NEGOWAT

RESEARCH REPORT Nº 4

A Methodology for intervention in the design and evaluation of a short-term Multi-Stakeholder Platform

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NEGOWAT Project: Facilitating Negotiations over Land and water Conflicts in Peri-urban Upstream Catchments

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The NEGOWAT Project (Facilitating Negotiations over Land and water Conflicts in Peri-urban Upstream Catchments) is a research project developed in Cochabamba (Bolivia) and Sao Paulo (Brasil). It is focused to develop tools to better understand water related competition and conflicts among different stakeholders in these areas.

In Bolivia, the NEGOWAT Project is executed by the Andean Centre for Water Management and Use (Centro AGUA) and the Study Centre of Social and Economic Reality (CERES). The Centro AGUA is an education and research centre of the Faculty of Agriculture and Livestock Sciences (FCAyP), San Simon University (UMSS).

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CONTENT

SUMMARY

This document proposes a methodology for the implementation of a multi stakeholder platform that may be utilized by an organization as a form of intervention in order to solve a specific problem.

The methodology considers four stages: (i) Baseline analysis in which the causes of the problem, the stakeholders and the reasons for a lack of agreements are analyzed, and the existing negotiation processes are assessed; (ii) Ex ante evaluation, which includes the assessment of whether an intervention is needed, whether it is an opportune moment and the kind of intervention needed; (iii) Design of the platform, which encompasses the definition of the convening organization and the facilitator, the basic structure of the platform, the relationship between the platform and the constituencies, and the structure of the sessions, and; (iv) Monitoring and evaluation based on the objectives of the platform and the actions of the facilitator.

The methodology establishes a general framework that should be considered in a flexible manner and according to the specific characteristics of each case. This can be deepened in two directions: testing the use of tools to support negotiations within the process and; testing its usefulness in permanent platforms.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents a generic methodology to support the design and evaluation of a Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP), with a focus on platforms which are to address a specific issue. The general situation tackled here is one where a common problem affects several stakeholders. This common problem may be an explicit one, where stakeholders' positions may range from a mere disagreement to a state of declared conflict, but an MSP can also be thought of to prevent a latent problem to turn into a conflict. In such situations, it is possible to consider solving the problem through a negotiation table involving all the stakeholders, with the objective of reaching a negotiated agreement among them.

This approach to solve problems has been existed for some times now (see for instance the large literature on Alternative Conflict Resolution). Though there are negotiation tables functioning without Facilitator, the most frequent situation is one where an organization is leading and/or facilitating the negotiation process. This is the case considered here: the Facilitator's aim is to intervene in order to improve an already existing discussion platform or to start a new one. Clearly, organization of the process and facilitation are not necessarily the unique activities that the Facilitator may plan in order to pave the way for a negotiated solution of the common problem.

The methodology was designed having in mind a focus on short term MSPs, although many of the aspects it considers would be also relevant for a permanent one. It is not meant to be a silver bullet to organize MSPs, least a recipe for success. Its aim is to help the organization in charge of the design and facilitation - for instance an NGO- thinking the way they will set up their MSP, merely as a source of inspiration, and maybe also as a list of points to help not forget issues.

The main points of the methodology are summarized in a check-list of questions, which helps keeping in mind the points to be addressed without adopting an ill-placed normative stand. Other documents also propose some ideas to design MSPs, such as Hemmati (2002), Sexton (2002), or Susskind and Cruishank (1987).

The methodology was set up and tested by the Negowat research project during its facilitation of a negotiation table in Tiquipaya, a peri-urban city nearby Cochabamba in Bolivia. Another paper produced by Negowat (see Faysse et al. 2005) presents the implementation of this methodology in that case.

The document is organized as follows. First, a short conceptual framework about MSPs is described. Second MSPs are presented in terms of their objectives and the facilitation activities that are to be considered. These activities are then presented in the same order as they are to be undertaken: baseline analysis, ex ante evaluation, design of the MSP, and organization of the sessions. The last section presents a methodology for the monitoring and evaluation of MSPs.

2. SOME DEFINITIONS

This document does not pretend to give a complete vision of the theoretical bases that can be used to analyse an MSP. The reader can refer for instance to Tyler (1998) or Steins and Edwards (1999a), in order to get a more theoretical point of view. The reader can also refer to the references quoted in this article to get a more in-depth perspective on a specific issue.

2.1 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are defined as the persons or groups that influence or are influenced directly or indirectly by the course took by an issue (Steins and Edwards, 1999), but not necessarily act in order to influence it (not necessarily became actors). In example, in the management of a water system the stakeholders include to the users of water but also to persons or groups that are not using it but can affect or be affected by the way water is managed in this system (other systems or users downstream affected by a discharge reduction or the pollution of water). In that sense in the document we prefer to use the word stakeholder and not actor.

It is important to consider that to define a stakeholder is always a simplification of reality. Within each group persons can have several interests and positions that, furthermore, may change over time.

2.2 Multi-stakeholder platform (MSP)

According to Steins and Edwards (1999a), MSPs are processes through which stakeholders (i) work collectively towards an understanding of the resource base; (ii) co-operate in solving social dilemmas associated with collective resource use; (iii) undertake joint actions with respect to the perceived problems. These MSPs can be permanent or of limited duration, in the latter case most often in order to solve a specific issue.

2.3 Problem, disagreement and conflict

It is possible to identify three ways of divergence among stakeholders:

- Problem: a situation where there is a difference among stakeholders' views, but not necessarily an explicit one.
- Disagreement: a situation where the stakeholders recognize explicitly that they have different views.
- Conflict: a situation of crisis among the stakeholders in some cases reaching confrontation (for a more specific typology of conflicts, it is possible to refer to CERES, 1999, Lewins, 2001, Warner, 2000, or Allain, 2003).

