Social Forestry in Latin America – A First Overview of the Issues

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1. Introduction

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was quite some enthusiasm in Latin America for participatory protected area management, so-called Integrated Conservation and Development Projects or ICDPs, and social forestry, especially community-based forest management or community forestry. Social forestry was promoted as a sustainable development model for rural, particularly indigenous people in forest areas. High hopes were set in non-timber forest products (NTFP) because their extraction was assumed to have a limited impact on the forest (concept of "extractive reserves"). Also small-scale commercial timber extraction received increasing attention.

By the end of the 1990s, assessments have become more realistic, and there is increasing recognition of the difficulties and limitations of these approaches – but also conviction that participation of local people in conservation and forest management is a sine qua non. The Latin American experiences, gained in a context of increasing democratization and in some countries profound legal and institutional reforms towards decentralization, people's participation and recognition of indigenous rights, are therefore worth to be carefully assessed.

This article presents first results of a recent 4.5 months study tour on the state-of-the-art of social forestry in Middle and South America.[1] The focus was on community or smallholder management of natural humid (sub-)tropical forests for commercial timber extraction. The idea for the study arose from first-hand experiences in the rather difficult circumstances of South East Asia, especially Indonesia.[2] The study tour was conducted to contribute to our understanding of social forestry and provide a basis for improving GTZ services in this field. The three broad questions pursued were:

1. Is sustainable management of these forests economically viable in Latin America, given that the density of commercial timber species is even less than in South East Asia? The success of social forestry obviously hinges on the feasibility of sustainable forest management in general.
2. Which experiences have been made with different types of social forestry, especially with regard to institutional arrangements (relationships between the forest administration, private enterprise, NGOs and communities; suitability of different types of local organizations for – different aspects of – social forestry)? Although these arrangements obviously need to be country- and culture-specific, it was intended to identify some general lessons or principles.
3. Based on 2., what conclusions can be drawn on desirable or even necessary adjustments in project management instruments and procedures?

Given the amount of information gathered, this article is only a first step in what will hopefully become a joint process of learning from experiences in social forestry in GTZ and beyond.

[1] Between late July and mid December 1998, I visited (not only GTZ-supported) forestry and conservation organizations and projects in the USA, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil (see Appendix 1; some information on the countries visited in Appendix 2). The study tour was preceded and accompanied by an extensive literature review. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody I met once again for sharing their precious time and information with me. Notes on each country including bibliographies of relevant documents are available upon request via e-mail (SWen642491 @aol.com).

[2] See article in this issue.

2. The Economic Viability of Sustainable Forest Management in Latin America

There are major differences in the size (see Table 1) and state of (sub-)tropical broadleaf forests in Middle America (including Mexico) and South America (focus here on the Amazon basin). The pressures from timber extraction and, in its suit, conversion to other land uses have so far affected a higher proportion of the (initially much smaller) forests in Middle America than in the vast Amazon basin.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

Country	**Total Land Area**	**Forested Area (1995)**		**Population (1995)**	**Certified Forest Enterprises**	**GTZ Involvement in Forestry (F)/ Protected Areas (P)**	
	Million ha	Million ha	Percent of Total Area	Million	Million ha (no.)	Since	Projects (GTZ experts) 1998
Mexico	190.9	55.4	29.0 %	93.7	0.120 (5)	1978 (F)	F: 1 (2)
Guatemala	10.8	3.8	35.4 %	10.6	-	1986 (F)	F: 1 (2)
Honduras	11.2	4.1	36.8 %	5.7	0.033 (2)	1984 (F)	F: 2 (4) P: 2 (2)
Nicaragua	12.1	5.6	45.8 %	4.4	-	?	P: 1 (3)[3]
Costa Rica	5.1	1.2	24.4 %	3.4	0.024 (6)	1988 (F)	F: 2 (4)
Colombia	103.9	53.0	51.0 %	35.1	-	None so far	None so far
Ecuador	27.7	11.1	40.2 %	11.5	-	1984 (F)	F: 2 (2) P: 1 (1)
Peru	128.0	67.6	52.8 %	23.8	-	?	P: 1 (1)
Bolivia	108.4	48.3	44.6 %	7.4	0.343 (4)	?	P: 2 (2)
Brazil	845.7	551.1	65.2 %	161.8	0.391 (7)	?	F: 1 (2) P: 1 (2)
Sources	**FAO 1997**				**FSC 12/1998**	**GTZ 6/1998**	

In Latin America, especially in the Amazon, forests under sustainable forest management (SFM) are rare. Nevertheless, a still limited but increasing number of certified forest enterprises document that SFM is technically possible (see also Table 1).

