

4. Getting started: first steps in policy development

PLANNING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND COMMUNICATION

Once a decision is made to embark on policy development, successful outcomes depend on proper preparation: outlining the responsibilities of decision-making bodies; establishing the rules of engagement; drafting work plans, timetables and budgets; preparing communication strategies; and building capacity to manage the process and engage stakeholder groups in a meaningful way. Basic reference data and information should also be compiled and relevant analysis initiated.

There is no escaping the fact that participatory processes take longer and cost more than traditional in-house policy development carried out by government agencies alone. However, the benefits over the long term are significant. A

A participatory policy development process is costly, but not having one will cost even more.

detailed work plan must be prepared and time, staff and budget set aside for joint efforts such as task forces, briefings and workshops. These requirements were frequently overlooked in the past; often consultations were superficial and involved only those who could afford the time and had the funds. As might be expected under this scenario, few new ideas emerged and the public showed little enthusiasm for or commitment to the changes. If policy-makers want people to implement the policy, they must involve people in its development.

Three factors have a major influence on work plans and timelines: the number of stakeholders; the importance and diversity of forest management and administrative arrangements; and the information available on regional and local policy as well as on legal, economic, environmental, technological, ecological and social issues and trends. This last aspect mainly relates to the resources and time needed to conduct reviews and analyses at the beginning of or during policy development.

Some processes to develop or reformulate policy have taken around or somewhat more than a year (e.g. Angola, El Salvador, Latvia, Liberia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor Leste), but sometimes it has taken two to three years to complete studies and conclude negotiations (e.g. Australia, Austria, Finland, Jordan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam). While short processes might fail to involve stakeholders to a sufficient degree for the policy to be broadly understood and accepted, those that take longer than 12 to 18 months run the danger of losing momentum.

No matter what process is followed, policy formulation generally consists of certain steps that need to be considered in planning work, time and budget.

