**Framing Paper**

**Alternatives and Options - What? Where? When? TC Modalities Under Scrutiny** by Shekhar Singh

## Objective

The objective of this study is to indicate possible solutions to some of the more universal and critical problems that TC modalities have been diagnosed with. The focus would be on analysing the concept of 'stakeholder ownership' and identifying methods by which the problems associated with achieving such an ownership of projects and activities can be overcome. This study will not attempt a fresh analysis of technical cooperation projects and initiatives (TCPIs) in order to identify these problems, but will depend on existing analysis and on the findings of other segments of this study, in order to build up such a list. Given the constraints of time and resources, the study would primarily focus on TCPIs related to nature and natural resources.

## Specific Tasks

The major questions this study would seek to answer and the main issues it would seek to address are listed below. These questions and issues have been formulated on the basis of existing analysis of TCPIs. If required, they will be modified on the basis of further analysis.

What is meant by 'stakeholder ownership'? Does it imply that TCPI objectives should be totally determined by the "owners" and "stakeholders" (which owners and which stakeholders?)? Should "ownership" be determined solely (as it is often done) on the basis of government concurrence or should other stakeholders also be involved? At what stage and level (planning, approval, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, etc.), in what issues, and in what manner, should stakeholders be involved? What, if any, should be the influence of global concerns, scientific concerns and donor/cooperating agency concerns?

Clearly a TCPI, if it is to be effective and sustainable, must be 'owned' by the stakeholders and, where there are multiple stakeholders, owned proportionately by all of them. But what does 'ownership' mean in this context?

As a start it must mean that TCPIs ensure stakeholders' ownership in terms of:

- Objectives - The objectives of the TCPI must be such that they not only reflect the felt needs of the stakeholders but also their perceived priorities.
- Process of design and planning The design of the TCPI, even the need for one, must be decided in partnership with the stakeholders and through an informed exchange of ideas, after considering various options.
- Method of implementation - TCPIs must be implemented in a manner that has been agreed to by the stakeholders and with the involvement of the stakeholders themselves.

But, who are these stakeholders? Clearly, everyone who is affected by the TCPI, directly or indirectly, beneficially or adversely, is a stakeholder. Therefore, each TCPI can have one or more of at least three types of stakeholders.

First, there are the intended beneficiaries, who include the direct and the indirect beneficiaries. The direct, intended, beneficiaries (DIBs) are the people of the country or region who are recipients of the TCPI and for whose benefit it is supposedly designed. The indirect, intended, beneficiaries (IIBs) are the people and governments of the donor societies and, sometimes, the world at large, whose desire (and sometimes need) to achieve something in another or in a specific part of the world is presumably satisfied by the TCPI. This is especially relevant in projects dealing with environmental issues like biodiversity conservation.

Secondly, there are the intermediaries , some of whom are also the unintended beneficiaries (UBs). The intermediaries include the donor and other agencies that facilitate the process as a part of their mandate, without necessarily benefiting from it. The unintended beneficiaries among the intermediaries includes the consultants and consulting institutions, and other commercial interests, who while facilitating the process also benefit from it in terms of fees and profits.

Thirdly, there are those who pay for the TCPI, or are adversely affected by it. Those who pay include those, mainly in the donor countries, whose tax money is being used to fund TCPIs. There are also others who pay an opportunity cost, because the money their government is using to fund TCPIs is, consequently, unavailable to meet their own felt needs. Then there are many, mainly in the recipient countries, whose lives are adversely affected by the TCPI, either because they are victims of unanticipated effects of TCPIs, or because their deprivation is seen as a 'justifiable cost'.

But who speaks for these different stakeholders? And how legitimate are their voices and concerns? Clearly, the direct, intended, beneficiaries, and those adversely affected, are the ones who have the biggest stake in the TCPI. However, it is not always easy to determine who legitimately speaks on their behalf. And within them, there are many interest groups.

There are the different strata of society, there are women and children. Who speaks for each of them?

In the past, it has been assumed that national governments represent a synthesis of national views. However, where these governments are not democratically elected, this is a doubtful assumption. Even where they are democratically elected, a shift in focus from representative democracy to participatory democracy might seriously undermine the strength of what such governments are saying.

Many TCPIs have floundered because of popular, civil-society, resistance and rejection. Various bilateral and multilateral agencies have earned a reputation of being anti people and undemocratic, because their programmes, while having the approval of national governments, are unpopular with the people. There are also states that are collapsing or have collapsed. Yet, often, such states need TCPIs more urgently than ever.

The situation is even more complicated where the perspective of direct, intended, beneficiaries, (national governments and other national stakeholders) is at variance with those of the Indirect, intended, beneficiaries (donor governments and agencies, and global perspectives). Here, there is a serious mismatch, for the 'givers' want to give something different to what the 'receivers' want to receive (or, where the monkey wants to persuade the cat to eat bananas!).