However, the economic viability of SFM is still being debated. So far, timber extraction in Middle and South America has focused on high-value mahogany, which has already been included in CITES Appendix III as endangered species. In all countries visited, un- or underdeveloped markets or unattractive prices for lesser known or secondary timber species were mentioned as a major problem for SFM. An exception are those regions where deforestation has already advanced to such a degree that e.g. construction timber is getting scarce. The key economic issues are the failure of markets to internalize costs & benefits of SFM and to fully value future benefits of forests, and the

[3] This project is not classified as a project of the GTZ division of forestry & nature protection ("Arbeitsfeld 4544").

volatility of markets for certain extracted luxury goods (Freese 1997).

For Central America, a recent study documents also that expectations for immediate economic returns from certification (the costs of which are so far usually covered by outside sponsors) are too high. In some cases there was no price impact at all (Camino/Alfaro 1998). Finally, it is predicted that "projected increases in global roundwood prices will not be large enough to make a significant improvement in the commercial prospects of sustainable tropical forestry" (Southgate 1998:60).

In this situation, there is a need for more discussion about how to finance SFM in high-diversity broadleaf forests. The question arises which parts of the SFM management cycle can and should be self-financing for the forest enterprise (be it run by a private company, a community or a smallholder), and which costs need to be covered from which combination of public and private, in-country and international sources? In this context, it is argued that since the benefits of forest conservation and management are highest at the national and international levels, while the costs are usually highest for local people, special support for communities or smallholders is warranted (Richards 1996).

So far, Costa Rica is the only country which has established a system of "payments for environmental services" (*Pagos para Servicios Ambientales* such as CO_2 sinks, water, biodiversity and natural beauty). These payments are not only for reforestation, but also for natural forest management and forest protection by smallholders.[4] In Honduras, the FINNIDA-supported MAFOR project has experimented with a *Fondo de Manejo Forestal* at municipal level (MAFOR 1996). The CIDA-supported Broadleaf Forest Development Project (PDBL) has done the same at regional level at the Atlantic coast (contributions from the forest agency, municipalities, producer groups, and private sector) for those forest management costs which producer groups are unable to cover (PDBL 1995, Poirier 1998).

3. Key Issues in Social Forestry

3.1. Land Tenure

In Latin American forest areas, as all over the tropics, addressing land tenure conflicts is a major issue in SFM and a precondition for developing social forestry. In most countries these problems remain unsolved. An exception is Mexico, where since the Revolution indigenous communities have had their land ownership – at least in theory – recognized, and settler communities in frontier areas like Yucatán were given large forest areas as *ejidos* in common property. However, contrary to Africa and Asia, the Amazon has seen an impressive process of indigenous mobilization since the 1960s which has concentrated on recognition of *territorios indígenas*. For indigenous peoples, this includes rights to land, water and mineral resources. During the 1980s and 1990s, often in the context of profound constitutional reforms, especially in South America, but also in Nicaragua, indigenous people have received different types of government recognition over extended – usually forested – areas (Reconocimiento 1993). In the Amazon, these areas comprise more than 100 million hectares (Smith forthcoming). Indigenous peoples are now facing the challenge to consolidate, demarcate, defend and manage these areas.

For this, "the alternative with the best track record is demarcation of community lands and award of community titles, leases, or special status ... accompanied by recognition of traditional authority to resolve resource rights disputes. This option does not require the state to understand the complexities of the communities' tenurial system. Community-based tenure offers a protective and enabling shell ... that allows locally derived management institutions to flourish and adapt to their ecological and social environment" (Alcorn 1996:246). The GTZ and KfW-supported indigenous land protection project (PPTAL) at the Brazilian Indian Agency FUNAI, a part of the PP-G7 (*Programa Piloto*

[4] For details of the system, see Heindrichs 1997 and Watson et al. 1998.

para a Protecao das Florestas Tropicais do Brasil), has gained valuable experiences with this difficult task.[5] In Nicaragua, The Nature Conservancy and the GTZ-supported BOSAWAS protected area management project have supported the demarcation and participatory management planning in five indigenous territories which constitute the core of the reserve.[6]

In countries like Honduras and Guatemala most forest areas are still classified as state forests.[7] Here, arrangements like "usufruct contracts" (Honduras) or "community forestry concessions" in the multiple use zone or buffer zone of the Maya Biosphere Reserve (Petén, Guatemala) provide local people with some tenure security (albeit no recognition of land rights). In Honduras, under the *Sistema Social Forestal*[8] from the mid 1970s on cooperatives and community groups could obtain annually renewable harvest rights to pine resin and timber (later in the context of 40-year contracts). In 1993, this system covered an area of 548,000 ha mainly of pine forests, managed by 311 groups (Ochoa 1995). In Guatemala, since 1994 communities in the Maya Biosphere Reserve – the oldest of which were founded around the turn of the century by *chicleros* (latex gatherers) – have been given the possibility to apply for concessions for the commercial use of timber and non-timber forest products.[9]

