Unpacking partnerships to inform climate-compatible development

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Figure 1 - Harvesting forest products in Zambia

Key Messages:

- Interest in cross-sectoral partnerships has increased in recognition of the potential in bringing diverse actors together to address complex social and environmental issues
- Partnerships usually focus on shared goals or purposes
- Partnerships can address regulatory, participatory, resource and learning gaps across sectors
- Successful partnerships depend on a combination of partner, process and context-related factors
- Future partnerships for CCD will need to determine which partners are most relevant to address each gap
- A variety of potential success factors need to be reviewed in each context when planning and executing a partnership aiming to advance CCD

Partnerships and Climate Compatible Development (CCD)

Cross-sectoral partnerships are necessary to allow developing nations to harness the evolving opportunities presented by climate finance, and to progress towards climate compatible development (CCD). CCD aims to minimise the harm caused by climate impacts, while maximising human development opportunities presented by a low emissions, more resilient future[2]. However, the functioning and composition of the new multi-stakeholder partnerships that these opportunities necessitate, between communities and other public and private sector stakeholders, remain poorly understood. As part of the CDKN funded research project: 'Assessing institutional and governance partnerships for climate-compatible development in sub-Saharan Africa' that is working across the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, this briefing note summarises current knowledge on partnerships drawing on case study examples from in-country workshops, semi-structured interviews and community-level research. It identifies key lessons from existing partnership initiatives that can better inform future national planning and development support for CCD.

Figure 2 - Staff of the Kamoa Copper Project (DRC) and Ecolivelihoods talk to farmers about conservation agriculture initiatives

Rationale for establishing partnerships

Partnerships have become increasingly important in recognition of the shortcomings of single-sector approaches to address complex social and environmental problems[4]. The rationale is that by developing partnerships, strengths can be harnessed from different actors or groups of actors, leading to outcomes that are not otherwise possible. Four groups of 'gaps' have been identified which can be addressed through partnerships[5: 176] (Figure 3) and this can be used to frame the analysis of case study partnerships.

Regulatory gaps • Potential to address governance failure, market failure and good intentions failure • Improved governance for complex metaproblems	**Participatory gaps** • Promotion of inclusiveness • Prioritising stakeholder demands • Increased diversity of knowledge and potential of synergies across sectors
Resource gaps • Transfer of tangible resources e.g. finances • Transfer of intangible resources e.g. skills, expertise, knowledge	**Learning gaps** • Creation of new knowledge • Creation of new rules, practices and technologies

Figure 3 - Four potential types of gap which can be addressed by partnerships[5]

Examples of different partnerships addressing these gaps are widespread. For example, producers of environmentally sound technologies partnered with local actors from the public and NGO sectors when transferring technology to Kenya, Rwanda and Lesotho[6]. The technology producers provided the financial and technical resources for the project, while local actors addressed resource gaps by providing information on the legal and regulatory framework, and the social structure. NGOs can also address participatory gaps by allowing access to minority groups and local communities. Mining companies often build partnerships with NGOs for a number of reasons: 'companies are attracted to partnerships with not-for-profits for a number of reasons: heading off trouble, accelerating innovation, increasing the ability to foresee shifts in demand, shaping legislation and setting industry standards'[4: 192]. Box 1 summarises the Lumwana Agri-Food Innovation Partnership in Zambia, which involves the private sector and the state. Private sector involvement rarely addresses the participatory gap but in most cases is viewed as addressing the resource gap, bringing financial resources and expertise[5,7].

Defining partnerships

Definitions of partnership are diverse. Table 1 highlights the broad variation in 'types' of partnership and the actors involved. Some authors use the generic term 'partnership'[e.g. 8,9] while others categorise particular types of partnership, e.g. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)[10,11] or use particular terminology e.g. Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs)[12,13]. Generally, partnerships operate across sectors, involving actors from the public and private spheres as well as NGOs and civil society. Darlow and Newby [14] include 'community' as a partner in their definition. Some case study projects also explicitly refer to the community as a partner (e.g. the Campfire Association, Zimbabwe, a Community Based Natural Resource Management Project (Box 2)). In other examples, the community could be more accurately defined as a project beneficiary, as they have little or no decision making power.

A common theme across the definitions is the idea of a shared goal or purpose within a partnership. Some authors suggest partnerships should be 'non-heirarchical'[9: 75], involve the sharing of expertise, resources, risks and rewards[10] or focus on a central cause or issue which one actor or actor group cannot solve alone[15]. An important distinction to make in addressing partnerships is that of a **stakeholder** versus a **partner**. These terms are often used interchangeably but this research defines a **stakeholder** as anyone who affects or is affected by a decision or action[1] whereas a **partner** is someone who plays an active role in shaping and delivering a project[3]. Terms such as **collaboration, cooperation**, **alliance** and **coalition** are often used in the literature around the same theme. Some authors distinguish these from partnerships as being less formal, less stable [e.g. 8], less structured, short-term and involving a lesser degree of interdependence[16]; others use the terms interchangeably [e.g. 19]. Such lack of clarity in terminology could result in confusion regarding the establishment of partnerships and the expectations of partners.