In this document we use the word "problem" in a generic way when we refer to problems and disagreements considering that it would be difficult to set up an MSP in a conflict situation.

2.4 Facilitator

We understand here as Facilitator to the organization in charge of the design, set up and facilitation of the MSP.

3. GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE METHODOLOGY

Though every MSP can have specific objectives designed in relation to the issue that is meant to deal with, the methodology proposed here is based on the accomplishment of a generic objective:

> Enable the empowered and active participation of stakeholders in the search for solutions to a problem that affects them.

This "empowered and active" participation refers to the highest rungs of the ladder of participation defined by Arnstein (1969). This generic objective can be split into two intermediary goals.

- **Regarding the process itself**: The process enables stakeholders i) to participate in the definition of the design of the MSP; and ii) to have an impact on the solution of the problem through the MSP.

- **Regarding the stakeholders**: The stakeholders have enough capacity and the legitimacy to participate, and accept to pay attention to other participants' point of view.

In order to achieve these two intermediary goals the Facilitator and the participants may define some "design objectives" of the platform. The actions of the Facilitator during the process will be devoted to accomplish the defined design objectives. Table 1 presents examples of usual design objectives.

Table 1. Possible design objectives for an MSP

	Intermediary goal	Examples of Design Objectives
Regarding the process itself	The process enables stakeholders to i) participate in the definition of the design of the MSP; and ii) have an impact on the solution of the problem through the MSP.	To define the objectives and design of the process with the participation of the stakeholders
		To make MSP process and results be considered by formal authorities
Regarding the stakeholders	Stakeholders have the capacity and the legitimacy to participate, and accept to pay attention to other participants' point of view	To promote that participants are genuine representatives and accountable to their constituencies
		To improve the power balance among representatives
		To ensure that participants have adequate information and access to human, material and financial resources for an effective participation
		To ensure that participants meet and respect each other

Thus the activities of the Facilitator will be developed in three moments: during preparation, implementation and after the implementation of the MSP (Figure 1). The steps of the methodology proposed here will be carried out by the Facilitator mostly during the preparation of the MSP: Baseline analysis, Ex-ante evaluation, Design of the MSP and Evaluation. However it is necessary that the Facilitator should execute other activities during implementation and after the MSP in order to achieve the design objectives of the platform. (Figure 1)
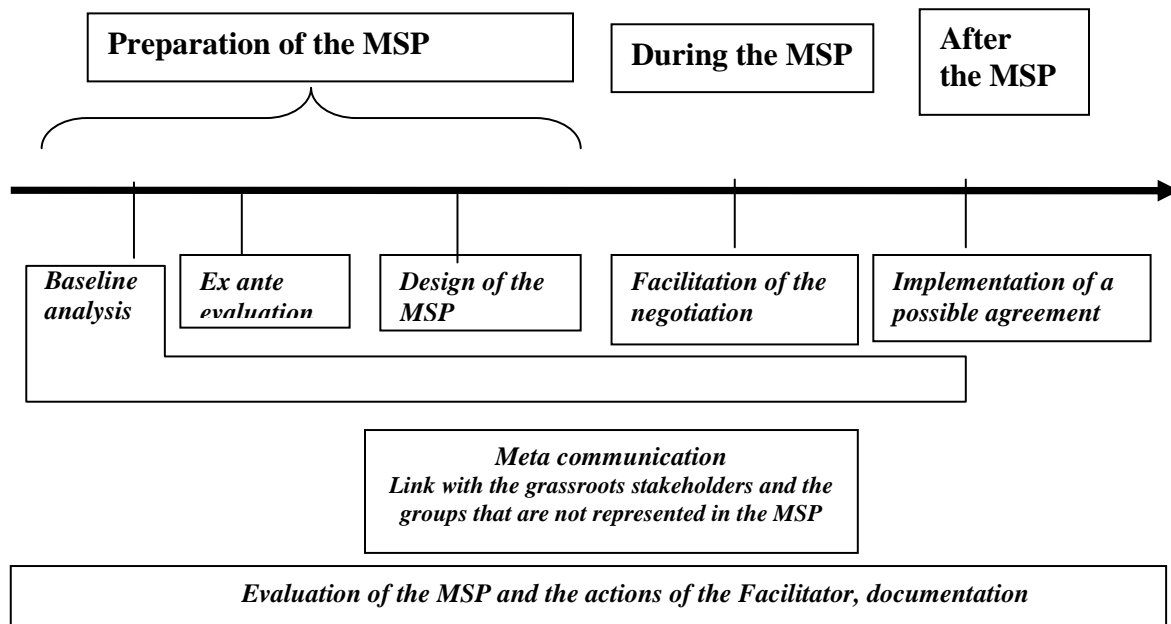
Figure 1. Activities of the Facilitator to design and facilitate an MSP

The following chapters describe in detail the methodological steps to design and evaluate an MSP.

4. BASELINE ANALYSIS

The baseline analysis is a first action that the Facilitator may undertake. This analysis will serve as a basis for the whole design of the process, from the decision of the Facilitator to intervene or not, to the agenda of negotiation during the sessions. It can encompass at least the four following elements: identification of analysis of the common problem and analysis of the stakeholders; assessment of on-going negotiation processes; analysis of reasons for failing to solve the problem and; analysis of stakeholders' willingness to reach an agreement.