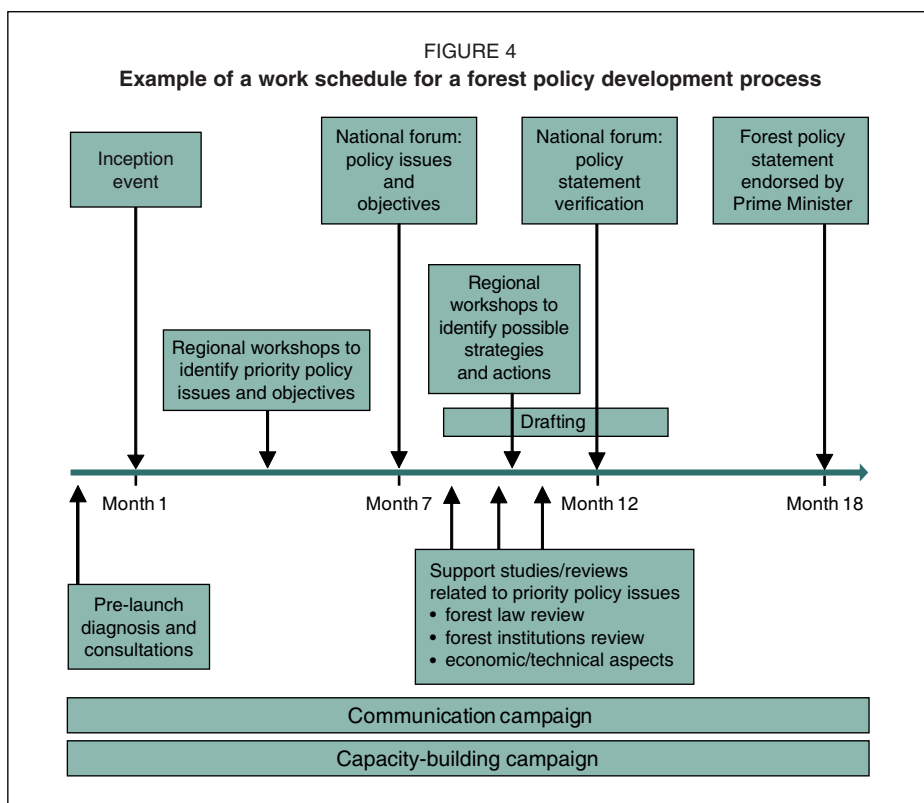


Figure 4 outlines the work plan of a hypothetical 18-month process to develop forest policy, similar to that used in Syria. After inception of the process, regional workshops are held to engage stakeholders in diagnosing constraints and opportunities as well as to learn about local issues and views. The results of discussions are then raised in a national forum. In parallel to the undertaking of a number of expert studies, a second round of regional workshops are convened to devise possible strategies and actions. Draft policy statements are then written and discussed, again in a national forum, to reach agreement and seek endorsement by the Head of State. All the while, efforts are made to communicate the process to those involved, raise their awareness and build their capacity.

The importance of clear and transparent communication during the policy development process cannot be overstated. It is an essential ingredient of any multi-stakeholder dialogue because effective communication:

- creates an open and inclusive national dialogue on policy options;
- manages expectations;
- promotes transparency and accountability;
- establishes and maintains momentum;
- promotes a culture of public dialogue, not only between citizens and government, but also between citizen and citizen, business and business, and citizen and business.

There are many ways to communicate with and involve stakeholders and the wider public, including Internet (dedicated Web sites), mobile telephone, radio, commercial or State television, village assemblies, town hall meetings and theatre. Experience shows that communication systems at the community level are the most effective for reaching local people.

Building capacity to facilitate and strengthen the involvement of different stakeholders is an integral part of many forest policy development processes; for example, in Latvia, Serbia, Turkey and Uzbekistan, all working group members were trained to use a participatory approach to policy development from the onset. Topics can include the concept and rules of participatory policy development processes, sharing experiences with participation in similar processes elsewhere, the role of data and information on situation and trends, identifying common interests, developing strategies, establishing mechanisms for constructive communication and feedback, identifying and building advocacy coalitions, lobbying to reach acceptable solutions and enhancing negotiation skills. Planning for capacity-building calls for an assessment of who requires training to be able to participate effectively and of the best means to deliver it, e.g. through workshops at the beginning of the process or through specific coaching.

Capacity building not only improves understanding of the concept, it also contributes to team building and strengthens personal commitment to the process – essential conditions for success.

PREPARATORY ANALYSIS: PROVIDING KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sound and credible information and data on a range of topics are needed in order to engage stakeholders meaningfully in discussions such as workshops or bilateral consultations. At the outset, it is beneficial to compile and review existing information, conduct studies and collect data on forests, their management and use, as well as on the context within which they are governed. The depth of the analysis depends on the circumstances, the resources and the time available for a review. It is necessary to prepare relevant, statistically sound and unbiased information that can be made available in discussions, on subjects such as:

Perception drives politics. Policy discussions need to be based on the best available data on key aspects.

- forest resources, their uses and management (e.g. from national forest inventories or assessments);
- situation and trends in the forest sector, political, societal and demographic trends, and economic and technological developments (e.g. from sectoral and outlook studies and public opinion surveys);
- past and current policies, legislation and strategies relevant to forests, including those pertaining to national development, economic and sustainable development, agriculture and energy;
- land use, land use planning, landownership, land tenure and related policies and legislation;
- institutional arrangements and capacities;

- key national forest policy issues such as deforestation, forest tenure and access, illegal logging, carbon sequestration and fire;
- international commitments related to forests.

Often, the necessary information and studies are already available. In many other cases, reviews must be undertaken in key areas such as policies or legal and institutional frameworks, as has been done, for example, in Algeria, Benin, the Comoros and Jordan. Alternatively, technical experts can be invited either to participate in the process or to make presentations at workshops or other forums.

