

White Paper

Collaborative (Co)-Management as a Model for Bio-Cultural Conservation in Suriname

Gwendolyn Smith PhD¹ | August 2020

This White Paper intends to help policymakers, private companies, scientists and practitioners who are involved in Nature Conservation in Suriname. The paper presents an overview of how co-management partnerships are structured and how they could work in practice. This paper concludes with a set of recommendations for solving the problems that commonly emerge in co-management partnerships, especially the problems that are already occurring or are expected to occur in Suriname.

1. The Introduction of Co-Management in Conservation

Around 3100 BC, during the early civilization of mankind, humans were largely dependent on places in nature for their survival. In a life of dwelling and gathering, men and women navigated through untouched patches of nature to gather the basic needs such as food, housing, medicines, and they also used nature for fulfilling spiritual ambitions.

Exploitation. With the introduction of technological innovation in the early 1900s, humans benefitted from nature by obtaining raw materials for the production of goods in mass quantities. These goods, produced with human labor and machinery, were manufactured for sale at the commercial markets. This popularly known “industrialization era” changed the way humans viewed nature: from a tool for self-sufficiency to a tool for creating profit. Many decades later, in the 1970s, the excessive processing of raw materials led to the buildup of toxins and pollutants into nature and this was presenting an immediate danger to human life.

Protected Areas. As a response to managing the negative impact of human behavior on nature and the environment, the more advanced countries began to set aside areas of particular scenic beauty or uniqueness exclusively for the conservation of plants and animals, called protected areas. Their creation urged to exclude the local inhabitants, who either left voluntarily or were driven out with force. This so-called “Fences and Fines” conservation model² was extremely popular all around the world, and also in Suriname.

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² The “Fences and Fines” conservation model was implemented in Yellowstone National Park, established in 1872 on indigenous lands full of hot springs and geysers in the state Wyoming in the USA. The Crow and Shoshone indigenous inhabitants left the

With the creation of the National Forest Service in 1904, Suriname began with implementing the Forest and Fines conservation model in unique land areas while still being part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In the 1960s, Suriname was one of the world's leaders in conservation with approximately 10% of its land area covered in a network of protected areas.

Climate Change. By the late 1970s, global temperatures had begun to rise as a result of accumulation of greenhouse gasses³ in the earth's atmosphere. These gas emissions were coming from the burning of fossil fuels needed for powering factories, agricultural farms and transportation industries, amongst others. The change in the climate was expected to result in the rise of the earth's surface temperature and this global warming would ultimately have an all-around negative impact on animal, plant and human life.

International Conventions. In an attempt to lessen the use of fossil fuels and corresponding global warming, and at the same time protect global landscapes and biological diversity, the world's nations came together to establish a common approach to save the environment in 1992. Three international conventions on environment⁴ came out of these negotiations. Suriname joined these conventions, however until now, little of its content had been officially structured into national laws and in national institutions⁵.

The world's nations were also focusing on poverty as the amount of poor people was rising drastically. Together the nations realized that poor people's development was structurally hindered by social, physical and political factors, and that this occurs beyond the control of these peoples. This "pro-poor" movement was also supported by the worldwide call for the equitable participation of marginalized peoples and the recognition of their human rights.

The recognition of human rights was formalized in multilateral agreements and a global breakthrough was reached with the declaration of the United Convention of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007. The rights-based movement has also found entry into Suriname, and Government, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and private sector are making an effort to follow the internationally agreed principles of participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants.

With the focus on marginalized peoples, the idea that local communities could help with the management of biological resources was born – popularly known as collaborative (co) management. Co-management started as a way to address the injustices to local communities living in protected areas but has now evolved to a more formal partnership between Government, local communities, NGOs and the private sector to manage a specific resource. In Suriname, co-management is a rather new concept which is currently being pioneered in pilot projects.

lands or were driven out by the army, after which the park was operated by the Government. The primary reason for building the park was to protect the unique area from the surrounding society. Source: Pimbert, M. and Pretty, J. 1995. Parks, People and Professionals: Putting "Participation" into Protected Area Management. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

³ Greenhouse gases include Carbon Dioxide, Water vapor, Methane, Ozone, Nitrous oxide, Chlorofluorocarbons.

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and United Nations Convention on Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

⁵ An exception is the Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) study which was voluntarily conducted by the private sector under auspices of the National Institute for Environment and Development (NIMOS) before the enactment of the Environmental Framework Law in May 2020.

Green Development. World nations are still struggling to find a balance between economic growth and nature protection. Green development provides a practical and flexible approach for achieving economic and environmental growth, while taking into account the social consequences of this growth. The purpose of green growth strategies is to create situations where natural assets can gain their full economic potential on a sustainable basis. With 93 percent of Suriname's land area covered with forest, green development could be a viable option for the country's future. Suriname has begun to set the first important step towards green development to move away from the conventional Fences and Fines protected area model towards a more holistic developmental approach with the establishment of the Environmental Framework Law in May 2020.