4.1 Identification of the problem and analysis of the stakeholders

The baseline analysis will start with an analysis of the problem diagnosis of the problem and a mapping of all stakeholders involved their interests and positions regarding this problem. The problem should be analyzed trying to clearly identify the points of disagreement among stakeholders, in relation to water management for example, the disagreements could be related to water rights, access to water, monetary problems, etc. If necessary, it might be considered getting a historical perspective of the problem.

In practice, it may be difficult to identify stakeholders, as they may be disorganized or not able to express their interests (Maarleveld and Dangbegnon, 1999 and Steins and Edwards, 1999b). Stakeholder groups are not easily delimitated, identified or grouped (Bickford, 1999) and the definition of a group involves unstable and complex processes of self identification and representation (Edmunds y Wollenberg, 2001).

The considered stakeholders can be either groups as a whole (well-organized or without organization), or individual persons who are important because of their decision-making

power and their relation network (stakeholder analysis for individual persons should be limited to the most influent ones). To carry out a stakeholder analysis, it is recommended to possible to take into account the following aspects:

- Basic data (number of members, activities);

- How leaders are designated;

- The vision of the problem, their discourse (often stakeholders do not initially share a common definition of the problem);

- Their legal and/or historic rights linked to the problem;

- The degree of involvement in the problem;

- Possible differences between interests and officially taken positions;

- Possible differences between the interests of the group as a whole and the individual interests of its leaders and representatives;

- Their possible interests in accepting to participate in negotiations to reach an agreement; what they could get if there is no negotiation process;

- The relationship (alliances or tensions) they have with other organisations and stakeholders.

It may be useful to validate the stakeholder analysis with the groups themselves, for instance showing them the list of groups as seen by the Facilitator and asking if any group has been forgotten.

Analysis of stakeholder positions can be achieved before the design of the intervention, but it is also a task to be followed up during the process, because stakeholder characteristics may change.

4.2 Assessment of on-going negotiation processes

In order to evaluate existing negotiation processes set up to solve the problem, three characteristics are of especial interest: whether they are public, whether they involve authorities and whether they are linked to an official decision-making process.

4.3 Analysis of the reasons for failing to reach an agreement

In a generic way, four factors may be considered to analyze why the stakeholders did not find yet a solution to the common problem:

a) *Lack of information:* For instance, in situations of groundwater over pumping, information regarding the recharge and the amounts pumped by users will likely be necessary.

b) *Lack of legal or management system:* In the same case of groundwater depletion, the lack of a legal system to back an agreement or a management system to implement it will probably prevent the success of the negotiation process.

c) *Lack of willingness of some stakeholders to discuss:* In several situations there might be stakeholders that can obtain more benefits if they do not discuss openly about the problem or another, on the contrary, that can lose if they opt for an open discussion of the problem.

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d) ***When there is an attempt to set up a negotiation, failure to achieve a consensus regarding the process design:*** Some stakeholder groups may complain that they are not given enough options in the negotiation, that they do not have sufficient access to information, that the Facilitator does not have legitimacy or that they do not have sufficient control over the decisions that are to be made within the MSP.

The following list of questions summarizes the points raised in the baseline analysis.

1. *What is the problem? What are its causes and its consequences?*

2. *Who are the stakeholders involved in this problem? What are their visions of the problem? What are their interests, objectives, strategies and positions? What are their capacities to understand the problem and negotiate? What are the relationships among these stakeholders?*

3. *Is there existing negotiation processes set up to solve the problem? What are their characteristics?*

4. *What are the reasons for stakeholders not achieving to reach an agreement?*

5. *What is the willingness of each stakeholder group to reach an agreement?*

5. EX ANTE EVALUATION OF THE INTERVENTION

During the ex ante evaluation, the Facilitator will assess if its intervention is necessary and opportune, and (if the answer is yes) what could be its role and position during the process. These are key elements to be pondered before making any commitment.

5.1 Evaluation of the opportunity to intervene

The Facilitator will need to evaluate whether its intervention is really needed and may lead to positive results. An ill-prepared intervention may lead to increase the conflict instead of solving it. Various authors underline the importance of a Facilitator to get a successful negotiation process (Steins and Edwards, 1999b, Warner and Vehallen, 2004, Groot and Maarleveld, 2000), though external facilitation is not always necessary.

The Facilitator will also need to evaluate the risks of the MSP itself. First, it may be of interest to try to identify ex ante the factors that would lead to the failure of the MSP. Second, participation of the weaker groups in the MSP may lead to negative outcomes for them, as they could be forced to accept an agreement that would not benefit them, because of pressure from other stakeholders, majority rule or lack of negotiation skills. Though they would lose participating in the process, it could still appear as a consensus decision from the point of view of an external monitoring organization (Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2001).

It may be also possible that the conflict is too strong to allow the use of an MSP-type approach to solve it.

5.2 Evaluation of the kind of intervention needed

The actions that a Facilitator might carry out during the intervention may be different according to the nature of the problem that the MSP wants to solve. The following aspects may be considered in order to define the kind of intervention needed to solve the problem.

First, intervention should be planned according to the reasons for a lack of agreement identified during the baseline analyses. If there is a lack of information, the Facilitator may collect the needed information and organize capacity-building events for stakeholders to understanding it. For instance, in California, in several cases of groundwater depletion, the State only involved itself in providing information regarding the dynamics of the groundwater system, and let stakeholders negotiate afterwards without its intervention (Blomquist, 1992). If there is a lack of legal or management system, the Facilitator may involve the organisations able to set up these systems in the discussion. If some stakeholders are not willing to negotiate, the Facilitator may design the "negotiation space" in such a way that each stakeholder would prefer an agreement to a lack of agreement. Finally, if there is initially no consensus over the negotiation process, the Facilitator may pay special attention to get the MSP design discussed in a comprehensive way with all stakeholders.

