

Number 1

MAPPING OF INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

Analysis of thematic project cluster

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Joris van de Sandt & Amy MacKinven, April 2007

CONCLUSIONS

Focus

- 1.1 There has often been a one-sided focus on mapping for tenure (indigenous land rights and ownership) against external threats; TRP-funded mapping projects so far have paid only scant attention to developing local stewardship agendas and expanding local competence in on-the-ground conservation based on traditional knowledge and strengthened customary institutions.

Situation and stakeholder analysis

- 1.2 The pre-project situation analysis was often poor; proposals lacked structured information on institutional context, which is elemental for assessing opportunities and chances of long-term success. There was a lack of substantive information on the socio-cultural situation of targeted communities, such as e.g. state of customary resource management institutions. Some projects failed to involve relevant government agencies, where this could have increased the legitimacy of the project and the IPO (Indigenous People's Organization).

Project design and management

- 1.3 Project objectives were often unrealistically formulated, due to: insufficient comprehension of community dynamics, insufficient time allocated for training, problems related to difficult terrain & technical problems. There was often little insight in the working procedure of mapping activities, and little coherence and distinction between objectives, activities, expected results and follow-up. Except for the budget/coverage relation, project achievability is difficult to estimate beforehand due to many preconditions to be met. It is for this reason that partner organizations positively consider IUCN NL for its lenient funding policy.
- 1.4 Mapping projects seem to have better chances of success when partner organizations are more closely related to the targeted communities, such as IPOs (Indigenous Peoples Organizations) with adequate project management capacity.

Project duration

- 1.5 A project duration of less than 1 year is too short for achieving even the most immediate objectives, especially in the case of projects involving a first-time demarcation of a territory.

Ecological impacts

- 1.6 None of the projects has brought a direct positive change in ecosystems and biodiversity – this is too much to expect. However, many have contributed to creating an enabling environment for community-based conservation (CBC).

Impacts on poverty and empowerment

- 1.7 Most projects had an impact on poverty reduction in that they (at least potentially) contributed to secure access to natural resources or the ability of communities to defend this security (monitor, patrol and bring formal complaints against destructive resource use). Projects also enabled communities to challenge uncompensated, externally imposed resource use restrictions. Few projects included livelihood components with a view to income generation.
- 1.8 Mapping projects can be a first step in recognizing land rights and have the potential for constituting a context for building effective community-based institutions for natural resource use and management. Tenure has not been acquired in any of the cases. Maps have been used to start up slow-moving tenure negotiations and communities keep waiting for their outcome while in the meantime their recently acquired skills are left unused.
- 1.9 In case of broad community participation, the mapping activity can function as a tool for raising awareness on environmental issues and for mobilizing communities to defend their lands and resource base.

Enabling environment

- 1.10 Some projects achieved territorial management plans or gains in influencing national policies and legislation favourable to indigenous (land and resource) rights, thus contributing to an enabling environment for community-based conservation. Regarding the social and institutional dimensions (human/social capital & empowerment) projects generally failed to develop measurable indicators of success, and of extent of capacity development & transfer of knowledge due to a lack of insight in methods and procedures.
- 1.11 Many mapping projects have made considerable contributions to enabling conditions for biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation, in the sense of:
- Raised awareness on environmental issues and links with their livelihoods.
 - Empowerment and increased self-confidence.
 - Reinforced cultural identities and connections to place.
 - More productive relations with outside agencies.
 - Potentially resolving conflict and territorial issues.

Continuity and sustainability

- 1.12 Community mapping has much more potential than only for acquiring tenure, but many partner organizations are uncertain of how to proceed into next phases.
- 1.13 Project sustainability is determined by the extent to which communities are in the position to build and capitalize on enabling conditions achieved during the initial mapping experience. Strengthening these conditions can be essential to maintain

the momentum since securing tenure rights, with mapping as a first step, is often a lengthy process interrupted by long intervals due to bureaucratic procedures.

- 1.14 Much of the expertise that was developed in the early TRP-funded mapping projects was used in later projects, especially if these took place in the same region and were executed by indigenous communities and organizations that received field support from the same NGOs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Internal vs external pressures

- 2.1 Most projects emphasize destructive resource uses by outside actors; they seem to neglect that resource management practices of communities are often under increasing pressure from change (demographic growth, changing settlement, breakdown of cultural values), leading to internal pressures. This issue warrants more attention.

Build environmental awareness

- 2.2 Projects should not uncritically assume environmental awareness of indigenous communities. To enhance compatibility between the indigenous (land rights) agenda and the conservation agenda, mapping projects should from the start explicitly draw the communities' attention to environmental concerns and biodiversity management, otherwise community mapping can turn itself against the conservation agenda.

Situation analysis

- 2.3 Future mapping projects should be based on a better situation analysis, especially in the sense of providing information on the wider institutional (i.e. politico-legal) context in which the project takes place, such as recent developments in national policy or legislation with respect to indigenous land rights and natural resource management (exploitation) and conservation.

Project design and management

- 2.4 Project objectives should be formulated more realistically and more attention is to be paid to the coherence between objectives, activities, expected results and follow-up. Proposals should give more insight into the working procedure of the mapping activity, i.e. the degree of community involvement in data gathering or whether field observations are combined with group discussions and interviews.
- 2.5 It is recommended to fund projects whereby an IPO functions as go-between between conservation organization/mapping support group (NGO) and communities, or whereby an IPO is fully responsible for project execution, provided it has sufficient capacity in financial project administration and the management of funds.
- 2.6 If legislation on indigenous land rights is poorly developed, then it is more effective to invest in policy influencing, institutional strengthening and awareness raising than in mapping for land rights.

Broadening the scope of mapping projects

- 2.7 In view of the sustainability of project results for community-based conservation (CBC), it is recommended that especially follow-up projects dedicate more

attention to mapping for management planning and as a context for institution-building, i.e. that they make a shift in strategy from a rights-based approach to a stewardship approach.

- 2.8 Projects should contribute more to sustaining and expanding indigenous customary institutions to help communities deal more effectively with claimants to their resources, as well as enable them to deliberate and reach decisions among themselves on the allocation of the environmental assets that attract such outside attention.
- 2.9 Future projects need to involve more livelihood components for income generation, both to provide an incentive for community-based conservation and to prevent or reduce pressures on natural resources. This is especially so where the cause for indigenous land rights is to be positively linked up with the creation of protected areas.

Success factors

- 2.10 Because capacity development, democratic decision-making and institution building are the most important factors for success in creating an enabling environment for CBC, they deserve more thorough assessment in project evaluations. This calls for the development of better, unambiguous and measurable indicators of success.

Easing tensions

- 2.11 In or nearby protected areas (PAs), community mapping can turn itself against the conservation agenda due to insufficient or failing participatory mechanisms, especially in the preparatory stages of the conservation initiative. There is a potential role for TRP-funded mapping projects in easing tensions between communities and PAs.

Usefulness of rights support/policy influence projects

- 2.12 Projects for rights support and policy influence, typically ongoing and long-term processes, are difficult to fit into the restricted format of small grants projects. These projects however determine chances of success of mapping projects and CBC efforts, and IUCN NL support to these projects should therefore be continued.