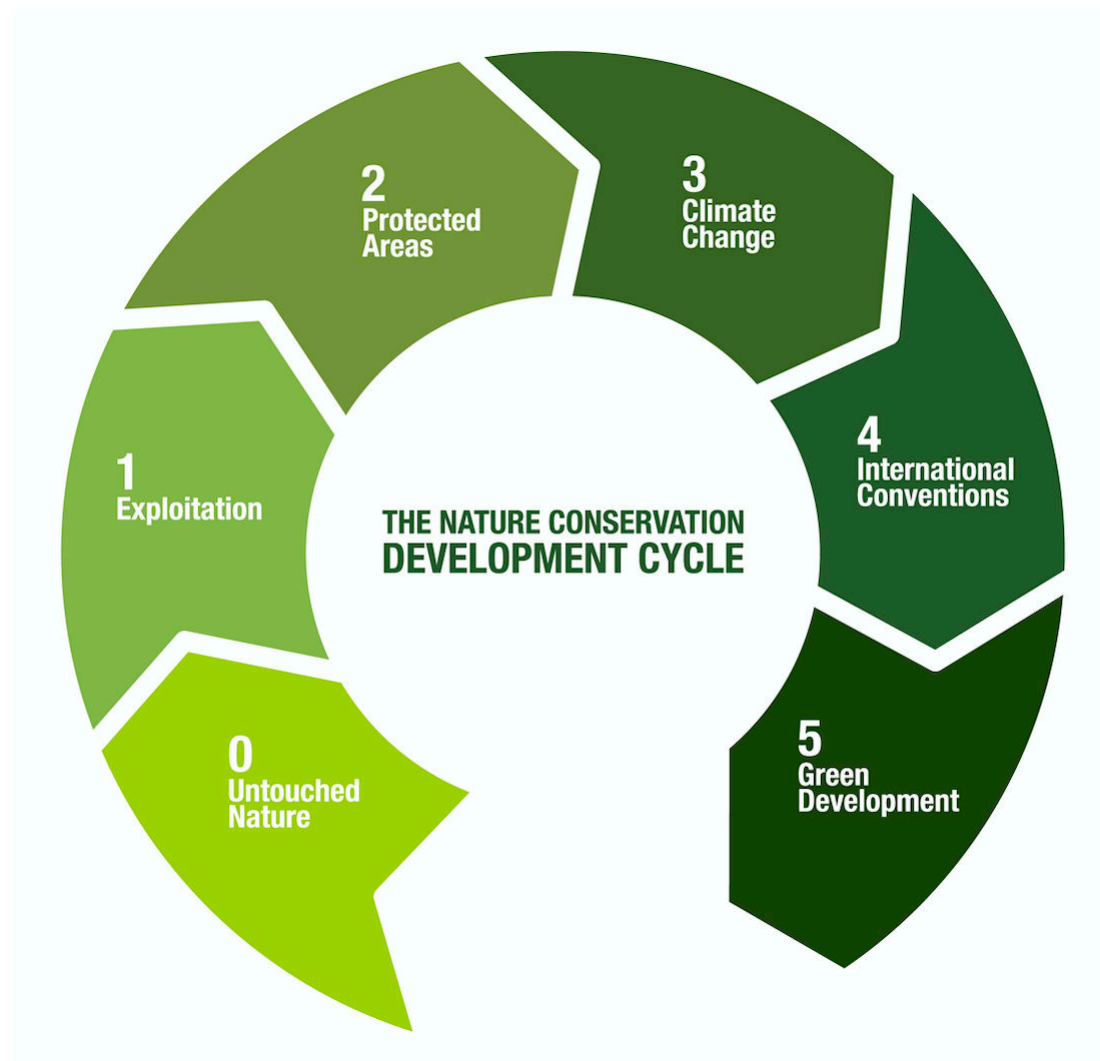


Figure 1: Overview of the role of Nature in Human Development

2. The Co-Management Partnership

What is co-management?

Co-management can be best described as a joint approach of various partners to sustainably govern living organisms – plants, animals– in a specific physical environment to the benefit of mankind. This definition is a common derivative of definitions held by different globally recognized institutions (Box 1). Each institution has another area of focus. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) emphasizes the conservation of a territory, while the World Bank concentrates on improving the marginalized position of local peoples. Distinctive scholars in the field of natural resource management either accentuate the execution of management tasks, the practice of learning together, or the sharing of power between the partners in the co-management arrangement.

Box 1: Common Definitions of Co-Management

IUCN defines co-management as “a partnership in which government agencies, local communities and resource users, non-governmental organizations and other partners negotiate, as appropriate to each context, the authority and responsibility for the management of a specific area or set of resources”.

The World Bank defines co-management as “the sharing of responsibilities, rights and duties between the primary partners, in particular, local communities and the nation state, a decentralized approach to decision-making that involves the local users in the decision-making process as equals with the nation-state”.