Another interesting type of forest management unit in both countries are municipal forests (*bosques ejidales)*, which may gain more importance elsewhere in Latin America in the process of decentralization. These forests are managed as an income source for local government and/or local people. They are the focus of the FINNIDA-supported MAFOR project in Honduras (pine forest areas) and of the GTZ-supported PMS in Guatemala (Carrillo/Ordonez 1998). In Bolivia, the new forest law (1996), besides handing over 25% of the royalties from timber concessions to municipal governments, foresees the establishment of municipal forest reserves (up to 20% of state forests in their area) to be managed by groups of local people (*Agrupaciones Sociales del Lugar, ASL)* (Kaimowitz et al. 1998). The BOLFOR-project (USAID) is supporting the newly created Forest Superintendency in the implementation of these innovative regulations.

Nevertheless, a recent comparative assessment of different tenurial arrangements cautions that the prospects for common property management regimes (CPMR) – or rather a "continuum of open-access, CPMR and private tenure land-use arrangements along which communities are continually evolving in one direction or another" (Richards 1997a:1) - are an open question:

- Longer established indigenous CPMRs are affected by increasing market integration and centralized tenure legislation, although this does not necessarily lead to their demise;
- More recently created CPMRs, both among indigenous and non-indigenous people, may face even more social, legal, institutional, economic, and technical problems.

In Costa Rica, most forest outside of small indigenous areas is in private hands. This creates a different type of challenge for social forestry which also applies for smallholder settlements and cooperatives in many Latin American forest frontier areas. The experiences gained in GTZ-supported projects in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Ecuador, and recent developments in Brazil indicate that smallholder forest management for commercial purposes can be viable from about 40 ha on (Brazil), 20-30 ha (Costa Rica) or even under 20 ha (Ecuador) if administrative and technical requirements are simplified. In the GTZ-supported PROFORS-project in Sucumbíos, Ecuador, the focus is on enrichment planting on

[5] These are currently being compiled in a publication. Check PPTAL website at: http://www.funai.gov.br/pptal

[6] For an example, see Kipla Sait Tasbaika 1997.

[7] In Honduras, until 1992 even trees on private late were state property subject to stumpage fees.

[8] See article by Killmann et al. in this issue.

[9] Contracts cover a period of 25 years (in some cases 50), and the communities have to pay a one-time fee, a performance bond and standard production-based taxes (Gretzinger 1998).

individual plots (farmers receive support for max. 4 ha). Timber harvest has not started yet, but predictions of future profits are quite high.

Forest management plans have also been established for smallholder cooperatives consisting of individually owned or operated plots, but there is much variation in labor organization, i.e. in what is done individually and what collectively. No systematic comparison and assessment of the different organizational options seems to exist yet. In one Guatemalan case, for example, standing timber is sold individually by all cooperative members to the same trader at a jointly negotiated price. In other cases, attempts are made to add value through cooperative-run timber extraction and processing (see 3.2.2. below).

3.2. Forest Management

3.2.1. Non-Timber Forest Products

After the murder of rubber tapper leader Chico Mendes in Brazil in late 1988, "extractive reserves" (an official land-use category in Brazil, but also relevant as community concessions in state forest areas elsewhere) received much scientific and public attention. By now, however, major ecological and economic limitations of a dependence on non-timber forest product (NTFP) extraction have been recognized: threats of overharvesting in boom periods, price decline due to oversupply, substitution by other products, all ultimately resulting in the poverty of extractors.

There seem to be inherent limitations in NTFP-based social forestry since in natural forests these resources are either of high commercial value but low abundance or the other way round. This makes it difficult to establish socially, economically and ecologically sustainable enterprises (Salafsky 1997/98). A Brazilian author argued already some time ago that "extractive reserves have importance as a means of slowing down the expansion of the agricultural frontier for the short and middle term. In the long term, however, the disappearance of extraction is inevitable" (Homma 1992:31).

As a result, "the typical venture aimed at promoting commercially viable harvesting of NTFPs is a small-scale one, aimed at taking advantage of a limited niche characterized by an existing and accessible market as well as favorable growing conditions. There is not room in Latin America for many such projects" (Southgate 1998:57).

Nevertheless, relevant and – on a local scale – encouraging experiences have been gained in Latin America with regard to the management of selected NTFPs as potential components of broader social forestry schemes, e.g. game in the Amazon (Bodmer et al. 1997, Fang et al. 1997) or in Mexico (*Plan Piloto Forestal*, see under 3.2.2.), or high-value medicinal plants (see Müller 1998 on *raicilla* in Costa Rica). In most cases, however, NTFP management means population enhancement or cultivation within or even outside of natural forest, not just maintaining the extraction of a natural product at a sustainable level. An example for this are the *tagua* palm patches in Ecuador and Colombia, site of Conservation International's highly publicized initiative to promote "vegetable ivory" buttons and carvings for "tropical rain forest conservation" (Southgate 1998). Especially in the case of *ex situ* management, the contribution to natural forest maintenance - if any - is limited to decreasing harvest pressures. Worse, NTFP cultivation can even compete for land with natural forests.