Second, the Facilitator will need to choose whether to try to settle in an existing negotiation process (if existing) or to launch a new one.

Fourth, undertaking parallel activities with some stakeholders may be sometimes useful. These activities would be dis-linked to the negotiation process, and would be undertaken in order to create trust or to enhance stakeholders' willingness to sit at the MSP table.

Finally, the Facilitator may define design objectives that are to be met in order for the MSP to succeed (Table 1).

5.3 Position of the Facilitator

A Facilitator is never completely neutral: trying to achieve this would be pointless. What matters is that stakeholders accept the Facilitator as a neutral organization.

The Facilitator will need to choose its stand in relation to the solution-seeking part of the process. Susskind and Cruishank (1987) differentiate between facilitation, where the organization supports the process (e.g. organises the meetings), but does not give any proposal to improve the search for a commonly agreed solution; and mediation, where the organization puts proposals on the table as an inputs for the discussion.

The following list of questions summarizes the points raised in the ex ante evaluation of the intervention.

6. *Should the Facilitator intervene? What would be the possible risks? In particular, is there a risk for the weaker stakeholders to lose out participating in the MSP?*

7. *Is the conflict too strong to prevent the set up of an MSP?*

8. *Should the Facilitator adopt a role of facilitation or of mediation?*

9. *Will the Facilitator intervene in an existing negotiation process or launch a new one?*

10. *Is there a necessity to undertake parallel activities with some of the stakeholders?*

11. *What will be the objectives of the Facilitator during the preparation and implementation of the MSP?*

12. *Is the Facilitator legitimate? If not, what is the strategy to achieve it?*

13. *What position will the Facilitator take with regards to neutrality?*

6. DESIGN OF THE MSP

This section presents a framework for analysis of the structure of an MSP. This may serve three purposes: 1) to design an MSP if the Facilitator is in charge of it; 2) to adapt an existing MSP to the solution of a specific problem; 3) to set a frame for the evaluation of an MSP structure and functioning.

Stakeholders must reach an agreement on the design of the MSP. The degree of involvement of participants in the MSP's design can be chosen between two extremes: on one side the participants design themselves the MSP, with the Facilitator only facilitating the discussion. On the other side, the Facilitator designs alone the MSP. Another choice to make is whether there will be a formally signed agreement on this design.

The following subsections present some key points to consider in the design of the MSP. For each of these points, it will be necessary to define (a) degree of involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making regarding the design; (b) the degree of flexibility of design once the MSP has started.

6.1 Main points to tackle for the design of the MSP

An MSP is a space in which the stakeholders participate through their representatives. Though during the design the Facilitator should try to involve all stakeholders, in practice there might be stakeholders that would not accept to participate. On the other hand there could be a Facilitator not really part of the MSP structure but developing tasks related to the functioning of the platform, and a convening organization with the legitimacy to call together the stakeholders (Figure 2). Within the later scheme six points can be outlined when designing an MSP. This section reviews these points, with the order shown in Figure 2.
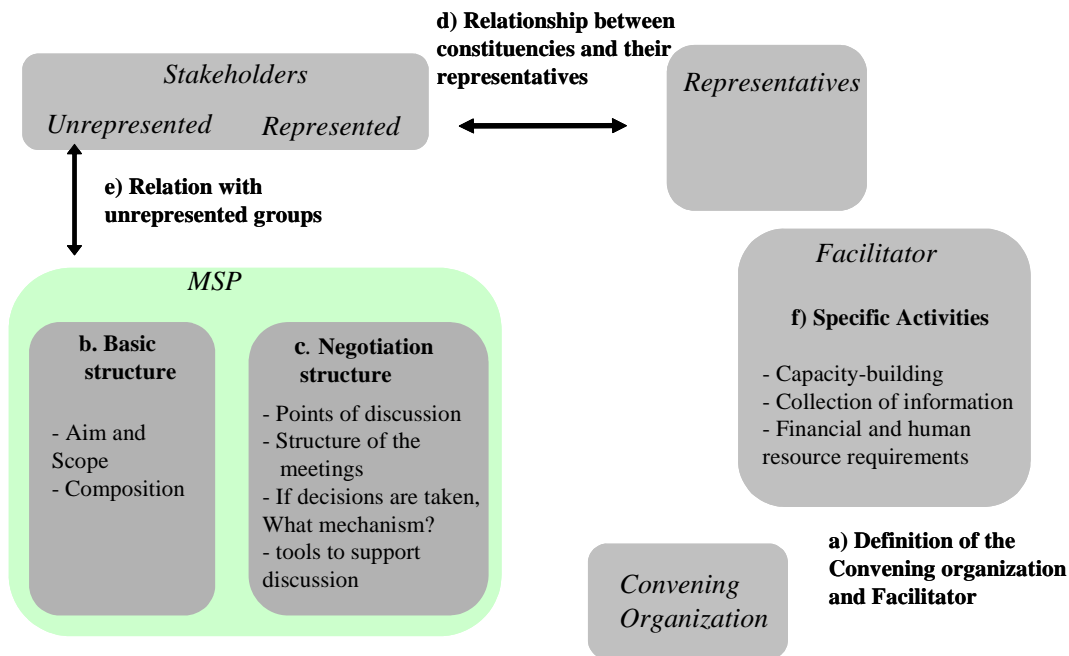

Figure 2. Main points to be considered for the design of an MSP

a) Definition of the Convening Organization and the Facilitator

It may be of interest to differentiate between the Organization inviting, i.e., the organization in charge of calling for the MSP, and the Facilitator, in charge of facilitating the discussion. For the first one, what matters is the weight it gives to the process, while for the second one it is being accepted as neutral. These two roles could be played by a single organisation, or two ones, depending on the local context. Though the Facilitator may take the lead in terms of organizing the MSP, delegating responsibilities to other participating organizations would be helpful to get them committed to the process.

b) Basic structure of the MSP

Two aspects are considered:

- *Aim and scope of the MSP*

The aim and scope of the MSP must be very clear to all stakeholders involved. Therefore the objective of the MSP should be defined in discussion with the stakeholders. It will be referred to what the MSP wants to solve, and therefore it will be particular to each process. To complement the later several design objectives could be defined.