Borrini-Feyerabend defines co-management as “a situation in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee amongst themselves a fair sharing of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources”

Berkes defines co-management as “the sharing of power and responsibility between the government and local resource users”.

Armitage, Berkes and Doubleday introduce the terms adaptive co-management, which holds on to “innovative strategies that explicitly foster collaboration and learning are emerging and contribute to trust building and the formation of social networks of researchers, communities and policy makers”.

At the heart of co-management lies a partnership between various institutions, each with their own jurisdiction, organizational culture and administrative rules. Co-management partnerships are pluralistic because of the following characteristics:

- *Multi-disciplinary approach.* Co-management links both the social and natural processes in one holistic system for nature conservation.
- *Multilevel approach.* The linking of conservation goals occurs at 3 levels: 1) international level through the environmental negotiations and conventions, 2) national level through the Government’s jurisdiction to nature protection and land ownership, and 3) the local level through the traditional stewardship role of indigenous people and local communities.

The pluralistic nature of co-management requires a certain amount of flexibility, which is usually not a common practice in institutions targeting nature conservation and/or environment.

Who benefits from co-management?

Co-management partnerships aim at combining the strengths and weaknesses of each partner in order to provide an overall better situation for nature management and protection. Partners will only engage in such arrangements when there is some form of benefit that should be far greater than when, if at all possible, they would manage the resource by themselves. An overview of the potential benefits for Government, local peoples and NGOs and other supporters is outlined below.

Table 1: Benefits of Co-Management for the Participating Institutions

Theme	Benefit for Government	Benefit for Local Peoples	Benefit for NGOs and other supporters
Global position	Adhere to international conventions		Flagship projects to sustain donor funding
Access and management of resource	Cost effective solution because local peoples are less expensive, and Government institutions are often under-staffed and funded	Socially just solution, improved social position. Improving the equity in decision-making, power sharing	
	Better protection of the resource from pending threats		
	Local people will gain more ownership and thus take on more responsibility	Monetary benefits and better ownership for managing the resource	Local people will gain more ownership and thus take on more responsibility
Land tenure	Resolving land-tenure conflicts		
Human/indigenous rights		Improved recognition of rights by setting an agreement	Advocacy for indigenous and human rights
Knowledge generation	Gain more knowledge of the place and community	Gain more knowledge about institutions, science, business	Gain more knowledge of the place and community
Planning	Better long-term planning		
Capacity building	Build capacity to learn traditional ways of conservation	Build capacity to learn western ways of conservation	
Logistics	Better logistics for working on site		Better logistics for working on site

What is the role of the Government authority in co-management?

The Government, as the highest responsible authority for nature protection, possesses a set of rights that come from the national legal framework. Once the Government enters into a co-management arrangement, it will share or delegate one or more of these rights (and responsibilities) to other partners operating in the partnership. Below is a list of rights that can be included in a co-management partnership:

- The right to access to the resource
- The rights to maintain residence in the resource area
- The right to gather products, hunt, fish and cultivate land according to agreed procedures
- The right to manage the resource
- The right to regulate internal use patterns
- The right to transform the resource
- The right to benefit from the resource, such as the setup of commercial enterprises
- The right to knowledge gathering, use and sharing
- The right to legal proclamation, transfer and termination.

The Government decides how much of its power it wants to share with the other partners. Operating along a continuum, co-management partnerships can vary from sharing little power to a situation where all partners have almost equal powers (Figure 2).

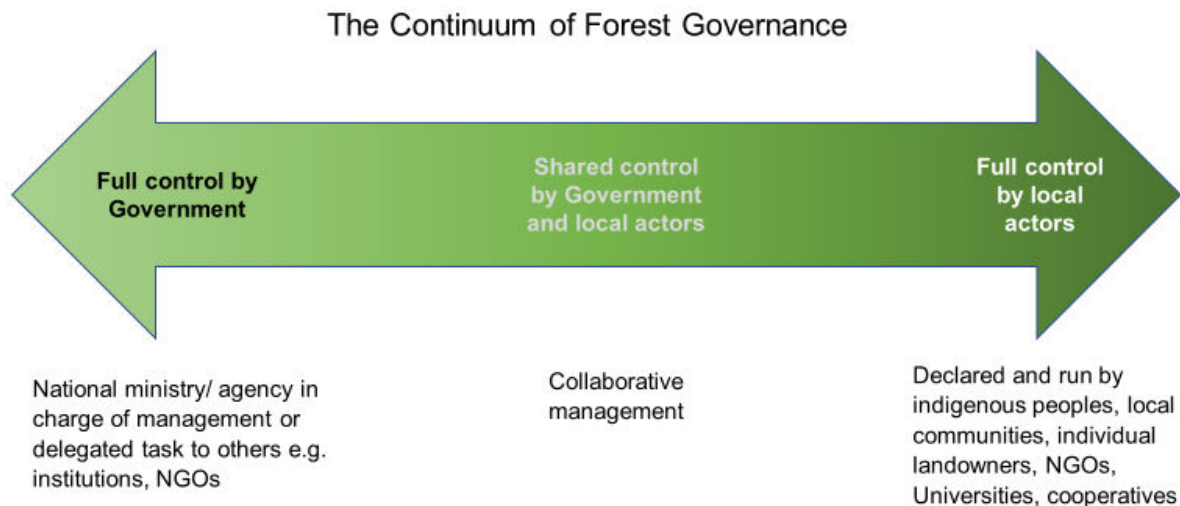


Figure 2: The Continuum of Resource Governance

The partners in co-management each have a specific view of the partnership. It is important to understand that these different views are always present and define the positions in the negotiation between the partners, and the overall dynamic of the partnership (Table 2).

