a product and had to search for a suitable client/site.
- **Multi-purpose, multi-client forestry** was promoted following the new Forest Policy of 1988. Although the overall conservation objective remains, the new policy precludes the return to traditional working plans forestry, since there is no longer a simple objective and a single implementing agency. However, the Forest Policy introduce new agencies, new rights and new relationships and, necessarily, these are inconsistent with previous strategies, structures and systems.

²⁴ The problem was not the plan, but the funding gap, which in time led to a loss of credibility. Where funds were available, the plan was usually followed, often there were no funds for proposed plans or funds were cut half-way through a planting programme such that there was no money available for replanting failures

Table A1.1 Changes in forest management approaches

Political environment (strategic/policy framework)			
Forest Management approach	Traditional working plans	Forestry scheme	New working plans (currently under development by Project)
Forest sector objectives	Conservation State revenue Industrial supply	Employment Welfare provision Asset creation	Conservation Joint management to meet local needs Market supply
Client	Government industry	Labour Investment	Local people (priority) Biodiversity and environment (priority) distant users (secondary)
Role of forest department	Organising and controlling supply Protection of forest	Mobilisation of labour Creating new assets	Facilitation of institutions (VFCs and others) which jointly – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan ● Fund ● Manage forest assets

The new Forest Policy recognises the role of the local user and allows for the local user, in the form of a representative Village Forest Committee, to share in the benefits of forest harvest in return for clearly defined responsibilities. This approach requires ‘bottom-up site-specific joint planning’ between the VFC and the Forest Department, with the VFC representing local interests and the Forest Department representing the wider interests of the community and the society as whole. This is of itself a radical change. A new institution has been created, with all the associated problems of ‘representation’ and ‘voice’ to plan for an asset out of which a new set of benefit flows will be realised and distributed and with the additional need to establish a new working relationship with the Forest Department.

Bottom-up site-specific plans, however well-prepared through a participatory process, do not of themselves allow for prioritisation between plans, nor for conflict resolution between conflicting plans. The problem is not just one of sorting out demarcation disputes between villages. For most of the forest, there is as yet no agency other than the Forest Department. However, as the new agencies (i.e. the VFCs) grow (i.e. products become available) they are inevitably in conflict with the old role and strategy of the Forest Department.

For both bureaucratic and biological reasons, operations were planned from a Forest Department perspective. The structure of the Forest Department had originally been designed based on need (size of forest areas to be managed and harvested) and equal workload in order to maximise efficiency and reduce costs. For example, harvesting was undertaken in an orderly sequence throughout the forest, in order to ensure sustainable yields and to minimise costs. Likewise, the allocation of funding was based on the structure of the Forest Department, on the assumption that structure reflected need and a fair workload. However, in practice, and especially following the change in objectives and policy, these assumptions no longer held true. If the new forest policy had not created new agencies and stakeholders, it would have been a relatively easy matter to reorganise the Forest department to reflect new objectives and priorities and to equalise workloads.

Joint planning by the Forest department and the newly created VFCs required new processes, new systems and new skills. Overall it required a new ‘understanding’, or shared vision, under which joint planning could be enacted.

Detailed site-specific decentralised planning requires a framework. This framework must be strategic in nature, since if it were to be prescriptive then there would no scope for local objectives and preferences and there would be no incentive for local involvement and participation. The features of such an approach are summarised below (Table A1.2) and provide a comparison to previous approaches.

Table A1.2 Changes in the planning framework (internal systems, shared understanding)

Types of planning processes	Traditional working plans	Forestry scheme	New working plans (currently under development by Project)
Planning timeframe	Long-term	Short-term	Medium-term
Forest management objectives	Sustainable yields of few products (mainly timber) from ‘normal’ forests Supply orientation	Fixed targets to meet demand Demand orientation	Sustainable yields of multiple products from variable forest, Supply orientation
Objectives set at level of:	Working circle (area of territory with the same objective for management)	Centre or state	Multiple levels Division, range, village, forest, site (whatever is appropriate to client group and management objective of particular product)
Planning process	Top-down, planned at working plan level with integrated site-specific prescriptions based on technical guidelines	Top-down, highly centralised at state or centre Based on fixed models and standard package for all sites	Top-down , strategic planning at division level to reflect policy with consultation on priorities Integrated with bottom-up, decentralised participatory planning of activities with range of local clients at variable sites. Technical guidance
Plan format	Single working plan	Scheme guidelines and models	Different levels of plan according to agency
Relationship to local clients	Limited Accountability to senior staff	Employer of daily labour Accountability to centre/funder	Partnership Accountability to clients and public
Monitoring and measurement	Silvicultural measurements in forest	Administrative and financial accounting	Accountability both to clients and to strategy

The features of the new planning systems are summarised and discussed below. At this stage, however, it is important to note that changes in local government were beginning to affect forest planning at the strategic level. As decentralised planning and funding expanded at the District level, and under increasingly democratic control, the isolation of the forest sector becomes more anachronistic and harder to justify.