In this matter, often one of two extreme viewpoints are professed. Either the right of the donor to give money for what it thinks proper is held up as legitimate or, conversely, the right of the recipient to decide what it wants to receive is seen as primary.

In reality, different countries (and different TCPIs) have a different profile. In some cases the donor (almost) totally decides what the TCPI is going to be, either on the basis of what it considers in the best interest of the recipient or on the basis of what it considers to be in its own best interest, or both. In other cases, the TCPI is almost totally as designed by the recipient, with a few concessions to the views of the donor. In the latter case, perhaps the interest of the donor is adequately served just by the fact that there is a TCPI, irrespective of its nature.

Apart from the donors and the recipients, the intermediaries, especially the unintended beneficiaries, are also known to influence the design and implementation of TCPIs, both through the donor and the recipient. Given the fact that they are the unintended beneficiaries, their voice lacks legitimacy, particularly when it enunciates their own interest. However, current TCPI modalities seem to be inordinately influenced by them.

Therefore, it is necessary to evolve modalities by which the voices of all major stake holders can be heard and given due weight. Such modalities must have the flexibility to deal with different types of situations and to

use varying methods of dialogue and negotiations, as appropriate to the context.

If TCPIs need to be fully or primarily owned by the intended beneficiaries, should most (all?) TC efforts primarily (wholly?) be capacity development efforts (remembering the adage about distributing fish versus teaching how to fish!)?

It is not enough for major stakeholders, the intended direct beneficiaries, to "own" the TCPI, they must also own, and in a manner that is sustainable, the gains of the TCPI. But this can only be so if the TCPI, instead of "doing things" for the recipients, focussed on developing their individual and institutional capacities to do these things for themselves. They could also focus on creating an enabling (systemic) environment or, better still, on helping the recipients to also develop the capacity to themselves create such an enabling environment.
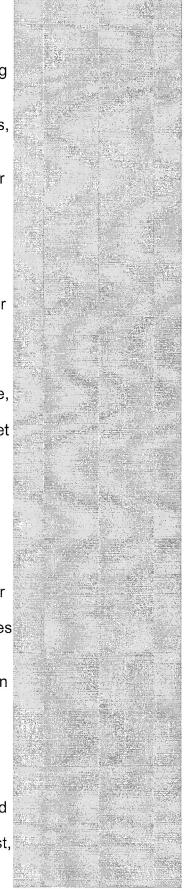
However, there has to be a starting point. There has to be the capacity to create capacity. Some systems and institutions must exist in order for them to be strengthened. Individuals must have the basic capacities on which additional capacities can be built. The stark reality of a situation might not always provide adequate time and resources to start from scratch and build indigenously all the capacities that are required, to both implement needed activities and build further capacities. Therefore, a judicious balance has to be maintained between helping people learn how to do things themselves and yet ensuring that critical needs are met in time.

Is this an instance where "top down" is a better approach – first developing systemic capacity and then moving "down" to institutional and individual capacity?

Past experience suggests that developing individual capacities is not effective if there is no institutional support and appreciation for these capacities. Similarly, it is difficult for institutional capacities to develop or be effective, if the systemic environment is not conducive. On the other hand, there is also the need to determine capacity development priorities on the basis of grassroots experience and felt needs.

Also, there is the need to develop capacities, or at least the appreciation for certain types of capacities, at the highest levels in governments and other institutions. Unless this is done, there would neither be a demand for these capacities in subordinate institutions nor a legitimacy for their development and use.

Therefore, perhaps a mixed approach is required, where capacity assessments must start at the field and look at individual needs first and then move on to institutional and systemic needs. On the other hand, capacity development might need to follow the opposite route or, at best, be concurrent at all levels.

How far should TC initiatives be "local", especially in terms of their funding patterns, way of doing things, using local and traditional knowledge and capacity, and being site specific? How far do they need to establish a paradigm for doing things differently (hopefully in a better way) using external models rather than reinforcing local practices?

TC initiatives are often seen as socio-economic and cultural aberrations in their host countries. They typically represent "western" ways of doing things, using "western" levels of resources and "western" or "westernised" personnel.

Even where "western" methods and expertise are inherently superior, and this is not always the case, the sudden introduction of such methods and expertise often has adverse impacts.

The high levels of funding are usually unsustainable, once the project is over, and create a work culture that becomes useless without the resources that it has become accustomed to.

The country loses local expertise as they are disinclined to take up locally funded tasks and seek levels of remuneration that only international organisations can provide.

Perhaps the most critical impact of such an approach is the relative marginalisation of indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices. There is usually no effective interface between "western" knowledge and indigenous wisdom and, even where it could develop, there is little understanding or appreciation of it among the experts. Even the time frames and the method of work are not always conducive to the blending of the foreign and the indigenous.