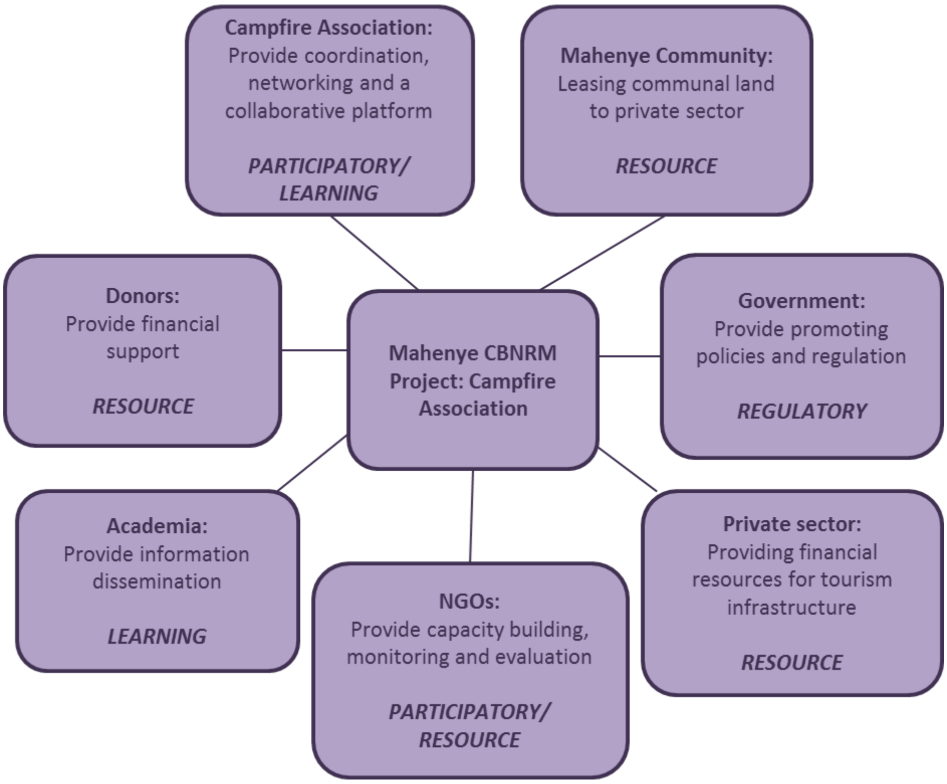
Partnership case study: Lumwana Agri-Food Innovation Programme

Lumwana mine in Zambia has partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in order to promote cash cropping amongst smallholder farmers and link farmers to markets. Government extension services provide technical expertise to address a non-financial resource gap, and can access the smallholder farmers and communities to address a participatory gap. The Lumwana mining company provides financial resources and capacity building where it is needed. Lumwana also partner with a local youth-based NGO to provide dairy cows for young women farmers and a bank to support their micro-finance scheme.

One of the cows provided to young women farmers for dairy production

Box 1- Partnership case study of Lumwana Mine's Agri-Food Innovation Programme in Zambia

Partnership case study: Mahenye CBNRM Project Campfire Association



Box 2 – Partnership case study of the Campfire Association CBNRM project in Zimbabwe highlighting the partners and the gaps they each address (in italicised capitals) as per the classification in Figure 3 (data collected during the Mozambique/Zimbabwe in-country workshop, June, 2012)

Table 1 - A selection of partnership types, actors and definitions

Type of partnership and actors involved	Definition	Author
Generic Partnership - government, civil society and/or private sector	'More or less formal arrangements between two or more parties from various sectors (government, civil society and/or private sector) around (at least partly) shared goals, in the expectation that each party will gain from the arrangement'	Arevalo and Ros-Tonen (2009: 735)
Generic Partnership - state, market and civil society	'Collaborative arrangements in which actors from two or more spheres of society (state, market and civil society) are involved in a non-hierarchical process, and through which these actors strive for a sustainability goal'	Van Huijstee et al. (2007: 75)
Generic partnership – 'diverse actors'	'Partnership is a dynamic relationship among diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labour based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner. Partnership encompasses mutual influence, with a careful balance between synergy and respective autonomy, which incorporates mutual respect, equal participation in decision making, mutual accountability and transparency'	Brinkerhoff (2002: 21)
Partnership - can be classified as public–private partnerships, company–community partnerships, NGO–community partnerships or multi-sector partnerships	'An arrangement existing between two or more organisations [or individuals or institutions] in working towards a commonly defined goal'	Darlow and Newby (1997: 74)
Public-Private Partnership (PPP) – public and private sectors	'A cooperative venture between the public and private sectors built on the expertise of each partner that best meets clearly defined goals through the appropriate allocation of resources, risks and rewards'	Narrod et al. (2009:10)
Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP) or Cross Sector Partnerships (CSP) - investors, state actors and citizens	'Collaborations between investors, state actors and citizens (NGOs) where different actors share in defining or carrying out the purposes of investment'	Forsyth (2997:1685)
Cross-sector social-oriented partnerships (CSSP) - business-nonprofit, business-government, government-nonprofit, and trisector	'Cross-sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis'	Selsky and Parker (2005: 850)

What makes a partnership successful?