The decision power of the MSP can range from a mere role of socialization and capacity-building (but in that extreme case it may not really be considered an MSP) to a role of fully-fledged decision-making body. These different "rungs" of decision-making power are similar to the ones defined for public participation (cf. Bruns, 2003, for a review of literature on this theme). However, MSPs are basically set up to give "voices, not votes" (Hemmati, 2002) and often the decisions taken will then have to be approved by a given authority (Municipality, State, etc.). However, stakeholder groups may refuse to participate if they do not trust the process will have any impact.

- *Composition of the platform*

There is a dilemma between two types of representation of grassroots stakeholders. On the one hand, representation by way of stakeholder groups enables a rich discussion, as these groups are often more knowledgeable about the problem and its possible solutions than authorities. In the area of water management for instance, representation can be organized with representatives from irrigation farmers, environmentalists NGOs, drinking water supply companies, etc. However, the legitimacy of some of these organizations is sometimes weak, and the grassroots users often will not get the same weight, depending on which group he or she belongs to. On the other hand, one can think of representation through universal vote: municipalities, government, etc. This representation has a stronger legal legitimacy, though social control could be failing. In most cases, using both forms of legitimacy in the definition of the composition of the platform might prove useful. For instance, the Local Water Resource Committees in France are to be constituted of 50% of local municipalities, 25% of government representatives and 25% of other stakeholder groups.

In terms of the number of participants in the platform, it is necessary to strike a balance

between a small group, where representatives can progressively know each other, move away from possible extreme positions and initiate the search for compromises, and a larger group, which will be more legitimate and will facilitate the link with the constituencies.

Hemmati (2002) proposes some basic rules to organize the composition of an MSP: (i) strike a balance in the distribution of the points of view, with a sufficient diversity among them; (ii) include at least two persons for each group, if possible with both genders; and (iii) a person should not represent more than one stakeholder.

c) Negotiation structure

Once the basic structure is defined it is necessary to organize how representatives will carry out the discussions in order to reach the agreed objectives. For points can be stressed for the organization of the discussion:

- *Definition of the points to be discussed and the limits of the discussion*

It is of interest to analyse, for each stakeholder group, what it will get out if there is no negotiation, i.e., the Best Alternative to A Negotiated Agreement (cf. Ramírez, 1998). In order to get all stakeholders coming to negotiate, it may be possible to add more issues to the initial common problem. Ramirez (1998) proposes that the negotiation structure must be designed in such way that stakeholders negotiate based on their interests and not their positions.

- *Structure of the sessions*

It will be necessary to organize the order in which the themes under discussion will be addressed.

There may be a single body of participants or an alternating sequence of plenary sessions and work with smaller groups. The Facilitator may also organize previous meetings with some stakeholder groups to prepare the following plenary session.

- *Definition of decision-making rules*

MSPs function often with the consensus rule the reason being their frequent lack of formal insertion in the official decision-making process. However, this is not a universal rule. For instance French Catchment Management Committees use majority rule.

If consensus is to be used, the Facilitator may play more a role of mediation (putting proposals on the table that may lead to an agreement) than a mere role of facilitation. The Facilitator will also have to think about an exit strategy, if consensus rule is to be used and eventually no consensus is achieved.

- *Tools to facilitate the discussion and the negotiation*

It is possible to differentiate four types of tools. First, some tools may facilitate the definition of a shared initial assessment of the situation and the common problem. This

involves for instance: i) improving stakeholders' understanding of the technical and social aspects of the problem and of other stakeholders' points of view; ii) help reveal stakeholders' actual interests in the problem. Examples of such tools are role-playing games or the Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (RAAKS, Salomon and Engel, 1997). Second, some tools may facilitate the discussion itself. This can be a set of rules of debate, or an invitation to participants to prepare background papers before the sessions. Third, tools can support the comparison of possible alternatives during the negotiation of the agreement. Some Decision Support Systems (DSS), i.e. a model that can quickly show the consequences of different kind of decisions taken, can be useful with this purpose. Fourth, some tools are used to diminish tensions and improve the relationship participants. Role playing games can also help this purpose

Some of the tools of the second and third types could be designed in such way that representatives may afterwards use them to interact with their constituencies (for other typologies of these tools, cf. Morardet and Rio 2003 or Grimble and Wellard, 1997)

The following list of questions summarizes the issues raised in these first 3 points regarding the design of the MSP.