3.2.2. Timber Extraction, Processing and Marketing

The usual argument for community-based or smallholder timber production is that, since timber is currently the most valuable product extracted in large quantities from tropical forests, local people need to have their share if they are to have a stake in forest maintenance. The general characteristics of community timber production (CTP) are that

- resource rights are either owned by or assigned to local community members

- people harvesting the timber live near the site (timber is part of a larger land-use framework)
- harvesting is smaller in scale and less capital intensive than in industrial timber harvesting
- CTP enterprises seek to add-value to raw materials on or close to the harvesting site
- capital is reinvested locally (incentive for sustainability) (Salafsky 1997/98:5/6).

Community timber production may have "inherent limitations where large-scale industrial wood production or preservation of fragile ecosystems are of primary concern" (Cabarle 1991:8), but in principle it seems an interesting option for many forest areas.

In Southeast Asia, the still limited "evidence is at best mixed" (Salafsky 1997/98:23) as to whether these enterprises can be ecologically, technically, economically, institutionally, and socially sustainable. In Latin America, the experiences of several well-documented projects in Quintano Roo, Mexico (*Plan Piloto Forestal*), lowland Peru (COFYAL) and lowland Bolivia (CICOL), and cursory information on other initiatives also show that establishing viable community-based forest management and timber processing and marketing enterprises in (sub)tropical broadleaf forest areas is difficult.[10]

One already mentioned basic issue is the questionable economic viability of sustainable forest management in general (see 2.) which seriously affects fledgling community enterprises. Another is the fact that most forests now managed by communities or smallholders have already been "creamed off" by previous logging and thus form a resource base in need of rehabilitation. In fact, although all community enterprises visited or documented have received substancial free-of-charge technical and often also financial support, they have difficulties making profit. There is also the issue of economies of scale: in Quintana Roo, Mexico, for example, approx. 9000 ha of production forest are considered necessary for a viable community enterprise, and in *ejidos* with smaller forest areas community members are said to loose interest in forest management due to limited immediate benefits.

Technically, no major problems are reported with regard to timber extraction by local people, neither by selective logging based on inventories and management plans, nor under the strip-cutting system developed by the Tropical Science Center in Costa Rica and applied in Peru. Both systems are implemented with no or minimal post-harvest treatments.[11] With adequate training and support, local people were able to conduct all necessary field-based tasks with regard to inventories, management planning, timber extraction and processing. In several cases young foresters of community origin are taking over the technical services previously provided by outsiders. In many countries, organizations and projects, technical guidelines, manuals and training courses for simplified inventories and management plans have been developed of which newly starting initiatives can make use (see Appendix 3).

Serious difficulties often occur with regard to business management of community sawmills or timber marketing enterprises, but these may as much be due to social pressures on the individuals in charge as to insufficient skills (more on this under 3.3.).

3.2.3. Multiple-Use Management of Forest Resources

Multiple-use management of forest resources is being promoted as a means to reduce the dependence on a single or a limited number of products and to ensure a more steady flow of benefits.[12] In the countries visited, there are attempts to combine the extraction of an increasing number of timber species with locally-specific NTFP or with eco-tourism. However, in

[10] See Richards 1993, LTC 1995; more references in Appendix 3. The experience of indigenous communities in the more homogeneous and accessible pine forests of Oaxaca, Mexico, who without much outside support have developed impressive forest enterprises, is more encouraging (see LTC 1995, Merino 1997).

[11] The technical details are described at length in the literature and will not be dealt with here.

[12] See Ford Foundation 1998 on experiences in Asia.

practice this is often complicated by the trade-offs involved in many combinations of forest products.

In Honduras, for example, where GTZ-supported projects promote multiple use forest management in - comparatively simple - pine forests (Uebelhör 1998), there may be conflicts between resin tapping and timber harvesting concerning use rights, harvesting schedules, and physical impact. The *Plan Piloto Forestal* in Mexico (broadleaf forest) concluded that the issue is not the maximization of the number of forest products used (i.e. increase in total yields), but rather their optimal combination to achieve synergies enhancing forest area maintenance (Janka 1998). Eco-tourism in at least one case in Mexico and another in Costa Rica made the communities cancel previously established logging plans since tourists prefer to see undisturbed forest. It remains to be seen which benefits will be higher and more stable in the long run.