It is particularly important to recognize the importance of wider political, socio-demographic, economic, technological and environmental trends and

A new policy needs to give guidance on anticipated, not past, conditions. Future conditions need to be in focus when a new policy is being developed.

predicted future scenarios, as these determine and influence how forests will be used and the context within which forests will have to be managed. Many countries have conducted studies or consultations on the outlook for

the forest sector (Box 7), some with support from FAO. National experts who are familiar with forecasting or foresight approaches or who are knowledgeable about trends in the wider socio-economic context can provide useful input to the policy development process.

As adequate financing is crucial for the implementation of policy, those involved in the process need to be aware of the possibilities, limits, options and

Be prepared to discuss money. Financing will inevitably be a topic in the policy development process.

procedures for obtaining access to new sources of funding. Government authorities leading a policy development process should be aware that they will be required to negotiate and secure

additional resources along the way. This task can be facilitated by analysing issues likely to arise, expected changes in financing requirements and the most realistic options to explore.

Many forest policy development processes include a review of policy, legislation and institutions as part of the preliminary analysis. In other instances, such reviews are part of policy implementation and, at times, trigger a revision. They can also be undertaken in parallel or as a follow up to the diagnosis and issue identification phase. Often, external consultants prepare background studies which the participating stakeholders then discuss.

BOX 7

Future Forum on Forests in Finland

Finland established a multisectoral forum to examine issues and changes that could affect forest-based livelihoods and the environment of the sector over the following 10 to 20 years. This approach was fundamental for finding innovative ideas, and Finland used the results to make national forest policy more proactive and future oriented.

A policy review usually covers current forest policies, strategies, programmes, work plans and action plans, as well as their implementation. It identifies what worked well and what did not: whether goals were adequately set; if incentives and restrictions were counterproductive or conflicted with other instruments or goals; and if the conditions under which policies would be implemented were sufficiently considered. A review helps to draw lessons for improving forest policies and arrangements for their future implementation.

Many forest policy development processes include a review of policy, legislation and institutions to learn what has worked and what has not.

However, many reviews have failed to take into account adequately the linkages with other government policies that touch on forests. Including the most relevant linkages in the review helps to reveal where policy coordination and integration of forest aspects into other policies have been effective, where they have not, and why. It also helps to prioritize areas in need of improvement in this regard under new policy goals.

A legal review may identify questions to address in the policy development process and can then guide subsequent legislative reform. Eventually, the implications of any changes in policy for existing legislation will have to be evaluated to ensure that legislation is in line with policy objectives and contributes to achieving them. A legal review usually examines how laws relate either directly or indirectly to forests and identifies constraints and opportunities for any new forest policy. It also should help identify and address areas where existing legislative provisions are conflicting, contradictory or insufficient. FAO experience underlines the importance of a broad legal review. The review should cover not only forest-specific laws and regulations, but also related legal instruments including those on land tenure, land use planning, land management, environmental protection, protected areas and wildlife management, and wider institutional arrangements such as those dictating the allocation of powers and how decentralization is implemented.

An institutional review can comprise both the institutional arrangements and stakeholders' opinions on these. It is used to identify the factors that contribute to the success or failure of such arrangements or of future alternatives, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts and to draw conclusions that may inform the policy development process. Such a review helps to clarify the extent to which institutional arrangements and organizations are aligned with policy objectives and have the capacity to fulfil their roles. It can also identify impediments, including a limited ability to adapt to changing contexts. The review may have policy-related implications at different levels, affecting processes, relationships (e.g. between ministries) or operations (e.g. reporting hierarchies). It can result in a more appropriate institutional arrangement, a better alignment of an organization's objectives with the forest policy and improved capacity of the organization to deliver its mandate. Today, many new institutional arrangements are emerging for joint implementation of policies; hierarchical relationships are being replaced by a network of parapublic and public-private partnerships.