Table 2: Common perspectives of Local Communities, Government and NGOs about Resource Governance

					
	High Government Power			Low Government Power	
Governance type	Full control by a Government Agency		Shared control by Government agency and local actors		Full control by local actors
From the perspective of the Government	Enforcing rules and suppressing violations	Consulting and seeking consensus (e.g. via benefit sharing)	Negotiating specific agreements	Shared authority and responsibility in a formal way (via seats in a governing body)	Recognizing/transferring authority and responsibility
From the perspective of local communities	Losing all control on land and resources	Letting Government make most decisions	Negotiating agreements and contracts to share formally and informally the management authority and responsibility	Asking for support of some partners (e.g. technical and financial support)	Conserving or taking on full management authority and responsibility and remaining independent
From the perspective of supporting NGOs/actors	Letting the Government deal with management alone	Supporting the Government communicate with local actors and achieve their support	Facilitating the negotiation if specific management agreements among Government agencies and local actors	Proposing various forms of support but letting the local actors choose what they need	Letting the local actors deal with management alone

In setting up a co-management partnership, the Government has to follow international agreements and standards for protecting the natural resource. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) maintains six categories⁶ to classify protected areas and this method is recognized on a global scale by Governments, donors and international coordination bodies. Co-management falls under the IUCN category VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources. This includes a protected area that conserve ecosystems and habitats, together with associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems.

How does a co-management partnership work?

Co-management usually undergoes two distinct developmental phases (Table 3).

Phase 1: Common vision and institution building. The first phase includes creating a workable relationship between the different partners and developing a common vision-statement for the landscape where the resource is located. Governments and NGOs that typically aim to promote economic development and environmental protection can align with local users, who themselves are more interested in balancing their social system with the resource.

The vision is then transformed into an agreement, in which the collaboration between the partners is outlined and the responsibilities of each partner is defined. The agreement should be accompanied with a clear action plan that sets out different tasks to resolve emerging problems, the timelines, and specification on funding sources needed for execution.

Phase 2: Governance and implementation. The goal of this phase is to create a governance structure that allows enough room for all partners to meaningfully negotiate about the tasks assigned and discuss how these tasks may be influenced by the ongoing changes in the social system (institutions, local communities) and the natural systems (ecosystems). The ultimate goal of this negotiation is to align interests and together make decisions, legitimize them in support to the overall protection of the resource.

For the co-management system to evolve, the partners should constantly learn about each other, and about the effective management of the resource. This “learning by doing” practice responds to social and ecological feedback and enables management flexibility.

⁶ The six categories are: Ia) Strict nature reserve, Ib) Wilderness area, II) National park, III) Natural monument, IV) Habitat/species management, V) Protected landscape/seascape, VI) Managed resource protected area.

Table 3: Overview of two-phase Process of Building a Co-management Partnership

Theme	Details
Phase I: Common vision and institution-building	
Negotiate meaning of key-terms	A central theme in this phase is the negotiation of the definition and meaning of conservation, collaboration and co-management, amongst others.
Create working relationship	The ultimate goal of institution-building is to have a working relationship between indigenous people and western-oriented partners by overcoming differences socio-cultural setting. The working relationship should eventually transform into a real partnership.
Setting rules and procedures	Working together requires setting rules and procedures: what is allowed and what is not.
Explore underpinning values	Developing a common vision can only be successful once all partners agree on the values underpinning the vision. This exploration is necessary to test the assumption that the participating partners may have different values (and thus reasons) for protecting an area. If this is not tested, once the common vision is created, it can easily fall apart.
Frame/reframe the common vision	The negotiation of the meaning of co-management itself and potentially the (re)framing of images among parties will lead to a common vision. Framing and reframing usually occurs during deliberations and negotiations.
Building trust	Trust appears to be a determinant of success in many cases of co-management. Building trust, learning to respect differences and integration of different knowledge systems facilitates collaboration between partners.
Sharing power	Decentralizing resource management decisions requires sharing of power. More powerful partners (government, NGOs) are assumed to share power with less powerful partner (local communities) to become empowered and share knowledge and skills, bridge worldviews and participate equitable in decisions about resource management.