**Methodology**

In General:

It is proposed to look at TCPIs supported by bilateral and multilateral agencies, and by NGOs, in Africa, Asia and South America. The TCPIs selected will be primarily those that address issues related to nature and natural resources (including water resources projects). This restriction is partly due to the shortage of time and resources, and partly because these are some of the most difficult types of projects to implement. Lessons learned from these would, therefore, be also applicable to other types of projects.

It is also proposed to focus on some multilateral and bilateral agencies and a few NGOs. The multilateral agencies to be focussed on would include the World Bank, UNDP, and UNESCO (MAB Programme). Among the bilateral agencies special attention would be paid to the Dutch Government, British DFID, Canadian IDA and Swedish IDA, and USAID. Among NGOs, Action Aid, WWF USA and International, and OXFAM would be looked at in detail.

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As this study aims to indicate solutions to some of the critical problems, it would focus primarily on successful projects and initiatives. It would select those that offer answers to some of the questions being addressed in the study. It would also focus on one country in South America (Brazil), one county in Asia (India) and a cluster of countries in Africa (Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda). An in-depth study of these countries would be carried out to understand what are the solutions and potential experiences of these countries offer in relation to the questions under discussion.

The study would be carried out with the help of colleagues in Delhi and in Africa and Brazil. The larger network of environment and development professionals would also be activated. As far as possible, the countries being focussed on would be visited by members of the study team and discussions held with a variety of institutions and individuals. A tentative list of institutions is given below:

## Tanzania

- Government of Tanzania, especially the Ministry of Tourism, Natural Resources and Environment, and Ministry of Finance.
- National Environment Management Council
- University of Dar es Salam, especially the Institute of Development
- Studies and the Gender Networking Programme
- Commission for Science and Technology
- Tanzania Forest Research Institute
- Serengeti Wildlife Research Institute
- Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania
- Other donors, NGOs and educational institutions

## Kenya

- National Environment Secretariat
- Kenya Wildlife Service
- Kenya Forestry Research Institute
- Ministry of Planning and National Development
- Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
- National Museums of Kenya
- East Africa Wildlife Society
- African Centre for Technology Studies
- Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
- Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
- Other donors, NGOs and educational institutions

## Uganda

- Department of Environment Protection
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

- Makerere University, Institute of Environment and Natural Resources
- Makerere Institute of Social Research
- National Environment Management Authority
- Uganda Forest Department
- Wildlife Clubs of Uganda
- Economics Research Centre
- Uganda Institute of Ecology
- Other donors, NGOs and educational institutions

**Brazil**

In Brazil I will be working with the help of Prof Paulo Friere of the Division of Ecological Sciences, Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), and would also be in touch with the Brazilian Teaching and Research Association in Ecology and Development (APED) and the Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas (SEBRAE). I will also be in touch with the government of Santa Catarina, the Association of Amazonian Universities and other NGOs, donors and eductional institutions.

The headquarters of some of the selected donor agencies and NGOs would also be visited and data collected and discussions held.
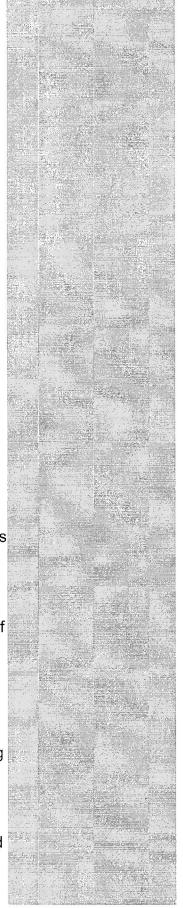
Electronic discussion groups would be activated and existing internet networks used to carry on the discussion on the selected issues. There would be a global "paging" of ideas and information that could have a bearing on the problems being analysed. The issues would also be discussed in a series of discussions organised in India, East Africa and Brazil. Donor agencies will also be contacted and some of the key persons interviewed to understand their perceptions. Similarly, interviews will be held with representatives of national governments and of other institutions and citizen groups.

In attempting to address some of the questions and issues listed , an effort will be made to understand the causes and implications of some of the critical problems that TCPIs have faced. This would be done primarily on the basis of existing assessments.

A matrix of the issues to be addressed would then be developed and projects would be selected from across the world that have successfully tackled one or more of these issues. By seeking possible answers from field experiences, It will be ensured that an effective process of "learning from past experience" is set into motion.

Specifically:

A sample of these projects would be analysed in greater detail to try and understand what they did differently and how 'universalisable' their approach is.

Other possible solutions that appear to be relevant to the issue will also be developed through discussion and analysis.

Finally, an optimal list of potential solutions will be developed by placing the identified problems and possible solutions into this matrix and determining which conditions (or sets of conditions) cause which of the identified problems and would support which of the proposed solutions.