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Leadership and support at the highest levels of government are essential from the beginning of the process to signal its importance and expected results. This commitment also assures stakeholders of the need for their involvement and

It is essential to get a high political authority to endorse the process and pledge to implement the forest policy from the start.

avoids the risk of their seeing it as merely a symbolic or administrative exercise, especially if the minister responsible for forests leads the process and promises

to use the results to guide future decisions. By the same token, securing explicit support from the Head of State, the Council of Ministers, the Parliament or a similar high level of government at the start can help encourage other sectors, government ministries and agencies to become involved, particularly if the relevance of the process to their areas of responsibility or the risk of not participating can be demonstrated. If the process is an exclusive initiative of the forestry administration or the ministry responsible for forests, other departments, ministries and agencies may not be convinced of the need to become involved.

Before embarking on the process of formulating or revising the forest policy, it is important to engage government agencies at the national and regional levels by informing key staff of why the initiative is necessary, how it will be carried

Middle management needs to be involved early and to be convinced of the gains to be made by opening up the process.

out and why their active involvement is necessary and beneficial. In many cases, specific sessions or workshops provide an opportunity to discuss the background,

objectives, procedures and intended outcomes so that staff can form realistic expectations. Such venues also can clarify questions, issues and implications regarding their potential involvement; address concerns about the value of the process and the approach for including non-foresters; allay fears associated with the perception that wider involvement entails a loss of control; and assess the possible negative consequences for the institution they work for or their jobs. When this engagement is organized successfully, staff are able to consider themselves part of the process. This is an important requirement for a smooth transition from policy on paper to policy on the ground.

DETERMINING WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED AND HOW, AND THE TYPE OF SUPPORT NEEDED

Stakeholders are individuals, communities, groups, government bodies, NGOs and others who are affected by the policy developed or who influence (facilitate or impede) its design and implementation. Their selection and the definition of their role in policy development are critical to the quality, acceptance and usefulness of the policy and need particular attention. Three questions guide participation: who should be involved, how should they be involved and what is necessary for their involvement? In practice, it is neither feasible nor desirable to involve all possible stakeholders. Many will not even be interested.

A good starting point for making decisions on participation is to identify

potential partners and their roles through an analysis that can vary from quick and superficial to an in-depth review of values, rights, responsibilities, internal and external relations, potential returns, representation, power relationships, capacity and needs. Many simple tools are available for this purpose (FAO, 2009; Vermeulen, 2005; DFID and World Bank, 2005).

Many people or groups are directly affected by forest policy, such as those who own the land or have legal or customary rights to use it. Many others are also affected by policy change, including those who extract forest products or who benefit from essential but less tangible services, for example, recreation, protection against soil erosion or climate change mitigation. Yet others are interested in using the land for agriculture, energy production, tourism or commercial development.

Stakeholders who can influence a policy are those who decide on, control or regulate forests and access to their benefits or have authority to change land use: the forest administration and agencies working at different levels, but also government bodies that are charged with biodiversity, environmental protection, agriculture, energy, transport, infrastructure development, overall planning and budget allocation. The level at which the policy will be adopted or endorsed also influences the choice of participants. For instance, if authorization is required from Parliament or Cabinet or if legislation subsequently needs to be amended, it is advisable to secure the involvement of key representatives from these bodies throughout the process. Consideration should also be given to inviting partners, including donors, who are interested in supporting implementation of the new policy.