Theme	Details
Phase 2: Governance and implementation	
Dealing with complexity	The design particularly emphasized the need for multi-disciplinarily to unravel the complexity of both the ecological and social dimensions, as well as the link between them. The assumption made here is that partners have limited experience working with complex socio-ecological settings and co-management is a novel undertaking. Learning by doing responds to social and ecological feedback and provides management flexibility.
Fostering sustainability	Sustainability of the co-management system will be promoted with: i) sufficient financial support to fund the management activities, ii) when benefits derived from participation exceed the cost of investment for partners, iii) legal rights to organize and make management arrangements, iv) group cohesion, including a willingness to engage in collective action, and a common understanding of the problem and the alternative solutions.
Problem solving and resolving conflict	Co-management systems have ongoing dynamics between participating partners and therefore always have tension and conflict. Co-management is seen as a conflict-prone system for which resolving problems and conflicts is at the heart of its success.

3. Co-Management in Practice

What are some common experiences in co-management?

The main challenge in establishing a practical co-management partnership is to manage the social component. Each partner bears complexities and these should be effectively handled during the deliberations and decision-making, such as:

- The state operates through various offices that each have a legal mandate
- The local community is dynamic and cannot be considered a homogenous body
- The ecosystem under management is constantly changing

Successful co-management systems tend to handle these complexities well by finding ways to discuss resource management through joint learning and adaptation.

Table 4 presents an overview of common experiences with co-management partnerships around the world that are comparable to the situation in Suriname. Cases from Africa, Asia, the wider Caribbean, South America, and Canada were analyzed, covering various ecosystems and settings with indigenous peoples and local communities.

What assumptions frequently hinder the functioning of a co-management partnership?

As explained earlier, conservation was designed along the paradigm of isolating unique biodiversity places and manage them with scientific principles. Although this paradigm has been changing over the last couple of decades, some basic assumptions are still active that systematically hinder the functioning of co-management partnerships:

- Assumption that traditional knowledge is inferior to science
Traditional knowledge is gathered by indigenous peoples and local communities through decades of experience with nature. Unlike scientific knowledge that is founded in abstract experimentation, traditional knowledge bears a body of practical knowledge, associated with strong values and beliefs. Generally, scientific knowledge is considered more important than traditional knowledge, and is validated through a system of peer review and publication.
- Assumption that the resource is the most important asset
Many conservationists are historically focused on the management of the resource and have less interest in thriving the livelihoods of local inhabitants. Putting local communities in second place is an automatic assumption that comes from the strong resource focus in the Fencing and Fines conservation paradigm.
- Assumption that local communities participate because of monetary benefits
From practice, it has become evident that local communities participate not only for monetary benefits, but also participate for broader non-monetary benefits. Non-monetary benefits include recognition, assurances, and promotion of equity, amongst others.

Table 4: Overview of Common Problems and Potential Solutions occurring in Co-Management

Theme	Identified Problems	Details	Potential Solutions
Partnership	Uniform co-management system	One-size-fits all solutions avoid case by case negotiations but bypasses the peculiarities of the resource area	Adjust co-management partnership to the situation and culture of the group present at the site
	Marginalized local communities are manipulated to participate	Marginalized peoples are promised/given benefits as a bribe to enable their participation	Strengthen community structures with technical assistance programs so they can self-decide on participation in the co-management partnership
	Co-management partnerships is highly dependent on outside funding sources	There is a risk the partnership will collapse because costs cannot be covered by themselves	Secure financial resources from management of the resource
	Top-down decision-making structure	Difficulty for Government to share power with indigenous people and local communities (due to legislation or unwillingness)	Implement right-based approach which includes a permission process before conservation actions are taken in resources inhabited by local peoples
	Structural inequality between participating groups	There exists inequality between groups in terms of education, health, social status, poverty level etc.	Maintain healthy power balance between the partners in the negotiation process
	Creation of sub-groups that negatively influence the partnership	Groups dominate based on knowledge, finances and/or authority	Constantly balance power in the partnership through process control system/expert
	Lack of institutional readiness for entering co-management partnership	Lack of flexibility (overcautious, protectionist) and/or allocation of resources (time, staff) for participating in co-management Mindshift (ethics, time, language) to work with local communities	Adjust institutional rules and procedures to work with partnership
	Communication between partners is ineffective	Non-culturally sensitive ways of communication lead to breakdowns	Create effective communication mechanism with assigned staff