Several factors have been identified as potentially affecting the success of a partnership (Table 2). The success of a partnership can be measured through a focus on **outcomes**, **process** or **both**[16].

Outcome-based success depends on the aim of the partnership, and may include e.g. an increase in productivity or efficiency, social equity, empowerment or conflict avoidance[16]. In the case of CCD, indicative outcomes would be the delivery of development benefits as well as of mitigation of and/or adaptation to, climate change. For example, Joint Forest Management programmes in Zambia aim to reduce deforestation while providing development benefits to local communities through the sustainable use of forest products and adaptation options by forests acting as food safety nets during times of weather related stress (Figure 1)[17].

Process-based success might include the impact of the partnership on human or social capital as a result of engagement in the partnership. For example, the Kamoa Sustainable Livelihoods Project in the DRC (Figure 2) offers training for communities in high value crop cultivation and conservation agriculture techniques, thereby increasing human capital as a result of their engagement. This measure of success is likely to be more appropriate for partnerships which are relatively newly established[18].

The relative importance of each factor will vary according to the partnership in question and each partnership faces different risks. For example, a lack of trust between private and public sectors can undermine PPPs in Africa through each partner trying to reduce their initial outlays and risks[11]. Multi-stakeholder fora and a role for mediating institutions are suggested in order to increase transparency. Business Partners for Development indicate that the delivery of each partner's aims is the key to success when engaging the private sector in partnership[4]. Other authors[19] refer to the difficulties in NGOs and government bodies understanding their partners' different institutional norms and governance structures. They suggest appropriate decision-making mechanisms are needed, alongside time for building understanding between partners in order to overcome these difficulties. The importance of leadership qualities such as the ability to motivate, empower and develop relationships when communities are included in a partnership are also important[20]. Major challenges of partnerships include overcoming the inherent power imbalances and reconciling diverging interests[8]. However, a diverse range of partners can bring a greater variety of 'non-financial resources' such as knowledge and skills[20].

Table 2 - Factors that can affect the success of partnerships
(adapted from Laing et al.[16], Lasker and Weiss[20] and Kefasi et al.[13])

Group of factors	Indicative questions
Partner-related	What partners are involved?
	How many partners are involved?
	Are all interested parties represented?
	What is the power balance between partners?
	What is the leadership structure?
	Are there synergies between non-financial resources?
Process-related	What is the scope of the partnership?
	Are values/visions shared?
	How interdependent are partners?
	Is the process transparent?
	Is there a high level of trust between partners?
	Are partners committed to the process?
	Does mode of involvement allow for contribution of relevant skills & expertise?
Context-related	Are the available resources and funding adequate?
	Will the allocated timeframe be adequate?
	How does the legislative framework support or constrain activities?
	Are benefits and/or incentives offered for fulfilment of obligations?

Zambia and DRC in-country workshop discussions reiterated many partnership challenges[3]:

- Representatives from the private sector commented that the pace they work at is very different from that of the government, which makes the operation of partnerships difficult
- NGO representatives highlighted concerns over power imbalances with the private sector due to differences in financial resource availability
- All participants emphasised sharing non-financial resources such as skills and expertise as one of the key advantages of establishing partnerships
- Transparency within the partnership was seen as more important than who was involved
- Policies which encourage partnerships were highlighted as crucial for mutually-beneficial and equal cross-sector partnerships

Group discussions at the Zambia/DRC in-country workshop

Box 3 - Comparing the literature to the situation 'on-the-ground' (data collected at a Zambia/DRC in-country workshop, April 2012)

Conclusion

Cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships present a promising approach to enable developing countries to harness the evolving opportunities presented by climate finance and progress towards CCD. In order to make partnerships successful for the implementation of CCD initiatives, definitions and terminology need to be reviewed, clarified and specified in the context of CCD itself. This can reduce misunderstandings and aid partners in understanding their respective roles and duties. In particular, the role of communities as partners, stakeholders or beneficiaries needs to be reviewed in each particular project in order to manage expectations of all stakeholders and reduce the risk of marginalising such groups through their exclusion from decision-making processes. When initiating partnerships, Table 2 provides a guide to issues which will need to be carefully considered and addressed. Deciding which partners are most relevant to fill regulatory, participatory, resource and learning gaps is a crucial first step. Determining the context-specific factors is also vital in order to identify challenges and opportunities for the project. At each stage of the process, communication channels need to be open. Transparency between partners has been highlighted as an essential requirement of partnership development (Box 3).

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