Changes in the planning systems, effectively the interface between the forest department and their immediate partners required adjustments within the Forest department as well as by the communities affected. These changes focused on skills, style and relationships, staffing and technology as well as internal systems, such as budgeting and funding (Table A1.3)

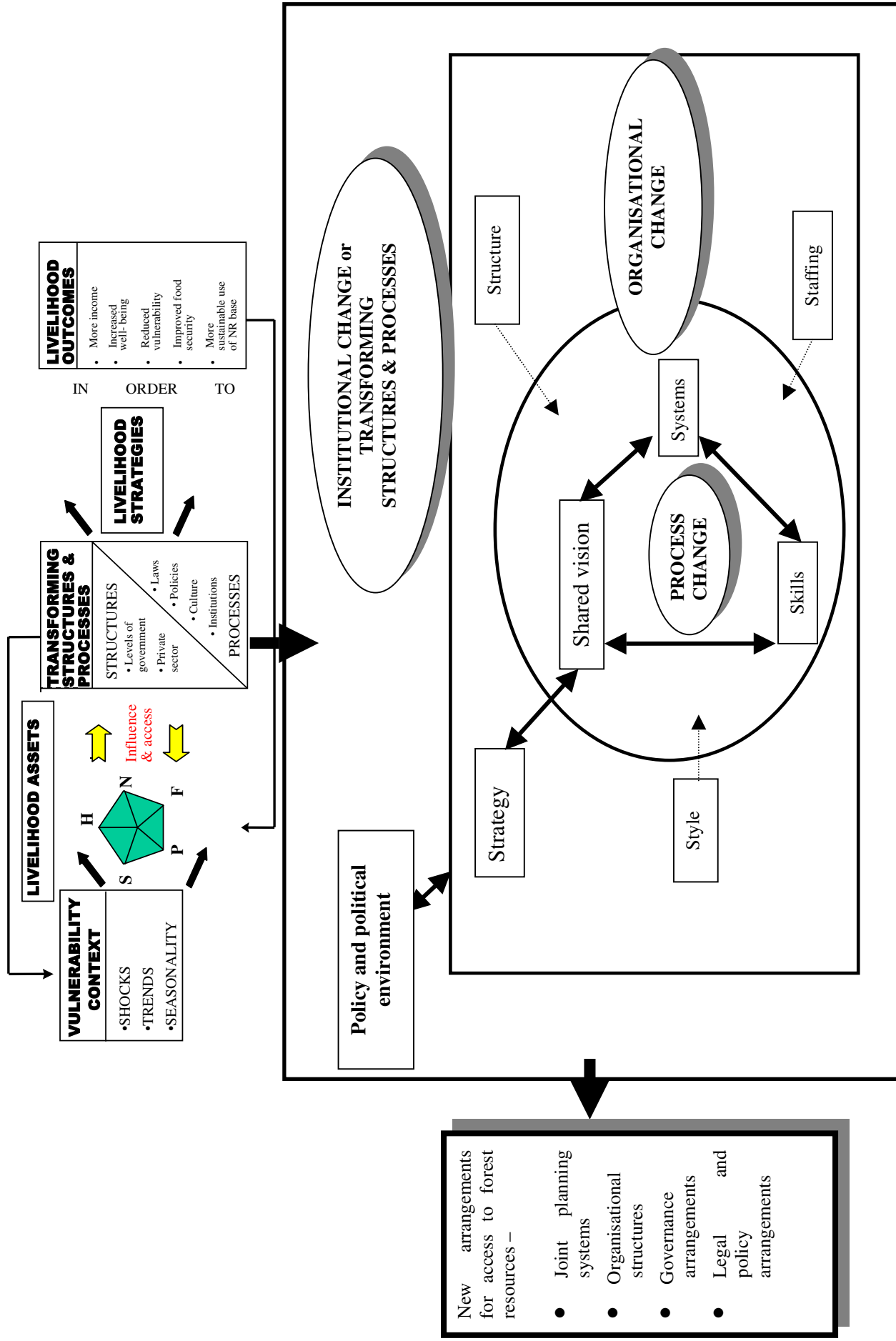
Table A1.3 Forest department organisation (skills, style, staffing)

Forest department organisation (skills, style, staffing)			
	Traditional working plans	Forestry schemes	New working plans (currently under development by Project)
Role and skills of FD staff	Professional foresters Technical competence	Administrators Financial management and budget control	Professional foresters Technical competence Social skills Facilitation skills
Budget	'Non-plan' budget i.e. funds to support silvicultural aspects of sound forest management	Plan schemes – funds only to support identified schemes (generally focused on investment in resource – planting) and not for all aspects of forest management	Many sources: Forest Department PRI (Panchayati Raj Institutions) Schemes
Technology	Traditional (maps, survey etc.)	Not required	New technology (MIS, GIS, satellite imagery etc. New silvicultural and research technologies Reapplication of traditional tools – use of maps, inventory techniques