3.3. Community Organization

Establishing a viable business is a challenge for entrepreneurs all over the world, even more so for communities or smallholders with limited experiences in market economy. First of all, the terms ”community” and ”community-based” are often being used without much analysis of the social units in question. They provoke images of small, homogeneous groups with shared norms and common interests and a tradition of collective action, which is often not warranted (Agrawal 1997). An in-depth five-country study on Amazonian indigenous ”communities” and their economic projects shows that even among these relatively isolated, ”traditional” people, ”the modern community, *resguardo* or *comuna*, as a property-owning unit, ... is quite likely not the same kind of kinfolk grouping that traditionally practiced resource management. As a result, each community needs both new mechanisms to develop and put into practice a plan, and new social norms to ensure group compliance to the plan.” (Smith 1996:213; see also Smith forthcoming). They ”need to balance the interests of individuals, domestic units and the collectivity that owns the territory” (ibd. 214). ”Community” can therefore not be taken for granted as a basis for organizing social forestry.

”Community forestry will be more successful where local institutions have a tradition of coordination, and there are established rules for managing common property resources” (Cabarle 1991:8). The organizational challenges throughout the process are:

- First Phase: Leadership to secure or obtain a forest area
- Second Phase: Managerial capacities; here, grassroots support organizations (NGOs) are often important
- Third Phase: Transparency and fairness (not necessarily equity) in the distribution of benefits
- Ongoing: Negotiating effective outside support while maintaining internal consensus (e.g. on land use decisions)
- Ongoing: Sound fiscal management, e.g. avoiding oversubsidizing of community projects from the profits made at the expense of reinvestment in the community forestry enterprise (ibd. 6/7).

A more fundamental issue is that ”the contradiction of values between the indigenous Amazonian economy and the market economy has led to a confusion within the moral order of indigenous societies” (Smith 1996:214). This puts the managers of community enterprises under much social pressure to share their apparent wealth (i.e. community funds). There is also a constant conflict between immediate redistribution of benefits for either community or individual needs and reinvestment in the enterprise needed e.g. for maintenance of equipment. The study concludes that, ”in general, collective enterprises have not been viable among indigenous Amazonians” (ibd. 205) and that ”production is an activity best left to the domestic unit” (ibd. 208). Others argue that in view of the unavoidably increasing market integration also in remote areas it is necessary to anticipate its potential negative effects and strengthen grassroots organizations in proc-

essing and marketing, focusing on already individualized areas of the indigenous economy (Richards 1998). In any case, the more isolated and less market integrated the people among whom a forest enterprise will be established are, the more problems can be expected and need to be anticipated with regard to business management.

Another issue is the user group approach pursued or at least permitted in several countries. In Asian countries like Nepal or India, it has proven to be more practical to work with the immediate traditional users of forest resources instead of government-imposed territorial units. In Latin American countries like Honduras or Bolivia, in contrast, where the formation of groups is promoted to gain access to new forest areas, the distribution of benefits from forest management among all inhabitants of a certain forest area and municipality becomes an issue. If the process of group formation is not guided by certain criteria and monitored, it can lead to the exclusion of a large part of the population. This may be desirable for business management purposes, but its social acceptability should at least be discussed in each particular case. User groups can then be requested to contribute to municipal or community funds.

Research on supra-community organizations like associations or federations in Latin America shows that they are usually more suitable for political purposes (pressure groups for land and resource rights, access to markets, etc.) than for managing of economic projects, and that they hardly ever become self-financing (Bebbington 1996). Nevertheless, there are now associations of community forestry enterprises, like JUNAFORCA (*Junta Nacional Forestal Campesina*) in Costa Rica (founded in 1991) or UNOFOC (*Unión Nacional de Organizaciones de Forestería Comunal*) in Mexico (founded in 1992), and CICAFOC (*Comisión Centroamericana de Forestería Comunitaria*) at Central American level (founded 1994 and a major partner for the FAO-supported "Forest, Trees and People Program" (FTPP) activities in the region).[13] These associations, like many of their member organizations, provide technical services which were formerly a government monopoly or non-existant. In addition, they strive to participate in national discussions about policies affecting them.

3.4. Institutional Change

All recent overviews on social forestry agree on the need for policy and institutional changes within government forest agencies (and beyond) and the development of a new division of labor and collaborative relationships with the private sector and NGOs (pluralistic approach). While major - and sometimes conflicting - political and economic reform processes (redemocratization, decentralization, deconcentration & deregulation, structural adjustment programs, *neoliberalismo*) have been underway in most Latin American countries, forestry has not always been at the core of these reforms. Other sector policies - as in the case of export crop or livestock development - often have negative impacts on forest maintenance. Also, forest policy reform processes have not always been well documented and analyzed.