Theme	Identified Problems	Details	Potential Solutions
Resource Management	Too much focus on the resource and its management	Too much focus on conservation and less focus on sustainable development of local communities	C-management approach should consider both conservation and sustainable development
	Resource management plans are too complicated for local communities	Local communities are often operating out of a traditional view and have limited ability to understand science-based management plans	Produce simple management plans which the local communities can comprehend
Resource Management	Local communities have little capacity to manage the resource	Local communities possess traditional knowledge, and have little knowledge about scientific-oriented monitoring	Strengthen community structures with technical assistance programs. Integrate traditional knowledge into management plan
	Unclear boundaries between management area and community area	Community customary practices may overlap with management area	Clear zoning of area before developing a management plan
Negotiation	Lack of information-sharing and initial discussion before negotiations occur	Partners are insufficiently informed and have little space for discussion about the issue on the negotiation	Conduct extensive and culturally sensitive information sharing and communication campaigns before negotiation
	Changing interests of partners during negotiation	When something changes in the socio-economic or political setting, parties may change their interest and the co-management agreements becomes vulnerable	Identify new interests before entering the negotiation process. Re-align interests during negotiation
	Lack of trust between partners	Incidents have occurred that violated trust and these have not been properly addressed	Gain trust in the facilitation with process control system/expert
	Lack of familiarity in institutions/communities with problem-solving technique	General problem-solving techniques enable partners to prevent unnecessary conflict	Exercise problem-solving in facilitation with process control system/expert
	Interference of outside parties through partners	Power can be introduced from outside (politics, donors) through parties at the negotiation table	Manage power balance in facilitation with process control system/expert

Theme	Identified Problems	Details	Potential Solutions
Administration	Rigid planning formats and administrative procedures	Difficult planning and administrative procedures for local communities were a barrier to participation in co-management	Focus on step-by-step learning and giving feedback to local communities rather than practicing enforcement
	Local communities need sound financial management	Bank accounts, procedures for withdrawal and transparent financial accounting procedures	Strengthen community structures with technical assistance programs
	Elite capture in local communities	Elite capture refers to the leaders taking most of the benefits allocated to the community	Negotiate a benefit-sharing agreement that includes all groups in the community
Quality Control	No integration of social learning processes	Self-reflection is episodic and/or largely dependent on external reviews and/or no process monitoring	Include adaptivity of co-management system by making learning the central dimension (adaptive co-management)
	Dynamic and pluralist nature of co-management naturally cause conflict between partners	Conflict is natural but it can have both positive and/or negative effect on the partnership	Manage conflicts with process control system/expert

4. How Would Co-Management Work in Suriname?

What is the context for a co-management partnership in Suriname?

Since the 1950s, the Suriname Government has been on a mission to sustainably manage the country's forests. Approximately 13.3 percent of Suriname's land area currently falls under some sort of protection, either through a nature reserve, multiple use management area, or nature park. With almost 93% of forest in pristine state, Suriname has a unique opportunity to keep being the most forested country globally. To do so, the country has to face some challenges that are part of its historic development.

Protection. The Government has viewed forests primarily as a common good for biodiversity protection but is now gradually moving to a more holistic view of the forest which includes safeguarding the headwaters and watersheds, mitigating climate change, and preserving the indigenous cultures and livelihoods. In this effort of updating the conservation model, co-management is treated as just one experiment among others that might reveal more effective ways to manage forest resources.

Land Tenure and Rights. Indigenous peoples' conservation efforts have been mostly undervalued because the Government's has ownership over all land, rendering Suriname the only country in South America withholding indigenous peoples' collective right to land use or ownership. The lack of land rights has been the main source of dispute between indigenous people and the Government.

Internal Divide. Since the colonial era, the coastal region has been more important in terms of social and economic activity than the interior of the country. The indigenous and maroon communities who inhabit the interior still belong to the most marginalized groups in the country. This disadvantaged position comes at the forefront of every discussion about conservation and sustainable development.

Peace Culture. Suriname's multicultural society consists of over 15 ethnic groups, originally coming from what is currently known as Europe, Asia and Africa. Maintaining a balance between these groups has retained a peaceful society which is often showcased as an example to the world. The Government always juggles to maintain the peace, and this can result in long delays in decision-making.

Underfunded and Understaffed Institutions. The general trend is that Government institutions possess limited amounts of technical personnel to do the job, especially compared to the conservation NGOs. For decades, the institutions have been plagued with meager budgets which can only cover salaries and basic maintenance costs of infrastructure and operations. New initiatives are mostly driven by donor funding.

Decentralization. Decentralization of government is still "a work in progress". Decision are normally made in major institutions located in the capital city Paramaribo, and then filtered to local bodies only for implementation. Regional and local district-level plans are usually confined to a list of to-do items for initiating behavioral change (e.g. waste management) or updating infrastructure.

What recent experiences does Suriname have with co-management?

In 2015, 16 interested parties⁷ formally agreed to the TWTIS⁸ co-management partnership (formally known as the South Suriname Conservation Corridor), an initiative to protect a continuous tract of pristine tropical rainforest, home to vast biodiversity and to the Trio and Wayana indigenous communities in the southern part of Suriname. Threats to this area include small-scale goldmining, illegal poaching and deforestation linked to road and dam development.

The TWTIS partnership started with a one-year long process of capacity-building and preparation of the indigenous communities, who were seen as the most important players because of their continuous presence in the forest. After which, the indigenous communities and other partners were brought together for a three-week negotiation to establish a common vision. Against all expectations, the partners agreed to the protection of 7.2 million hectare in South Suriname, which was outlined in a partnership agreement.