Appendix 2 Stakeholder analysis

Types of stakeholder agencies and relationships	Definitions	Examples
Clients/users	Primary client or end-user	Members of a village forest committee Market users of timber and NTFPs Society-environment Biodiversity
	Direct or intermediary clients These organisations have direct dealings with the delivery agency. The project intention is to change the output of this client group. However, such a change in itself would not justify the project	The VFC as a committee The front line staff of the Forest Department
Delivery agency	Contracted to deliver agreed outputs to clients	Forest Department NGO – e.g. MYRADA providing training support to front-line staff
Partners (of the delivery agency)	Associated delivery agencies with shared vision and a role in setting goals and objectives This may be (jointly) contracted or sub-contracted (to main delivery agency), but is defined at a higher level than for a sub-contractor	NGOs who assist with forming or supporting new VFCs e.g. IDS providing support to development of self-help groups and empowerment activities for women members of VFCs
Sub-contractors	Deliver agreed inputs to delivery agencies or sometimes directly to clients Not involved in decision-making, setting goals or objectives	Government training institute providing training in new approaches to front-line staff Private company helping with MIS/GIS Logging co-operative
Enabling agency	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of agencies and making ‘things’ happen • Ensuring functional relationships between agencies (markets, contracts, information) • Governance and evaluation • Setting standards • Ensuring funds are allocated <p>Some of these functions can and should be separated e.g. setting standards could become the responsibility of a separate agency</p>	Forest Department (circle level) State Government Local Government – through Panchayati Raj system Funder/donor

Appendix 3 The 7 'S' Model & its relations to the DFID livelihoods framework



- New arrangements for access to forest resources –
- Joint planning systems
 - Organisational structures
 - Governance arrangements
 - Legal and policy arrangements

Appendix 4: The Action Learning Cycle for development of new planning relationships ('A') between forest users and Forest Department staff

(Source: adapted from learning cycle in Agritex, 1998)

Please go to the following url for Appendix 4:

<http://www.oneworld.org/odi/publications/wp132app4.pdf>

Table A3.1 Process and products of a participatory approach to forest management

Stage		Process and tools		Product
	Planning for the start	Area profiles	Rapid appraisal with field staff – based on their knowledge of the area which they work Maps	Work plan of prioritised activities based on an assessment of need and interest
B U I L D I N G R E L A T I O N S H I P S	Entering the community	Building trust	Introductory meetings	Developing trust, mutual understanding and commitment to continue
	Understanding the context – people, institutions and resources	Forest user understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest group analysis and dependency on forest – livelihood analysis • Social resource mapping • Wealth ranking and forest dependence 	Understanding interest groups at the local level, dependency, influence and forest use; importance of forests in livelihoods; understanding existing local institutional framework and how to build on it
	Building relationships	Institutional understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Venn’ diagram (Local institutions) and how to build on them • Stakeholder perception mapping 	
		Forest understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest product matrix and prioritisation • Seasonal calendar – agricultural and forest • Identification of household/gender-based dependency on forest resources • Trend diagram – history of change in forest reasons 	Reasons for degradation of forest, different dependencies on forest – local and external (represented by forest dept.); state of the forest
N E G -	Negotiating outcomes, trade-offs, action planning	Problem analysis	Problem tree	Based on understanding developed, and discussion with different interest groups, an assessment of the problems faced by each interest group

O T I A T I N G		Objective setting	Objectives for each area of forest agreed based on understanding of forest use, problem analyses, differential need (local and external – represented by local users and forest dept. respectively); matching the objectives of Forest Policy at the level of the forest (guided by the strategic planning framework e.g. Working Plans)	
		Mandating the management organisation	Agreeing whether an existing local organisation can manage the forest or whether need to create a new organisation – in this case assisting development of village forest communities	
		Action planning and establishing the agreement	Opportunities analysis	Relating demand to supply, responsibilities and rules for use for both local people and forest dept. – putting ‘joint’ or ‘partnership’ into forest management; developing site specific plans for particular interventions
		Agreement of rules and responsibilities for use of forest		
I M P L E M E N T	Implementing	Activities	Assisting with managing and implementation Building local capacity to manage – building in equity and gender considerations Provisions of inputs – training..... Facilitating ‘coalitions’ with other organisations to supply services	
L E A R N I N G	Learning	Monitoring	Participatory monitoring systems – group progress indicators	Joint learning and change in practice and policy; measures of ‘quality’ understood and agreed; understanding when to change level of support – identification of indicators of a ‘robust’ relationship
			Review forums	
C H A N G E	New cycle	New cycle of support	On-going changes to support – based on feedback, reviews, outcomes of monitoring	Responsive support varied according to needs of partnership – from intensive at start to ‘hands-off’ when local partner managing resource and ‘social’ context effectively

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