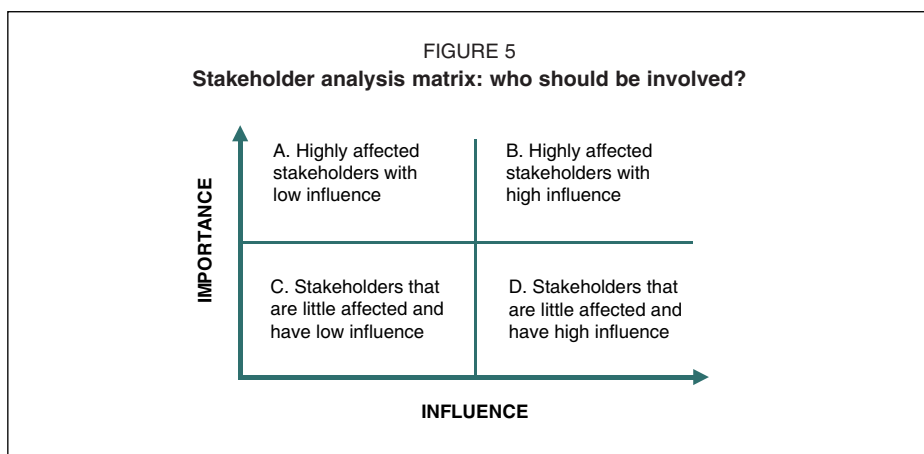
Legal, administrative and technical experts can also help to inform and guide the process, for example, those working on the national development policy or strategy, forest-related legislation, rules and procedures (including budget allocation), field level administration, education or research and international commitments. Additional experts need to be brought in as well, including those who have knowledge of wider trends and developments influencing the context in which the forest policy will have to be implemented.

One way of identifying key stakeholders is to classify the different groups along a two-dimensional matrix (Figure 5). For instance, forest-dependent poor people in rural areas are important stakeholders as they are highly affected by what happens to forests but often have little influence. A minister of agriculture is also a major player because of the influence he or she wields. Similarly, agro-enterprises that expand their businesses by deforesting cannot be ignored.

The results of the mapping exercise should provide sufficient guidance for identifying the key stakeholders, given practical and budgetary restrictions. While there will be different views on who should participate, serious effort must be made to involve those who are most affected, particularly poor groups living in

The success of participatory policy development rests on how well stakeholders are identified and involved.

Key stakeholders are those who are affected by or can influence forest policy and its implementation in a significant way.



remote areas of the country, who often are not well organized and lack capacity. Similarly, particular efforts are often necessary to involve groups that do not consider themselves to be significantly affected, including key bodies from other sectors, so they will subsequently help implement the new policy instead of ignoring or obstructing it.

A range of stakeholders need to engage in the process for a number of purposes, at various times and at different levels (national, regional and local). The depth of their involvement can range from simply receiving information to fully participating in decision-making and implementation (Table 2). Many governments seem reluctant to move beyond providing information. However, meaningful consultation is essential if the policy is to have the support it needs to be implemented, even if the process appears protracted, expensive and confusing at the start. Consultation often works when authorities offer options for discussion and listen to feedback from other stakeholders, including recommendations. This is an appropriate approach if choices can be offered and if possibilities for developing stakeholders' own ideas or putting plans into action (e.g. improving

TABLE 2

Levels of stakeholder participation

Level of participation	Examples	Types of stakeholder
Information	Information to the public, hearings, briefings	Those who consider the policy process of low importance and/or have low influence
Consultation	Meetings, focus groups, interviews	Those who consider the policy process of low importance but have high influence
Deliberation	Workshops, task forces, negotiation	Those who consider the policy process of high importance and/or have high influence
Decision-making	Joint decision-making	Those who consider the policy process of high importance and/or have high influence
Implementation	Responsibilities in work plans	Those with interest and capacity

current services) are limited. Deliberation is a form of participation that generates options, choices and agreement on ways forward, even if the responsibility for implementation lies elsewhere. Joint decisions and recommendations are often made on more general aspects; not everyone can be involved in decisions of an operational nature such as those related to property, investments, the specifics of the policy or institutional changes.

Stakeholders need to see that genuine and adequate efforts are made to engage them seriously; this can be done in various ways.