14. *What will be stakeholders' involvement in the design of the MSP? A formal or informal agreement? Which flexibility is given ex ante to modify some elements of the design during the process itself?*

15. *Who will invite the participants?*

16. *What will be the status, aim and decision-making power of the MSP?*

17. *How will the MSP be linked to an official decision-making process?*

18. *What will be the composition of the MSP?*

19. *How to choose the points to be discussed in such a way that all stakeholders prefer an agreement to a lack of agreement?*

20. *What will be the limits of the points to be discussed?*

21. *In which order the points will be discussed?*

22. *If decisions are to be taken, what will be the decision-making rule?*

23. *What will be the exit strategy? What will be the strategy to go on negotiating if the Facilitator needs to quit the process before its end; or if no agreement is reached?*

24. *Will there be use of tools to improve stakeholders' understanding of the problem, to facilitate the discussion, to support the comparison of alternatives during the negotiation phase, or to improve the relationship among participants?*

d) Relationship between constituencies and their representatives

This issue is one of the toughest in defining and implementing an MSP, since the relationship between representatives and their constituencies is often weak. Effective social control is

based on a satisfactory circulation of information, both top-down and bottom-up.

In a bottom-up way, the issue is how representatives are elected or designated and how the latter learn the opinions of his/her constituency, especially to know if they would accept an agreement under negotiation at the MSP. The top-down direction relates to how the representative is accountable and how he/she informs about what took place at the negotiation table.

In the common cases where this relationship is not satisfactory, the Facilitator will have to decide whether intervenes to improve it. A first example is the situation where the group is not organized. For instance, in large-scale basins, it may be difficult to get representation of small-scale water users for a water-resource management MSP. In such a case, the Facilitator may help organize this stakeholder group. A second example is when a representative may decide according to his or her own individual interest, e.g. to leave the negotiation table, without having discussed this decision with his/her constituency. In such situations, the Facilitator may consider other medias (e.g. bulletins, radio) to publicize what takes place at the MSP. Hemmati (2002) suggests that the way by which representatives are elected or designated, and the way they link up with their constituencies, should be shared knowledge among the participants at the MSP.

e) Link with stakeholder groups not represented in the MSP and the general public

In the case where some stakeholder groups are not represented, the Facilitator may use specific media to inform them about what takes place at the MSP. In this way these groups could react in cases some decisions affect them importantly. It can also give more transparency to the platform. The use of massive communication media (i.e. radio, newspapers) can be more effective for this purpose.

f) Specific activities of the Facilitator

These activities are referred to what the Facilitator should carry out in order to ensure an active and informed participation of the representatives within the MSP. There could be three kinds of activities:

- *Capacity-building*

Some stakeholder groups may be less knowledgeable of the issues dealt with in the MSP, and they may come to the negotiation table without other stakeholder groups paying attention to their points of view (Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2001). Therefore, it may be necessary to organize capacity-building events for these groups' representatives before the process implementation. This would help achieve a better power balance among stakeholders. However, these activities may impact on the Facilitator's neutrality. Capacity-building could also encompass trying to empower stakeholders to run the MSP once the Facilitator leaves the process.

- *Collection of information*

The Facilitator may need to collect additional information in order to support the

negotiation process (cf. the ex ante analysis made regarding the different possible reasons for failing to achieve an agreement).

- *Planning of the financial and human resource requirements*

It is necessary to define if the MSP will have a fixed duration or if it may get prolonged in the case difficulties appear to reach an agreement. Based on this decision, the Facilitator needs to plan the requirements in terms of financial and human resources. This may be done for its own activities, as well as for the participation costs of the stakeholders. In several cases of MSPs in developing countries, though participants are not paid, transport costs are reimbursed. Such an assessment is needed if funding organizations are expected to support the process. The costs of the whole process should be compared - at least in a very blunt way - to the costs of not solving the problem in a participative way.

Finally, publicizing the source of the funds used by the Facilitator to support the MSP may be important in order to show a neutral position.

6.2 Organization of the MSP sessions

MSP sessions are the meetings of representatives where every selected theme is discussed. The following points may be considered in order to organize these sessions.

a) Rules to organize the debates

Some rules may be defined to organize the debates itself, for instance the definition of a bylaw for debating agreed by all participants at the beginning of the negotiation process (see Hemmati, 2002, for some suggestions of rules to ensure that the sessions take place with a respectful and constructive thinking). For instance, it could be agreed to give priority in the intervention order to participants that did not talk yet.

b)Language

It may be of interest to differentiate the language(s) in which documents will be written, and the language(s) in which participants can express themselves during the sessions.

c) Position of the Facilitator

The Facilitator may try to achieve a common vision of the problem and the possible solutions, more than focusing on passed conflicts. This focus on a negotiated and agreed solution should not cause to forget the importance of power relationships among stakeholders.

The following list of questions summarizes the second part of points to be tackled during the design of an MSP.

> *25. How are the representatives designated or elected? How do they collect information regarding their constituencies' opinions? How do the representatives give back information of what happened at the MSP to their constituencies?*
>
> *26. Will the Facilitator intervene in the relationship between the representatives and their constituencies?*
>
> *27. What will be the link between the MSP and the stakeholder groups not represented, and with the general public? What will be the communication used to inform them?*
>
> *28. Which kind of capacity-building before and during the negotiation process, for which stakeholder group?*
>
> *29. Which kind of information the Facilitator should collect to support the process?*
>
> *30. If the MSP is to have a limited duration, what will it be?*
>
> *31. What are the requirements in terms of human resources, budget, for the Facilitator and for the stakeholder groups participating? How will the process be financed?*
>
> *32. What will be the discussion rules during the MSP sessions?*
>
> *33. What will be the accepted languages during the meetings and for the documentation?*

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The evaluation of an MSP can be defined as the analysis of the achievement of its objectives and the efficiency of its actions in the view of implementers and stakeholders involved. Though the former seems to place evaluation as the final stage of an MSP, to include evaluation activities all along this type of processes is unavoidable.