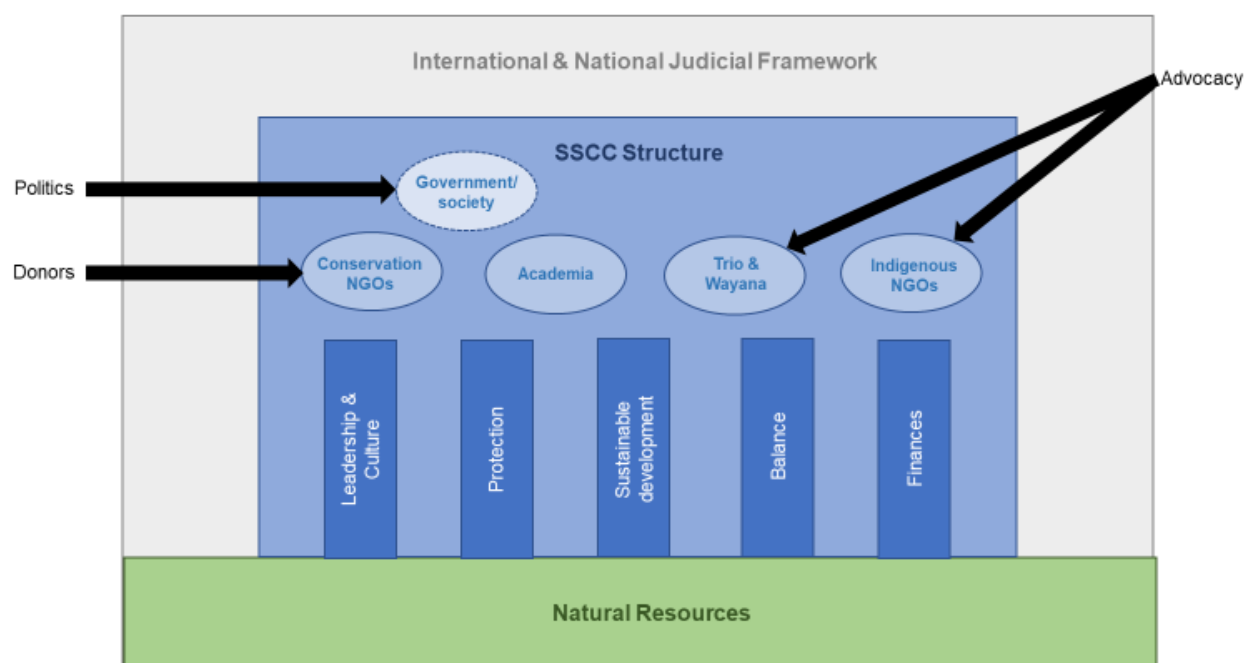


Figure 3: The TWTIS Co-Management Structure. Source: WWF, 2020.

⁷ Eight indigenous forest communities – Kwamalasamutu (Trio), Alalapadu (Trio), Sipaliwini (Trio), Pelelelepu (Trio), Palumeu (Trio), Amotopo (Trio), Apetina (Wayana), Kawemhaken (Wayana) - and eight other partners – Conservation International (NGO), World Wildlife Fund (NGO), Amazon Conservation Team (NGO), National Herbarium of Suriname (Academia), Indigenous platform (Indigenous Advocacy Organization), Organization of Indigenous Peoples in Suriname (Indigenous Advocacy Organization) and Foundation Kuluwayak (Wayana Advocacy Organization), with the Ministry of Physical Planning, Land and Forest Management (Government) as observer.

⁸ Meaning Trio and Wayana working together to protect South Suriname.

The partners had a common ambition to keep the forest intact and this underpinning goal served as the foundation for building the co-management system. The dynamic between the partners is organized around five pillars: i) leadership and culture, ii) protection, iii) sustainable development, iv) balance between protection and sustainable development, and v) finances. The participating organizations and communities are subject to external influences coming from donors, advocacy groups and politicians (Figure 3).

In two years following the signing of the partnership agreement, the momentum for creating a thriving co-management partnership in TWTIS was lost due to lack of adequate planning and execution. There were several problems identified related to planning and execution, such as lack of institutional readiness, unwillingness to share power, and partners adhering to centralized or top-down decision-making which is the normal practice in-country.

Due to the lack of overall process guidance, unfortunately, the process crumbled because there were problems between the partners that remain unaddressed. The falling apart of the trust and cohesion between partners let disputes to emerge and allowed for outside parties to negatively influence the partnership.

After five years of existence, the TWTIS partnership still exists in Phase 1: Common vision and institution building. The TWTIS partners are currently busy establishing a workable relationship. The partnership has not yet been able to move forward because of the start-up problems (Table 5), which are common and relatively easy to resolve according to comparable experiences in co-management systems globally, as explained in Table 4.

How can co-management be improved in Suriname?