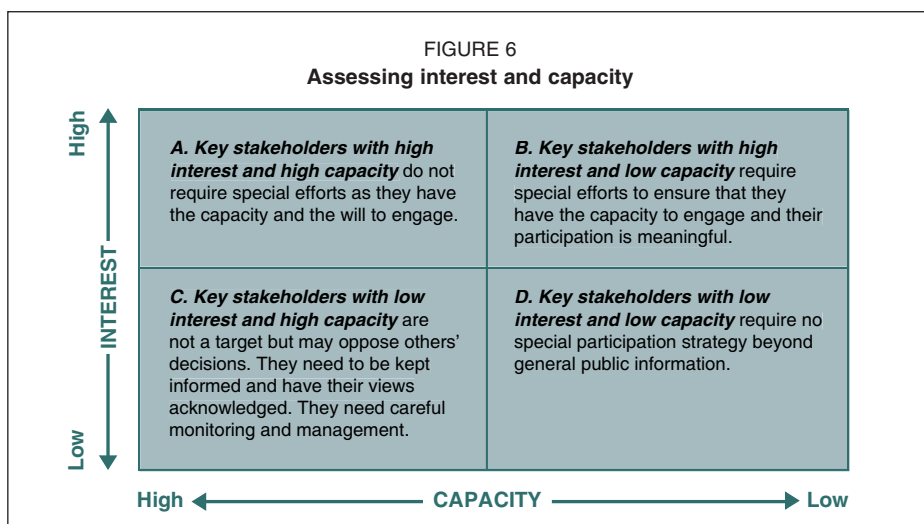
The appropriate level of participation partly depends on the degree to which stakeholders are affected by the policy or can influence its development and implementation. Table 2 offers suggestions in this regard, but in the end, the stakeholders themselves will decide on the nature and form of their engagement. Many are likely to be sceptical about the benefits (as opposed to the costs) and may be reluctant to get involved.

The identification of legitimate stakeholders to include in the process is often contentious, especially because balanced representation of stakeholder groups according to the relative importance of respective needs and interests is essential. Given the political sensitivity surrounding the selection of participants, experience has shown that it is advisable to consult with the different stakeholders on which groups to involve. Doing so not only ensures that they have a say in the process from the beginning; it also enhances the understanding of who the stakeholders are, of their opinions and of relations among them. In practice, different bodies can decide on whom to involve. For example, the initiators of the process can conduct a preliminary analysis and make suggestions to a steering body which then jointly reviews them with participants, perhaps at a launching event.

The decisions regarding which stakeholders to involve and the nature of their participation also need to take into account their interest in policy change, including the importance they place on the process, and their capacity and power to influence policy development and implementation. Often, those interested and willing to be involved are groups that lack capacity and power, even though they might be the most affected by the policy. In addition to those groups who are influential but who deem they have no relevant stake in the process and choose not to get involved, others, including powerful insiders, may fear that a policy change will cause their situation to deteriorate. In order to overcome their reluctance to face change, good arguments would need to be found to show these groups how they would gain (or not lose) by participating. The matrix in Figure 6 can be used to assess and map the willingness and ability of stakeholders to participate in the policy development process.

Securing appropriate participation involves:

- selecting the right participants from each stakeholder group, by considering a range of organizations and individuals in terms of their willingness and ability (legitimate or perceived) to speak for particular groups;
- convincing reluctant or discouraged stakeholders to join the process (if deemed by other stakeholders to be important players);



- building the capacity of groups that are too dispersed or too distant from policy processes to participate effectively.

Many stakeholders will be sceptical and uninterested in becoming involved. Others will require capacity building to participate meaningfully.

With regard to the first point, much depends on the degree to which groups with similar stakes are coordinated and willing to be involved. When feasible, organizations often consult among themselves to nominate a representative and decide on how to organize discussions during the policy formulation process. In many cases, however, organizations are too diverse, independent or divided on issues to take this approach. Mayers and Bass (1999) propose two criteria to assess whether participants can adequately represent a group:

- whether and to what degree an individual shares the views of the group or constituency on the issues at stake and can refrain from raising other interests or representing other identities (e.g. those of tribe, class or political party) in the process;
- the degree of accountability to the group for which the individual speaks.

If particular members of a group are chosen well and their capacities to share information and consult among themselves are developed, representatives can genuinely speak on the group's behalf. If representatives are happy with the process and outcomes, chances are good that they will champion the policy.