The evaluation of an MSP can be useful to:

- Assess the established objectives and actions taken by the facilitator during the implementation process.

- Know the results and effects of the overall process and stakeholders' perception about it.

- Considering the complexity of these processes and their strong linkage with specific context situations, contribute to a better design and implementation of future MSPs through documentation of experiences.

Thus, the evaluation can be important for facilitators and stakeholders involved in a particular case, and for researchers and organisations interested in MSP implementation.

A first decision to take is the appointment of a responsible(s) of the evaluation task. The consideration of evaluator(s) as part of the Facilitation team of the MSP, could allow the effective inclusion of evaluation tasks from the beginning of the platform.

7.2 Elements to consider in the evaluation

The following elements should be considered in the evaluation process:

7.2.1 MSP objectives

The implementation of an MSP implies the existence of various objectives. These can be classified into (i) formal objectives, linked to MSP design (design objectives) and what its implementation is meant to achieve (general objective of the MSP) and (ii) stakeholders' objectives, related to what they want to attain through their participation in the platform.

The definition of evaluation indicators will be based on the formal objectives of an MSP hence the importance of their identification and clarification. In turn, stakeholders' objectives will in some way conduct their actions within the MSP thus influencing the results and effects of the platform. Therefore, the identification of the latter can be helpful to explain some of the found results and effects.

7.2.2 Results and effects of an MSP

Firstly, *results* are defined here as the short-term consequences of actions undertaken along the process. In that sense, they are related to the design objectives of the platform, allowing the evaluation of their achievement. Secondly, *effects* are defined as the products of the whole platform implementation, and therefore can be used to assess the achievement of the MSP general objective. It should be considered that both results and effects could be the product of the influence of external factors as much as of the actions taken during the platform implementation.

Changes in perspectives and positions of stakeholders as well as in their relationship are expected effects of MSP implementation.

The following list of questions summarizes these first points regarding evaluation.

---

34. *Who is responsible for the evaluation? Is he or she part of the Facilitation team?*

35. *Who will have access to the information obtained? How the information will be stored, analyzed and used?*

36. *What were the formal objectives of the MSP? What did they mean in terms of stakeholders' participation and the resolution of one specific problem?*

37. *What were the objectives of each stakeholder to participate in the MSP?*

38. *What were the results and effects of the MSP? How were they influenced by the stakeholders' objectives?*

39. *Has the process caused some changes in the initial positions and relations among the stakeholders?*

40. *Are there some agreements reached during the process?*

41. *Are there some actions undertaken as implementation of agreements reached during the MSP?*

7.3 Evaluation activities

Evaluation activities will consist of the definition and construction of indicators, the gathering of information through monitoring of the process its results and effects and the analysis of the information.

7.3.1 Definition of indicators

Evaluation indicators have the purpose of measuring and/or qualifying the efficacy of objectives and efficiency of carried out actions, given the results and effects of the process (Figure 3).
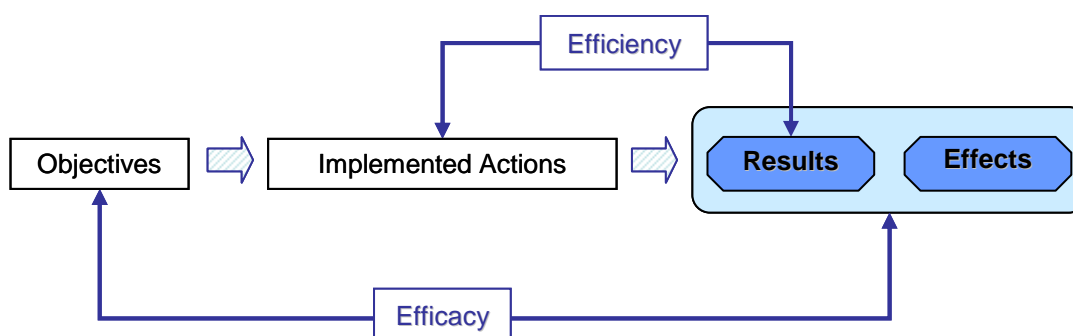

Figure 3. Definition of efficacy and efficiency indicators

Efficacy indicators should help to asses the relationship between the objectives of the MSP and its results and effects, while efficiency indicators should contribute in the assessment of the relationship between the implemented actions and the results of the MSP. Thus, each objective could have efficacy indicators to assess its accomplishment, and efficiency indicators of the actions carried out to achieve the objective (Figure 4).

Objective	Efficacy Indicator(s) Was the objective attained?	Actions	Efficiency Indicator(s) Were the carried out actions relevant to achieve the objective?
To improve the power balance among the representatives	• Participants skills to defend their interests during platform events • No participant can impose his/her opinions easily	• Execution of previous training events • Design and use of MSP decision-making rules that protect weaker groups	• Number of stakeholders in training events • Degree of weak groups' participation in discussions

Figure 4. Examples of the efficacy and efficiency indicators for an MSP

a) Efficacy Indicators

Efficacy refers to the success of the platform, i.e., the degree of attainment of its objectives. Since the general objective includes themes specific to each platform, it is difficult to single out generic efficacy indicators. These must be constructed based on the objective outlined in each case. Nevertheless, several design objectives are common to many MSPs, and it is possible to propose generic efficacy indicators for each one of these (see Table 2).