Nevertheless, several recent more theoretical considerations, comparative studies on natural resource management and forest policy reform processes, as well as country studies on Costa Rica and Bolivia document the serious conflicts of interests between different stakeholders, but also potential strategies for reform towards a more appropriate division of labor and framework for collaboration.[14] These issues cannot be discussed in detail here, but the preliminary conclusions of a comparative study by IIED indicate the overall direction:

"'Policies that work for forests and people' will derive from processes that generate *local multi-stakeholder understanding and commitment,*

[13] So far, there seem to be no equivalents in South America.

[14] See Uphoff 1998, Carney/Farrington 1998, Morrell/Paveri 1994, Richards 1996, Bass et al. 1997; on Costa Rica Watson et al. 1998 and Bolivia Pávez/Bojanic 1998.

that *link policy-making with its actual outcomes,* and that are able to *deal with change."* (Bass et al. 1997:189) The "10 elements that work" are:

- Opening up the policy process to civil society through forest fora at national and sub-national levels.
- Information, monitoring and research which actively feeds into policy and management processes.
- Capabilities to address extra-sectoral influences on forests.
- Agreed national goals for forests – focusing on people and their needs for forest goods and services.
- Policy instruments better geared to stakeholders and national goals for forests.
- Decentralisation, devolution and strengthening capacity as appropriate.
- Standards and codes of practice for improved accountability.
- Development and spread of resource-conserving technology.
- Democracy of knowledge.
- Framework for continuous policy improvement (ibd. 189-190).

The role of the state – and therefore also of central-level forest agencies – ideally gets reduced from direct involvement in implementation to creating a conducive policy environment, setting norms, monitoring compliance, and mediating conflicts between different stakeholders (Richards 1996). This situation leads to the paradoxical situation that commitment is needed from those who are losing power through reform, and that a minimalist state is expected to deal with the complex new task of facilitating its own reform (Carney/Farrington 1998). Therefore, during the reorganization of forest agencies, especially with regard to social forestry, the previous gap in extension and other services for local people can hardly and should not be filled by central or regional government agencies. However, the development of alternative approaches is still in process.

As already mentioned, local governments are increasingly important actors in Latin America: new laws in Brazil (1988), Guatemala (1988), Honduras (1993), and Bolivia (1994), for example, permit or even require greater municipal involvement in forest management and conservation. However, besides often still lacking technical and managerial capacity for providing the foreseen forestry extension services to community or smallholder associations, local governments may also be under pressure by local business elites not to use their new opportunities in the common interest.

In such situations, local peoples' organizations can and need to demand accountability. In addition, as the Mexican and Costa Rican cases document, producer associations can establish their own forest extension services. In contrast, so far there is surprisingly little NGO involvement in social forestry that goes beyond small pilot projects. It seems that many NGOs in Latin America are still in a process of reassessing their position vis-a-vis the state (Bebbington 1997) and timber extraction. In contrast, there is much more NGO involvement in nature conservation. There is also little information on successful partnerships in social forestry between local people and large private companies in Latin America, which in situations of ongoing direct competition for and conflict over resources may not be surprising.

Obviously, there are no blueprints for "multi-agency partnerships". Nevertheless, it is clear that the institutional change process requires a profound reorientation of government officials and their new partners at all levels, focusing on social skills. One contribution to this is the development and spread of participatory methodologies. As in other parts of the world, PRA (participatory rural appraisal), integrated human development, *sistematización* (process documentation and analysis), self-evaluation etc. have been applied, tested and adjusted in many social forestry projects in Latin America (see Appendix 3).

A major challenge in the endeavor of institutional change is usually the process of "scaling-up" from intensively supported and monitored pilot projects focusing on a small area and a limited number of communities to a regional or even national level. In the countries visited, the

Plan Piloto Forestal in Mexico is certainly the project with the broadest impact, having covered in its 15 years of work (1983-1998) approx. 400,000 ha of forest managed by 50 *ejidos* in several associations which provide their own technical services, operate their own sawmills and marketing, and have some influence on forest policy through their regional and national federations (Janka 1998). Although this area is half of the federal state's remaining production forest, in comparison to the situation in "mega-forest" countries like Brazil, it is not very large. Due to sheer distances and the number of administrative layers, institutions and persons involved, scaling-up will be much more difficult in a country like Brazil than in Costa Rica, a factor so far insufficiently taken into consideration in development cooperation, not only in forestry (see e.g. number of GTZ-supported projects and staff in Table 1).

4. Challenges for Project Management

The challenges involved in developing and institutionalizing SFM and especially social forestry have consequences for development cooperation. The ODI review on institutional aspects of natural resource management concludes that donors should be "strengthening ... democratic pluralism" (Carney/Farrington 1998:92). Apparently, there is little hope for success in authoritarian settings. For forestry, there is agreement that international technical assistance is best provided via "a programme approach that supports governments at every step of the structural modernization and implementation process" (Morrell/Paveri 1994:37). Continued support is needed for managing reforms and establishing innovative partnerships. Also, there should be more systematic selection of countries, control over quality of aid interventions, donor coordination and "increased funding of autonomous or semi-autonomous development funds" instead of single government agencies (Carney/Farrington 1998:104).

