COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Stuty Maskey
International Fellow - Nepal
World Forest Institute
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Background

Premise:
- Nepal – Foreign-Aid dependent country
- Donors have been advocating good-governance as a pre-condition for poverty reduction
- The emerging concept is – Collaborative Governance

- Collaborative Approach - Buzzword
- In the US – emergence of striking number of collaboratives
  - In Oregon:
    - 1992 # 1
    - 2015 # 25
Collaborative Governance?

- A governance mechanism that brings public and private stakeholders together in collective forums with public agencies to engage in consensus-oriented decision making

- Has influenced Policy Shifts and created space for public engagement in decision-making

- U.S. Policy experiment – Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP)
Types of Collaboratives in the US

- **Public Land Collaborative**: focuses only or primarily on federal forests or public lands
  
  E.g. Blue Mountains Forest Partnership, Lakeview Stewardship Group

- **All Land Collaborative**: mixed ownership landscapes wherein public and private land have equal importance
  
  E.g. Alsea Stewardship Group, Mary’s Peak Stewardship Group

This study focuses only on Public Land forest-collaboratives, including CFLRP
Areas of enquiry

This rising popularity of collaborative-governance raises some important questions:

• Does collaborative-governance fulfill the tenets of good governance?

• What are its limitations; and areas for further enquiry?

• How relevant and applicable is it in Nepal’s forestry?

• The purpose of this study is not to provide a complete alternative to the collaborative-governance approach but rather raise a note of caution about its limitations and warn against excessive reliance on this model as the ultimate strategy for natural resource management.
Process of enquiry

- Review of published peer-reviewed academic journals – Google Scholar and OSU portal

- Suggested articles, project reports, project websites referred by key resource persons

- Interaction over email, phone and in person with resources who either manage collaborative projects or are involved as researchers and extension-specialists
Limitations

- An exploratory exercise
- Need for deeper investigation
- Limited time and resources
- No primary data
Criteria for good governance

- Ownership
  - Participation
  - Influence

- Transparency
  - Public information
  - Clear rule of law

- Accountability
  - Delegation
  - Informal relations

- Clarity of Purpose
  - Clear Objectives
  - Expectations
Testing against the criteria of good governance

**Ownership**

*Assumption:* In CG, stakeholders become partners in forest management; therefore there is higher ownership and commitment to the activities.

- Reduction in number of litigations as there is buy-in from stakeholders.

*Findings:*
  - Yes. More successes than failures noted when evaluated on indicators of ownership and participation.
  - USFS reported reduction in litigation and appeals. E.g. Blues Mountains Report
Testing against the criteria of good governance

- **Ownership**

  **Critical review:**
  - Who participates in decision-making?
  - Power differences affect willingness to participate
  - Political influence
  - Consensus for decision-making leads to 'participation fatigue'
Testing against the criteria of good governance

- **Transparency**

**Assumption:** In CG, there is public information (esp. about decision-making process) and clear rule of law

**Findings:**
- Yes.
- Also verified from the websites of 4 collaboratives reviewed.
Testing against the criteria of good governance

- **Transparency**

**Critical review:**
- Agency unsure which ‘Hat’ to wear
- Overlapping legal mandates about agency’s collaboration e.g. NEPA
- Agency at arms-length for procedural requirements due to FACA-Fear
Testing against the criteria of good governance

- **Accountability**

  **Assumption:** Enhances not just vertical accountability but strengthens horizontal too through representation, information and education.

  **Findings:**
  - Yes the process does help to develop trust although is time consuming
  - Expanded accountability through informal and relational means
Testing against the criteria of good governance

• Accountability

Critical review:

- Stakeholders heavily consulted in planning but have limited role in implementation esp. in government-led collaboratives
- Multi party monitoring a requirement for CFLRP but not yet practiced
Testing against the criteria of good governance

**Clarity of Purpose**

*Assumption:* Each Collaborative collectively set their mission, goals, objectives, and outcomes. They work collectively to achieve the goals.

*Findings:*
  - Collaboratives have documented outputs and results
  - Consensus based decision-making can be time consuming

CFLRP Five National Indicators:
- Fire costs
- Jobs
- Leveraged funds
- Collaboration
- Ecology and Restoration
Testing against the criteria of good governance

- **Clarity of Purpose**

  Critical review:

  - Gap in linking process to outcomes
  - Improving relationship is not an outcome
  - In CFLRP, Ecological Monitoring Questions set, but much more work on Economic tools is required
Lessons for Nepal

• A good mechanism to address the state’s goal of improving forest health and community wellbeing.

• But should set realistic expectations.

\[
\text{DISAPPOINTMENT} = \frac{\text{EXPECTATION}}{\text{REALITY}}
\]
Lessons for Nepal

• Literature Gap

  - What about Capacity of stakeholders to participate?
  - Leverage probably a strong indicator for sustainable outcomes
Thank you!