Table 2. Some possible design objectives and efficacy indicators for an MSP

Possible Design Objectives	**Efficacy indicators**
1. To identify all the stakeholders, their positions and relations around the problem dealt with	• The MSP planning did not disregard the inclusion of any stakeholder • The relations among stakeholders are wisely handled during the process
2. To define the objectives and design of the process with the participation of the stakeholders	• MSP characteristics included some stakeholders' suggestions
3. To promote that representatives can adapt the methodology of the platform during the process	• Methodological changes were introduced, based on stakeholders' suggestions
4. To ensure that the process allows an early involvement of the stakeholders in the treatment of the problem	• Stage of the problem when the platform was initiated • Influence of the timing of intervention in the problem over the results
5. To make MSP process and results be considered by formal authorities	• Recognition and support of the platform by authorities • Consideration of MSP results by formal authorities
6. To promote that participants are genuine representatives and accountable to their constituencies	• Constituencies' knowledge about the process • Constituencies' ratification of MSP reached agreements
7. To inform the public about the development and results of the process	• Public knowledge about the platform
8. To improve the power balance among the representatives	• Participants' skills to defend their interests during platform events • No participant can impose his/her opinions easily
9. To ensure that participants have adequate information and access to human, material and financial resources for an effective participation	• Participants give well-grounded opinions about the treated issues • The discussion process can be followed easily
10. To permit all participants to have influence in the decision making	• Most participants have the opportunity to give opinions during discussions

b) Efficiency Indicators

Efficiency is used to evaluate the performance of actions and efforts undertaken (Quintero 1995) to achieve the outlined objectives, which also includes the analysis of time and financial resources used to reach some results.

Usually, actions undertaken during the MSP relate to a design objective and not directly to the general objective. Therefore, generally there will not be efficiency indicators for the general objective of an MSP. In the same way, though many of the design objectives are generic, the actions to achieve these objectives may be different in each process. Thus, efficiency indicators must be built based on a previous identification of the actions carried out to achieve the design objectives in each case.

c) Generic evaluation indicators for a MSP

Finally, some general indicators that could improve the overall evaluation of the MSP are proposed. The following indicators are based on Warner and Verhallen (2004).

- *Platform adaptability*, which refers first, to MSP capacity to solve a diversity of problems (permanent platforms) or to change the way of addressing one problem in order to solve it (temporary platforms). Second, it relates to the flexibility of the MSP structure in order to solve problems effectively.

- *Generating support*, i.e., MSP capacity to obtain resources for its operation.

- *Synergy*, the platform's capacity to solve problems as compared with other stakeholders' possible alternative actions. This parameter can be useful to analyse whether any stakeholder could solve effectively the problem discussed about in the platform without having to appeal to the MSP.

- *Legitimacy*: whether the platform is really representing the stakeholders involved and whether its status and attributions are acknowledged by authorities.

- *Stakeholders' satisfaction* with the platform.

7.3.2 Monitoring of the process, its results and effects

The process monitoring will encompass several activities, e.g., elaboration of meeting memories, observation of meetings and other events, informal conversations with representatives and surveying. This can also include periodic meetings with the implementation team to consider the information gathered by the evaluator and to ponder about the way the process is being implemented.

The process monitoring can also include activities that allow the stakeholders to make suggestions about the platform implementation (i.e., what Hemmati, 2002, calls meta-communication).

The monitoring of results and effects would consist of secondary information review and interviewing. Secondary information refers to all documents and paper generated during the platform implementation.

Through interviewing, stakeholders' perceptions about the process, results and effects of the platform can be obtained. An important aspect to consider is the criteria to select persons to be interviewed, for instance considering stakeholders who chose not to participate in the MSP, or among the MSP participants, active and passive persons during the discussions that took place in the MSP.

Since some representatives may not inform their constituencies correctly and others could provide distorted information, it is also important to know the perceptions of the constituencies about the platform and their degree of acceptance of the agreements that were decided at MSP level.

7.3.3 Analysis of Information

Though different techniques can be used, the analysis of information will be based on the indicators previously defined to establish the relationship between objectives and results and effects. One important aspect to consider during the analysis is that several results and effects may not be products of what occurred in the MSP only but also of another external factors.

The following list of questions summarizes the aspects related to evaluation activities.

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42. What will be the efficacy indicators of the MSP? How will they be chosen?

43. Were the proposed objectives attained? What were the factors which influenced the achievement of each objective?

44. Was the time considered for the implementation enough to achieve the general objective?

45. What will be the efficiency indicators of the MSP? How will they be chosen?

46. Did the adopted methodology allow an efficient accomplishment of the objectives?

47. What were the time and resources dedicated to the process?

48. What aspects can be improved to accomplish a more efficient process?

49. How will the information needed to assess the indicators be gathered?

50. What kind of information will be gathered, when and by whom?

51. Will there be meta-communication activities during the process?

---

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to remind that this methodology aims at providing ideas to design or evaluate an MSP. In no way it should be seen as a normative stand. Therefore the specificities of each case and the flexibility in the consideration of the methodology are two important aspects to keep in mind.

Not all the problems involving several stakeholders can be solved through an MSP kind of approach. As can be noted in the first two part of the methodology proposed, the decision to intervene or not using an MSP should be based on a deep understanding of the problem, the stakeholders and the current stage of the problem. Thus the methodology can also be used to decide not intervene using an MSP.

This methodology gives a first reference framework, which could be deepened in two directions. First, attention could be paid to permanent platforms and their specificities (e.g., how to ensure sustainable financial resources, or which kind of turnover among the representatives). Second, it would be of interest to study the tools that are used to facilitate these platforms, for instance information and communication tools (cf. HarmoniCOP, 2003 for a review of these tools), how the use of these tools fits in this general framework and impacts on the general issues raised when an MSP takes place.

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