The recent DfID (then still ODA) evaluation of experiences with "shared forest management" focuses more on consequences for the donor agency itself and concludes that the principle of participation implies "a challenge to development agencies' self-perception" (Bird 1997:179). "Shared forest management initiatives require time. This means changes in project management procedures to match longer timeframes to budgetary cycles, and in monitoring procedures where process-type indicators are credible proxies for longer-term impacts" (ibd. 181). All this in turn requires new skills among agency staff.

In this context, USAID is working increasingly through international NGOs (like CI, WWF, WRI, TNC). This approach can have advantages like mobilizing experiences in participatory work and contacts with national NGOs, but also limitations, especially in countries where NGOs are not yet accepted partners for government agencies (Richards 1994). Within German development cooperation, the BMZ tropical forestry sector concept (BMZ 1992) stresses the need for German agencies (mainly GTZ and KfW) to address the situation of forest-dependent people and ensure their participation in forestry projects, and to support not only government agencies, but to collaborate also with national NGOs.

Two recent comparative BMZ evaluations[15] and studies by a "sector project"[16] address institutional issues in (social) forestry projects in Latin America. In addition, several projects have started to document their own approach.[17] The projects discussed vary considerably in terms of focus, which may be placed more on the forest (trying to gain control over the deforestation process by means of involving local people) or on the welfare of forest-dependent people for their own sake. As a result, and also due to the different political settings, their strategies differ as well.

The overall trend in German development cooperation in forestry is away from working only with – usually badly equipped and poorly moti-

[15] On Ecuador & Costa Rica (BMZ 1996) and Mexico & Dominican Republic (BMZ 1997).

[16] "Ressource Management through Self-Help" or RMSH, see Pretzsch et al. 1992, Pretzsch et al. 1993, Förster et al. 1993.

[17] See e.g. Janka 1998, Carrillo/Ordonez 1998.

vated – central government forest agencies and towards institutional pluralism at different levels. In some countries, program approaches combine policy advisory services at central level with field-based projects in forestry, social forestry and protected area management. There is increasing recognition, at times rather confirmation, that process-orientation and the capacity to react flexibly to sudden opportunities are vital for project success – which in turn requires changes in project planning and management. In the context of the decentralization of GTZ and the creation of regional forestry sector networks (*Fachverbunde*) among project staff, mutual conceptual and practical assistance during project planning, implementation and evaluation (as it happened for example from PPF/Mexico to projects in Guatemala, Honduras and Ecuador) is an interesting option.

The recently updated GTZ forestry concept outlines basic principles, service areas, "topics for the future" and a new set of skill requirements for GTZ advisors (GTZ 1999). The focus is much less on technical than on personal, social, and management skills. With regard to forestry-specific qualifications, the ability to deal with policy and institutional issues, and experience in social forestry and integrated land use systems are given the same importance as technical knowledge in forest management and nature protection. With these advisors, it should be possible to deal with the challenges of social forestry in Latin America and beyond.

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Appendix 1: MOST IMPORTANT PROJECTS & INSTITUTIONS VISITED

Country	Forestry (General)	Social Forestry	Protected Areas
USA	WRI	CS	WWF, CI
Mexico	FSC	ERA (Oaxaca), GTZ/AMA-Plan Piloto (Quintana Roo)	WWF
Guatemala		GTZ-PMS, ProPetén (CI), CATIE-OLAFO & CONAP, Centro Maya	
Honduras	AFH, GTZ-PSF & Subprojects	GTZ-AFOCO, CIDA-PDBL, COATLAHL, FINNIDA-CAFOR	MOPAWI
Nicaragua			GTZ-BOSAWAS
Costa Rica	GTZ-COSEFORMA, CODEFORSA	CATIE (various projects), FAO-FTPP, JUNAFORCA	WWF
Colombia	CONIF		Ministerio del Medio Ambiente
Ecuador	GTZ-PPF	GTZ-PROFORS, FAO-FTPP	GTZ-Gran Sumaco
Peru	Cámara Forestal	FAO-FTPP, COICAP	GTZ-Protected Areas, WWF, Pro Naturaleza, CI
Bolivia	Superintendencia Forestal, USAID-BOLFOR, ITTO, GTZ-PDTC	FAO-FTPP, CERES, APCOB	GTZ-Protected Areas, CI, Eco-Bolivia
Brazil	IMAZON	Projeto Saude e Alegria (Santarém), GTZ-FUNAI	GTZ-IBAMA, Fundacao Vitoria Amazonas