The promise of co-management for Suriname lies in the effective management of a unique natural resource with a set of combined resources from the Government and partnering institutions, such as knowledge, manpower and finances. For co-management to become a viable option, there are several recommendations:

- Set definitions of various concepts clearly

Conservation and co-management are defined differently for indigenous people, Government and NGOs. It is very important to explore the definitions of concepts used in co-management before entering into the partnership and be clear about the differences in perspectives of the different partners about co-management.

- Develop agreed upon roadmap for reaching long term goals

The partnership should make a collaborative roadmap to set out a plan for the future. Even though this plan may change during the course of collaboration, it will provide each partner a handle of what is expected in the future.

- Include rights-based approaches in the partnership

In the context of absence of indigenous land rights, the partnership should implement a right-based approach which includes a permission process before conservation actions are taken in resources inhabited by indigenous and local peoples.

- Transform institutional approach from centralized to collaborative

Each partner should change its mindset and institutional procedures to engage with all other partners, in particular with the indigenous communities. The latter requires a certain flexibility in administrative procedures and decision-making structures, especially in multilevel and multilateral institutions.

- Focus on the social process of the co-management partnership

As seen globally, the social process of the partnership is much more important than the actual management of the resource. Guiding the process with engagement, trust building, negotiation and decision-making is imperative for moving the partnership from early on to more mature stages of collaboration. The co-management partnership should move forward in a way that is attuned to the capacity and pace of the weakest partner.

- Build capacity of the partners as the partnerships grows

All partners should build capacity to understand each other's culture and approach to conservation. After this awareness phase is completed, capacity building should focus on technical aspects of conservation and techniques for working effectively together.

- Develop a sustainable system for funding co-management activities

Co-management activities such as monitoring, and surveillance require adequate, long term funding. The set-up of a nationwide fund together with (potential) donors who are interested in nature conservation and sustainable development.

When following the recommendation above, co-management holds the promise to can become a win-win option for all major conservation actors in Suriname: the government will be able to manage areas for which they have limited resources, the indigenous peoples get support in managing land for future generations and become one step closer to obtaining the rights to the land they inhabit, and the conservation NGOs are supporting the protection of large pieces of natural resources for the future of our planet.

Table 5: Overview of Identified Problems in TWTIS co-management partnership

Theme	Identified Problems	Details
Partnership	Lack of institutional readiness for entering co-management partnership	Limited coordination between Conservation NGOs resulted in a fallback to the old mode of functioning. These NGOs did not have enough capacity to function in a collaborative setting with each other, and with the other partners.
		Indigenous people had limited internal organization to often speak to partners without being all present, the latter being a costly undertaking. Trio and Wayana communities were unequipped to negotiate, and therefore supporting local governance to participate effectively in TWTIS became a priority.
		One Conservation NGO took the lead on working with assistants. Yet, the NGO lacked experience working with indigenous peoples led to tension and disputes. Interference from experts was necessary to streamline the relationship.
	Top-down decision-making structure	Difficulty for Government to share power with indigenous people and local communities (due to legislation or unwillingness). The Government's Ministry of Land and Forest Management changed position from potential partner to observer at the start of the negotiations
	Co-management partnerships is highly dependent on outside funding sources	Some conservation NGOs were also donors. These organizations (informally) set the direction of the partnership, rather than a collaborative effort between all partners.
	Creation of sub-groups that negatively influence the partnership	One indigenous NGO engaged in an activity to get all the indigenous peoples to work with them and leave the partnership. This attempt failed but left a bitter taste of distrust between the Wayana and the Trio peoples.
		The conservation NGOs only saw the indigenous people as a real partner and tend to forget the other partners.

Theme	Identified Problems	Details
Negotiation	Lack of trust between partners	Lack of a process expert to guide the institution-building process had led to a situation without control and direction.
	Lack of familiarity in institutions/communities with problem-solving technique	
	Interference of outside parties through partners	Increased interest for TWTIS brought lots of outsiders (donors, observers) in the panel meetings which disrupted the collaborative process. A newly established international NGO focused on indigenous peoples, came in as a new player and partnered with the Wayana. The mission of the new NGO was to empower the Wayana to self-manage their territory and leave TWTIS.
Quality control	Dynamic and pluralist nature of co-management naturally cause conflict between partners	Lack of a process expert to guide the institution-building process had led to a situation without control and direction.
		Problems between two Conservation NGOs resulted in subgroups and conflict then progressed from covert to overt.
		The conflict between the two Conservation NGOs was discussed and resolved by aligning goals, strategies and actions. Partnership between NGOs was redefined through logistics (charter flights) and strategic implementation of the following goals: i) increasing awareness and a sense of urgency in maintaining health of TWTIS, people and forests, ii) sharing resources, information and intelligence on common goals and plans, iii) self- and cross evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, projects and programs related to livelihood and conservation within SSCC, iv) create a dedicated staff pool, v) create a coordinated funding mechanism to secure sustainability of joined on-going programs within TWTIS.

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