The development of a credible and legitimate policy depends on finding ways to involve stakeholders who may be the most affected by policy reform but who are not well organized or do not have the capacity to participate meaningfully. Two groups are particularly vulnerable: people who depend on forests for their existence but are not well connected to policy-making or markets; and large parts of society that benefit from the

In most processes, special efforts are needed to let the voice of some stakeholders to be heard, including minority groups, poor people, women, youth and the general public.

environmental and recreational services of forests but have interests that are not advocated by specific lobby groups.

The views of the various segments of society can often be captured through surveys, opinion polls and focus group discussions. Even if not representative as a whole, a few characteristic “voices from the street”, e.g. views of individuals from groups with different interests such as women, youth, the urban population or farmers, can provide valuable insights and be obtained with limited budgets. Public opinion is particularly useful in aligning the interests of citizens with forest management priorities to make forests more relevant to society. Latvia is one of the countries that has used this approach, and the results significantly enlightened the policy development process. In Grenada, community meetings and public surveys demonstrated that the public and forest officials shared similar ideas about forest values (Box 8).

Often, it is a challenge to secure the endorsement and active participation of key stakeholders who are not able to dedicate the time or resources to spend days, weeks or months in discussions and negotiations. In most successful NFP processes, assistance with travel costs enables local representatives or poor people to engage in the process. Another barrier to the participation of minority groups, indigenous peoples, poor people, women and the elderly is the real or perceived formality of the process. These groups may have much to offer, including local wisdom and indigenous knowledge, but even their more experienced representatives can find the policy milieu intimidating. Successful processes tend to take special measures to encourage and facilitate the participation of

BOX 8

Participatory forest policy development in Grenada

Historically, forest policy in Grenada focused on production and timber processing and was the responsibility of government, professional foresters and foreign experts. When developing a new policy, the Forest Department recognized the need to include the views of stakeholders to make it effective. These were obtained through a series of forums, (including community meetings), cross-sectoral committees, study groups, and public surveys and hearings. A common vision was developed, a stakeholder analysis was conducted, and regular multi-stakeholder meetings were held. The Forest Department shaped a new strategic direction, and a national workshop helped to build consensus. Guided by a multi-stakeholder committee, the process resulted in the 1999 Forest Policy, which is very much owned by the people of Grenada who decided what it would look like. The Forest Department was transformed from an organization that had a mandate for the direct management of forests to one that facilitates implementation of the vision of the people of Grenada.

Source: Bass, 2000.

such stakeholders, for example, separate meetings for ethnic minorities, women, landless people and other marginalized groups to put them at ease to speak out – which would not be possible in a large meeting where powerful groups or more eloquent speakers usually dominate. For example, in Turkey, special attention was given to involving women in local assessments, and separate meetings were held for them. Efforts used elsewhere to inform and reach out to interested parties include call-in radio and television shows and public consultations via the Internet. Many approaches and tools designed for a wide range of situations are available for effective involvement of stakeholders throughout the different phases of the process (e.g. FAO, 2009).

Investments of time and resources in participatory policy development processes yield stronger support and improve the visibility of the forest sector. Participatory processes sometimes also achieve major breakthroughs, especially when forest administrations have traditionally fulfilled a policing role and have a history of poor relations with stakeholders. Such processes build confidence and improve understanding of the needs of participants, including government organizations. In selecting stakeholders it is important to take the time to understand the needs, interests and capacities of the different groups and to find the right representatives, avoiding the temptation to choose for convenience those who are already known, those who rush to step forward or those who are easiest to mobilize.

It may be difficult to engage other government bodies and agencies such as those responsible for national development, energy, agriculture, infrastructure and finance because they may consider forest issues of minor relevance and because other policies and legislative provisions shape their daily operations. To involve other sections of government, high-level political support within the respective ministries is crucial. Countries that have included key ministries in steering committees, for example, have met with some success in this regard. Where active participation is not possible, stakeholders should be informed of progress at key stages of the process.