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbr./Acr.	Explanation
AFE-COHDEFOR	Administración Forestal del Estado - Corporación Hondurena de Desarrollo Forestal, Honduras
AFH	Agenda Forestal Hondurena
AFOCO	Apoyo a la Forestería Comunal, Honduras (GTZ)
AMA	Acuerdo Mexicano-Alemán, Mexico (GTZ)
APCOB	Ayuda para el Campesinado Indígena del Oriente Boliviano, Santa Cruz, Bolivia
ASL	Agrupación Social del Lugar, Bolivia
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, Bonn, Germany
BOLFOR	Proyecto de Manejo Forestal Sostenible, Santa Cruz, Bolivia (USAID)
BOSAWAS	BOSAWAS Biosphere Reserve Support Project, Nicaragua (GTZ)
BSP	Biodiversity Support Project, Washington
CATIE	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Ensenanza, Turrialba, Costa Rica
CERES	Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social , Cochabamba, Bolivia
CI	Conservation International, Washington
CICAFOC	Coordinadora Indígena Campesina de Agroforestería Comunitaria Centroamericana
CICOL	Central Intercomunal Campesina del Oriente de Lomerío, Bolivia (supported by APCOB, BOLFOR)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research, Bogor, Indonesia
CITES	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
COATLAHL	Cooperativa Regional Agroforestal Colón, Atlántida, Limitada, La Ceiba, Honduras
CODEFORSA	Comisión de Desarrollo Forestal de San Carlos, Costa Rica
COFYAL	Cooperativa Forestal Yánesha Limitada, Peru (supported by USAID, later WWF)
COICAP	Coordinadora Indígena de ... la Amazonía Peruana, Lima, Peru
CONAP	Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas, Guatemala
CONIF	Corporación Nacional de Investigación y Fomento Forestal, Bogotá, Colombia
COSEFORMA	Cooperación en los Sectores Forestal y Maderero, Costa Rica (GTZ)
CPMR	Common property management regimes
CS	Cultural Survival, Cambridge, Mass., USA
CTP	Community timber production
DfID	Department for International Development
ERA	Estudios Rurales y Asesoría, Oaxaca, Mexico
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome, Italy
FINNIDA	Finnish development cooperation agency
FLONA	Floresta Nacional, Brazil
FOIN	Federación Indígena del Napo, Ecuador
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FTPP	Forest, Trees and People Programme (FAO), Rome, Italy; offices in Latin America in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia

Abbr./Acr.	**Explanation**
FUNAI	Fundacao Nacional do Indio, Brazil
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, Eschborn, Germany
IBAMA	Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais Renováveis
ICDP	Integrated Conservation and Development Project
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development, London, UK
IMAZON	Instituto do Homem e Meio Ambiente da Amazonia, Belém, Brazil
INEFAN	Instituto Ecuatoriano Forestal y de Areas Naturales y Vida Silvestre, Quito, Ecuador
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization, Japan
JUNAFORCA	Junta Nacional Forestal Campesina, San José, Costa Rica
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, Frankfurt, Germany
LTC	Land Tenure Center, Madison, Wisconsin, USA
MAFOR	Proyecto Manejo y Utilización Sostenida de Bosques de Coniferas en Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras (FINNIDA)
MERGE	Managing Ecosystems and Resources with Gender Emphasis, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA
MOPAWI	Mosquitia Pawisa, Puerto Lempira, Honduras
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
ODA	Overseas Development Administration, London, UK
ODI	Overseas Development Institute, London, UK
OLAFO	Proyecto Conservación para el Desarrollo Sosenible en América Central, CATIE, Turrialba, Costa Rica
PDBL	Proyecto de Desarrollo de Bosque Latifoliado, La Ceiba, Honduras (CIDA)
PDTC	Proyecto de Desarrollo del Trópico Cochabambino, Bolivia
PMS	Proyecto de Manejo Sostenible, Petén, Guatemala (GTZ)
PPF	Plan Piloto Forestal, Quintana Roo, Mexico (GTZ) Proyecto Política Forestal, Quito, Ecuador (GTZ)
PPTAL	Projeto Integrado de Protecao as Populacoes e Terras Indígenas da Amazonia Legal, Brazil (GTZ & KfW)
PROFORS	Programa Forestal Sucumbíos, Lago Agrio, Ecuador (GTZ)
PSF	Proyecto Social Forestal, Tegucigalpa, Honduras (GTZ)
PUMAREN	Program for the Use and Management of Natural Resources, Tena, Ecuador (supported by CS)
RMSH	Ressourcenmanagement durch Selbsthilfe; sector project (GTZ, until 1998)
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TCO	Tierras Comunitarias de Origen, Bolivia
TNC	The Nature Conservancy, USA
UNOFOC	Unión Nacional Forestal Campesina, Mexico
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature (international) / World Wildlife Fund (USA)
WRI	World Resources Institute