GUIDING AND MANAGING THE PROCESS: STEERING BODY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

A steering committee is frequently used to lead the forest policy development process and to provide the necessary political support. As noted previously, it is easier for other government organizations to recognize the importance of forest policies if they join the process at the start. If their participation is at a high level and their representatives are empowered to influence the design and the process, the advantages of establishing such committees can be significant, including:

- easier access to information and better understanding of the practice of implementing previous forest policy;
- recommendations that take into account all the important points of view;
- better and quicker dissemination of conclusions and recommendations;
- greater acceptance of revised forest policy and arrangements for implementing it.

A steering committee is strong, and thus useful, if the most important stakeholders are at the table with representation from sufficiently high levels; if members are supported by the bodies they represent; and if their participation is not merely symbolic. Representatives should be drawn from ministries and private entities that deal with issues relevant to forests, including, for example, agriculture, environment, economic development, industry or mining, planning, infrastructure development, finance, education and research. Where an established national multi-stakeholder steering committee exists in the context of an NFP process (e.g. Cambodia, Liberia, Paraguay, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania), it is often well suited to assume a lead role in policy development because it has a good institutional base (Box 9). In some countries (e.g. El Salvador and Jordan), such committees were established specifically for the forest policy development process.

A steering committee guiding the forest policy development process is strong and useful if it consists of key stakeholders who have the will and position to provide political support.

A steering committee should drive the process and guide the team managing the exercise, ensuring that operations run smoothly and important decisions are made. It will normally also be involved in submission of the draft policy for approval, possible related follow-up amendments, preparation for implementation and communication aspects throughout all phases.

The day-to-day management of the forest policy development process is often undertaken by a team or an individual appointed for this purpose by the body in charge. The coordinator can be an independent entity or person that, ideally:

- has expertise in moderating and facilitating discussion or negotiation processes;
- is accepted and trusted by and can interact with all stakeholders;
- has credibility with the government;
- listens respectfully to all points of view and encourages participants to do likewise;
- has no bias on the issues and can elicit a balanced picture from very different types of stakeholders;

BOX 9

Uganda's NFP steering committee

The forest sector reform process that led to the development of Uganda's revised Forestry Policy (2001) was steered by a 12-member Forest Sector Co-ordination Committee, with members from across central and local government, the private sector and civil society. A Forest Sector Co-ordination Secretariat in the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment supported the process which involved seven working groups composed of 73 members from diverse interests and backgrounds.

Source: Bass, 2000.

- is able to resist pressure from strong administrative and political bodies, if exerted.

Professional facilitation and communication skills are essential to achieving meaningful participation, which is in turn a prerequisite for formulating effective and lasting forest policy. One of the most frequent observations in the many processes in which FAO has been involved is the importance of the choice of a leader – who needs to have the right skills, personal qualities and organizational affiliations.

The steering committee and/or coordinator usually invites three to eight national experts to oversee operational aspects of the policy development process – individuals who possess skills in relevant technical areas such as agriculture, environmental protection, forest industry, forest research, forest management and administration proper. Experience has shown that a team drawn from

A multidisciplinary team, led by a well-respected independent person or body, often manages the process.

forest authorities alone finds it difficult to get the acceptance and trust needed to work effectively, as it fails to represent effectively the various interests of all stakeholders. By the

same token, external advisers can provide technical advice and support, but if they are the main authors of the policy, government and other stakeholders will feel little ownership; hence, political commitment to implementation will be weak, as will accountability and responsibility for outcomes.

The team needs to be capable of overcoming the two main challenges of policy development:

- ensuring all views are heard and treated with respect, while reaching meaningful conclusions that stakeholders accept;
- translating the conclusions reached during consultations into a policy document that is fair, balanced and representative of stakeholders' views, while proposing measures that are feasible and easily understood.

Although it is useful for the coordinator to give team members on-the-job training, it is also helpful to convene a special meeting in the initial phase to brief them in detail about the process, discuss expected roles and prepare them for the tasks ahead.